



THE POWER OF SECONDHAND: HOW RESALE SLOWS CONSUMPTION

DEPOP DISPLACEMENT RESEARCH 2022



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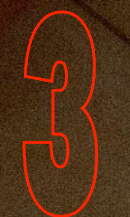




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ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

• THE POWER OF SECONDHAND: HOW RESALE SLOWS CONSUMPTION



About this research

WHO WE ARE

At Depop, our mission is to build the world's most diverse, progressive home of fashion. We want to create a community-powered fashion ecosystem that's kinder on the planet and kinder to people.

Our overall aim is to change the way we shop, by keeping clothes that already exist passing from person to person.

WHY SECONDHAND?

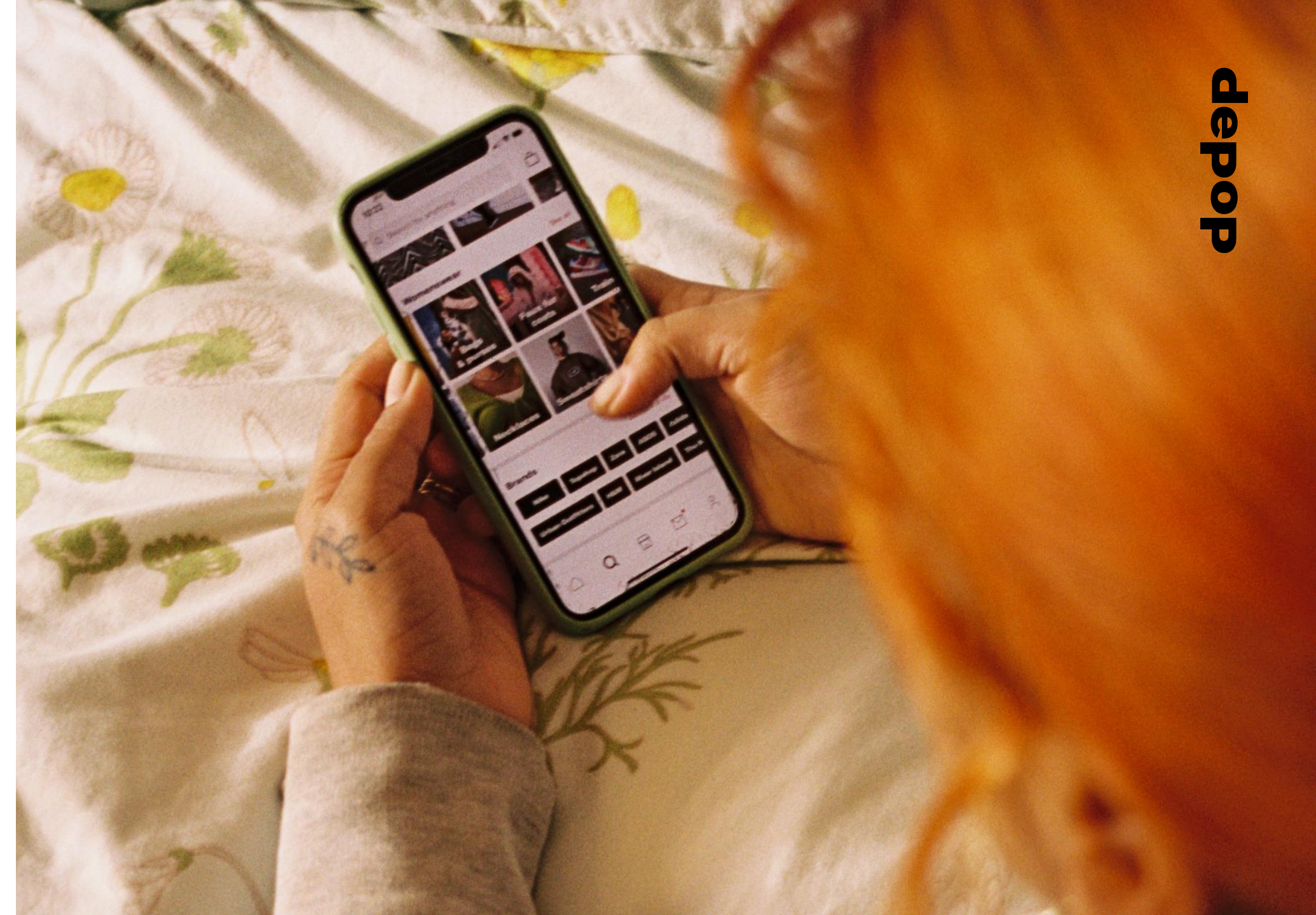
Between 2000 & 2015, the production of clothing doubled, whilst the number of average wears decreased by 40%¹.

Production of raw materials, fabric processing and manufacturing of garments are major contributors to the overall

environmental impact of a piece of clothing - with detrimental impacts including high greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption, excessive waste, and contamination of water sources and land².

A simple way to reduce the overall environmental impact of fashion is to reuse what already exists - **displacing brand new purchases with secondhand ones**. If on average a garment was worn twice as much, then lifecycle GHG emissions of the garment could be 44% lower³.

Our community considers secondhand as an important way to reduce their consumption (75% of our Gen Z users buy secondhand to reduce consumption⁴).



depop



• THE POWER OF SECONDHAND: HOW RESALE SLOWS CONSUMPTION

About this research



THE RESEARCH

In March 2022, in collaboration with QSA Partners⁵ and Icaro Consulting⁶, Depop conducted research via a survey of Depop users.

The aim of the research was to understand Depop's users' behaviours when it comes to buying and disposing of fashion items, especially secondhand items versus new. One of the key research questions was to

establish the extent to which purchasing a secondhand item on Depop prevents the purchase of a brand new one elsewhere.

In collaboration with QSA, we used the survey data to estimate the displacement rates of purchases made on Depop, in each of our key 3 markets (UK, USA, Australia). See appendix for more details on the displacement rate calculation methodology.

The aim of the research is to understand Depop's users' behaviours when it comes to buying and disposing of fashion items



About this research

Transparency and collaboration between players is key to reaffirm the environmental case of resale.

WHY THIS RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT

As circularity gains momentum in the nascent resale industry, it is crucial to verify whether circular business models are truly slowing the need for new fashion or are unintentionally fuelling more consumption. By estimating Depop's own displacement rate, we can better understand the environmental impact of purchasing secondhand fashion on Depop compared to brand new items elsewhere.

Collaboration between resale platforms and brands to align and improve the methodology for environmental impact valuation in resale will be crucial to reinforce the case for new circular fashion businesses and pave the way for a fashion industry built on circular principles.

We congratulate our peers - like Farfetch⁷ and Vestiaire Collective⁸ - that have already shared their own displacement rates, and encourage others to do the same.

Finally, sharing insights on consumer behaviour related to purchasing, wearing and disposing of secondhand fashion will help inform brands looking to trial new circular offerings - further strengthening the resale industry's customer penetration and impact.

About this research

THE SAMPLE

The results of this research are based on a sample of 5,531 Depop users across three markets (UK, USA, Australia). The survey was open to users who had made a purchase of clothing on Depop (including shoes and accessories) between December 2021 and February 2022 (i.e. a 3 month period).

The time frame was selected to ensure that respondents could accurately recall the purchase on the one hand; while also having had time to receive and use it. The profile of the sample in terms of socio-demographic variables (such as age, gender, etc.) was allowed to fall out naturally in each territory. As we tend to get a more engaged set of users taking part in surveys, we included a prize draw to encourage less engaged users to participate.

Note:

Data points referencing "Depop users" in this research report are based on responses from the surveyed user sample (unless otherwise stated). Where findings have been combined across markets, a straight average has been taken and no weighting has been applied to the results to account for the size of the markets. Results given at a total level should therefore be used only to give direction. Depop can provide country specific data upon request.

	US	UK	AUSTRALIA
Total respondents	1927	1847	1757
Male	16%	25%	10%
Female	73%	70%	84%
Non-binary	8%	4%	4%
I identify as a different gender	84%	79%	80%
Prefer not to say	14%	16%	16%
16 - 24	84%	79%	80%
25 - 35	14%	16%	16%
36+	2%	5%	3%





NEW



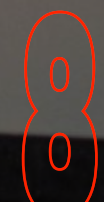
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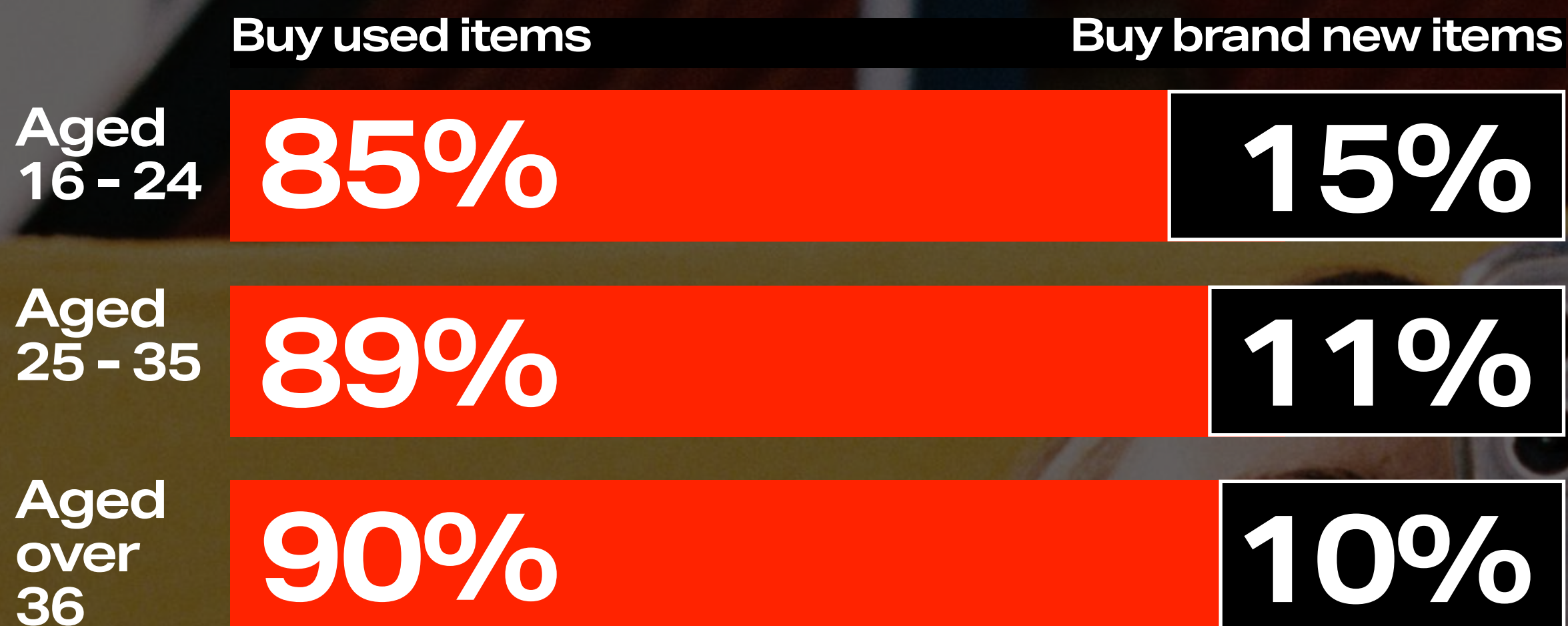
depop

Purchase habits

More than 8.5 in 10 Depop users typically purchase used items.

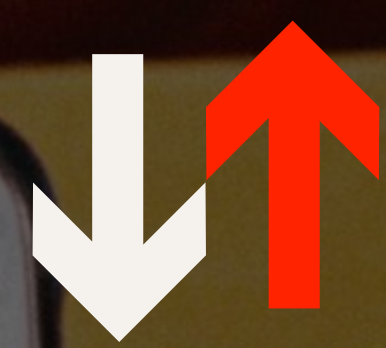
Users overwhelmingly come to us for secondhand items - with users over aged 36 most likely to purchase used items. The proportion of users buying secondhand is likely to be higher, as some items listed as brand new with tags by sellers are in fact secondhand - since they have already been owned by someone.

Our community is conscious to keep items in circulation, and high frequency buyers are more likely to sell items once they are done.



BUY

50% of users purchase 2-3 times a month.



SELL

Of those that purchase 2-3 times a month, 66% go on to re-sell items. This compares to 58% of users that purchase once a month or less.



Displacement

9 in 10 purchases made on Depop prevented the purchase of a brand new item elsewhere.

There is no shortage of clothes in the world: between 80 and 150 billion garments⁹ are produced each year and **30%** are never sold¹⁰.

An increase in the volumes of secondhand items sold can reduce the environmental impact of fashion. On average, **7.9kg** of carbon (CO₂e) is saved by purchasing one secondhand item instead of a brand new one¹¹.

displacement rate=

88% in the US

90% in the UK

92% in Australia

This shows that by preventing the purchase of new items, resale can help to slow the demand for new items being produced.



Displacement

Displacement at Depop is higher than other marketplaces.

Compared to other marketplaces that have published research to date, Depop's displacement rate is at least 20% higher. This means buying on Depop prevented the purchase of more new items than others.



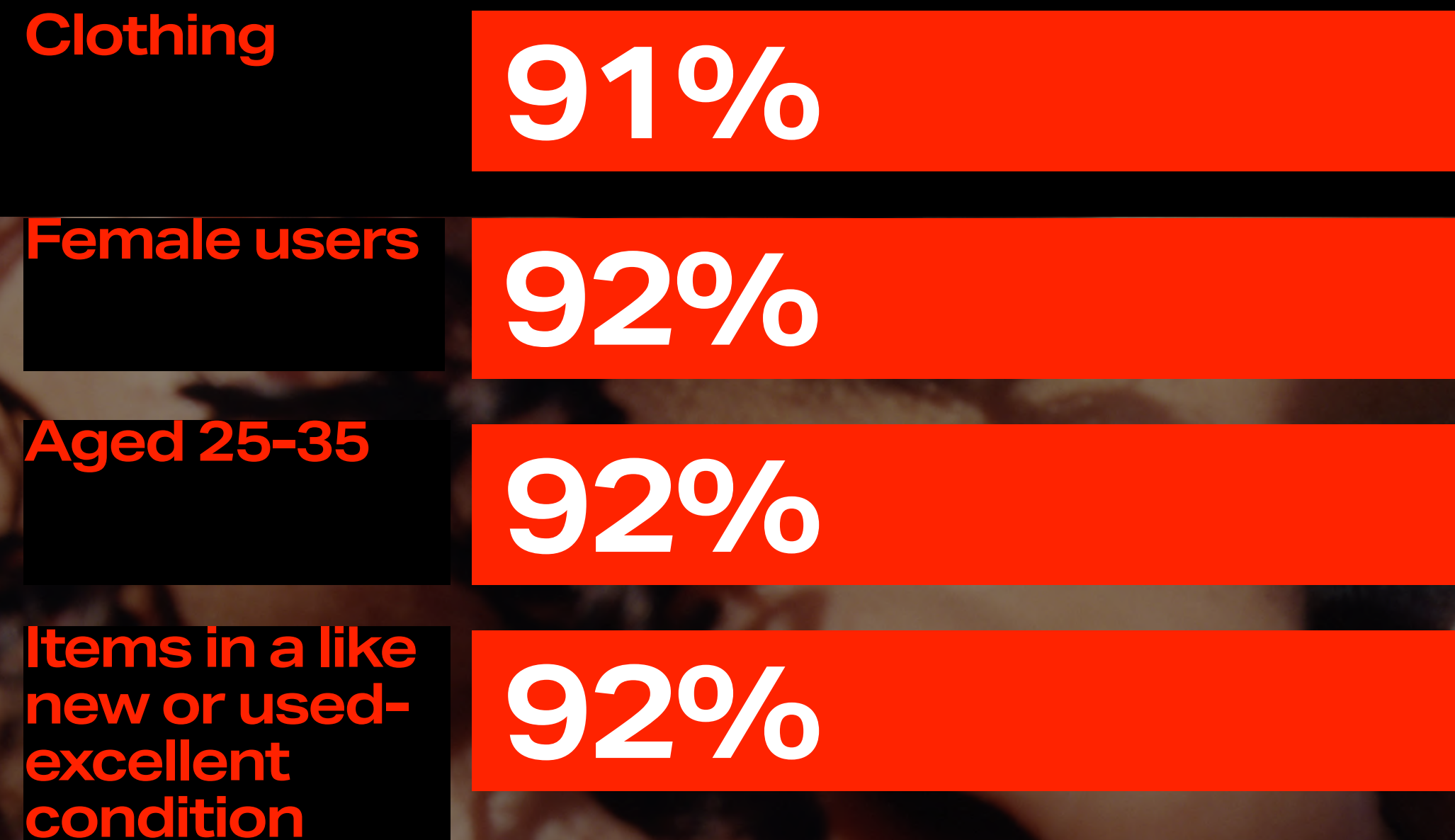
Displacement rate methodology for peers is available in [Appendix 3](#).



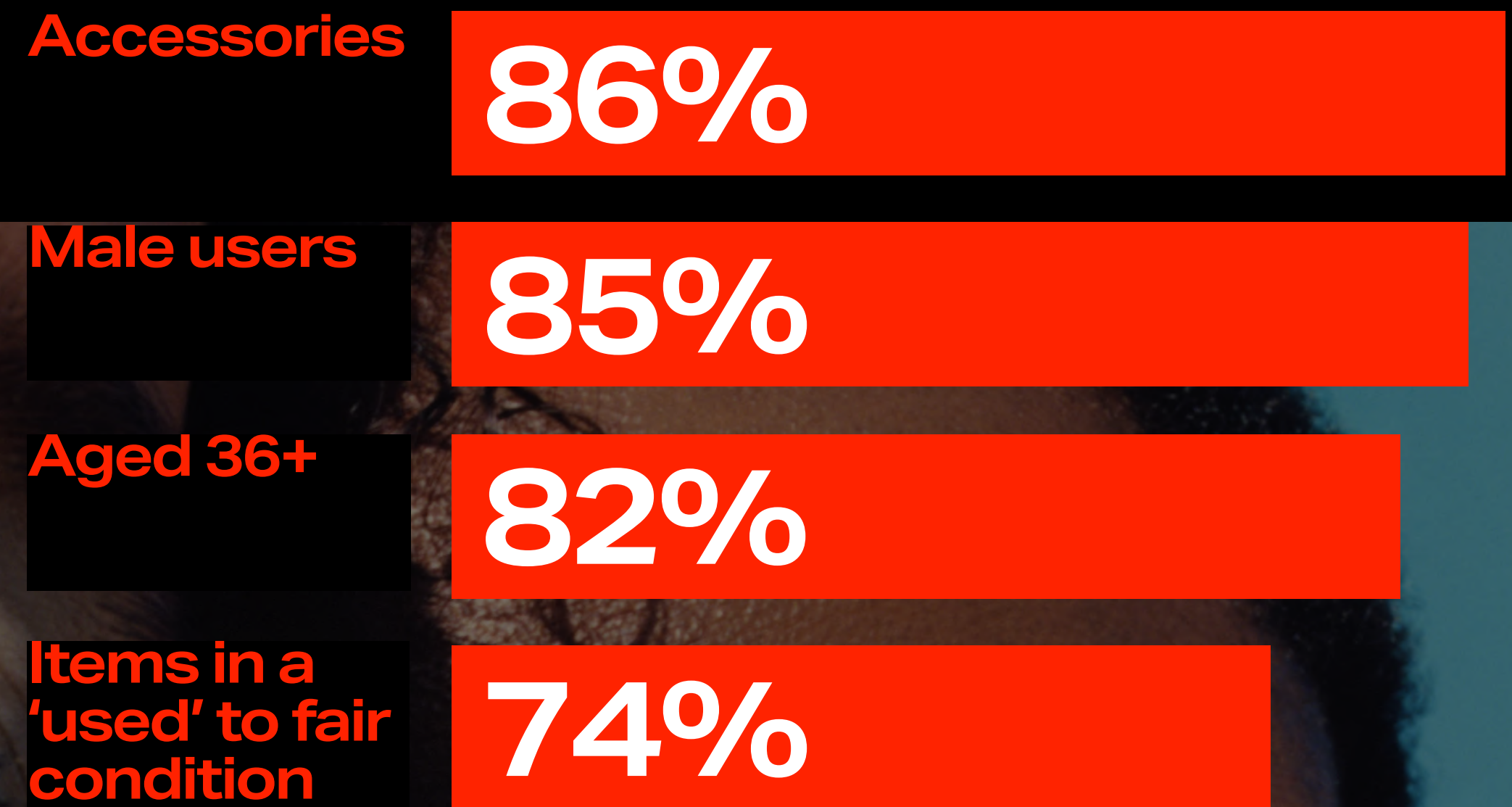
Displacement

Displacement rate varies across different users, and purchase types.

Displacement is highest among:



Displacement is lowest among:



Displacement rate is not affected by the frequency of purchasing or disposing of items.



Wear frequency

Outfit repeating is no longer a fashion faux pas, instead it's celebrated.

In 90s and 00s fashion culture, there was a stigma around re-wearing clothes - driven by the speed of new fast fashion collections, and also by celebrity culture which shamed outfit repetition as a fashion faux pas. But now for Gen Z, outfit repetition is celebrated. Depop users love re-wearing items many times before they clear out their wardrobes - popularised by celebrities and influencers like Bella Hadid¹⁵ being spotted wearing garments purchased on Depop multiple times.

On average, Depop users estimate that they wear an item a total of 46 times before it is discarded

This is highest in the UK, and lowest in Australia



Wear frequency

Contrary to popular belief, younger users are more likely to wear items many times rather than disposing of them after a few wears.

16-24
25-35
36+

expect
to wear
items an
average
of

48 times
40 times
31 times

Our community is buying less and wearing items for longer. We also found that users that purchase items less than every 6 months, on average wear an item 54 times in total. This suggests a shift away from the disposable habits of fast fashion.

This compares to other studies which estimate 18-24 year olds are the group most likely to discard an item after 1-5 wears ¹⁶.

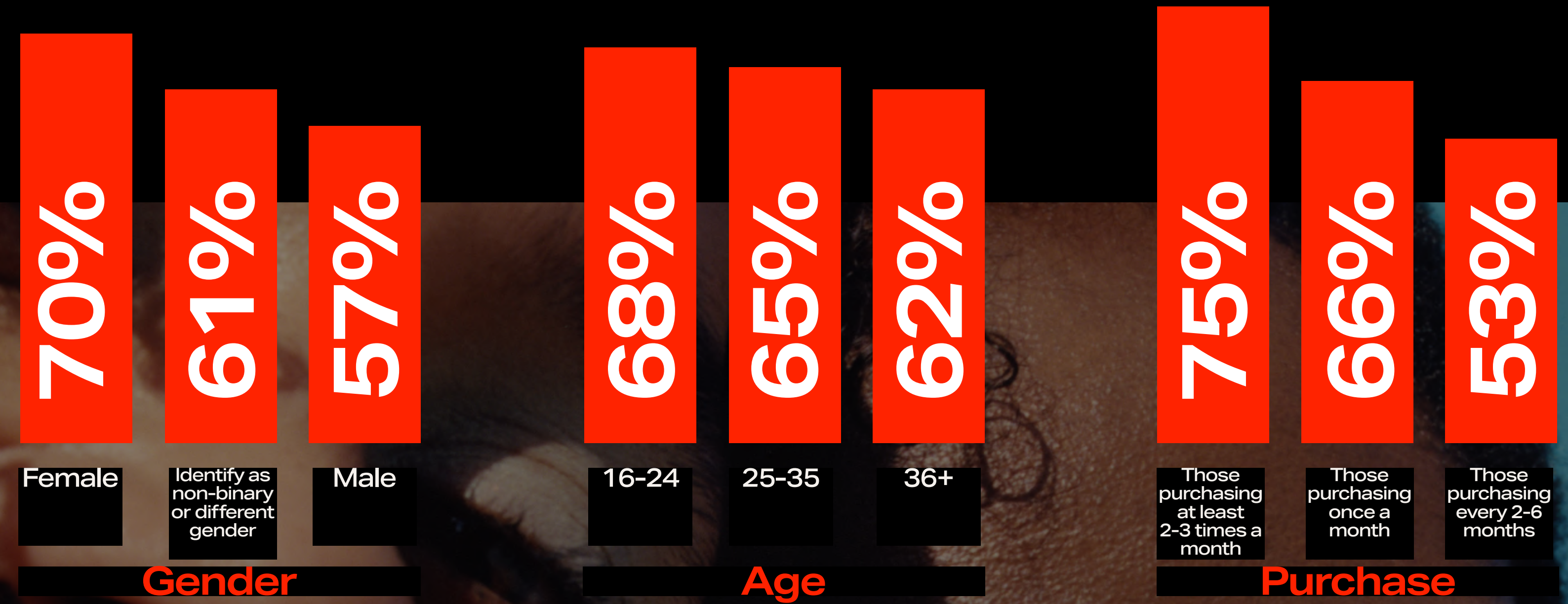


Disposal

Depopers like to change up their wardrobes at least twice a year.

The majority of users clear out their wardrobes at least every six months (67%), and the more frequently they buy, the more often they clear out their wardrobe.

Depop users who clear out their wardrobes every 6 months:



Disposal

When it's time to change up their wardrobes, Depopers aim to give garments a second, third or fourth life.

When clearing out wardrobes, survey respondents had a clear preference for extending the life of a garment - through resale, charity shops and passing items to friends and family. This suggests an important mindset shift in how Depop users view clothes - i.e they are a valuable asset with cultural, emotional or monetary significance that can be exchanged, rather than a liability with no value.

58% donate to a charity
or thrift shop
53% sell on
41% pass to friends
or family

This research indicates a rise in the use of resale and passing on to family and friends since 2015 - when it was estimated in the UK that only 7% of garments were resold, and 5% of garments was passed on to others¹⁷.



Disposal

Our users are less likely to dispose of items via general waste, take back schemes or clothing recycling banks.

Depop users rarely dispose of items via general rubbish, further suggesting their commitment to find alternative disposal means that are better for the planet.

Despite the rise in brands offering clothes recycling solutions, our users rarely use take back schemes from brands.

To dispose of clothing items:

Use clothing recycling banks

19%

Use brand take back schemes

4%

Use general waste

3%



Summary

We're proud that Depop continues to have a notable positive effect on the reduction of new consumption.

At Depop, we believe that working together is the key to building a more sustainable future. Collaboration between resale platforms, rental businesses, governments, and brands is essential to create a fashion industry built on circular principles, and reduce our impact on the planet.

And for those looking to make changes to live more sustainably, we encourage them to shop secondhand first. Every secondhand item bought over a new item helps slow down the fashion industry's impact on the planet.

For any questions please contact sustainability@depop.com



APPENDIX 1

DISPLACEMENT RATE METHODOLOGY



Displacement rate methodology

To calculate the displacement rate in each of the three markets, we used a series of questions building on a methodology first introduced by Farfetch¹⁸ in 2019. This work builds on original work on displacement by WRAP in 2012¹⁹.



Displacement rate methodology

Respondents were asked to answer the following questions about the most recent item of clothing they bought on Depop:

Which of the following statements best applies to the item?

- Buying it secondhand/on Depop stopped me from buying a brand new item
(e.g. I didn't/won't need to buy the same or a similar item for a while)
[DISPLACEMENT = 100%]
- Buying it secondhand/on Depop didn't stop me from buying a brand new item
(e.g. I bought the same or a similar item shortly after)
[DISPLACEMENT = 0%]
- It's difficult to say
[GO TO NEXT QUESTION]

And which of these statements best applies to the item?

- Buying it secondhand/on Depop probably stopped me buying a brand new item
(e.g. I didn't/won't need to buy the same or a similar item for a while)
[DISPLACEMENT = 50%]
- Buying it secondhand/on Depop probably didn't stop me buying a brand new item
(e.g. I bought the same or a similar item shortly after).
[DISPLACEMENT = 0%]



Displacement rate methodology (continued)

Example calculation

Which of the following statements best applies to the item?

- 50% say it prevented a new item [100% displacement] = 50%
20% say it did not prevent a new item not [0%] = 0%
20% say it probably did [50%] = 10%
10% say it probably did not [0%] = 0%
- Average rate of displacement = 50% + 0% + 10% + 0% + = 60%

Notes on displacement methodology:

- The survey took place between 7 - 21 March 2022
- It is important to note a potential seasonality impact on the results, given this time period covered winter in the UK and US but summer in Australia.



APPENDIX 2

DETAILED FINDINGS



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Condition of item purchased on Depop

Survey question - How would you describe the condition of the item?

The answer options provided are consistent with the item condition options on the Depop app.



Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

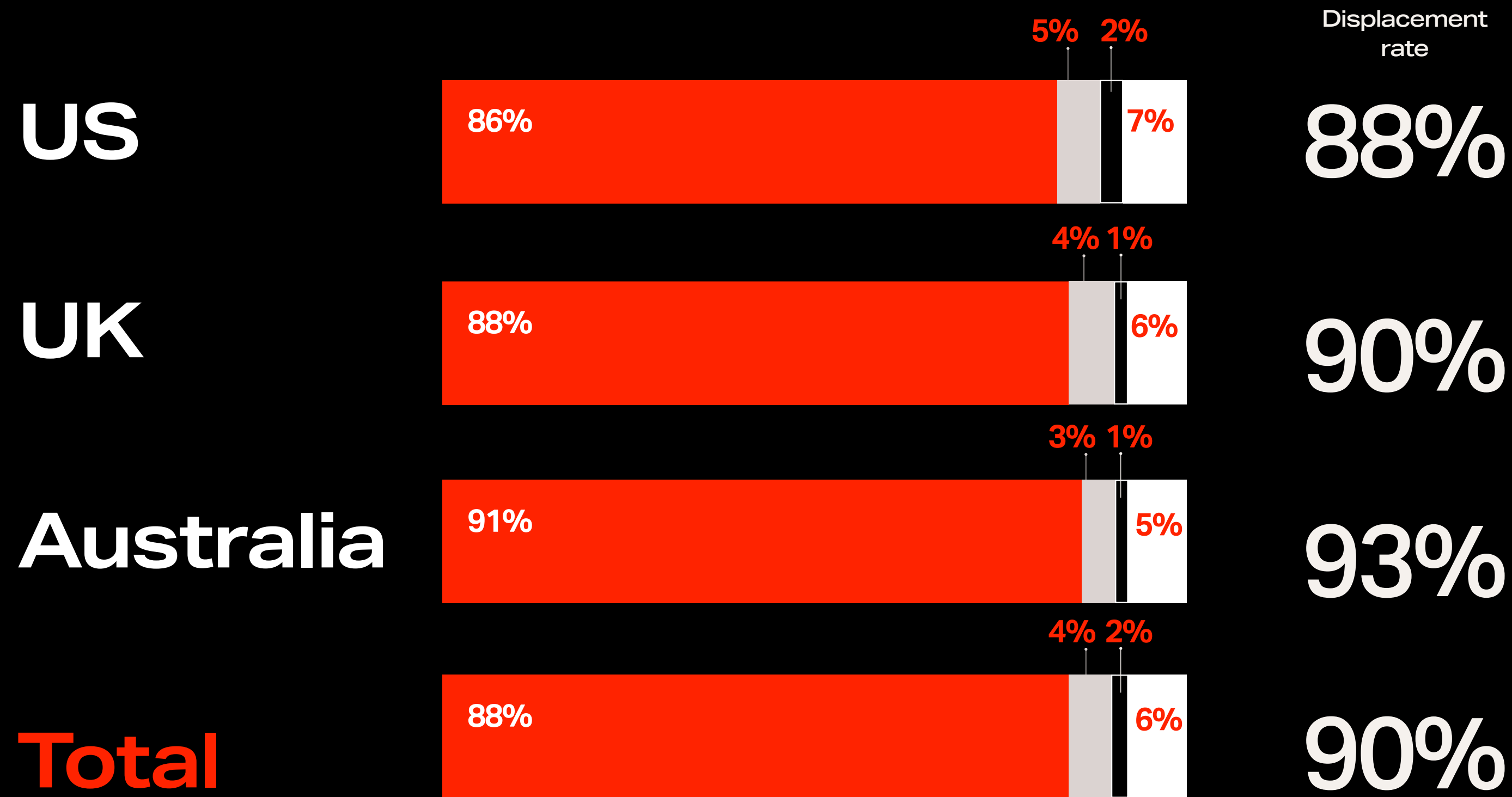
- Brand new (unused with original tags)
- Like new (mint condition without tags)
- Used - excellent (lightly used with no obvious flaws)
- Used - good (minor flaws/signs of wear)
- Used - fair (obvious flaws/signs of wear)

86% of items purchased by users were described as a 'used' condition.



Displacement

Survey question - Which of the following statements best applies to the item?



Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

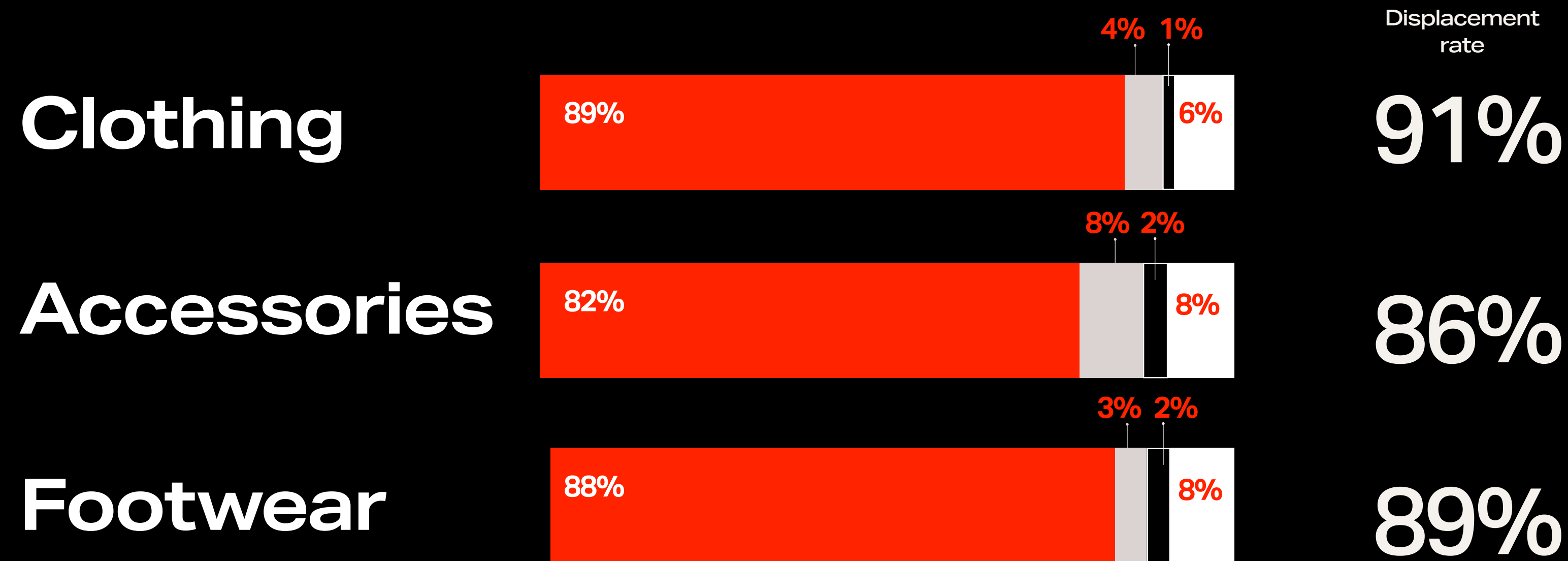
- It stopped me from buying a brand new item
- It probably stopped me buying a brand new item
- It probably didn't stop me buying a brand new item
- It didn't stop me from buying a brand new item

The level of displacement is consistently high across all three countries and across all sub-cohorts of users - with **9 out of 10 items** bought on Depop displacing the purchase of new ones.



Displacement by item type (all markets)

Survey question - Which of the following statements best applies to the item?



Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

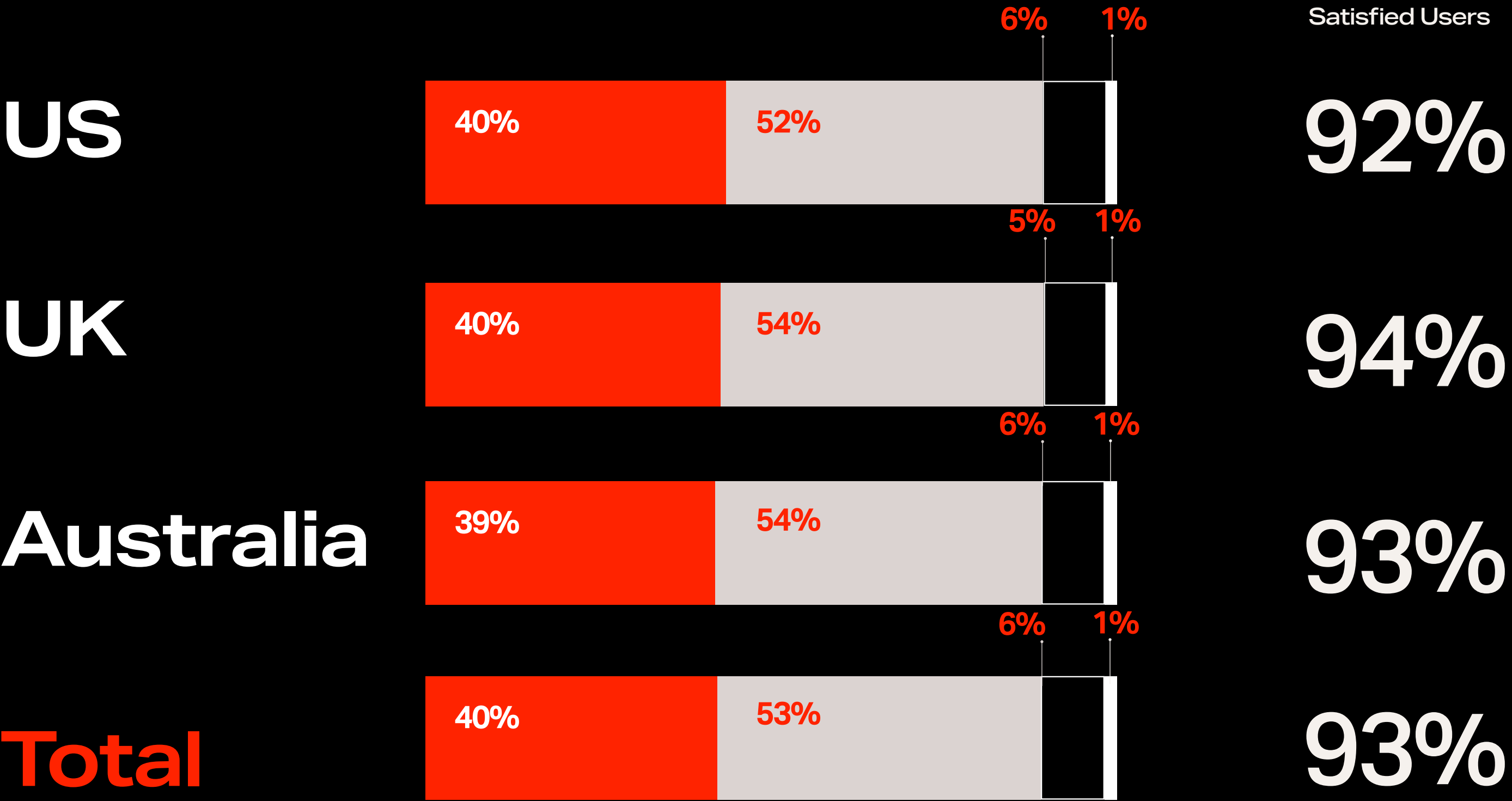
- It stopped me from buying a brand new item
- It probably stopped me buying a brand new item
- It probably didn't stop me buying a brand new item
- It didn't stop me from buying a brand new item

In each of the three markets, clothing has higher levels of displacement compared to shoes and accessories.



Satisfaction with items purchased on Depop

Survey question - In general, how many of the items of the clothing (including shoes and accessories) you've bought on Depop have you been satisfied with?²⁰



- All items I've bought
- Most items I've bought
- Around half of the items I've bought
- Less than half the items I've bought

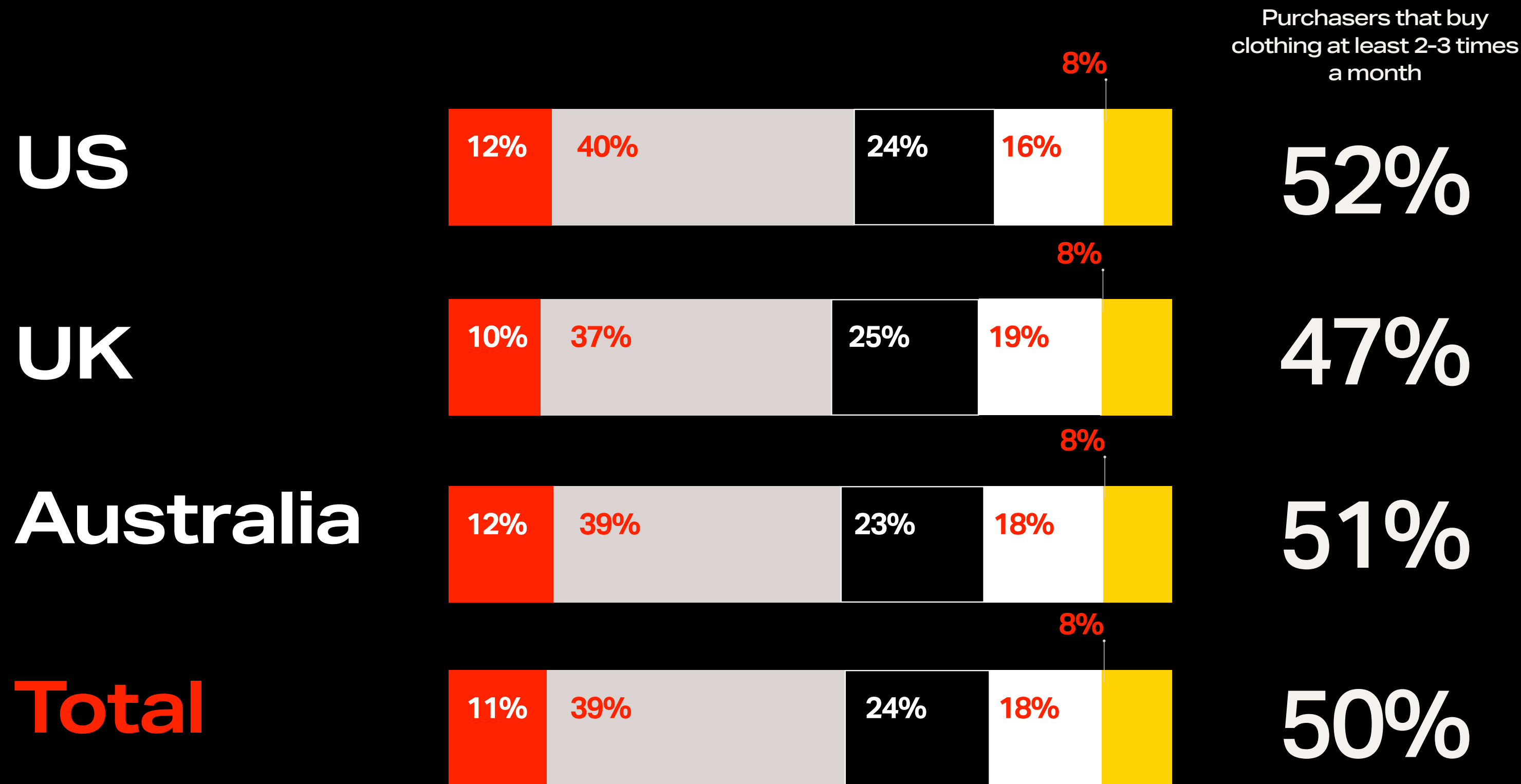
Between 92% and 94% of users in key markets are satisfied with either 'all' or 'most' items they have purchased on Depop. Where users are less satisfied with their purchase, the displacement rate is lower.

Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)



Clothing purchase frequency

Survey question - How frequently do you generally buy clothing (including shoes and accessories), either in store or online?



Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

- Once a week or more
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- Once every 2-3 months
- Less often

Our users tend to buy clothes frequently, with around half of users purchasing at least 2-3 times a month. Users aged over 36 tend to buy more regularly than other age groups.



Typical monthly clothes spend

Survey question - How much, on average, do you spend on clothes (including shoes and accessories) in a typical month? NB. This question was asked only of those who say they purchase clothing at least once a month



Monthly spend is similar in the UK and Australia - whereas in the US, spend is higher.

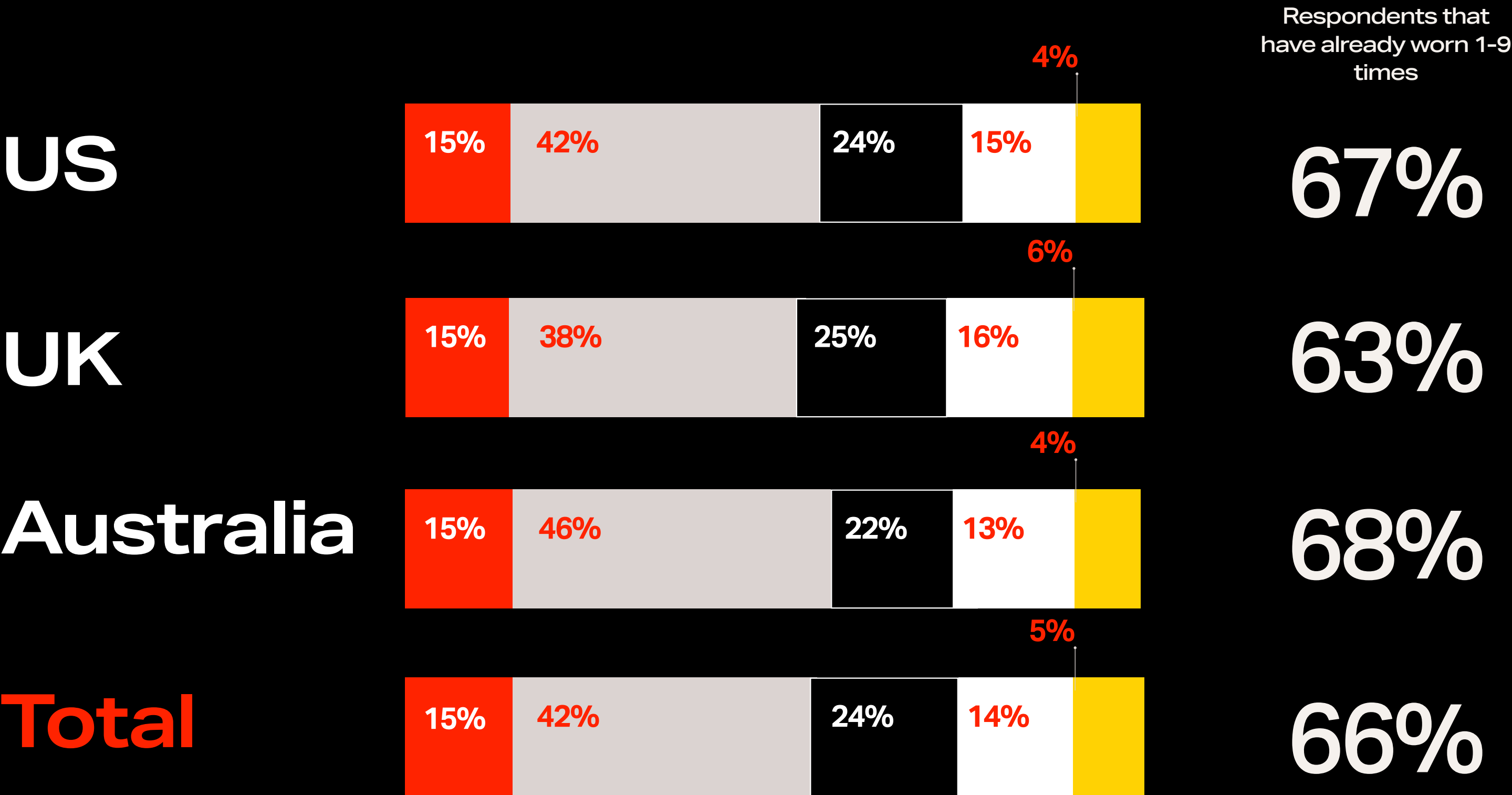
Base: all in each market who purchase a least once a month: US (n=1,478), UK (n=1,345), AU (n=1,293)

Currency: US dollars. The question was asked in respondents' national currency and converted using FX rates as of July 2022 (Original currency: US - \$108, UK £79, Australia - \$135 AUD).



Wear frequency: Number of wears so far

Survey question - How many times have you worn/used the item so far?²¹



Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

- 0 (not worn yet)
- 1-4 (a few times)
- 5-9 (several times)
- 10-49 (a lot)
- 50+ (daily/continually)

Two in three recent Depop purchasers have already worn their item 1-9 times.



Wear frequency: Number of predicted wears

Survey question - And how many more times do you think you will wear/use the item?

US



Respondents that expect to wear items over 10 more times

70%

UK



75%

Australia



70%

Total



71%

Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

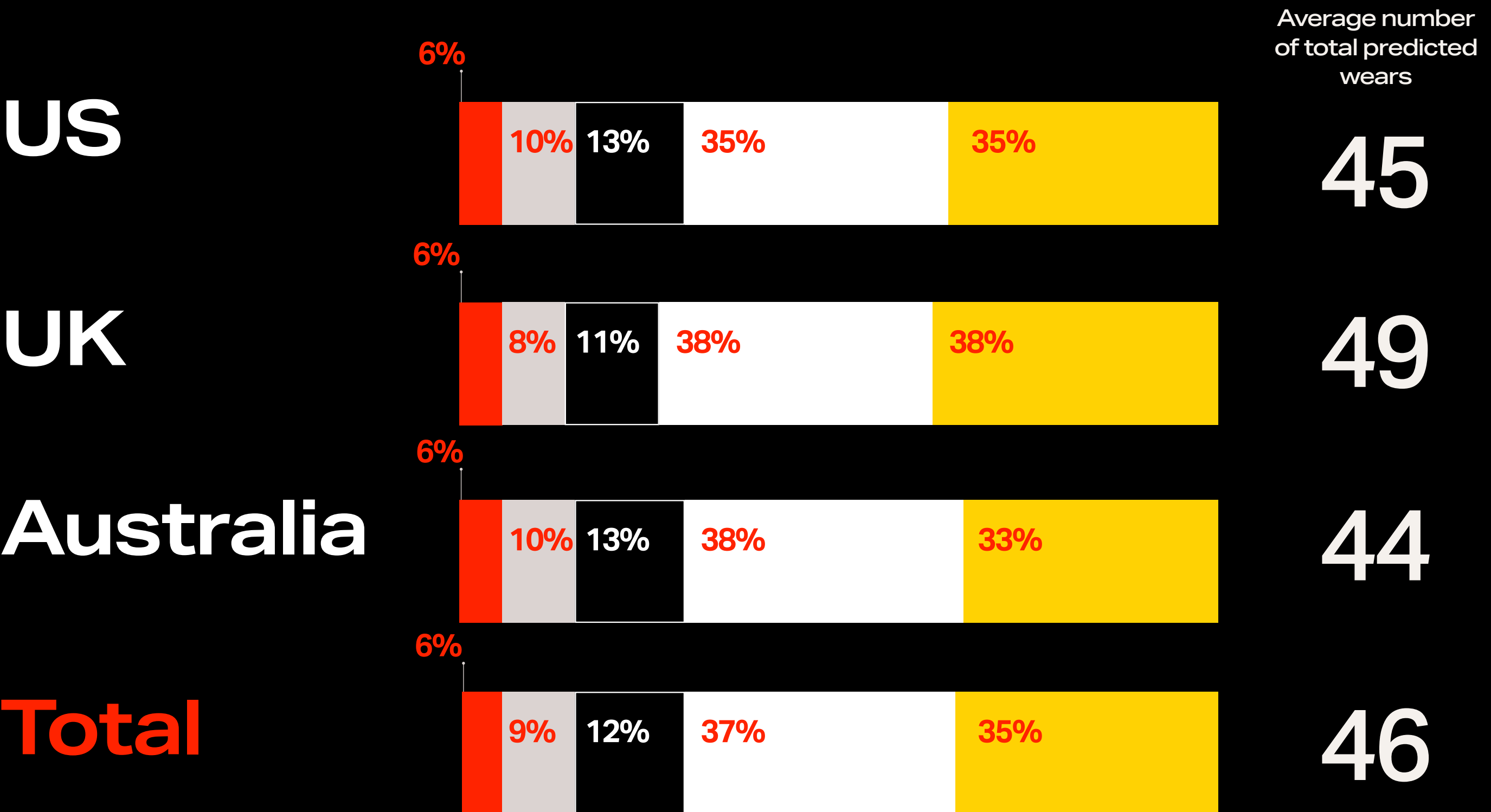
- 0 (not worn yet)
- 1-4 (a few times)
- 5-9 (several times)
- 10-49 (a lot)
- 50+ (daily/continually)

Almost 7 in 10 recent purchasers predict they will wear the item over 10 times - including almost 3 in 10 who predict they will wear over 50 times.



Wear frequency: Overall number of predicted wears during a garment's lifetime

Methodology: This chart is calculated through combining the number of wears reported so far and the number of predicted wears in the future.



Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

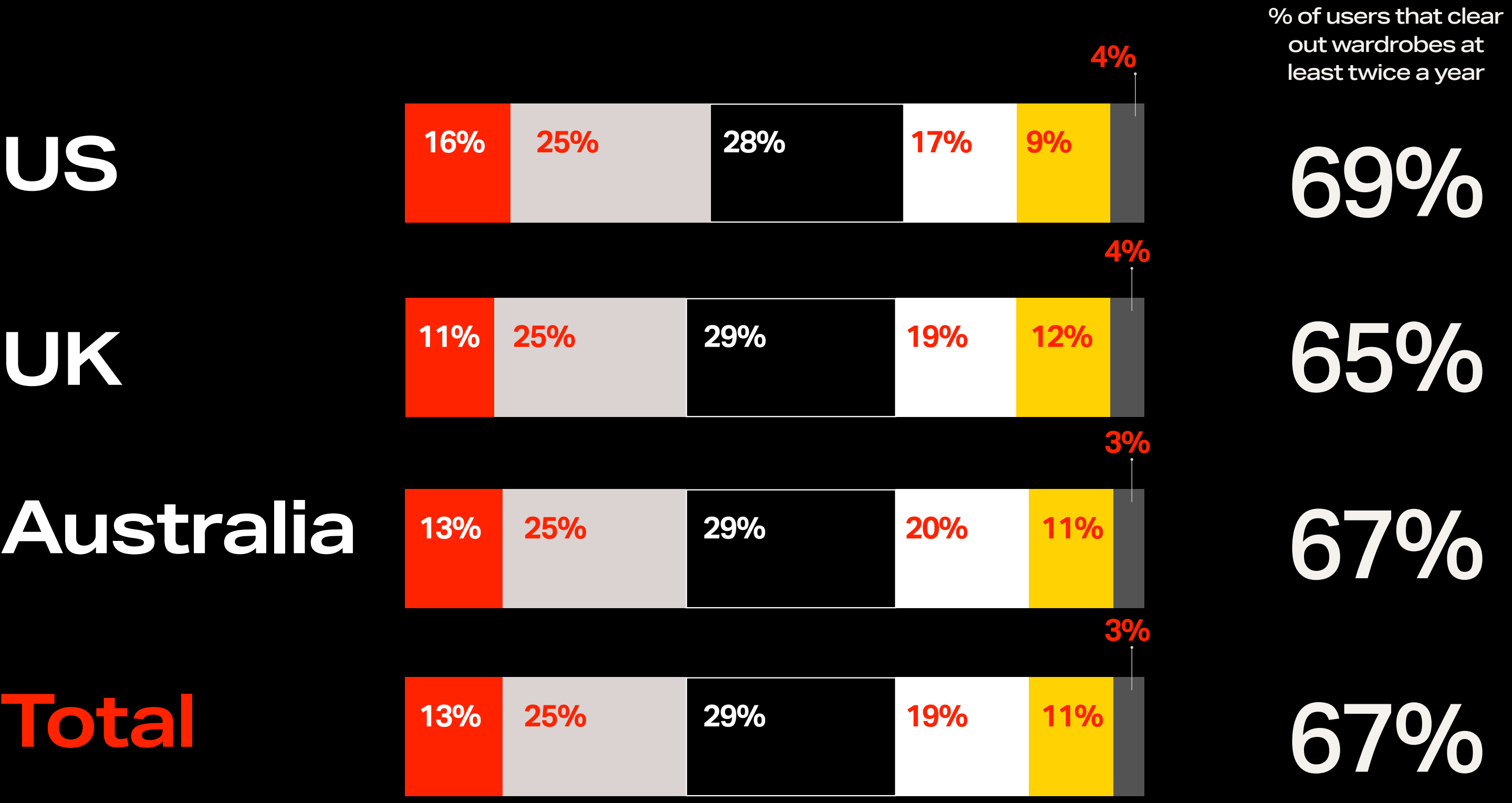
- Very low (0 - 2 wears)
- Lower (3 - 10 wears)
- Medium (10 - 29 wears)
- Higher (30 - 49 wears)
- Very high (50 + wears)

Around 7 in 10 recent Depop purchasers predict they will wear an item a total of over 30 times. For some items such as sweaters, coats/ jackets, jewellery, watches and bags, a higher number of respondents (8 in 10) predicted they'd wear it more than 30 times in total.



Clothes disposal frequency

Survey question - How often do you clear out items (of clothing/shoes/accessories) in your wardrobe?



Base: US (1,927), UK (n=1,847), AU (n=1,757), total (n=5,531)

% of users that clear out wardrobes at least twice a year

69%

65%

67%

67%

- At least once a month
- Once every 2 - 3 months
- Once every 4 - 6 months
- Once a year
- Less Often
- N/A - don't clear out

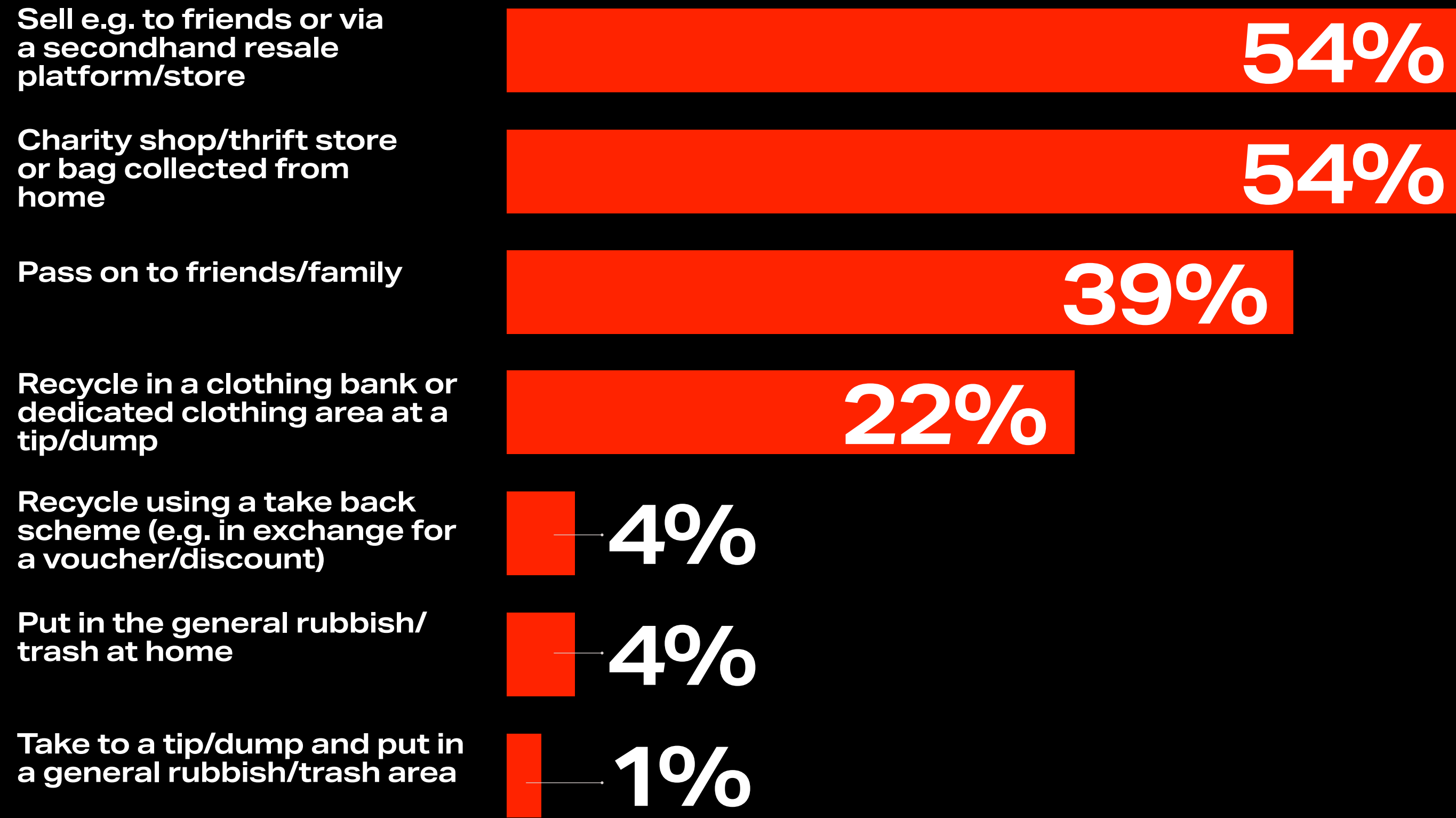
The majority of users clear out their wardrobes at least twice a year (67%). The more frequently they buy, the more often they tend to clear out their wardrobe - 62% of buyers who purchase weekly on Depop clear their wardrobe at least every 2 or 3 months.



Disposal routes - UK

Survey questions

- ☐ When you clear out items in your wardrobe, which of the following do you use? (Respondents could select multiple answers)
- ☐ How often do you clear out items via each selected route? (The graph shows the percentage who say they use this disposal route 'often' or 'sometimes')



Base - all in UK who ever clear out their wardrobes: n=1,777

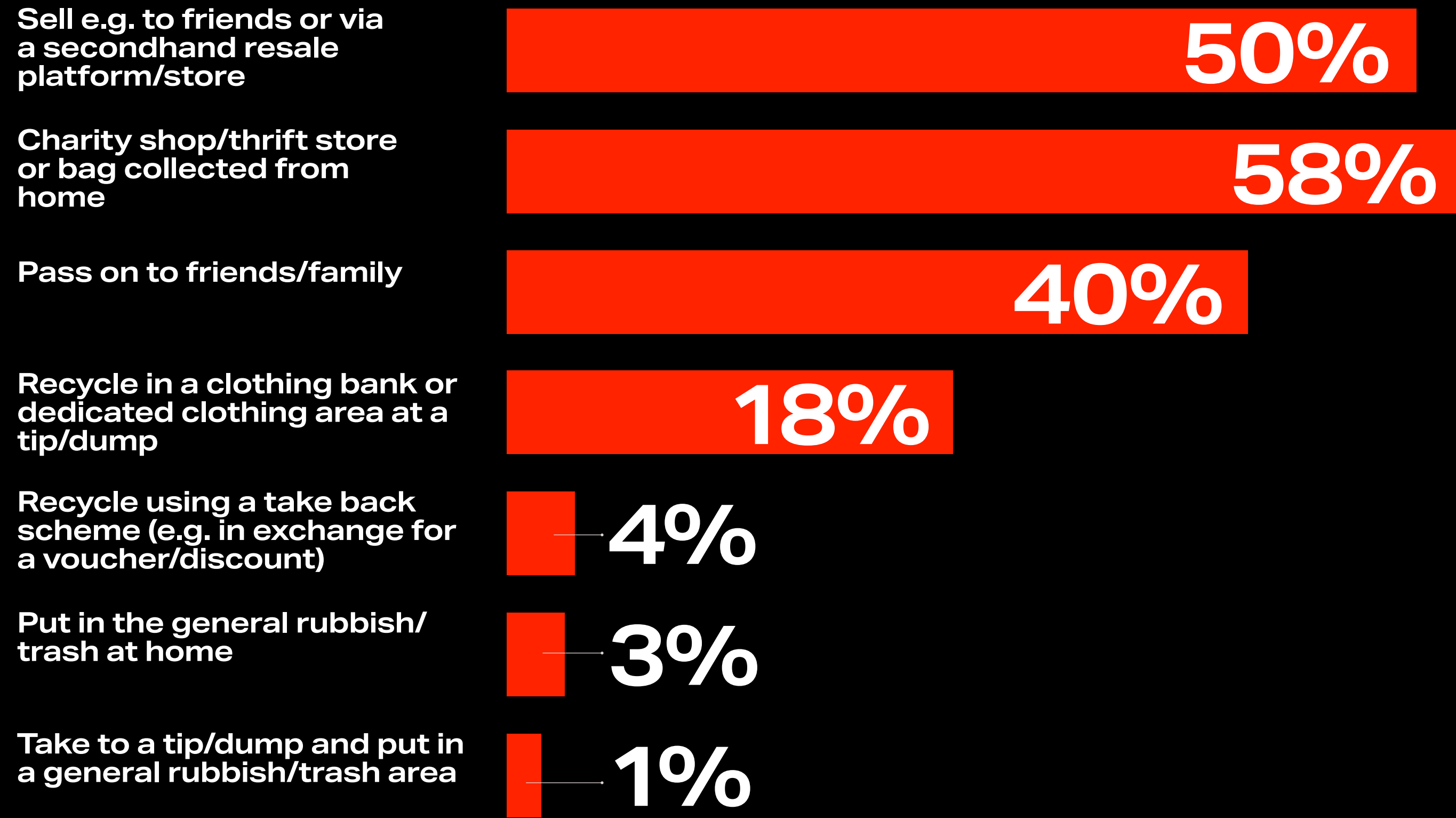
When clearing out their wardrobes, our users have a clear preference for resale, charity shops and giving items to friends and family. General rubbish and brand take back schemes are barely used.



Disposal routes - US

Survey questions

- ☐ When you clear out items in your wardrobe, which of the following do you use? (Respondents could select multiple answers)
- ☐ How often do you clear out items via each selected route? (The graph shows the percentage who say they use this disposal route 'often' or 'sometimes')



Base - all in US who ever clear out their wardrobes: n=1,853

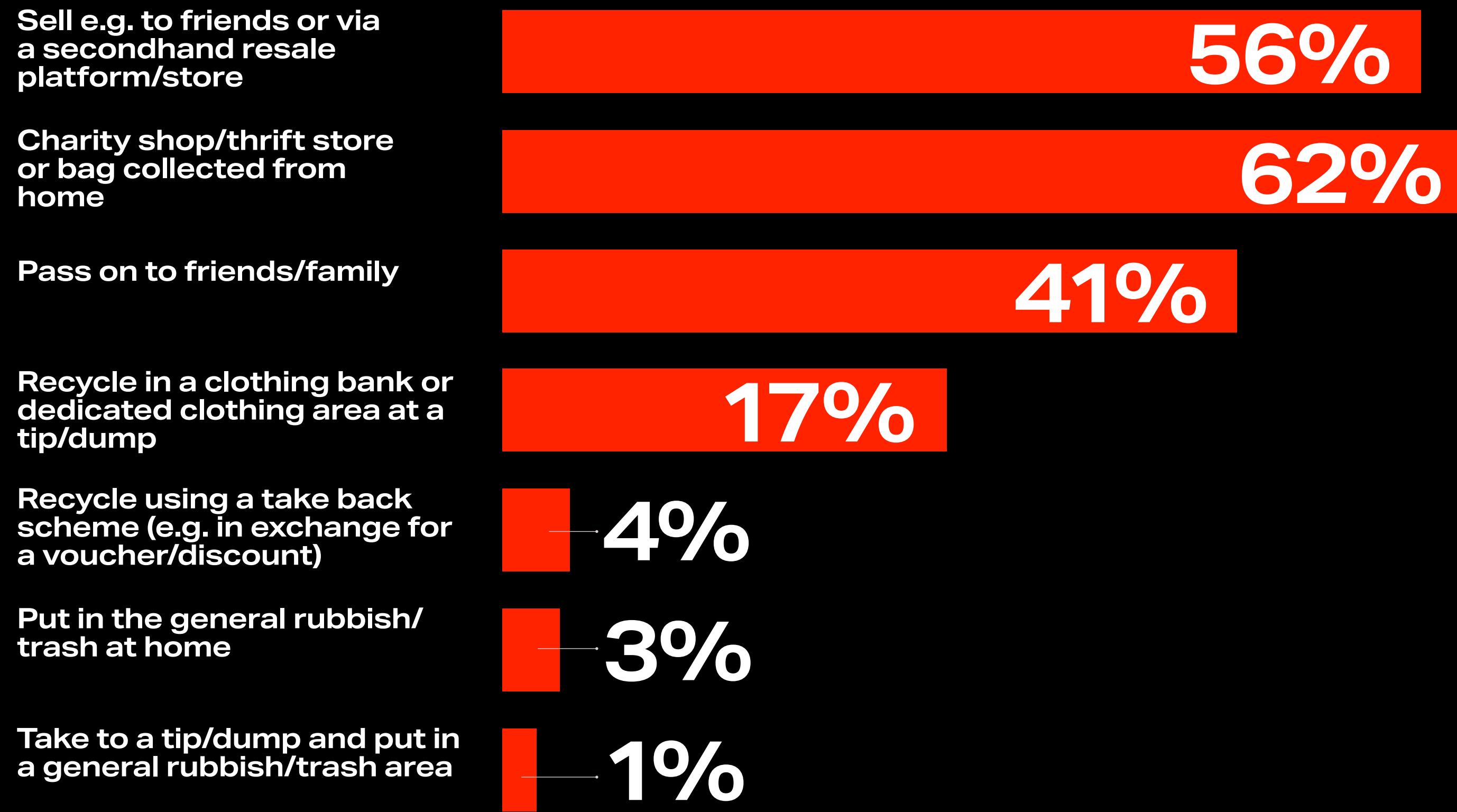
When clearing out their wardrobes, our users have a clear preference for resale, charity shops and giving items to friends and family. General rubbish and brand take back schemes are barely used.



Disposal routes - Australia

Survey questions

- ☐ When you clear out items in your wardrobe, which of the following do you use? (Respondents could select multiple answers)
- ☐ How often do you clear out items via each selected route? (The graph shows the percentage who say they use this disposal route 'often' or 'sometimes')



Base - all in Australia who ever clear out their wardrobes: AU (n=1,712)

When clearing out their wardrobes, our users have a clear preference for resale, charity shops and giving items to friends and family. General rubbish and brand take back schemes are barely used.



APPENDIX 3

GLOSSARY AND FOOTNOTES



Appendix 3: Glossary

Circular economy	A systems solution framework that tackles global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution. It is based on three principles, driven by design: eliminate waste and pollution, circulate products and materials (at their highest value), and regenerate nature ²² .
Circular fashion	A fashion system which keeps items in use for longer, ensures they are made to be made again, and makes them from safe and recycled or renewable inputs ²³ .
Displacement rate	The proportion of secondhand purchases that have displaced what would otherwise have been a purchase of a new item ²⁴ .
Garment lifecycle	The journey a garment makes from its raw materials, through production and usage, all the way through to its disposal ²⁵ .
Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	Greenhouse gases are gases in the atmosphere that absorb heat from the sun. Human interference, especially burning of fossil fuels, has led to high concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This causes a greenhouse effect, meaning that heat is trapped close to the surface of the Earth which leads to global warming ²⁶ .
Resale	The act of selling an item again ²⁷ .
Secondhand	Item that has previously been owned by or in the possession of an individual, whether worn or not, with or without tag ²⁸ .

Footnotes

1. [Ellen MacArthur Foundation, New Textiles Economy \(2017\)](#)
2. [McKinsey, Fashion on Climate \(2020\)](#)
3. [Ellen MacArthur Foundation, New Textiles Economy \(2017\)](#)
4. [The Depop x Bain & Company - Gen Z Report \(2020\)](#)
5. QSA Partners is a specialist team of sustainable business experts with extensive experience in consumer markets, mobility and infrastructure.
6. Icaro Consulting is a leading consumer insights agency with expertise in market research and behaviour change.
7. [Farfetch, Understanding the environmental savings of buying pre-owned fashion \(2019\)](#)
8. [Vestiaire Collective, Impact Report \(2022\)](#)
9. [Vox, Fashion has a misinformation problem \(2020\)](#)
10. [Fashion United, The extent of overproduction in the fashion industry \(2018\)](#)
11. [Green Story, Comparative Life Cycle Assessment \(LCA\) of second-hand vs new clothing \(2019\)](#)
12. [Vestiaire Collective, Impact Report \(2022\)](#), based on a survey of 2,363 Vestiaire Collective members. Details of the displacement calculation methodology are unknown.
13. [Farfetch, Understanding the environmental savings of buying pre-owned fashion \(2019\)](#) based on a survey of 3,000 Farfetch pre-owned buyers, using the same displacement calculation methodology as Depop.
14. [The RealReal, 2021 Luxury Resale Report \(2022\)](#), based on the number of shoppers that say they shop The RealReal as a replacement for fast fashion. Sample size unknown.
15. [Grazia, Bella Hadid re-wears her favourite Depop trousers \(2022\)](#)
16. [ThredUp, 2018 Resale Report \(2018\)](#)
17. [WRAP, Valuing our clothes: The cost of UK fashion \(2017\)](#)
18. [Farfetch, Understanding the environmental savings of buying pre-owned fashion \(2019\)](#)
19. [WRAP, Study into consumer second-hand shopping behaviour to identify the re-use displacement affect \(2012\)](#)
20. Satisfaction with items purchase on Depop: The purpose of this question is to assess the stability of the displacement calculation, by understanding if the answers given are typical (or atypical) of their wider purchases on Depop. Satisfaction with purchases on Depop is high and is taken here as a proxy for consistency in the predicted rate of displacement.



Footnotes

21. Wear Frequency: Number of wears so far. Given that respondents answered about the most recent item bought on Depop in the last 3 months, responses may range between items they had just received to items owned for up to 3 months.
22. [Ellen MacArthur Foundation - Glossary](#)
23. [Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Redesigning the future of fashion](#)
24. [Wrap - Study into consumer second-hand shopping behaviour to identify the re-use displacement affect, \(2012\)](#)
25. [Redress Design Awards - A garment's lifecycle: Sustainable fashion educator pack \(2018\)](#)
26. [Centre for Sustainable Fashion and Condé Nast - The Sustainable Fashion Glossary: Greenhouse gases \(GHGs\) \(2020\)](#)
27. [Cambridge Dictionary: Resale](#)
28. [Cambridge Dictionary: Secondhand](#)

