

Fact Sheet:

Public support for deposit return systems

By the end of 2022, it is expected that over 350 million peopleⁱ will live in jurisdictions with deposit return systems (DRS) in place for the collection and recycling of single-use drinks containers. And according to our knowledge of programmes that are committed to but not yet operational, it's reasonable to predict that this could increase to nearly 750 million people by the end of 2025, when it's expected that more than 70 jurisdictions worldwide will have a DRS (up from 47 in 2020).

In the European Union (EU) alone, the first half of 2022 saw three Member States – Latvia, Malta, and Slovakia – establish mandatory DRS for single-use drinks containers, and another – the Netherlands – will expand its system to include cans by the end of this year. Elsewhere in Europe, several countries are expected to launch deposit programmes over the next two to three years, including Austria, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, the Republic of Ireland, Romania, Scotland, and Turkey. Although legislation has not yet been passed, plans for DRS are also in place in Cyprus, France, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, and the UK.

DRS is also gaining ground in the US, where lawmakers plan to introduce a bill that they hope will create a standardised deposit programme for the country.ⁱⁱ Parts of Asia have jumped on the DRS bandwagon, too: the Republic of Korea's DRS for single-use cups is expected to kick off in December of this year, and Singapore has announced that it will implement a DRS by 2023 as the first phase of its EPR approach to tackling packaging waste. And over in Australia, it's anticipated that the states of Tasmania and Victoria will have their systems up and running by 2023, making Australia the first continent to adopt a comprehensive DRS across every jurisdiction.

The fact that no other method of collection can effectively recover 90% of drinks containers for closed-loop recycling explains why governments around the world are considering DRS. But it's not just governments who are showing a renewed interest in this policy tool; more and more drinks companies (including Coca-Cola, Pepsi, and Nestle)ⁱⁱⁱ and industry associations have begun to throw their support behind DRS, too. In an open letter to the European Commission (EC) in September 2020, the European Federation of Bottled Waters together with the Union of European Soft Drinks Associations (UNESDA) called for the widespread adoption of DRS in European countries to meet the collection and recycled content targets set in the EU's Single-Use Plastics Directive (SUPD).^{iv} And more recently, in October 2021, Natural Mineral Waters Europe and UNESDA (in association with Zero Waste Europe) urged the EU to acknowledge the role of DRSs in achieving a circular economy for drinks packaging in Europe, and to support the establishment of minimum requirements for new DRS in the revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD). In their joint statement to the EC, they acknowledge that "DRS have not only delivered high collection rates for beverage packaging in countries where they are in place, but they...can also contribute towards the EU's climate objectives...by reducing the need for virgin materials thanks to closed loop recycling."^v

As governments continue to consider DRS and implement legislation in their own jurisdictions, they will be happy to know that research shows that public support for these systems is high. New laws receive much public fervour, and most respondents to public opinion polls support expansion of existing deposit laws.

This fact sheet represents a compilation of results from over 100 public opinion polls gathered on a global scale from 2003-2022. The data focuses on public attitudes and opinions towards deposit return legislation in over 20 countries including: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of the Maldives, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, Spain, the United States (U.S.), and Wales.

For more information on each opinion poll, please see our 'Country-by-country opinion polls' fact sheet available on our website.

Figure 1 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Introduction of Deposit Return Legislation in Europe

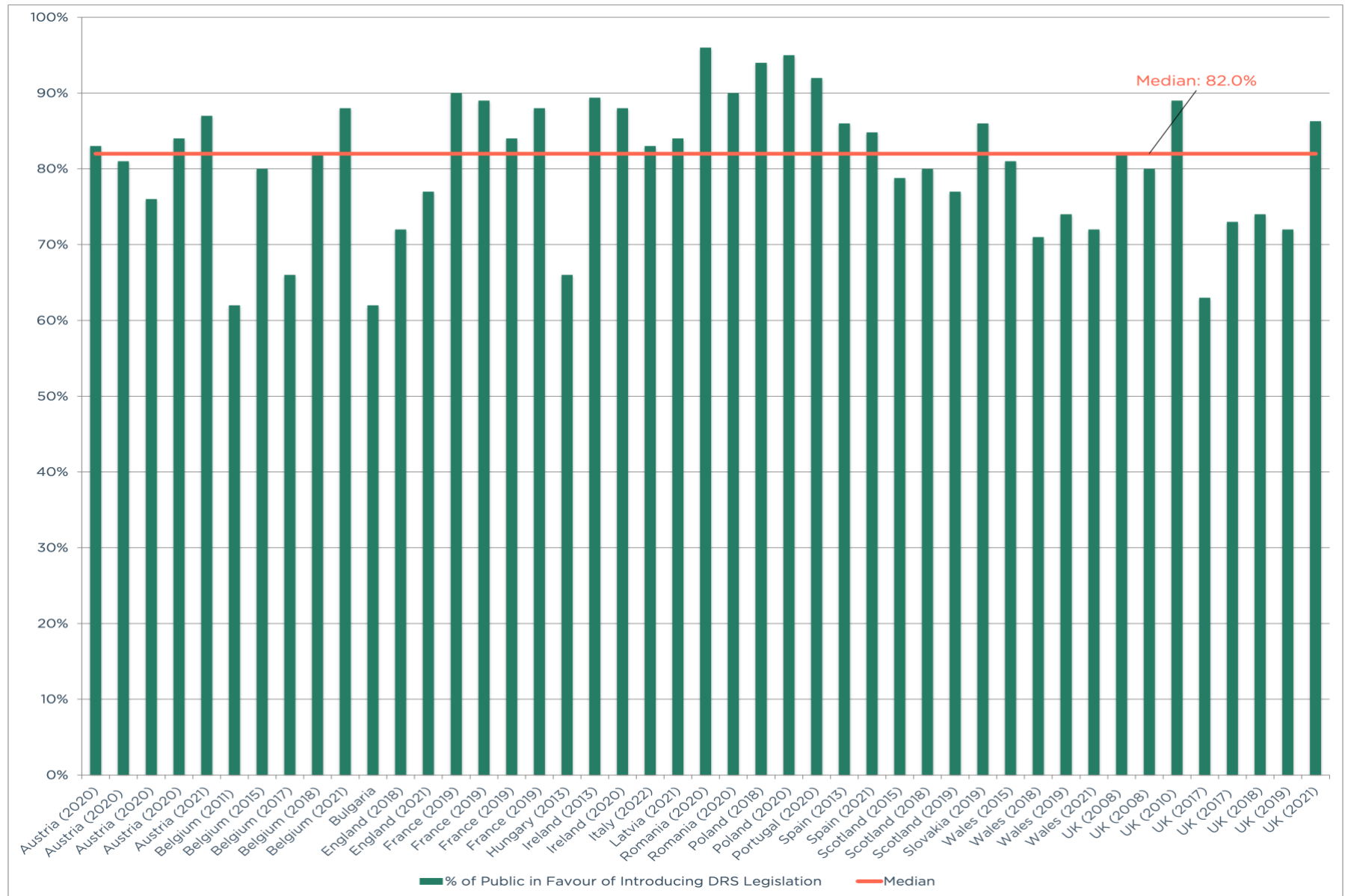


Figure 2 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Existing Deposit Return Legislation in Europe

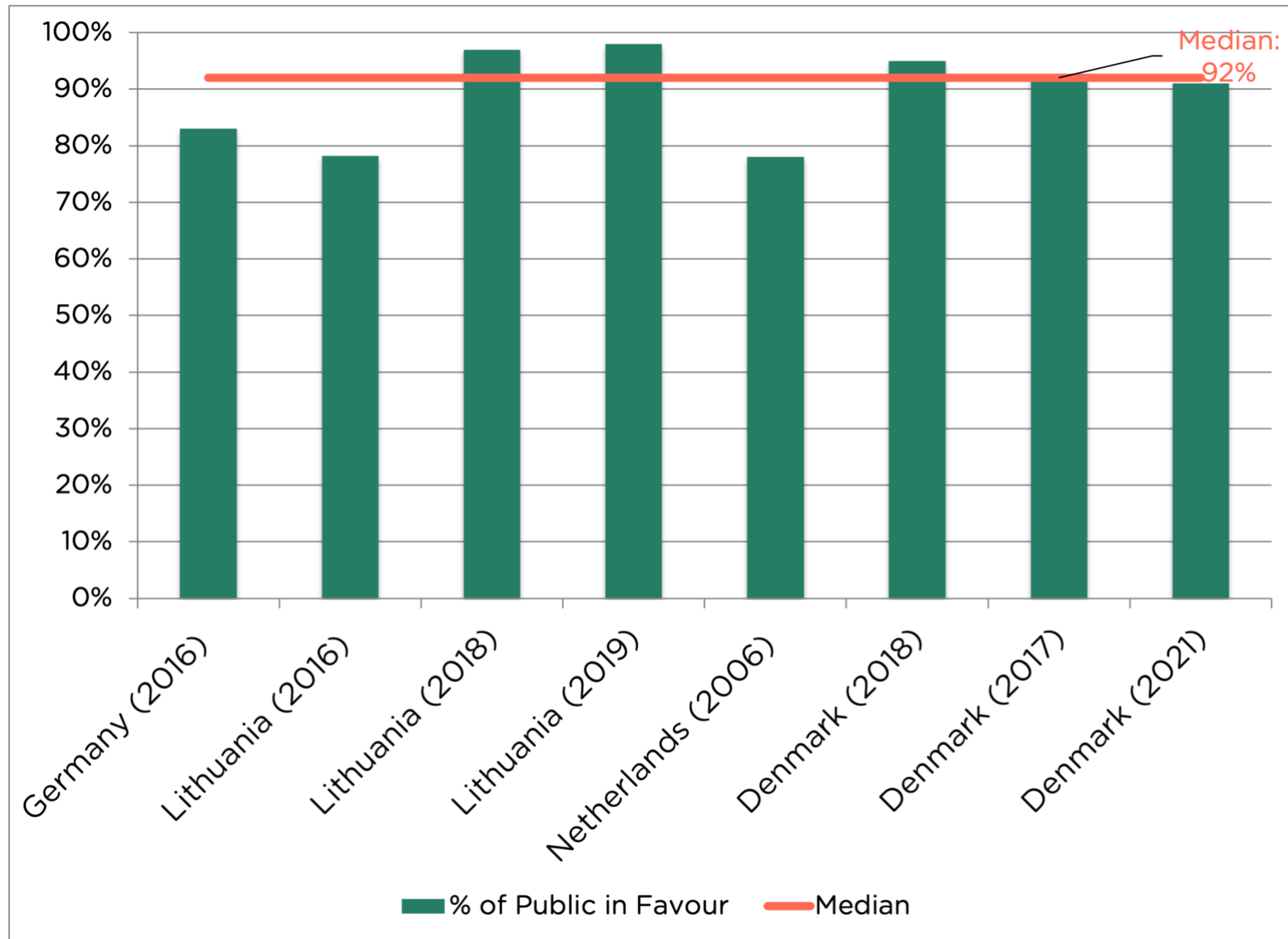


Figure 3 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Expansion of Deposit Return Legislation in Europe

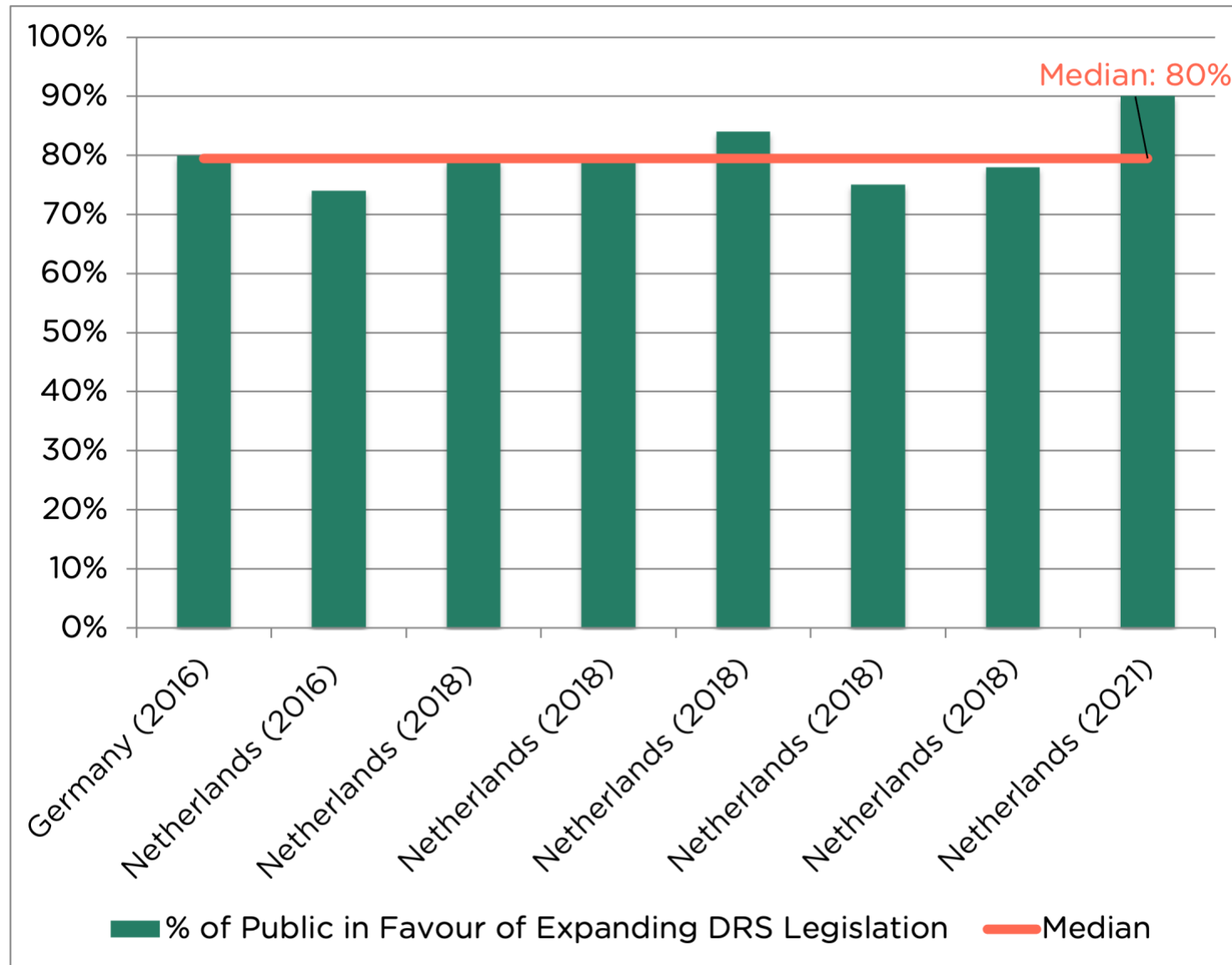


Figure 4 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Introduction of Deposit Return Legislation in the U.S.

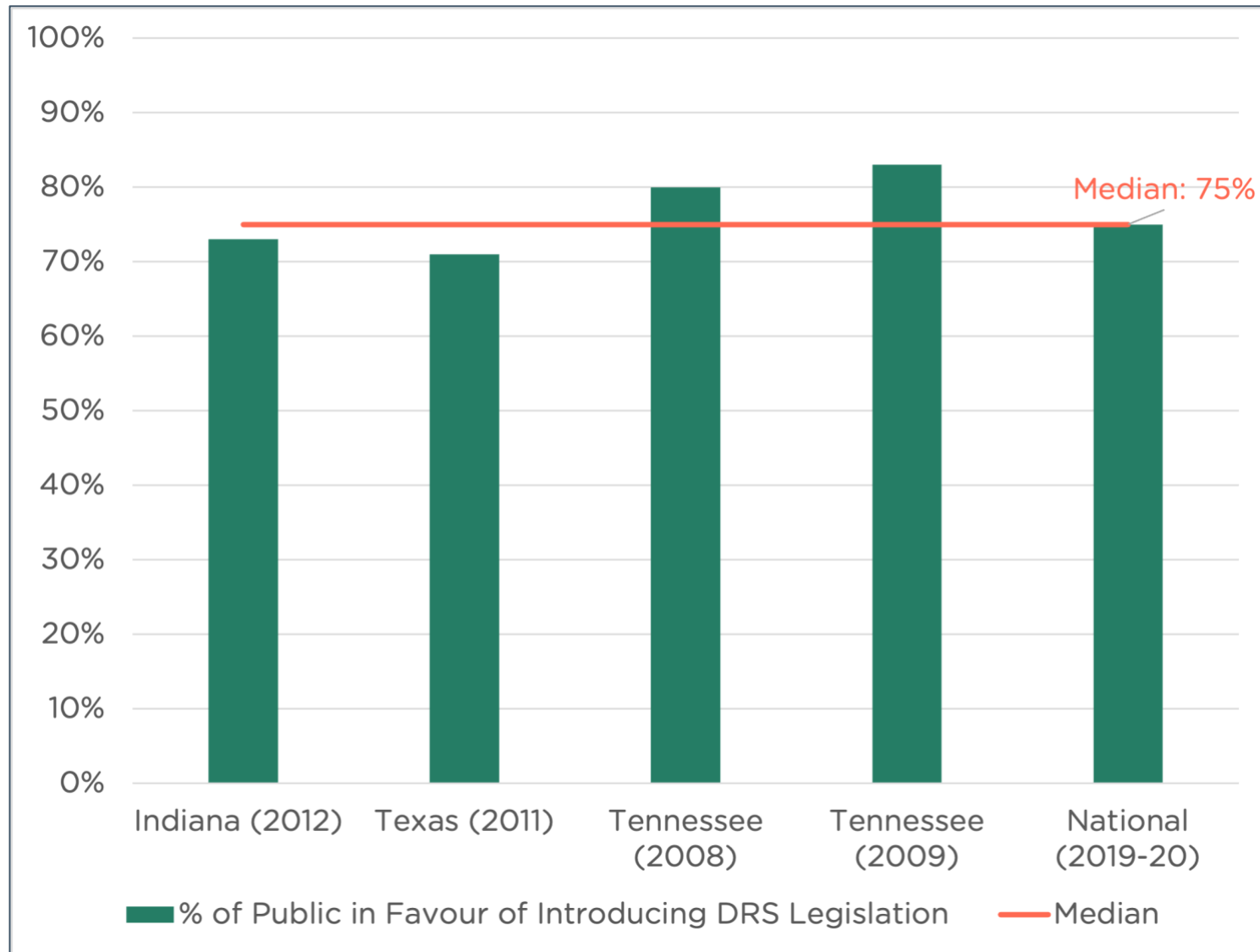


Figure 5 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Existing Deposit Return Legislation in the U.S.

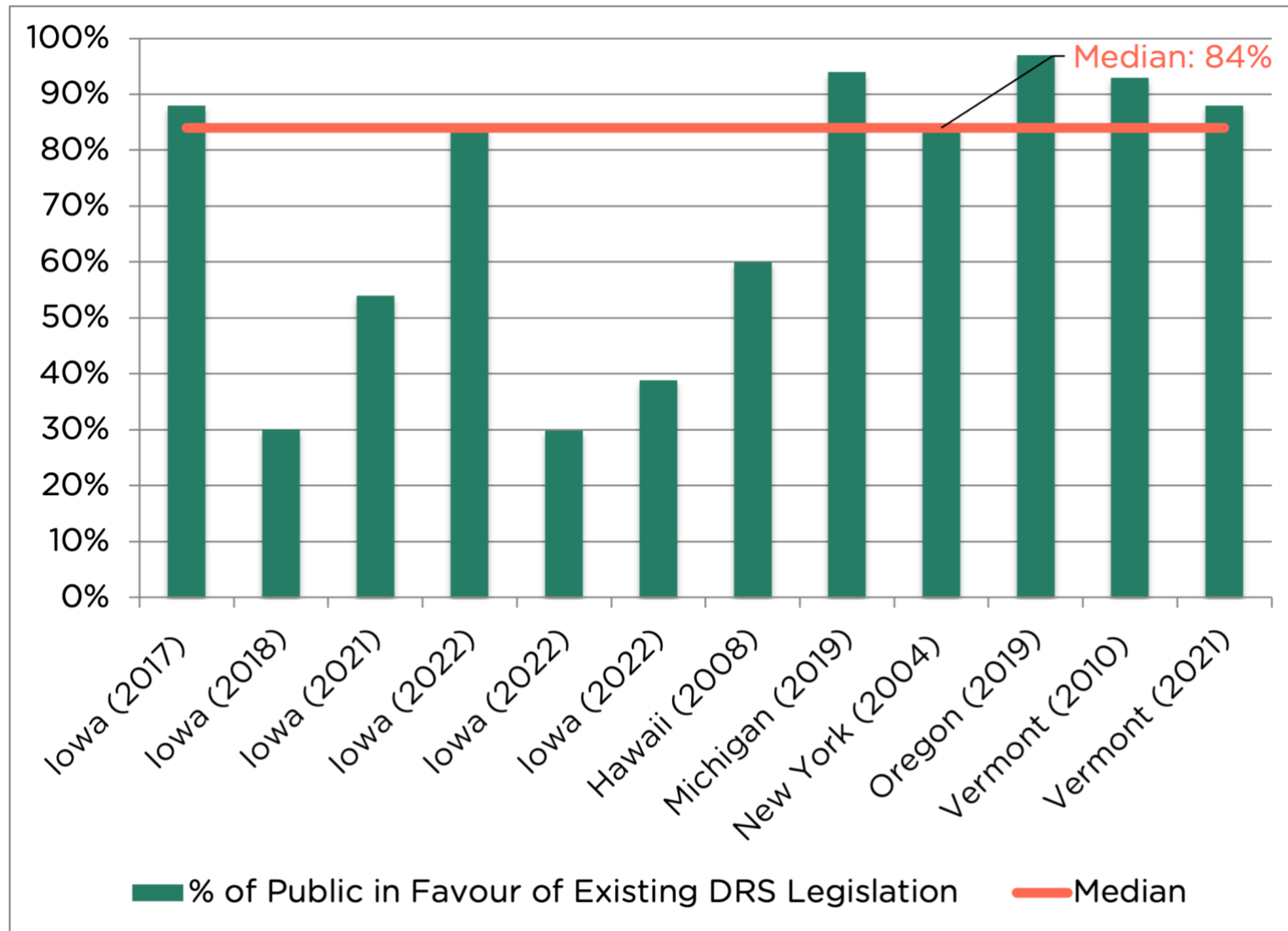


Figure 6 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Expansion of Deposit Return Legislation in the U.S.



Figure 7 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Introduction or Expansion of Deposit Return Legislation in Canada

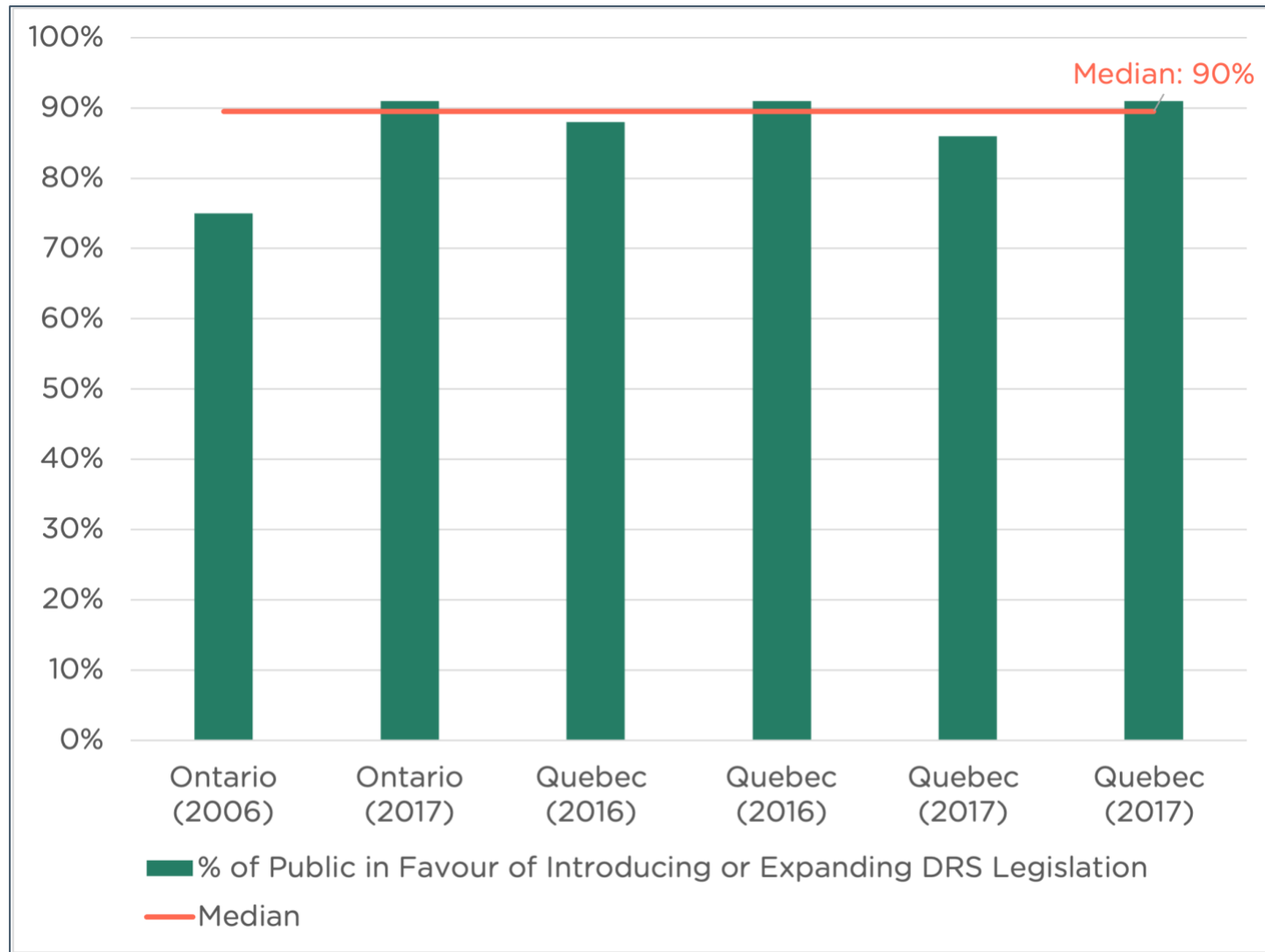


Figure 8 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Introduction of Deposit Return Legislation in Australia and New Zealand



Figure 9 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Existing Deposit Return Legislation in Australia and New Zealand

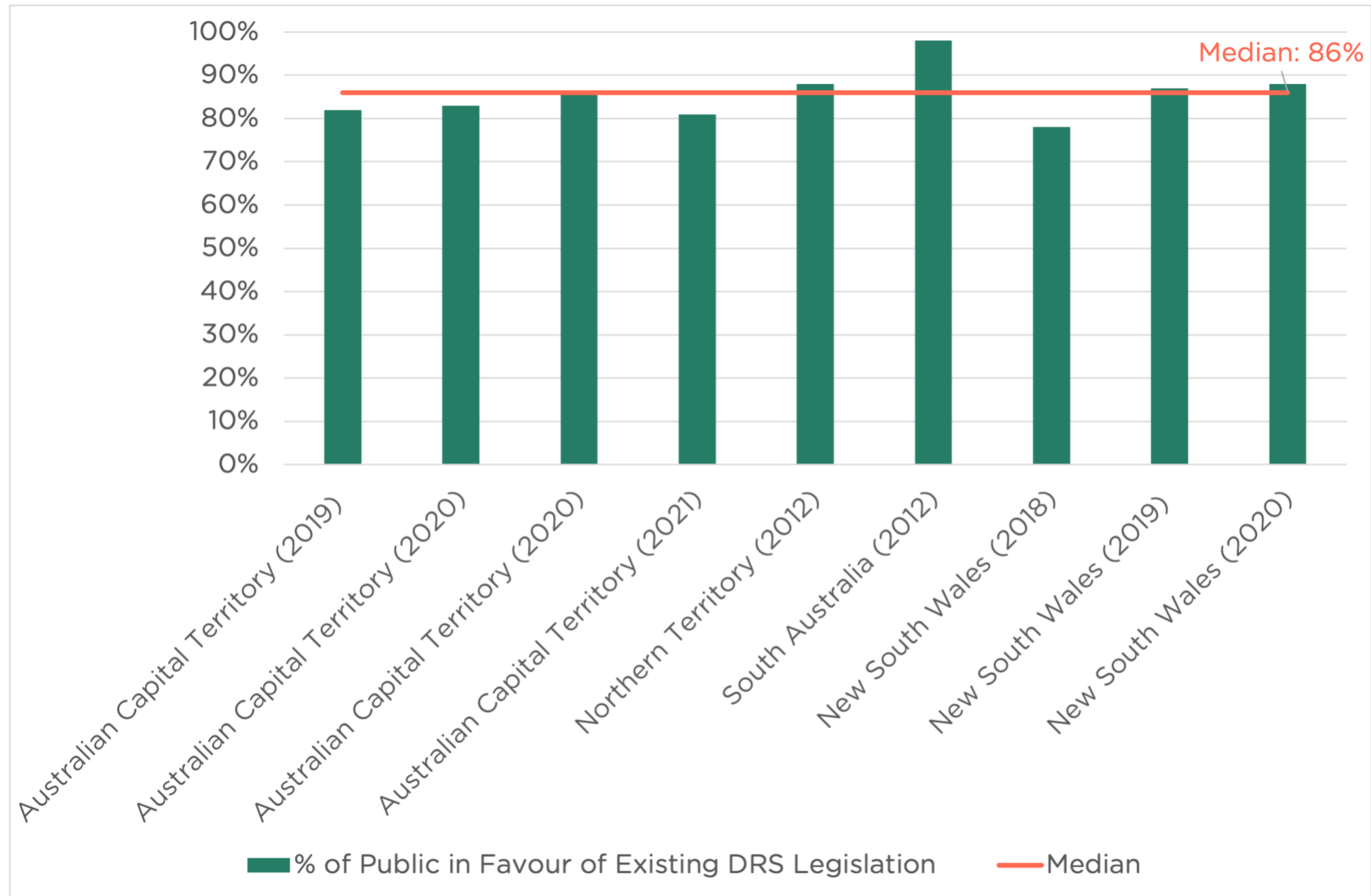
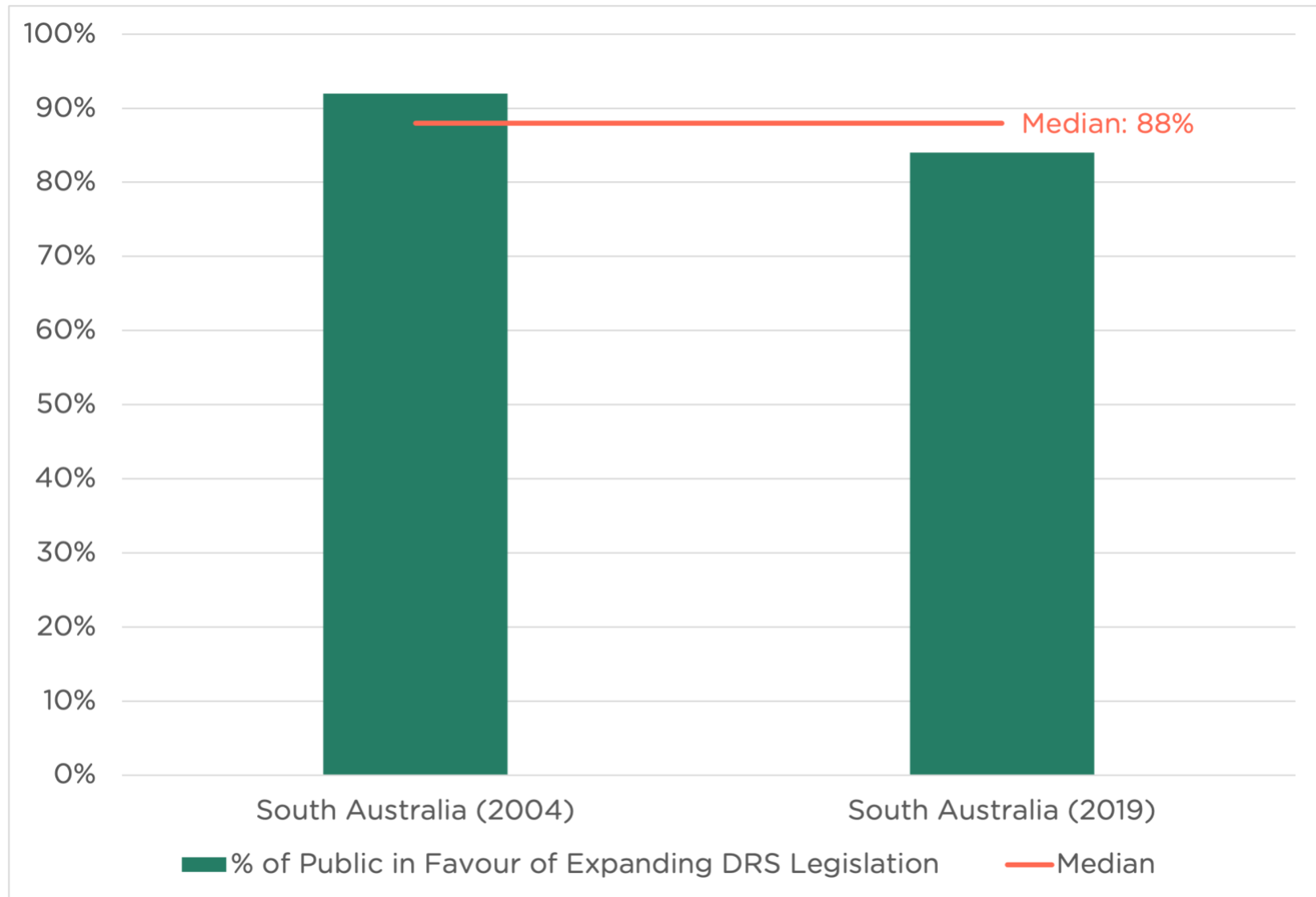


Figure 10 Opinion Polls Showing Support for Expansion of Deposit Return Legislation in Australia



Endnotes

ⁱThis includes the populations of Malta and the Republic of Korea. Both jurisdictions are expected to have their systems in place by the end of 2022.

ⁱⁱHeffernan, M. 8 February 2022. "National bottle bill likely to land in Congress soon." <https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2022/02/08/national-bottle-bill-likely-to-land-in-congress-soon/>

ⁱⁱⁱNatural Mineral Waters Europe, Soft Drinks Europe (UNESDA), and Zero Waste Europe. 6 October 2021. "It's time to acknowledge the role of Deposit Refund Systems (DRS) in achieving a Circular Economy for beverage packaging in the EU." https://naturalmineralwaterseurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Press-release_DRS_NMWE-UNESDA-ZeroWaste-Europe-06-10-21.pdf

^{iv}EFBW and UNESDA. September 2020. "DRS: UNESDA and EFBW call for a wide deployment of well-designed deposit return systems (DRS) in EU countries in order to meet the targets of the Single Use Plastics Directive." <https://www.unesda.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/UNESDA-EFBW-joint-paper-DRS.pdf>

^vNatural Mineral Waters Europe, Soft Drinks Europe (UNESDA), and Zero Waste Europe. 6 October 2021. "It's time to acknowledge the role of Deposit Refund Systems (DRS) in achieving a Circular Economy for beverage packaging in the EU." https://naturalmineralwaterseurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Press-release_DRS_NMWE-UNESDA-ZeroWaste-Europe-06-10-21.pdf