

# NAB Australian Wellbeing Index - Q4 2015

## How Australians assess the quality of their lives

by NAB Behavioural & Industry Economics (Group Economics)



### Executive Summary

Australia's wellbeing has fallen driven by heightened levels of anxiety - around 40% of Australians are feeling "highly" anxious, the highest reading since the survey began. Of concern, anxiety continues to be a much bigger issue for younger Australians, particularly young women.

The NAB Wellbeing Index fell to 64.4 in Q4 2015 (65 in Q3), with all measures rated lower, except life satisfaction.

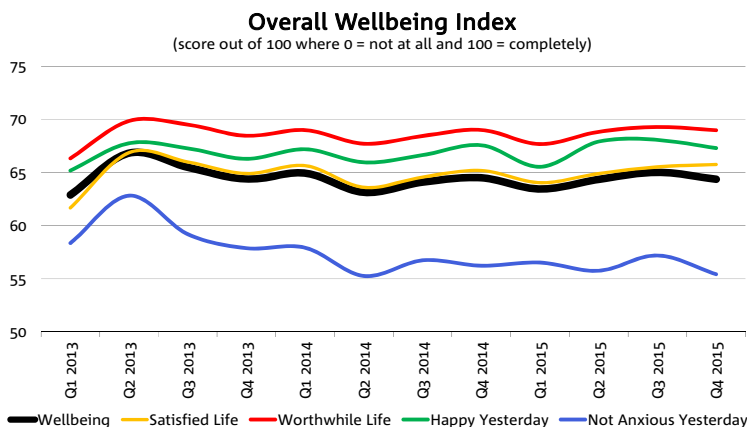
Among key demographic groups, wellbeing was typically **highest** for those in SA/NT & VIC, capital cities, on high incomes (+\$100K), aged over 50 and male, widowed, single households, without children, technical workers and not employed. Wellbeing was **lowest** for young Australian women, singles and low income earners (<\$35K).

Wellbeing is most **positively** influenced by our family and personal relationships, our homes and personal safety. Events such as abuse and a lack of time **detract** most. In terms of where we live, a safe community, good local shops & parks and gardens, contribute most to our personal wellbeing.

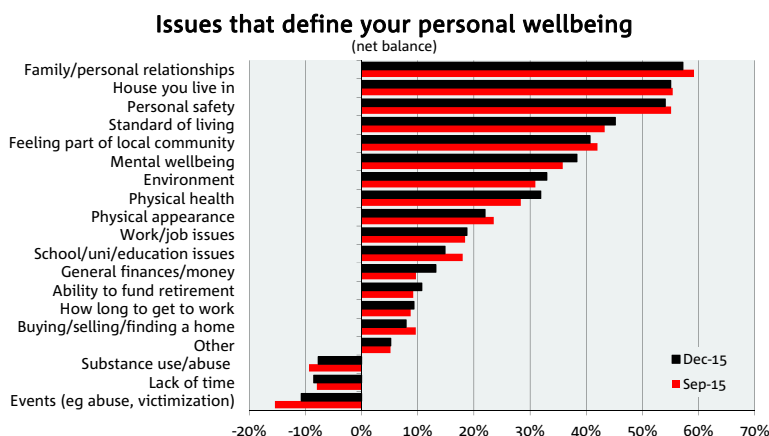
In this report, we take a look at **longer term** wellbeing trends, focussing on those groups that have historically reported the **lowest** wellbeing – i.e. single people, young women (18-29), middle aged men (30-49) and low income earners (earning less than \$35,000 per annum).

On average, these Australians typically rate their personal wellbeing lowest for each wellbeing measure. But, the main **inhibitors** to higher wellbeing are notably **different** in each group. For example, young women are by far the most anxious group, but anxiety levels among the lowest income earners is just below the Australian average and much lower than in many other demographic groups.

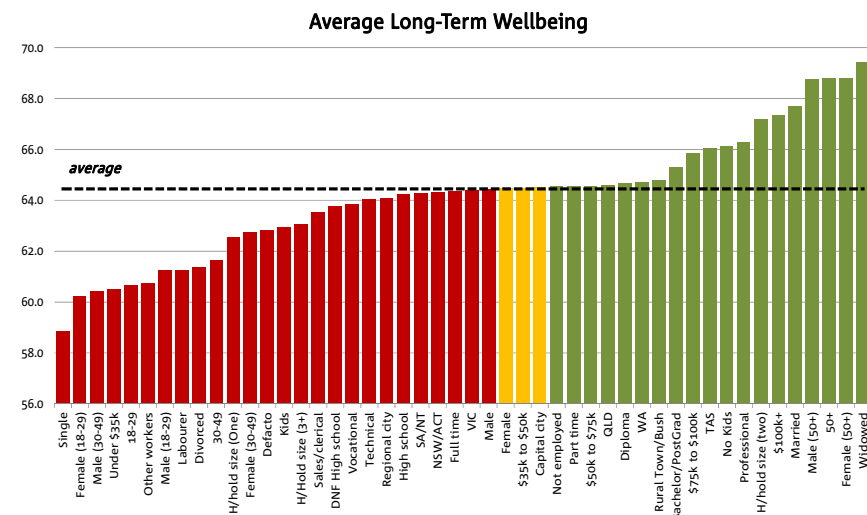
### Australia wellbeing falls as anxiety continues to rise



### Family/personal relationships contribute most to wellbeing



### Average wellbeing masks big differences among Australians



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By comparing the issues that define wellbeing for those who have lower levels of wellbeing against the “average”, we can start to understand (and perhaps address) the causes. While it is clearly apparent that these “low” wellbeing groups typically also rate their wellbeing lowest across most measures, the main inhibitors to their personal wellbeing differ (and in some cases) quite widely across each group.

### Singles

When compared to the Australian average, the wellbeing benefits derived from mental wellbeing, family and personal relationships and feeling part of the community were notably lower for single people. A lack of time was also identified as a much bigger inhibitor of their personal wellbeing.

### Young women (18-29)

When compared to average Australian, general finances, a lack of time and events (such as abuse) detracted significantly more from the wellbeing of young women. It is also notable that far fewer young women derive positive benefits from their mental wellbeing and physical appearance.

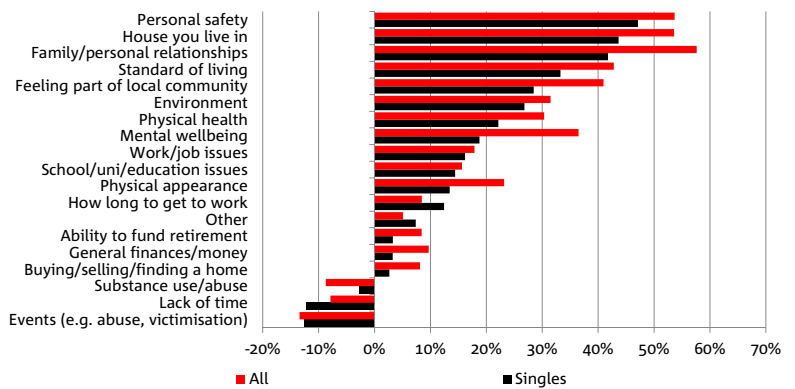
### Middle-Aged Men (30-49)

In terms of key wellbeing drivers, notably fewer middle aged men derived positive benefits from their local community, family and personal relationships, their homes and standard of living compared to the average Australian. However, they derived greater benefits from their education and jobs, with key detractors such as substance use/abuse, a lack of time events also detracting less from their personal wellbeing.

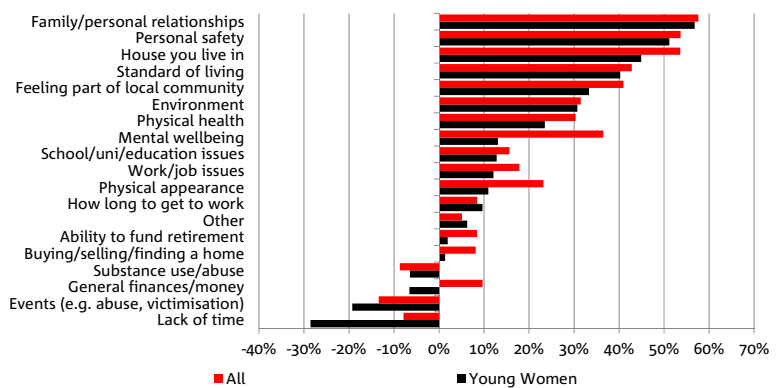
### Low-Income Earners (under \$35,000)

Not surprisingly, general finances and ability to fund retirement were key detractors to the overall wellbeing of low income earners. Events (such as abuse), substance use/abuse, buying, selling or finding a home, lack of time and time to get to work also detracted from the wellbeing of this group. All other drivers also contributed less to the wellbeing of low earning Australians, particularly in regards to standard of living, physical health, mental wellbeing, their homes and jobs.

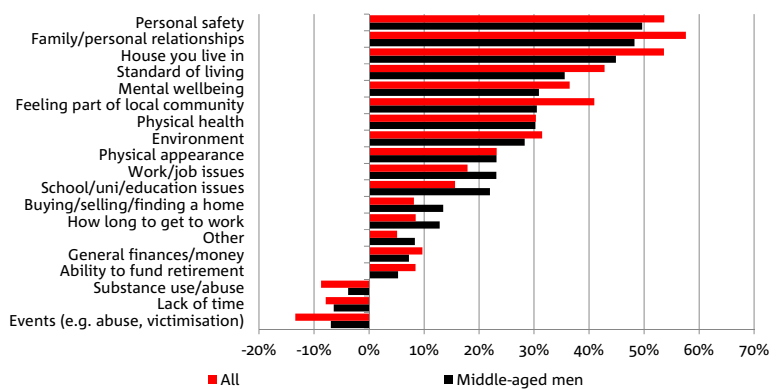
Issues that define your personal wellbeing: Singles (average net balance)



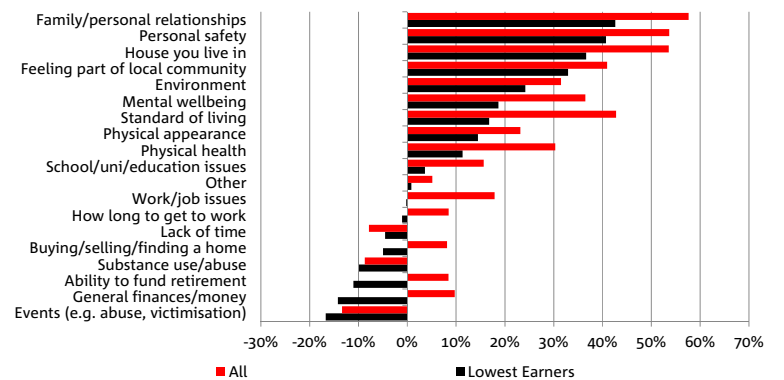
Issues that define your personal wellbeing: Young women (average net balance)



Issues that define your personal wellbeing: Mid-aged men (average net balance)

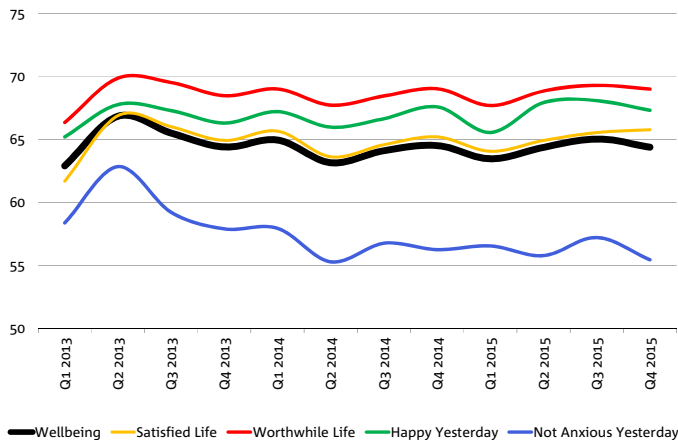


Issues that define your personal wellbeing: Lowest earners (average net balance)



## Wellbeing trends

**Overall Wellbeing Index**  
(score out of 100 where 0 = not at all and 100 = completely)



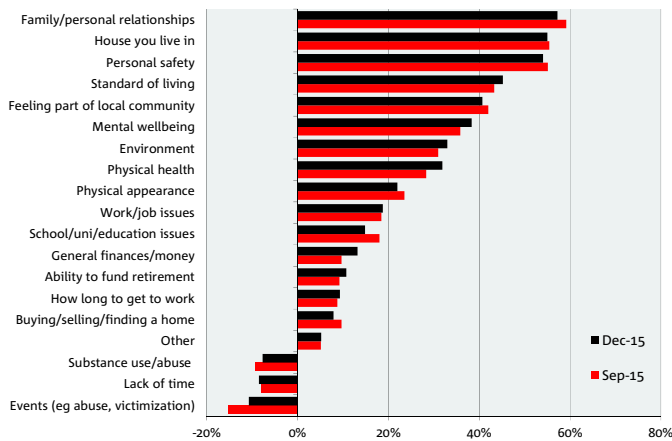
The NAB Wellbeing Index fell to 64.4 in Q4 2015 (65 in Q3), with all survey questions rated lower, except life satisfaction.

Anxiety continues to be the biggest detractor to the overall personal wellbeing of Australians, with around 40% “highly” anxious - the highest reading since this survey began (see table on page 7). Of particular concern, anxiety continues to be a much bigger issue for younger Australians, particularly young women.

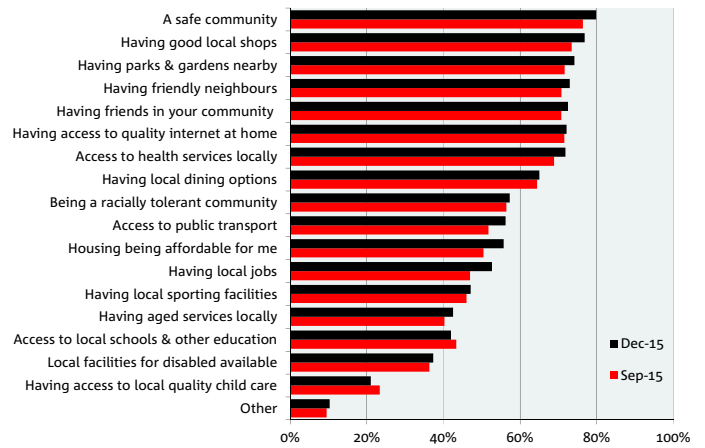
Among key demographic groups, wellbeing was highest in SA/NT and Victoria and capital cities and for high income earners (+\$100K), 50-year old men, widows, single households, those without children, technical workers and for those not employed. Wellbeing was lowest for young Australian women, singles and low income earners (<\$35K).

Among some of the notable changes in the quarter, personal wellbeing improved most for technical workers, widows and young men. It fell most for young women (driven by higher levels of anxiety and lower self-worth) and for sales/clerical workers (see charts on page 8).

**Issues that define your personal wellbeing**  
(net balance)



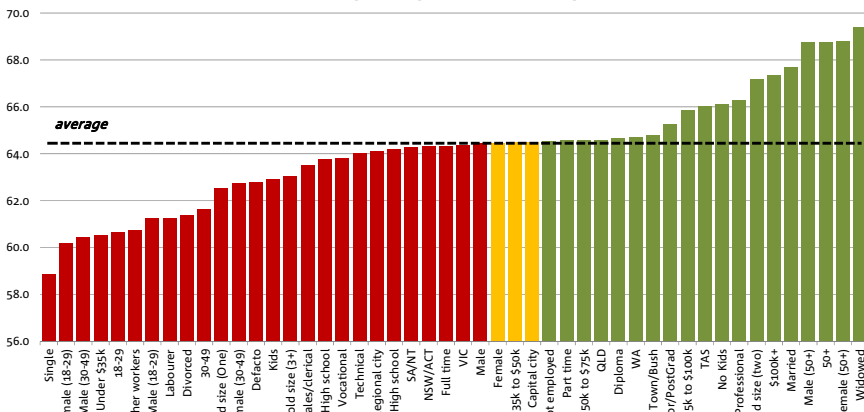
**How where you live impacts your wellbeing**  
(net balance)



Overall, our personal wellbeing is most positively influenced by family and personal relationships, our homes and personal safety (but marginally less so than in Q3). Events such as abuse, a lack of time and substance use or abuse detract the most.

In our local communities, safety, good local shops, parks and gardens and friendly neighbours are the biggest drivers of our personal wellbeing. Access to quality local childcare and facilities for the disabled add the least.

**Average Long-Term Wellbeing**



In this report, we take a look at longer term wellbeing trends and focus on those groups that have historically reported the lowest wellbeing - single people, young Australian women (18-29), middle aged men (30-49) and low income earners (less than \$35,000 per annum).

These groups typically have the lowest levels of personal wellbeing across all survey questions. However, the main inhibitors to higher wellbeing are notably different in each group. For example, young women are by far the most anxious group, but anxiety levels among the lowest income earners is just below the Australian average and much lower than in many other demographic groups.

In the next section, we look at wellbeing in “low” wellbeing groups in more detail.

## Long-term wellbeing of “low” wellbeing groups

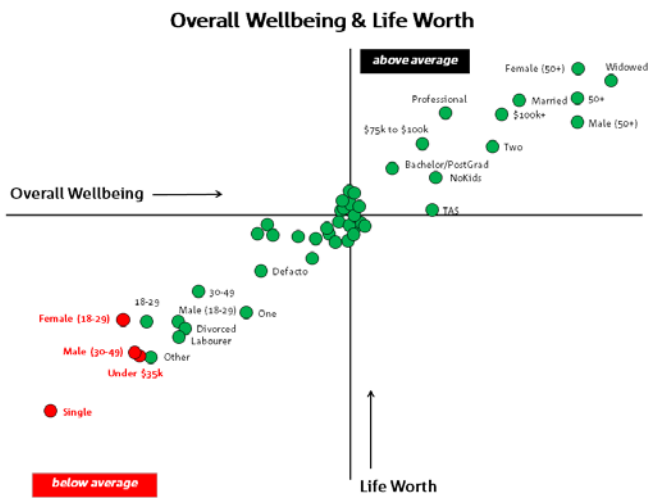
The charts below compare average long-term wellbeing scores against average scores for each component of wellbeing - life worth, happy yesterday, life satisfaction and not anxious yesterday.

We shine the spotlight on those groups that have continually reported the lowest levels of wellbeing - singles, young women (aged 18-29), middle aged men (aged 30-49) and low income earners (earning less than \$35,000 per annum).

While it is clearly apparent that these “low” wellbeing groups typically also rate their wellbeing lowest across most survey questions, the main inhibitors to their personal wellbeing differ (and in some cases) quite widely across each group.

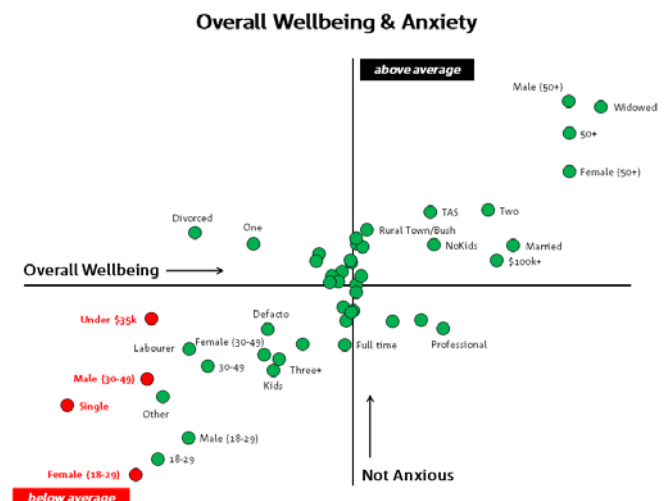
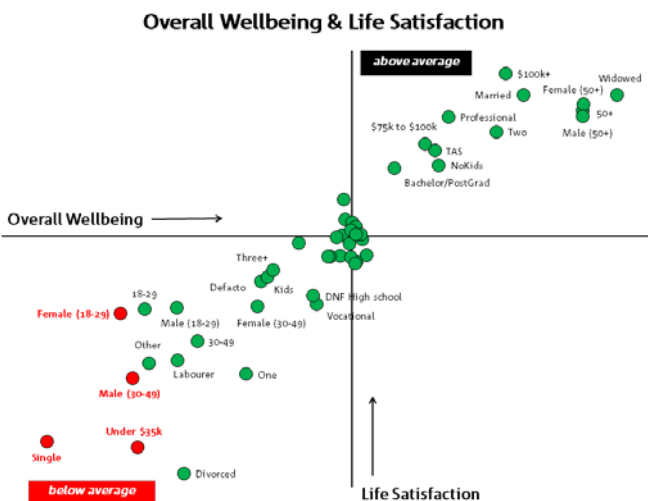
In terms of life worth, single people score lowest across all demographic categories. Low income earners and middle age men also rate their life worth among the lowest of all other groups. Although young women also rate their life worth among the lowest of all groups, it is higher than for all other “low” wellbeing groups and also above that of “other” workers (self-employed), labourers and divorced people.

When it comes to happiness, single people typically report the lowest levels across all demographic groups and also well below those in other “low” wellbeing groups. Young women, middle aged men and low income earners report broadly similar levels of happiness, but they are all well below average and among the least happy groups overall (along with divorced people).



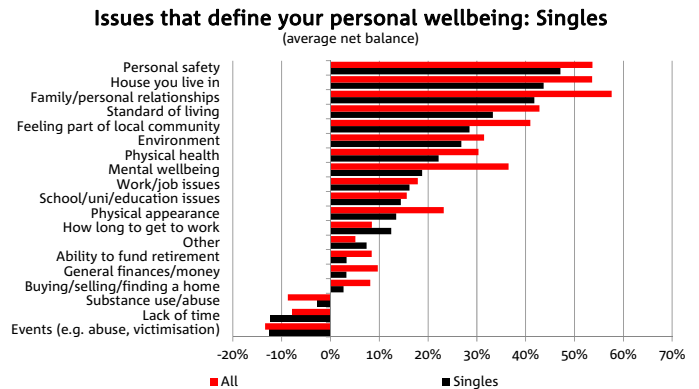
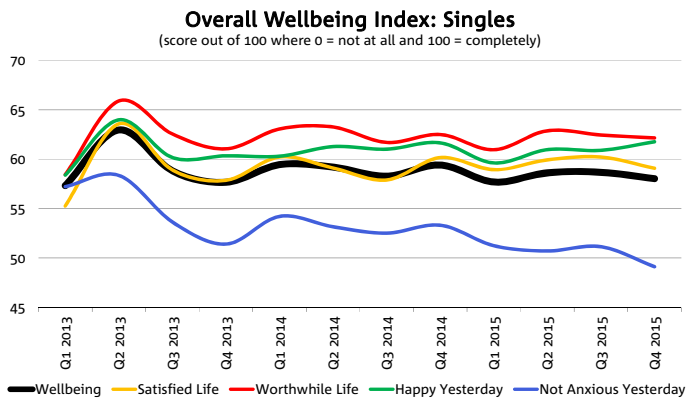
There is more variance in the role that life satisfaction plays in driving wellbeing in “low” wellbeing groups. The contribution to overall wellbeing from life satisfaction is typically lowest for divorced people, followed by single people and low income earners. Middle aged men also have some of the lowest levels of life satisfaction across all groups, but somewhat higher than for singles and low income earners. In contrast, life satisfaction for young women is notably higher (albeit below average) and above that for many other groups including “other” workers, labourers, single person households and 30-49 year olds.

Another key difference among “low” wellbeing groups relates to anxiety levels, particularly for young women (and in fact all to young people). Young women on average typically report the highest levels of anxiety across all demographic groups and notably higher than for all other groups except for young men. Anxiety is also a significant issue for singles and middle-aged men, but appears to be much less of an issue for low income earners. In fact, anxiety levels for low income earners is only slightly below the average for all Australians, and notably lower than in many other groups including labourers, middle-aged women, professional and full time workers.



# Wellbeing drivers for “low” wellbeing groups

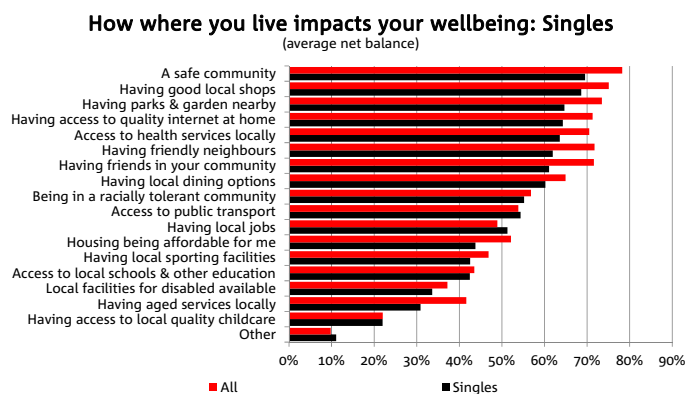
## Singles



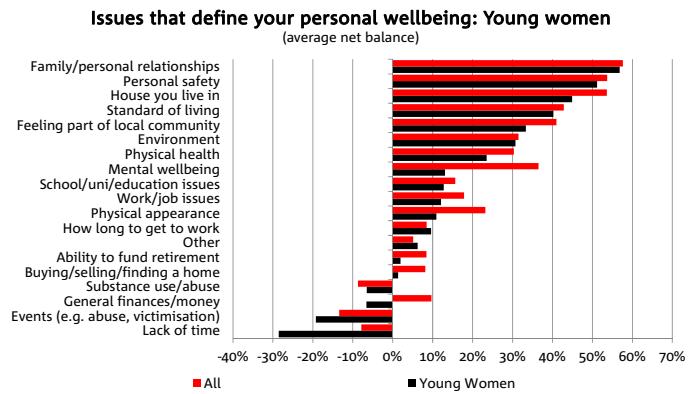
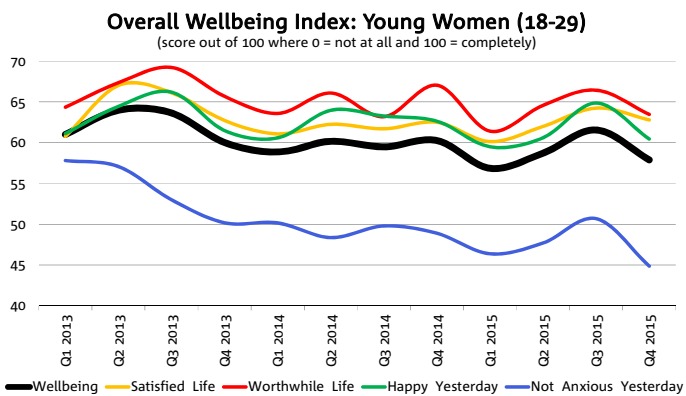
Overall wellbeing for single Australians was slightly lower in Q4, as notably higher anxiety and reduced life satisfaction and life worth were partly offset by an increase in happiness.

When compared to the Australian average, the wellbeing benefits derived from mental wellbeing, family and personal relationships and feeling part of the community were notably lower for single people. A lack of time was also identified as a much bigger inhibitor of their personal wellbeing.

In terms of where they live, the impact of having friends in the community, friendly neighbours and local aged care services added notably less to the wellbeing of single people than for average Australians. In contrast, having access to local jobs and good public transport were somewhat more important.



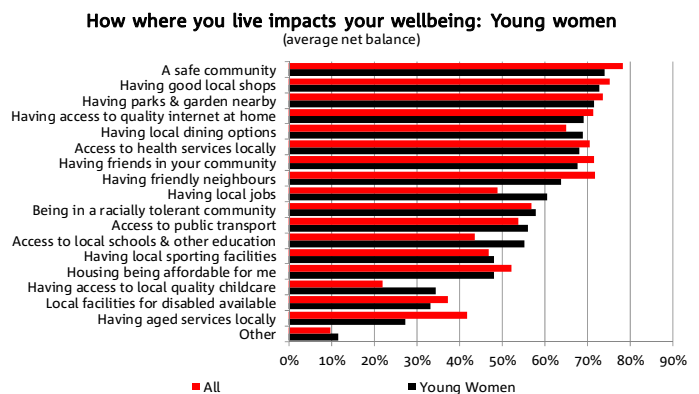
## Young women (18-29)



Overall wellbeing for young women fell to a new low in Q4. Wellbeing was lower for all survey questions, with anxiety at its highest level since the survey began.

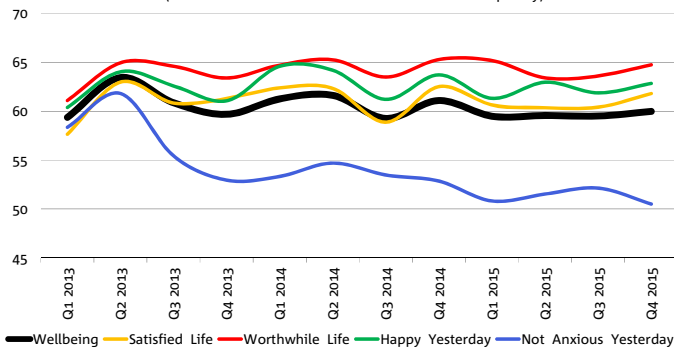
When compared to average Australian, general finances, a lack of time and events (such as abuse) detracted significantly more from the wellbeing of young women. It is also notable that far fewer young women derive positive benefits from their mental wellbeing and physical appearance.

In terms of their local community, it is not surprising that young women derive much higher wellbeing from having local quality childcare, schools/other education and local jobs compared to the average Australian. Having aged services locally and friendly neighbours, however, contributed somewhat less to the wellbeing of young women.

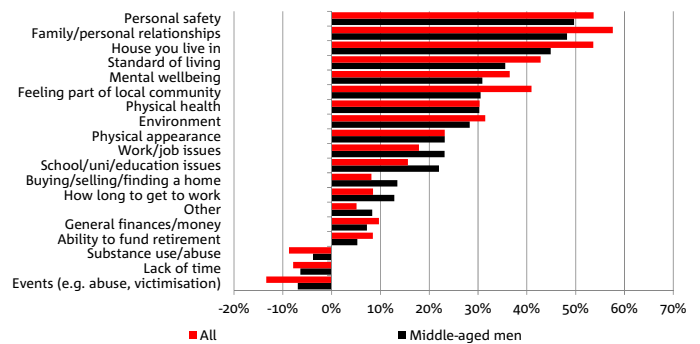


## Middle-aged men (30-49)

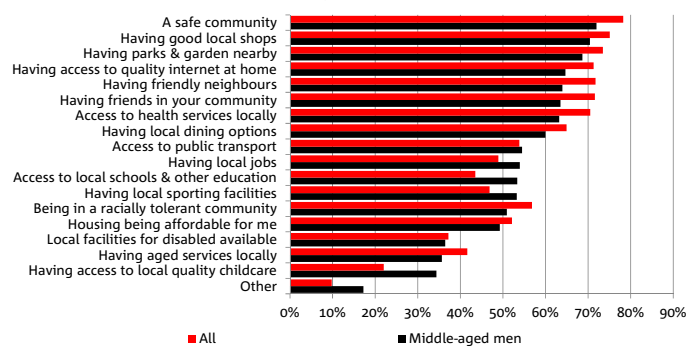
**Overall Wellbeing Index: Middle-Aged Men (30-49)**  
(score out of 100 where 0 = not at all and 100 = completely)



**Issues that define your personal wellbeing: Mid-aged men**  
(average net balance)



**How where you live impacts your wellbeing: Mid-aged men**  
(average net balance)



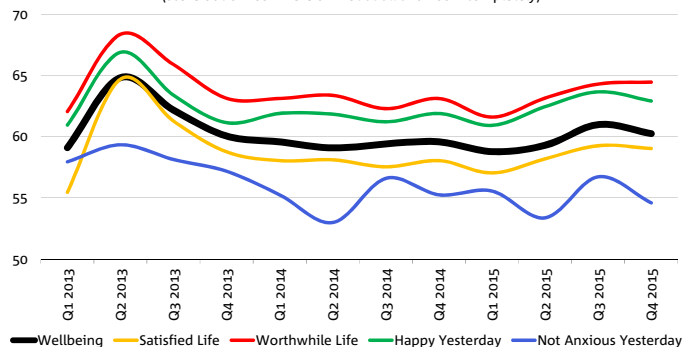
The overall wellbeing of middle-aged Australian men improved slightly in Q4, with higher life satisfaction, life worth and happiness offsetting an increase in reported anxiety.

In terms of key wellbeing drivers, notably fewer middle aged men derived positive benefits from their local community, family and personal relationships, their homes and standard of living compared to the average Australian. However, they derived greater benefits from their education and jobs, with key detractors such as substance use/abuse, a lack of time events also detracting less from their personal wellbeing.

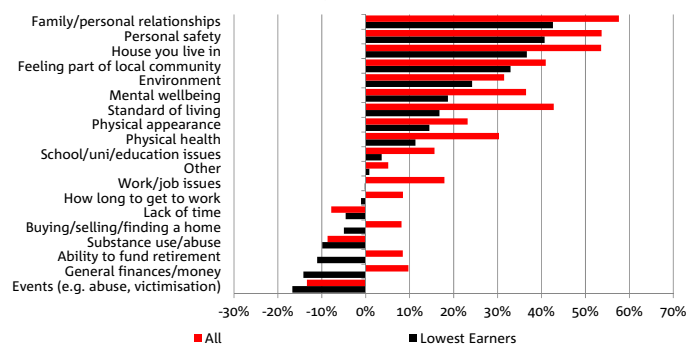
In terms of where they live, middle-aged men rated all wellbeing drivers lower than average except childcare, local sporting facilities, schools, local jobs and public transport.

## Low income earners (less than \$35,000)

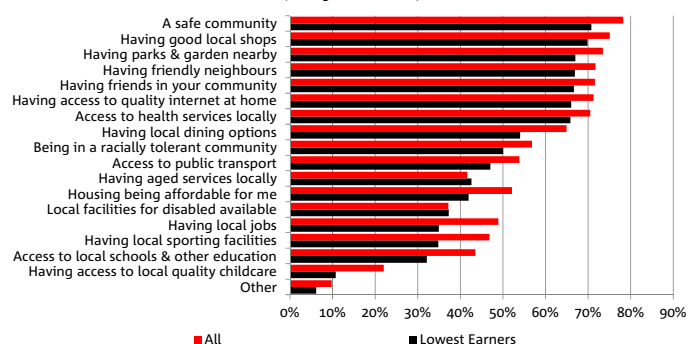
**Overall Wellbeing Index: Lowest Income (<\$35K)**  
(score out of 100 where 0 = not at all and 100 = completely)



**Issues that define your personal wellbeing: Lowest earners**  
(average net balance)



**How where you live impacts your wellbeing: Lowest earners**  
(average net balance)

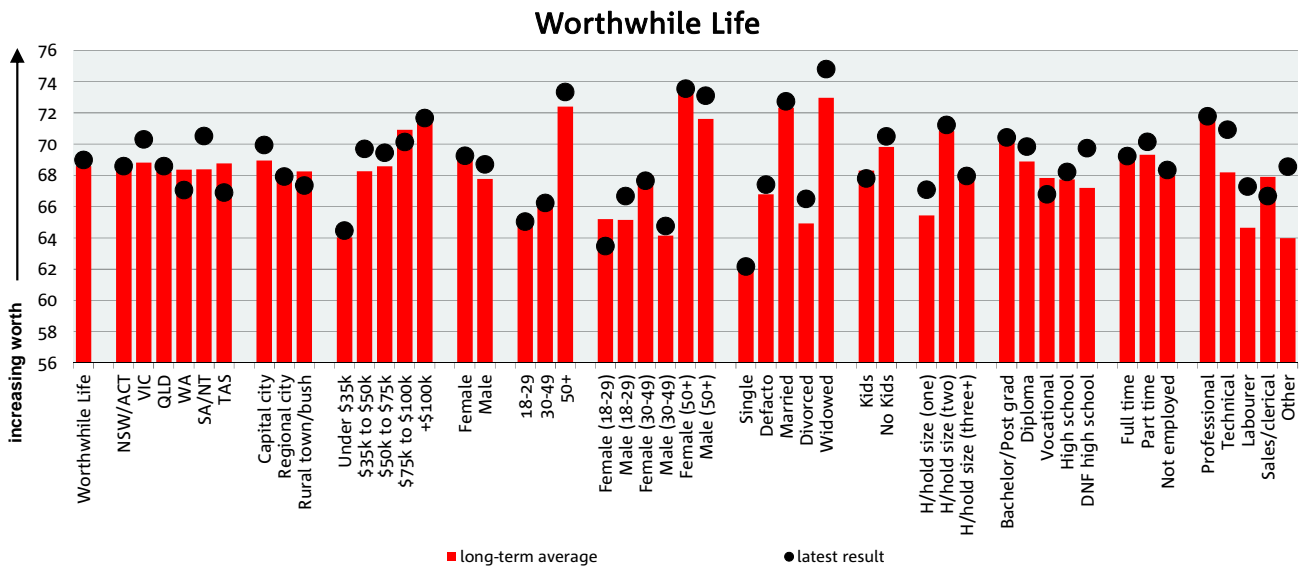
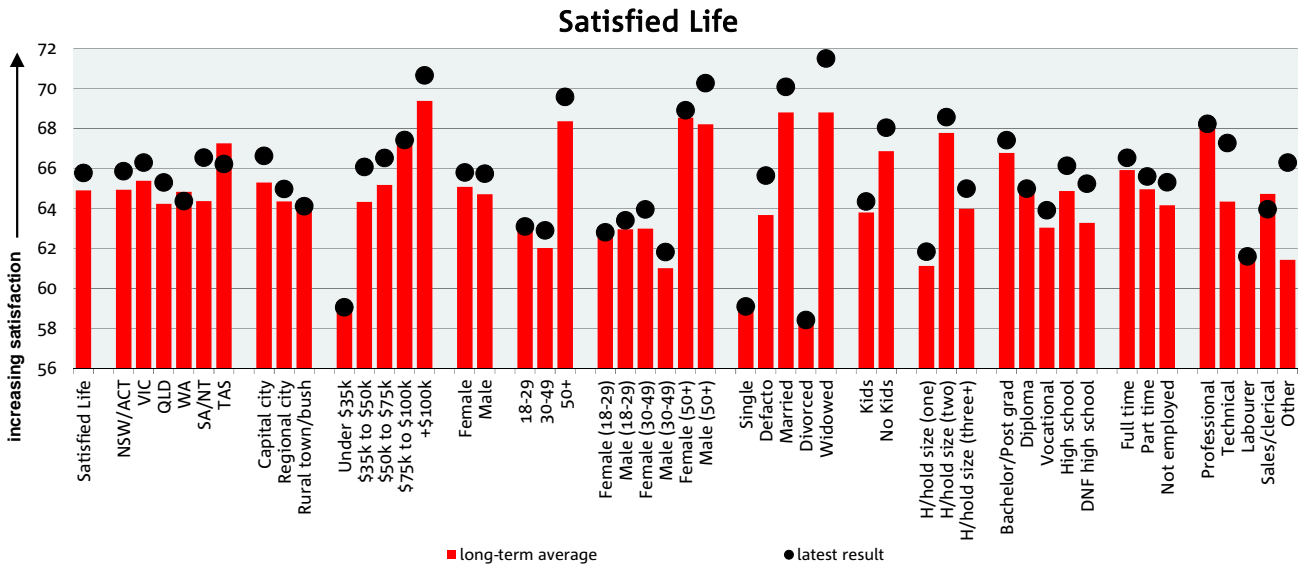
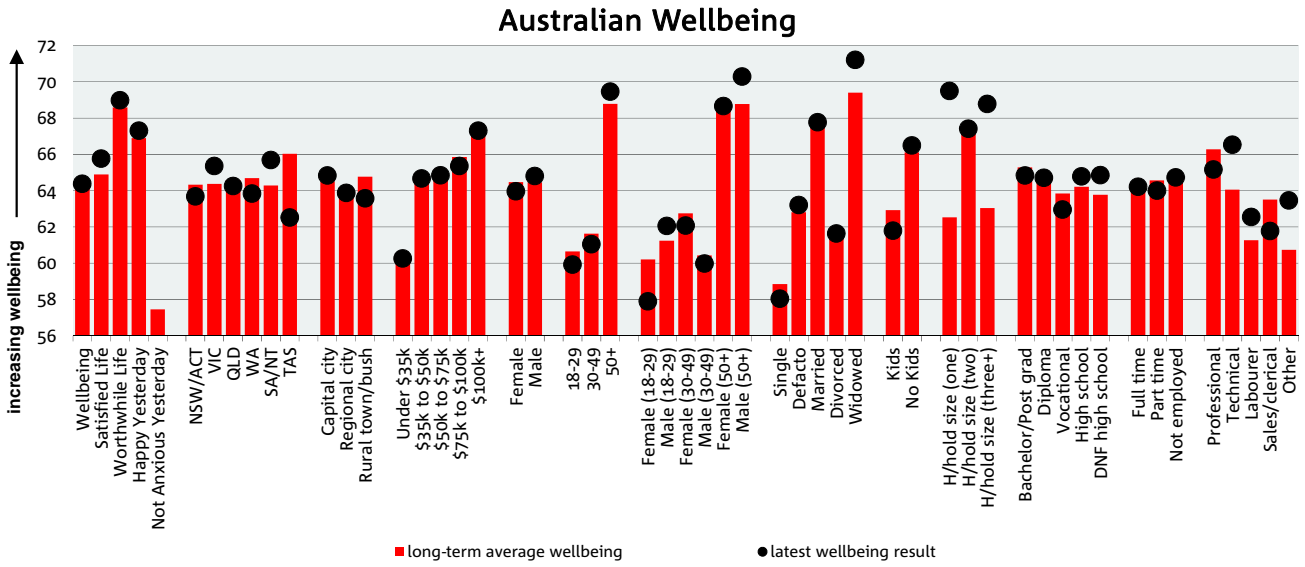


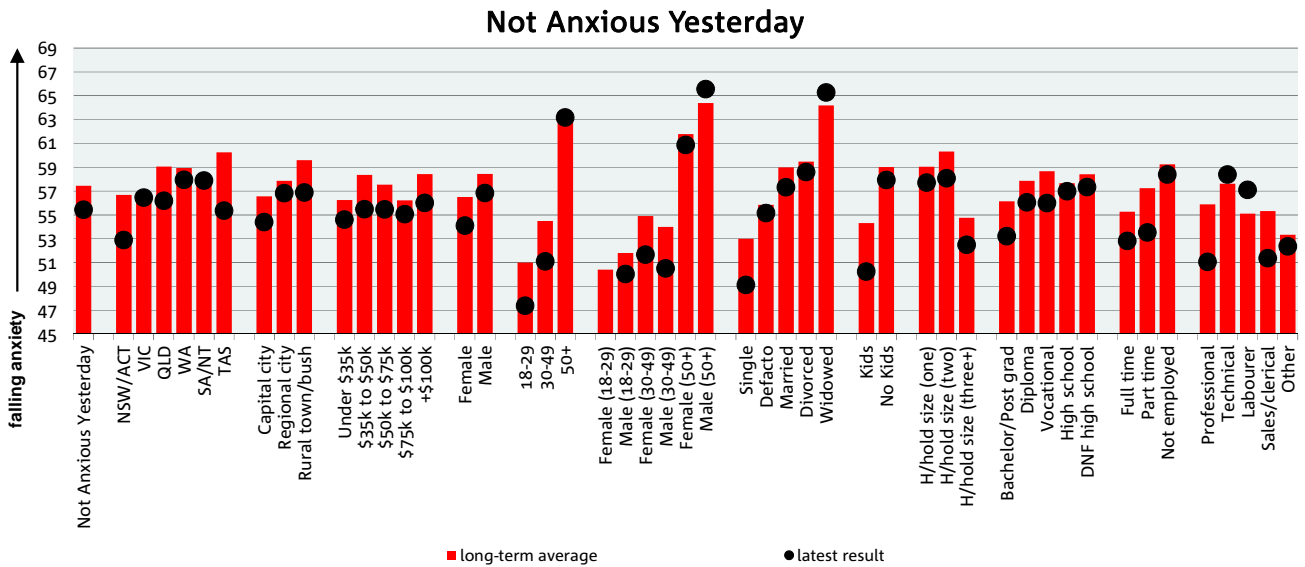
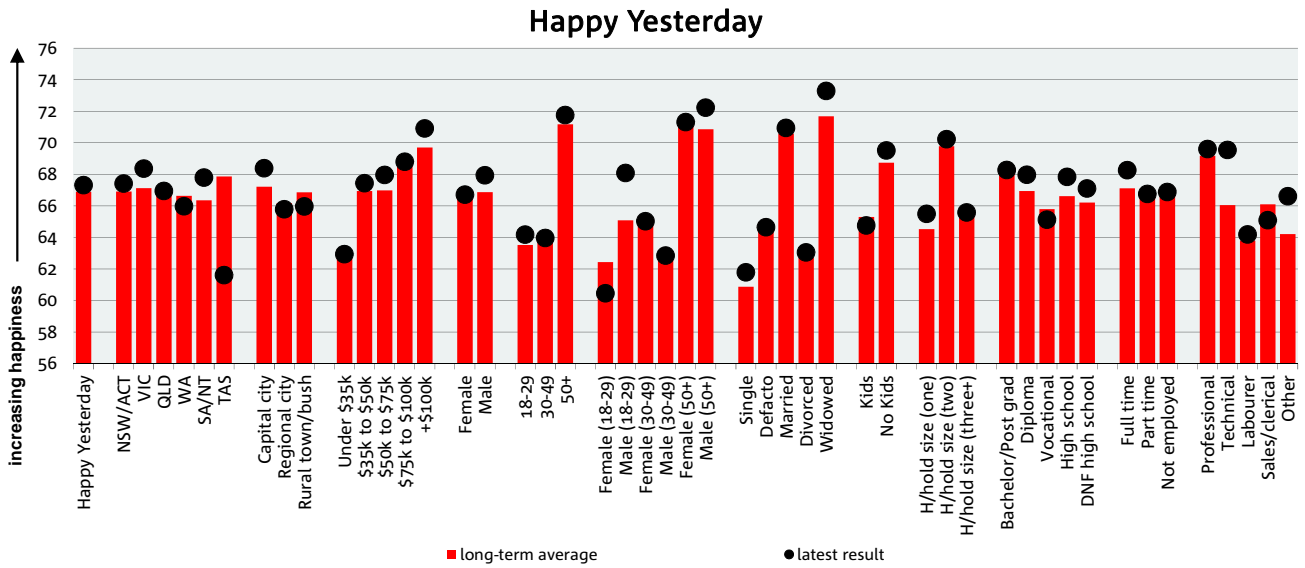
Overall wellbeing for low income earners (<\$35,000) fell in Q4, with higher anxiety and lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction offsetting a small improvement in life worth.

Not surprisingly, general finances and ability to fund retirement were key detractors to the overall wellbeing of low income earners. Events (such as abuse), substance use/abuse, buying, selling or finding a home, lack of time and time to get to work also detracted from the wellbeing of this group. All other drivers also contributed less to the wellbeing of low earning Australians, particularly in regards to standard of living, physical health, mental wellbeing, their homes and jobs.

In terms of where you live, low income earning Australians rated all wellbeing drivers lower, except when it came to having aged services and disabled facilities available locally.

# Overall wellbeing - latest results against long-term average





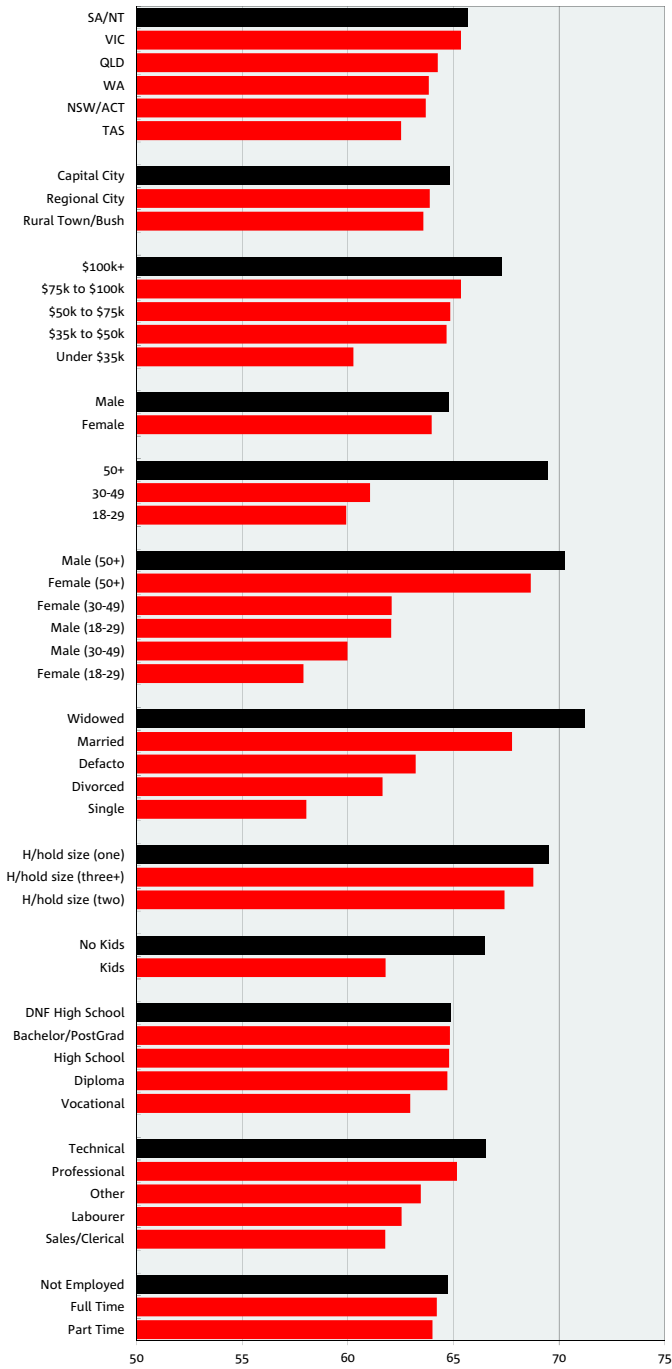
## Wellbeing Indicators: Range of responses (%)

		Very Low (0-4)	Low (5-6)	Medium (7-8)	High (9-10)	Average Score
Satisfied Life	Q3 2015	14.8	24.8	45.4	15.0	65.5
	<b>Q4 2015</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>65.8</b>
Worthwhile Life	Q3 2015	11.9	21.7	42.4	24.0	69.3
	<b>Q4 2015</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>69.0</b>
Happy Yesterday	Q3 2015	13.4	23.1	40.2	23.4	68.1
	<b>Q4 2015</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>67.3</b>
Not Anxious Yesterday		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Average
	Q3 2015	34.4	23.8	21.0	20.8	57.2
	<b>Q4 2015</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>55.4</b>

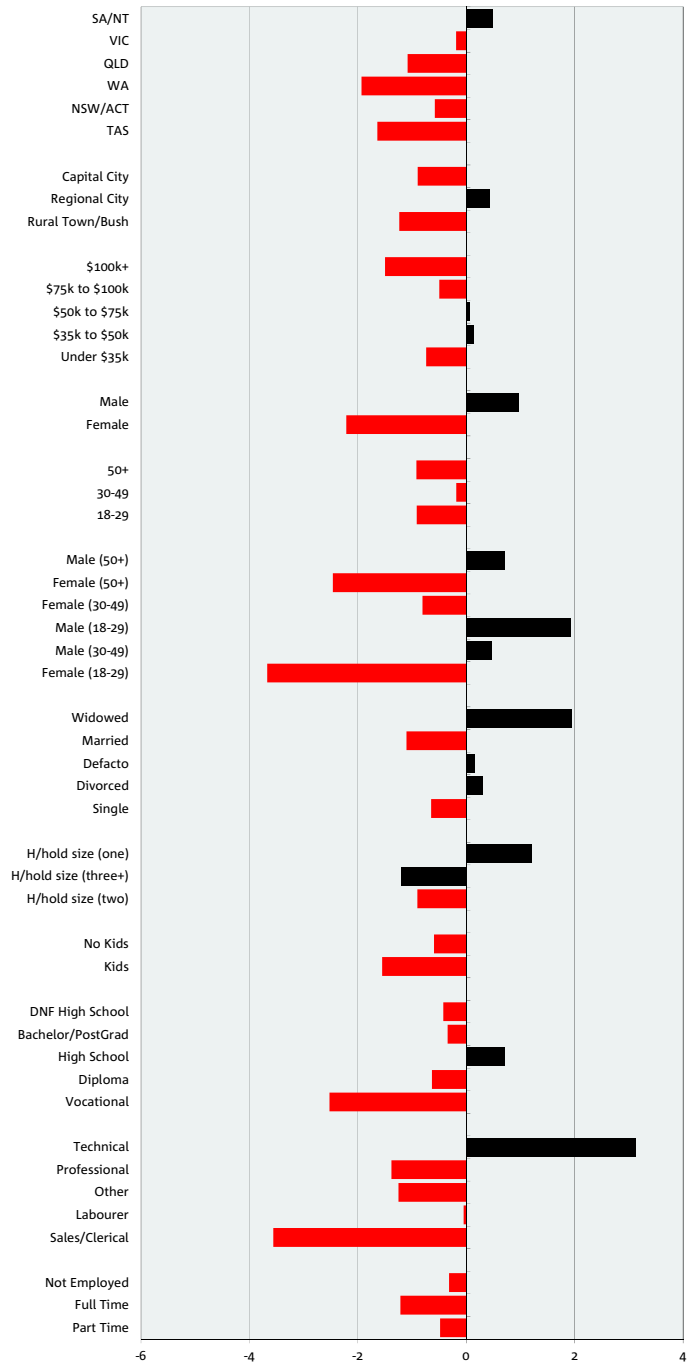


# Overall wellbeing - rankings and change over the quarter

Wellbeing Ranked by Category



Wellbeing by Category (change)



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