## NAB Australian Wellbeing Index - Q1 2016 How Australians assess the quality of their lives

by NAB Behavioural & Industry Economics (Group Economics)



### Findings

While Australia's wellbeing has improved, anxiety remains the key detractor with more than 1 in 3 Australians still feeling "highly" anxious. Younger Australians are among the most anxious. Most of us have feelings of anxiety at different times of our lives. But some people cope better than others. In this report we asked how well "highly" anxious Australians think they are managing their anxiety. On average, 60% of highly anxious people are coping well. But some highly anxious groups are not coping, particularly young women. Around 1 in 3 young women who have "high" anxiety say they are not managing their anxiety well - by far the biggest share of any group. It may however be the case that women are more comfortable speaking about their ability to cope than men.

The NAB Wellbeing Index fell to 64 in Q1 2016 (64.4 in Q4 2015), with all measures rated lower, except anxiety.

Among key demographic groups, wellbeing was highest in Tasmania, capital cities, for high income earners (+\$100K), men, over 50s, widows, two person households, those without kids and professional and part time workers.

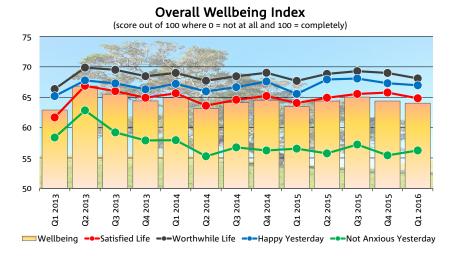
In contrast, **wellbeing was lowest** for singles, young Australians (particularly women), low income earners (less than \$35,000) and labourers.

Wellbeing was most positively influenced by our family and personal relationships, personal safety and our homes. Events (such as abuse and victimisation), substance use/abuse and a lack of time detracted the most from our personal wellbeing.

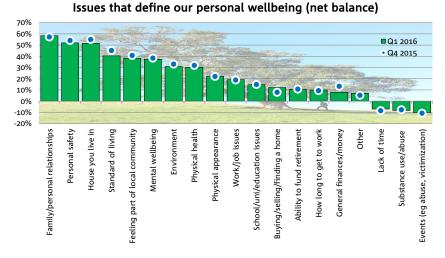
In terms of **community connectedness**, we feel only "moderately" connected to our local communities, scoring just 58 out of 100 points.

If we had the power to **change anything about our local community** to improve

### Australian wellbeing falls, but anxiety lower

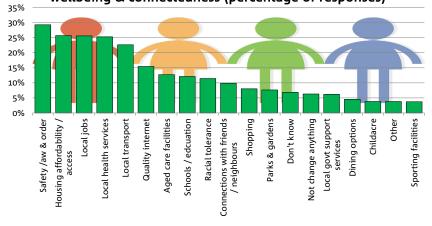


### Family/personal relationships contribute most to wellbeing



### Improving safety/law & order would add most to wellbeing

What would you change to improve your personal wellbeing & connectedness (percentage of responses)



our personal wellbeing and connectedness, most of us would improve safety/law and order, housing affordability and access to and quality of local jobs, health services and transport.

NAB research shows anxiety is the main detractor of personal wellbeing in Australia - mirroring the results in many other advanced countries. Some would argue that this in itself is a normal byproduct of living in a modern society. But, some groups (and individuals in those groups) feel that they are managing their anxiety much better than others.

In this report, we take a closer look at those Australians that report "high" levels of anxiety and ask them to rate the extent to which they feel they are able to manage their anxiety (where 0 is "not at all" and 100 is "completely").

Overall, **"highly" anxious labourers appear to be faring the worst for managing their anxiety** (49.3 points), followed by young women (49.7 points), defactos (51 points), singles (51.1 points), 18 to 29 year olds (52.4 points) and divorced people (54 points).

In contrast, "highly" anxious widows (70.7 points), women over 50 (63.1 points), married people (61.7 points), professional workers (61.4 points) and men over 50 (61.3 points) appear to be managing their anxiety best.

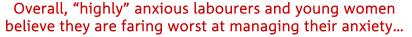
A different picture emerges when looking at the share of Australians in each group that are reporting high levels of anxiety.

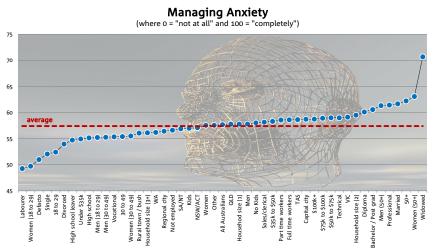
On this measure, around 1 in 3 young women who have "high" anxiety are not managing their anxiety well - by far the biggest share of any group. In contrast, less than 1 in 10 (8.9%) young men with "high" anxiety believe they are not managing it well.

However, some care may be needed in interpreting these results. It may be the case that women are more comfortable speaking honestly about their ability to cope with their anxiety than are men.

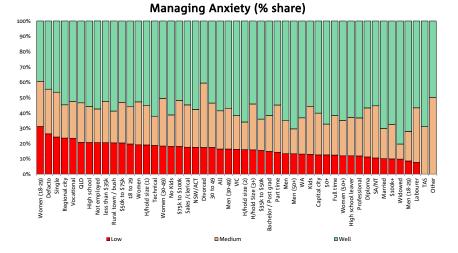
Recent suicide figures from the ABS highlight alarming differences between men and women. In particular, men are three times more likely than women to die by suicide. Suicide is also the leading cause of death in Australia for men aged between 15 and 44.

**CONTACTS:** Alan Oster - Chief Economist (03) 8634-2927 0414 444 652 Dean Pearson Head of Industry & Behavioural Economics (03) 8634 3221 0457 517 342





### But around 1 in 3 "highly" anxious young are not coping well - by far the biggest share of any group.

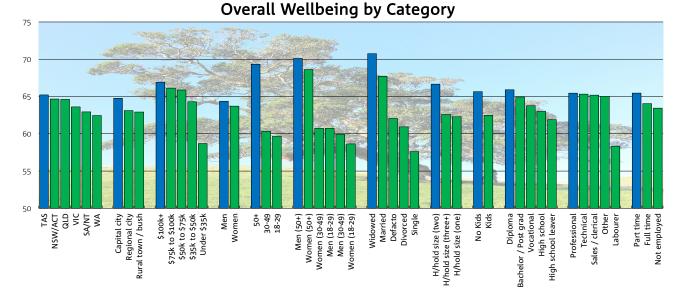




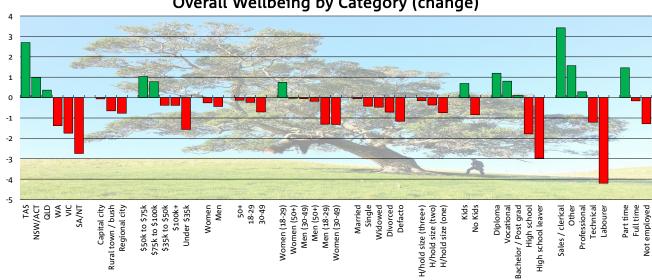
Robert De Iure - Senior Economist Industry & Behavioural Economics (03 8634-4611 0477 723 769 Brien McDonald - Senior Economist Industry & Behavioural Economics (03) 8634-3837 0455 052 520

## Overall wellbeing - rankings and change over the quarter

### Personal wellbeing in Q2 2016 was highest for widows, men over 50, high income earners (over \$100,000) and in single person households. It was lowest for labourers, singles, young women and low income earners (less than \$35,000).



### In terms of changes, personal wellbeing improved most in Q1 2016 for sales/clerical workers, in Tasmania and for "Other" (i.e. self-employed) and part time workers. It fell most for labourers, high school leavers and in SA/NT.



### **Overall Wellbeing by Category (change)**

### Wellbeing Indicators: range of responses (%)

		Very Low (0-4)	Low (5-6)	Medium (7-8)	High (9-10)	Average Score
Satisfied Life	Q4 2015	14.6	25.0	44.5	16.0	65.8
	<b>Q1 2016</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<mark>64.8</mark>
Worthwhile Life	Q4 2015	11.9	23.4	42.1	22.6	69.0
	<b>Q1 2016</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>68.1</b>
Happy Yesterday	Q4 2015	15.3	21.6	40.8	22.4	67.3
	<b>Q1 2016</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>67.0</b>
Not Anxious Yesterday	Q4 2015 <b>Q1 2016</b>	<b>Very Low</b> 39.0 <b>37.8</b>	Low 21.8 <b>21.8</b>	<b>Medium</b> 18.0 <b>17.8</b>	High 21.2 <b>22.6</b>	<b>Average</b> 55.4 <b>56.2</b>

# **Overall wellbeing** in Q1 2016 notably **above average** for:

- sales/clerical, "Other" & technical workers
- Australians with a diploma
- Widows and men over 50
- those earning between \$50-75,000

### It was notably **below average** for:

- Australians living in WA, SA/NT & rural towns
- low income earners
- women aged 30-49,
- high school leavers

# In terms of **life satisfaction**, wellbeing was notably **above average** for:

- Australians with a diploma
- technical and sales/clerical workers
- those living in a one person household
- men over 50.

### It was notably **below average** for:

- Australians living in Tasmania and WA
- labourers and defactos,
- young women

# In terms of **life worth**, wellbeing was notably **above average** for:

- widows
- those earning \$50-100,000
- had a diploma
- sales/clerical workers

### It was notably **below average** for:

- labourers
- Australians living in WA and in rural towns
- young women
- defactos

# In terms of **happiness**, wellbeing was notably **above average** for:

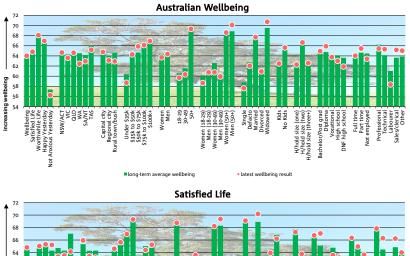
- Australians with kids
- sales/clerical and technical workers
- men over 50
- widows

### It was notably **below average** for:

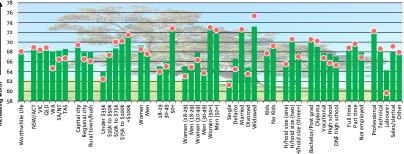
- Australians that did not have children
- labourers
- Australians living in WA and in rural towns
- low income earners (less than \$35,000)

## In terms of not being anxious yesterday,

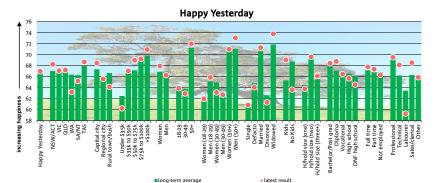
- wellbeing was notably above **average** for:
- "Other" and part time workers
- Australians with children
- defactos
- It was notably **below average** for:
- professional workers
- high school leavers
- singles
- young men and women aged 30-49
- low income earners (less than \$35,000)
- Australians living in Victoria

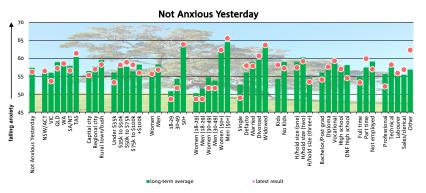






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Alan Oster Group Chief Economist +61 3 8634 2927

Jacqui Brand Personal Assistant +61 3 8634 2181

### Industry & Behavioural Economics

Dean Pearson Head of Industry & Behavioural Economics +(61 3) 8634 2331

Robert De lure Senior Economist - Industry & Behavioural Economics +(61 3) 8634 4611

Brien McDonald Senior Economist - Industry & Behavioural Economics +(61 3) 8634 3837

Steven Wu Senior Analyst – Industry & Behavioural Economics +(61 3) 9208 2929

# Australian Economics and Commodities

Riki Polygenis Head of Australian Economics +(61 3) 8697 9534

James Glenn Senior Economist - Australia +(61 2) 9237 8017

Vyanne Lai Economist - Australia +(61 3) 8634 0198

Phin Ziebell Economist - Agribusiness +(61 4) 75 940 662

Amy Li Economist - Australia +(61 3) 8634 1563

#### International Economics

Tom Taylor Head of Economics, International +61 3 8634 1883

Tony Kelly Senior Economist - International +(61 3) 9208 5049

Gerard Burg Senior Economist - Asia +(61 3) 8634 2788

John Sharma Economist - Sovereign Risk +(61 3) 8634 4514

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