

NABHEALTH AUSTRALIAN WELLBEING SURVEY

HOW IS WELLBEING CHANGING DURING COVID-19 & WHAT ARE THE KEY DRIVERS? Q2 2021



NAB Behavioural & Industry Economics

July 2021

WELLBEING UP & NOW AT ITS HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE 2019. RESILIENCE BUILDING AS ANXIETY FALLS, BUT NOT FOR ALL. NSW LOCKDOWN A KEY RISK. WELLBEING UP FOR WORKING AUSTRALIANS, BUT FALLS FOR THE UNEMPLOYED.

Key Messages: Wellbeing levels have risen to their highest levels since Q3 2019, despite rising concern over the COVID virus. Resilience is building, with a key driver of higher wellbeing driven by falling anxiety. But, while many have bounced back from the challenges of the pandemic, a significant minority have not. More than 1 in 3 Australians continue to report “high” anxiety levels. Wellbeing fell among low income earners and remains low for several key groups including the unemployed, those that lost their main source of income because of COVID and young people. Anxiety remains particularly concerning among young men. Wellbeing continues to rise with income, but Australians earning between \$75-100,000 p.a. have replaced those on higher incomes as the highest wellbeing group for the first time since 2014. While most Australians don’t want their lives to return to exactly as they were before COVID, a growing number of us are looking back more fondly on the old “normal”. NAB will continue to monitor any changes in wellbeing as lockdown continues in NSW. Previous extended lockdowns in VIC saw a significant impact on wellbeing in that state, but more positively, wellbeing levels snapped back once restrictions were eased.

The **NABHealth Australian Wellbeing Index** rose in Q2 to 65.1 pts to its highest level since Q3 2019, with all wellbeing measures (happiness, anxiety, life worth and life satisfaction), above survey average levels. SA/NT has replaced TAS as the state with the highest wellbeing. It is lowest in NSW/ACT and VIC, although wellbeing did rise in VIC. The survey was taken between June 10-23. While it does not capture the full impacts of recent COVID events in NSW, VIC and SA, residents of VIC had moved into lockdown, and towards the end of the period, NSW had started to implement COVID related restrictions. Not surprisingly, the level of concern over the virus has jumped, particularly in NSW, VIC and the ACT, after falling for two consecutive quarters. Outside of direct health concerns, Australians biggest COVID worries remain the economy - although fewer of us expressed this concern. With international borders still effectively closed and growing uncertainty over domestic borders, 4 in 10 consumers also identified travel movements and restrictions, up from the previous quarter, followed by the ability of the healthcare system to cope.

Against this background Australians are showing resilience, with the biggest uplift in wellbeing in Q2 driven by a fall in anxiety. Resilience is important in how we cope with adversity. Our capacity for resilience can grow when we are confronted with difficult times. Most people dislike major departures from their daily routines only to discover they are more adaptable than they first believed. Most of us have the ability to bounce back from adversity. But a significant minority do not. More than 1 in 3 (36%) Australians continue to report “high” anxiety levels (down from 43% in early-2021). And, while in aggregate wellbeing rose, it fell among people earning less than \$35,000 p.a. (60.8). Money impacts not just how we see our lives today but also the future. While almost 1 in 2 (46%) Australians earning over \$100,000 p.a. feel optimistic when thinking ahead, this compares to fewer than 1 in 5 (16%) among those earning less than \$35,000 p.a. Other low wellbeing groups include: the unemployed; those that lost their main source of income because of COVID; labourers; singles; renters; and young people (although there was some improvement in Q2).

Australians in the 18-29 age group have consistently reported the lowest wellbeing but did see an improvement in Q2 (up 1.0 pt to 60.0). Encouragingly, this was led by improved anxiety levels (up 4.0 to 50.9) - though they remain 22 pts lower than the over 65 group (73.9). Anxiety remains particularly concerning among young men (49.1). NAB’s research is consistent with multiple studies showing that as people age, they accumulate emotional wisdom that leads to selection of more emotionally satisfying events, friendships and experiences leading to higher wellbeing and greater resilience. As a result, during a crisis like pandemic, older adults may be less negatively affected by mental health outcomes than other age groups. Another protective factor for older people can be the quality (rather than the number) of their social connections, helping to combat issues of loneliness and isolation. Studies have also consistently shown that having strong interpersonal relationships and community support (giving and receiving care) is associated with better recovery from traumatic events.

Other higher wellbeing groups include married people, home owners, 2-person households, couples without children, higher income earners (\$75-100,000 p.a. & over \$100,000 p.a.), men aged 50-64 and professional workers. Australians earning between \$75-100,000 p.a. replaced those earning over \$100,000 as the highest wellbeing group by income for the first time since Q4 2014.

Since COVID emerged in Australia we have been tracking lifestyle and behavioural changes. Many people have reframed their COVID experience as an opportunity for positive change and growth. Despite the challenges, some aspects of life have improved and there has been some reluctance to fully return to our pre-COVID lives. When people experience change for the better, it can become extremely difficult to persuade them to go back to something perceived as less desirable. For example, for some an important positive outcome of the pandemic has been the opportunity to spend more time with loved ones and to refocus on what really matters to support wellbeing. But as the impacts of COVID continue to play out, a growing number of us want our lives to return to as before. While some key concerns remain (particularly in regard to the environment/pollution, pace of life, time commuting to work, time with family, previous consumption levels and time spent driving), we are noticeably less concerned.

NAB's survey also identifies various factors Australians associate with higher and lower wellbeing. Our pets continue to contribute positively to the emotional wellbeing of most Australians. Other key areas include: personal safety; our homes; and family and personal relationships. This is consistent with research that has found people with strong connections often recover better from a crisis. Other key drivers include standard of living, religion, faith and spirituality and feeling part of our local community. Debt (outside of mortgages), events like abuse and victimisation, substance use or abuse and mortgages are the key detractors and for significantly more people in Q2. Lack of time is also significant.

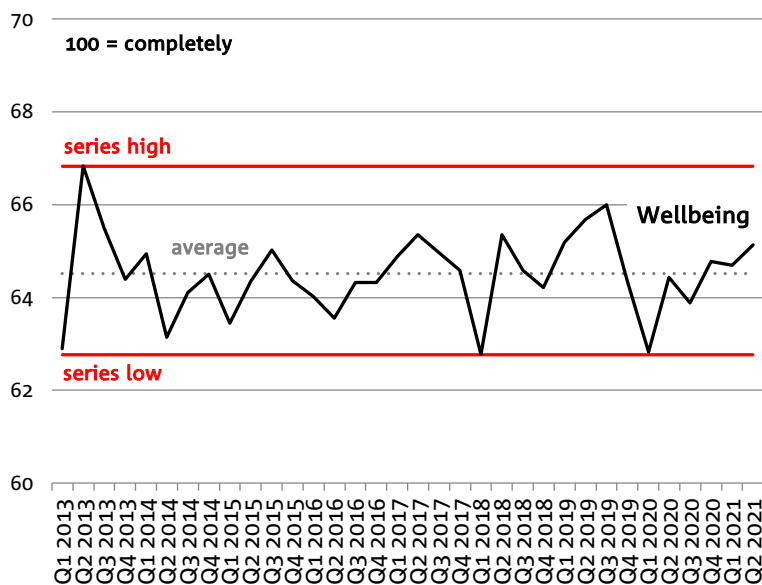
Noticeably more younger Australians are being negatively impacted by debts, lack of time, buying selling or finding a home and work or job issues. More people in the 50-64 age group identified sleep, physical appearance, ability to fund retirement and events such as abuse, and victimisation as key detractors.

For some, the impact of COVID has been more enduring. While for many life has moved on, resilience has grown and wellbeing has recovered, for others it has not and the impacts may linger for years to come. Unemployed Australians have consistently rated their emotional wellbeing the lowest of all groups. Amid improving employment conditions, wellbeing in Q2 lifted for both full time (64.5) and part time (62.8) workers. In contrast, self-reported wellbeing levels for unemployed Australians fell (down 2.1 pts to 49.8 pts) to its lowest level in 2 years.

Having a job means a lot more to us than simply earning a living. Whether paid or unpaid, working is important for maintaining wellbeing. In general, our physical and mental health improves when we work, providing an important sense of purpose. Employed Australians rate all aspects of their wellbeing - life satisfaction, life worth, happiness and anxiety - significantly better. In Q2, full time workers in particular reported a noticeable improvement in their anxiety levels (up 2.1 pts to 54.7). Full time workers typically derive greater wellbeing benefits across most domains than part time workers. The unemployed report considerably lowers of wellbeing (when compared to full time and part time workers) in regard to their standard of living, mental wellbeing, physical health, work/job issues, homes, perceptions of the future, and ability to fund their retirement.

PART 1: EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

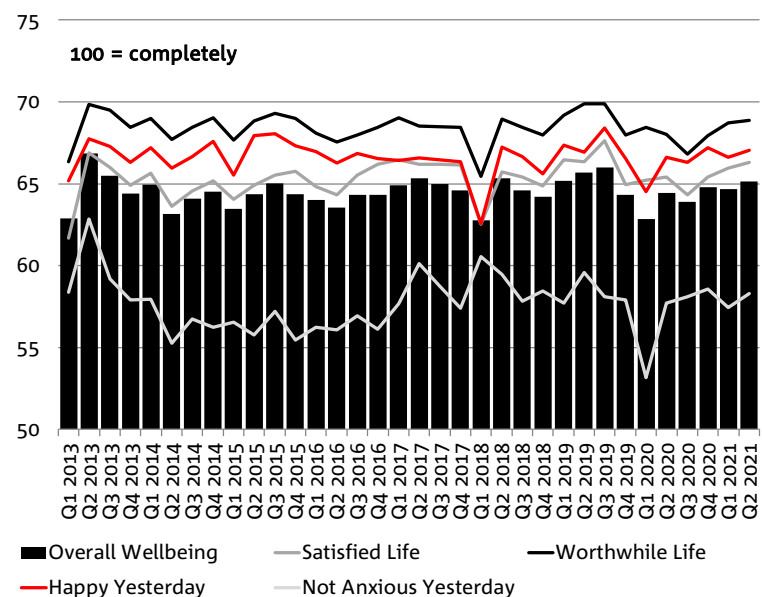
NAB HEALTH AUSTRALIAN WELLBEING INDEX



The NABHealth Australian Wellbeing Index recovered to 65.1 pts in Q2, after having fallen to 64.7 pts in the previous quarter. As a result, wellbeing has risen to its highest level since Q3 2019, and has recovered strongly since Q1 2020 when a sharp spike in anxiety associated with the outbreak of the COVID pandemic saw it fall to survey low levels. It is also encouraging that despite the re-emergence of new COVID challenges in some parts of the country during the survey period (June 10-23), all wellbeing measures now sit above survey average levels.

In Q2, wellbeing improved most in relation to anxiety. On average, Australians scored the “not anxious yesterday” question at 58.3 pts, up from 57.4 pts in the previous quarter (a higher score signals lower anxiety), putting anxiety at its lowest level since mid-2019. But challenges remain with 36% of all Australians still reporting “high” levels - though down from 43% at the onset of the pandemic in Q1 2020 .

NAB HEALTH AUSTRALIAN WELLBEING INDEX



Australians were more content in the June quarter, with the happiness measure rising to 67.0 pts (66.6 pts in Q1). Life satisfaction also improved to 66.3 pts (65.9 pts in Q1), while our sense of life worth climbed slightly to 68.9 pts (68.7 pts in Q1), and it continues to add the most to overall wellbeing.

Wellbeing levels however continue to vary significantly across demographic groups. The charts on the following page show that it was highest in the over 65 age group (73.9 pts) - for both men (74.2 pts) and women (73.6 pts) - and for retirees (73.1 pts). Wellbeing in these groups was also significantly higher than in all other groups and is consistent with “socio-emotional selective theory” which postulates that as people age they accumulate emotional wisdom that leads to selection of more emotionally satisfying events, friendships and experiences leading to higher wellbeing.

Other high wellbeing groups in Q2 included people who were married (68.7 pts), lived in a house that they owned (68.7 pts), lived in a 2-person household (67.9 pts), did not have children (67.2 pts), earned \$75-100,000 p.a (67.3 pts) or over \$100,000 p.a. (67.0 pts), men aged 50-64 (66.8 pts), people who had not lost their main source of income due to COVID (66.6 pts) an professional workers (66.2 pts).

The lowest wellbeing groups were unemployed (49.8 pts), had lost their main source of income because of COVID (56.4 pts), worked as labourers (57.3 pts), were single (57.8 pts), lived in a rented apartment (58.7 pts) or house (59.8 pts), were 18-29 years old (60.0 pts) - both men (59.5 pts) and women (60.5 pts), or were earning less than \$35,000 p.a. (60.8 pts).

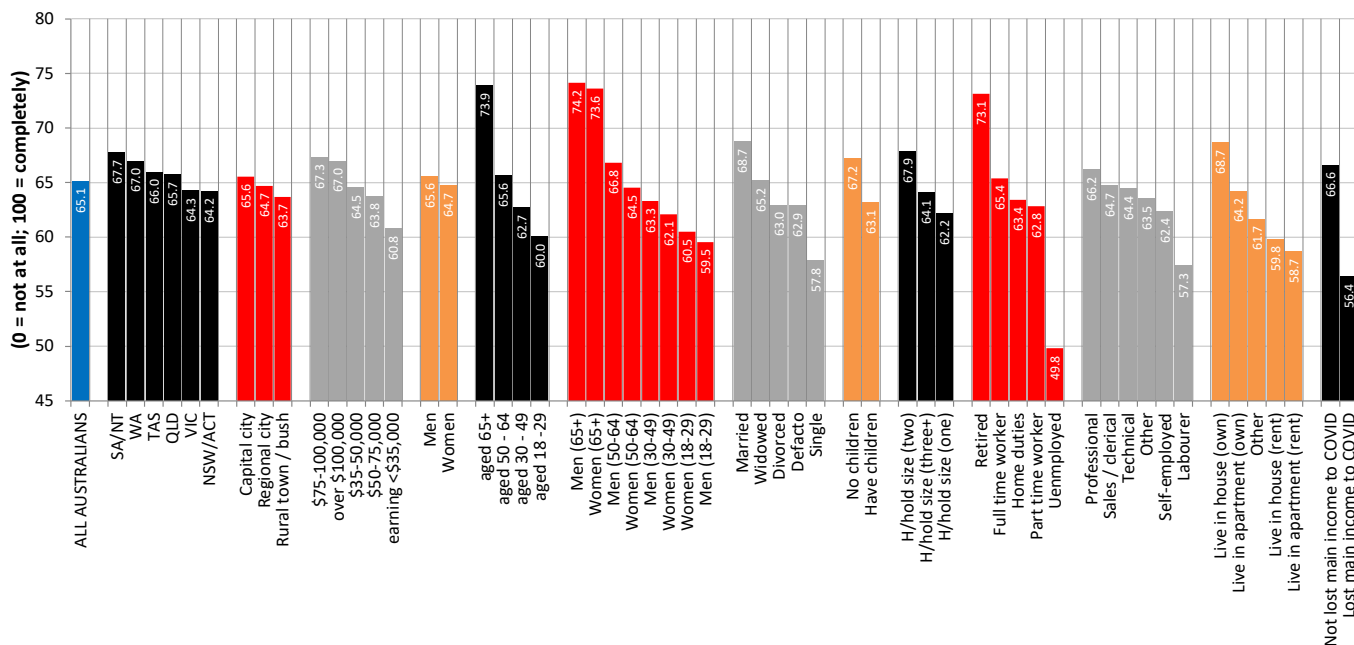
SA/NT (67.7 pts) replaced TAS for the highest wellbeing in Q2 largely due to a significant improvement in anxiety levels. Wellbeing was lowest by some margin in NSW/ACT (64.2 pts) and VIC (64.3 pts) - although overall wellbeing in VIC improved during the quarter despite entering into lockdown and extended restrictions - see Appendix 1 for individual state charts. People in capital cities (65.9 pts) had the highest wellbeing, with city dwellers also reporting the highest wellbeing for all measures.

By income, it was particularly interesting that Australians earning between \$75-100,000 p.a. led the way for wellbeing and replaced the highest income group - the first time since Q4 2014 that this has happened. People in the \$75-100,000 p.a. income bracket also reported higher wellbeing across all measures, particularly anxiety. Wellbeing levels for people earning less than \$35,000 p.a. however fell (down 1.2 pts to 60.8) and was lower for all survey measures.

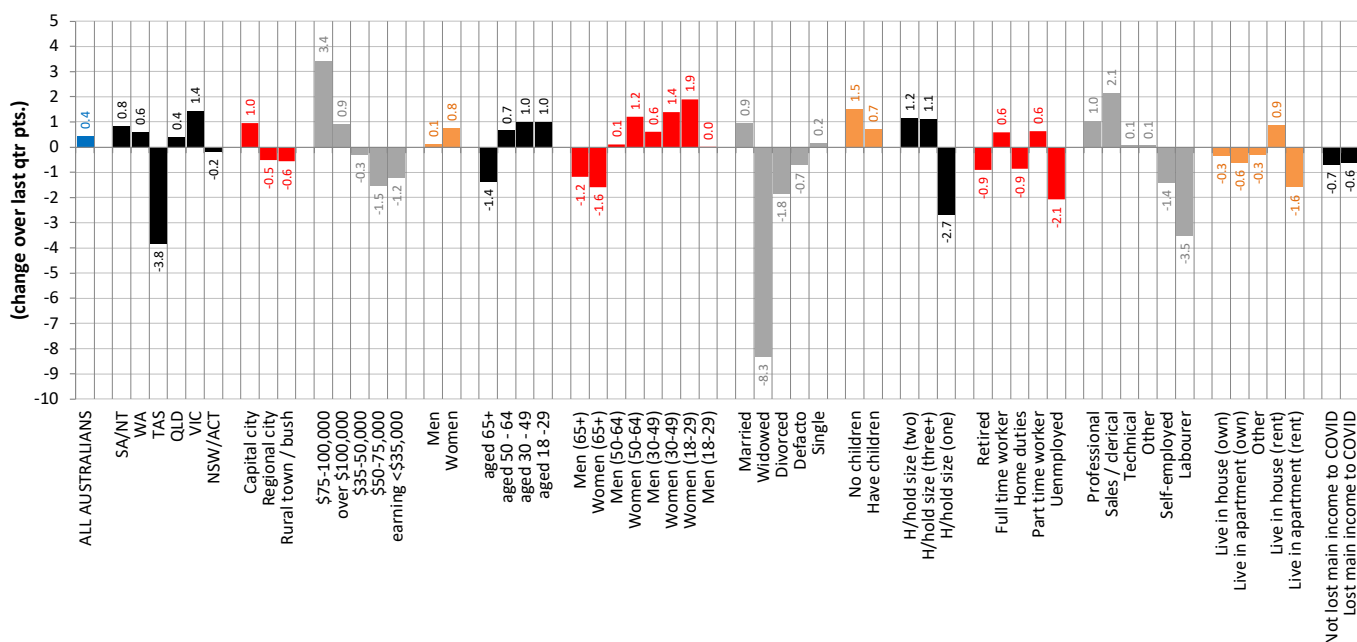
Both men (up 0.1 pts to 65.6) and women (up 0.8 pts to 64.7) reported higher wellbeing in Q2 but it remained higher for men for the sixth consecutive quarter - though the gap narrowed to just 0.9 pts from a recent high of 2.4 pts in Q4 2020. Men continued to report higher wellbeing than women for all measures, except anxiety where they are now on par.

While Australians over the age of 65 continue to rate their overall wellbeing (and all sub-measures) significantly higher than all other age groups, self-reported wellbeing in this group was somewhat lower in Q2 (down 2.4 pts to 73.9), and lower for all measures particularly anxiety. However, Australians in the 18-29 age group who have consistently reported the lowest wellbeing saw an improvement (up 1.0 pts to 60.0 pts). Encouragingly, this was led by improved anxiety levels (up 4.0 pts to 50.9) - though this was still scored some 22 pts lower than in the over 65 group. Anxiety in this age group remains particularly troublesome for young men (49.1 pts) - although those with “high” anxiety in this group report they are also coping relatively well.

NAB AUSTRALIAN WELLBEING INDEX - ALL CATEGORIES



NAB AUSTRALIAN WELLBEING INDEX CHANGE - ALL CATEGORIES



WHAT IS DRIVING WELLBEING?

Since 2015, NAB has been asking Australians what impact (positive or negative) do several factors have on their ratings of personal wellbeing.

While self-reported wellbeing increased in Q2, we noted a widespread decline in the net number of Australians who were deriving wellbeing benefits in many areas, as well as a noticeable increase in the net number who said other factors had detracted from it

Our pets are still contributing positively to the emotional wellbeing of most Australians - but in Q2 the number who said it contributed positively fell to +58% (+62% in Q1). Other areas that made a positive difference for most people included personal safety (+47% vs. +49% in Q1), their homes (+47% vs. +50% in Q1) and family and personal relationships (unchanged at +47%).

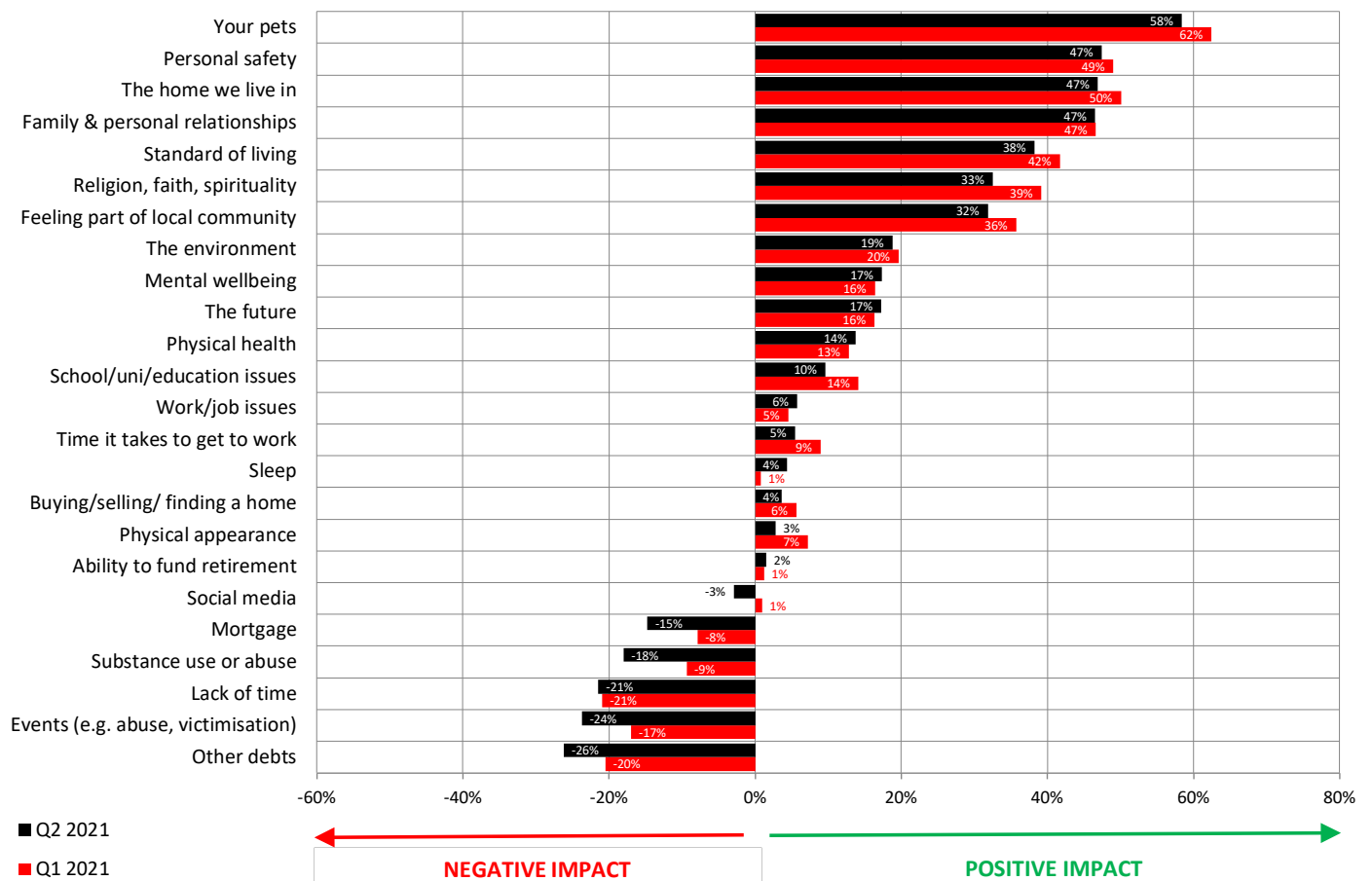
Other key drivers included standard of living (+38% down from +42%), religion, faith and spirituality (+33% down from +39%) and feeling part of our local community (+32% down from +36%), with all three factors contributing positively for noticeably fewer Australians this quarter.

In other findings, the contributions from the environment (+19%), mental wellbeing (+17%), the future (+17%) and physical health (+14%) were broadly unchanged, school and education issues had a positive contribution for noticeably more people (+10% vs. +14%), but the positive impact on wellbeing from education (+10% vs. +14%), time it takes to get to work (+4% vs. +9%) and physical appearance (+3% vs. +7%) was lower.

Significantly more Australians on balance also indicated that other debts (-26% vs. -20%), events like abuse and victimisation (-24% vs. -17%), substance use or abuse (-18% vs. -9%) and mortgages (-15% vs. -8%) had detracted from their wellbeing in Q2.

Lack of time was also again identified as a key detractor, but was the net impact was unchanged (-21%).

WELLBEING DRIVERS (NET BALANCE)



But perceptions of how these things impact wellbeing can vary widely by gender and age. By gender, more (or less) men on balance reported a positive (or negative) contribution from all these factors with a few exceptions - pets (which played a positive role for the same number of men and women at +58%), religion, faith or spirituality which played a positive role for slightly more women (+34%) than men (+31%), and feeling part of the local community where the impact was also broadly similar (+31% women: +33% men).

Areas where the divide was biggest included mental wellbeing, which contributed positively in net terms for more men (+28%) than women (+7%), physical health (+24% men; +4% women), work and job issues (+15% men; -4% women), sleep (+13% men; -4% women); physical appearance (+17% men; -11% women); ability to fund retirement (+10% men; -6% women); mortgages (-5% men; -24% women); lack of time (-12% men; -31% women), events such as victimisation and abuse (-15% men; -33% women) and other debts (-15% men; -37% women) - see table below.

WELLBEING DRIVERS: BY GENDER & AGE

	Overall	Women	Men	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Your pets	58%	58%	58%	56%	61%	61%	53%
Personal safety	47%	44%	51%	43%	46%	44%	57%
The home we live in	47%	43%	51%	39%	40%	50%	63%
Family & personal relationships	47%	44%	49%	45%	45%	43%	54%
Standard of living	38%	33%	43%	32%	36%	36%	51%
Religion, faith, spirituality	33%	34%	31%	29%	38%	24%	35%
Feeling part of local community	32%	31%	33%	28%	30%	30%	41%
The environment	19%	16%	22%	14%	17%	17%	29%
Mental wellbeing	17%	7%	28%	10%	14%	11%	36%
The future	17%	10%	24%	11%	21%	9%	25%
Physical health	14%	4%	24%	18%	16%	5%	14%
School/uni/education issues	10%	2%	17%	1%	19%	4%	7%
Work/job issues	6%	-4%	15%	-5%	10%	9%	7%
Time it takes to get to work	5%	-1%	11%	8%	8%	2%	-1%
Sleep	4%	-4%	13%	10%	5%	-9%	11%
Buying/selling/ finding a home	4%	-2%	10%	-5%	11%	2%	2%
Physical appearance	3%	-11%	17%	-4%	5%	-7%	17%
Ability to fund retirement	2%	-6%	10%	0%	1%	-7%	13%
Social media	-3%	-9%	3%	-3%	-2%	-2%	-5%
Mortgage	-15%	-24%	-5%	-13%	-13%	-19%	-17%
Substance use or abuse	-18%	-25%	-12%	-17%	-13%	-22%	-25%
Lack of time	-21%	-31%	-12%	-33%	-27%	-21%	2%
Events (e.g. abuse, victimisation)	-24%	-33%	-15%	-26%	-18%	-31%	-25%
Other debts	-26%	-37%	-15%	-31%	-26%	-27%	-19%

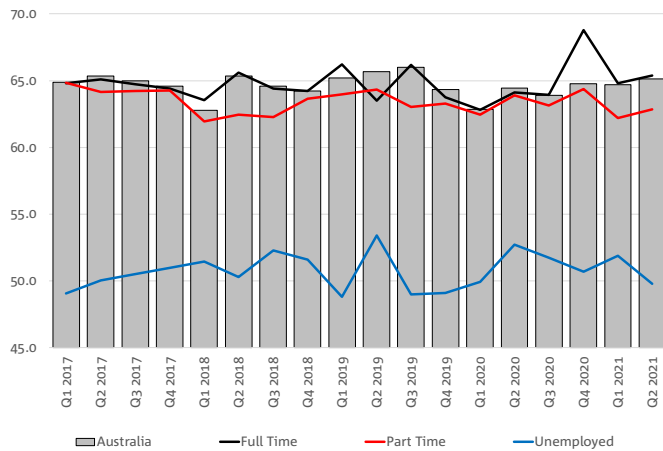
By age, more Australians in the 30-49 and 50-64 groups enjoyed positive wellbeing benefits from their pets (+61%). The 30-49 group were also the most positively impacted by religion, faith and spirituality (+38%), education issues (+19%) and buying, selling or finding a home (+11%). In contrast, noticeably more people in the 50-64 age group said that sleep (-9%), their physical appearance (-7%), ability to fund retirement (-7%) and events such as abuse, and victimisation detracted from their wellbeing than any other age group.

Significantly more Australians in the over 65 group enjoyed positive wellbeing benefits from their personal safety (+57%), homes (+63%), family and personal relationships (+54%), standard of living (+51%), feeling part of their local communities (+41%), the environment (+29%), mental wellbeing (+26%), the environment (+29%), physical appearance (+17%) and ability to fund retirement (+13%) than did other age groups.

But noticeably more younger Australians in the 18-29 age group indicated that their wellbeing was negatively impacted by other debts (-31%), lack of time (-33%), buying selling or finding a home (-5%) and work or job issues (-5%).

DEEP DIVE: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYMENT IN SUPPORTING WELLBEING

WELLBEING: EMPLOYMENT STATUS



Unemployed Australians have consistently rated their emotional wellbeing the lowest of all groups since we first started tracking their wellbeing in early-2017. Since that time, we have also noted a significantly large wellbeing gap between those with jobs (either full or part time) and unemployed people. Amid improving employment conditions, wellbeing in Q2 lifted for both full time (up 0.6 pts to 64.5) and part time (also up 0.6 pts to 62.8) workers. In contrast, self-reported wellbeing levels for unemployed Australians fell (down 2.1 pts to 49.8 pts) to its lowest level in 2 years.

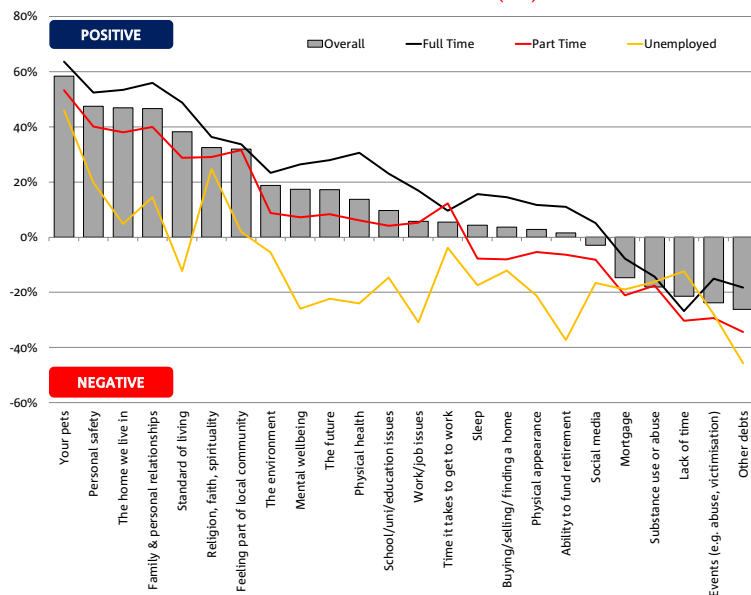
Not only do Australians with jobs enjoy higher wellbeing than those unemployed, they rate all aspects of their wellbeing - life satisfaction, life worth, happiness and anxiety - significantly better. The gap between both full and part time workers was biggest for life satisfaction at 24.3 pts and 19.9 pts respectively.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING: EMPLOYMENT STATUS - Q2 2021

	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed
Overall Emotional Wellbeing	65.4	62.8	49.8
- Life Satisfaction	68.6	64.3	44.3
- Worthwhile Life	69.9	67.8	52.6
- Happy Yesterday	68.4	64.3	51.9
- Not Anxious Yesterday	54.7	55.0	50.4

In Q2, full time workers reported a noticeable improvement in their anxiety levels (up 2.1 pts to 54.7), and modest gains in happiness (up 0.7 pts to 68.4 pts). Life satisfaction and life worth were broadly unchanged. Part time workers enjoyed a noticeable uplift in life satisfaction (up 2.1 pts to 64.3) and lower anxiety (up 0.7 pts to 55.0), with their sense of life worth and happiness basically unchanged. But all measures of wellbeing fell for unemployed Australians, led by life satisfaction (down 3.3 pts to 44.3), happiness (down 2.8 pts to 51.9 pts), anxiety (down 1.4 pts to 50.4) and sense of life worth (down 0.8 pts to 52.6).

WELLBEING DRIVERS - EMPLOYMENT (NET)



Unemployed Australians also derive lower wellbeing benefits from all key drivers than do full and part time workers except for a lack of time, where it detracts for noticeably fewer unemployed people.

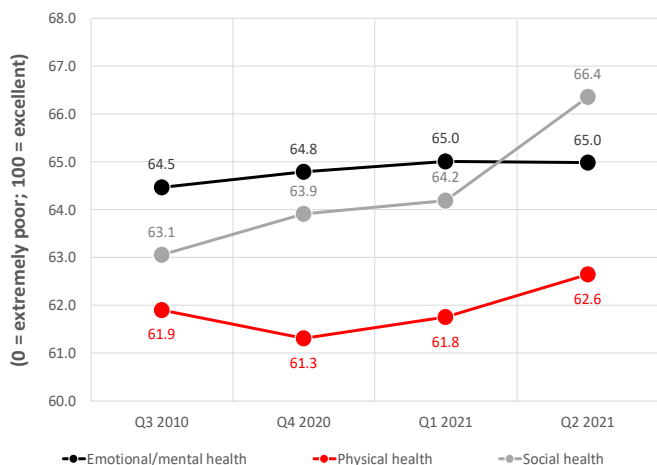
Moreover, the number of unemployed people who said these drivers detracted from their wellbeing outweighed those who said it added to it in most areas except their pets (+46%), religion, faith and spirituality (+25%), personal safety (+20%), family and personal relationships (+14%), their homes (+5%) and feeling part of their local community (+2%). But even here the positive wellbeing impact of these drivers was less widespread than it was among full and part time workers.

Unemployed Australians also fall well behind in most areas when compared to the average Australian.

Areas where the unemployed fell most behind compared to those with jobs were standard of living (-12% unemployed; +49% full time; +29% part time), mental wellbeing (-26% unemployed; +26% full time; +7% part time), physical health (-24% unemployed; +31% full time; +6% part time), work/job issues (-31% unemployed; +17% full time; +5% part time), their homes (+5% unemployed; +53% full time; +38% part time), the future (-22% unemployed; +28% full time; +8% part time), and the ability to fund their retirement (-37% unemployed; +11% full time; -6% part time).

OUR EMOTIONAL/MENTAL, PHYSICAL & SOCIAL HEALTH

RATING OUR HEALTH TODAY: OVERALL



On average, Australians consider themselves to be ‘moderately’ healthy across all aspects of their health - emotional or mental health (ability to cope with normal stresses of life and take pleasure and satisfaction from life), physical health (soundness of the body and freedom from disease and abnormality) and social health (quality of interactions and meaningful relationships with others).

In Q2, self-reported health outcomes improved for social health, rising to 66.4 pts from 64.2 pts in Q1. Physical health was also rated higher, rising to 62.6 pts from 61.8 pts in Q1. Emotional and mental health was however unchanged at 65.0 pts. This means that for the first time, Australians rated their social health stronger than any other area, but their physical health remains lowest.

Health outcomes vary widely by gender & age and income. Men in all age groups still rate their health higher in all areas, except social health where women over 65 (76.3 pts) rated above men (73.1 pts). In the 18-29 group, health outcomes improved in all areas, except emotional and mental health where it fell to 61.2 pts (62.4 pts in Q1) for men. In the 30-49 group, outcomes improved for women in all areas, but men reported lower emotional and mental health (65.3 pts vs. 65.6 pts in Q1), similar levels of physical health and improved social health. In the 50-64 group, health outcomes improved in all areas for women and men, except for men’s emotional and mental health (65.5 pts vs. 65.9 pts in Q1). In the 65+ group, men reported broadly similar levels of physical and social health but improved emotional and mental health. Women however reported improved outcomes for physical and social health, but lower outcomes for emotional and mental health - see table below.

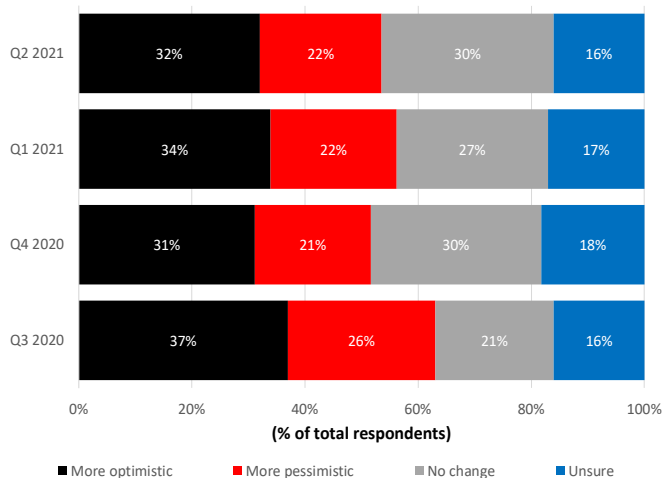
By income, health outcomes were much stronger for physical and social health in the highest income group when compared to the lowest income group, but emotional and mental health was rated about the same.

RATING OUR HEALTH TODAY: GENDER & AGE

	Women 18-29	Men 18-29	Women 30-49	Men 30-49	Women 50-64	Men 50-64	Women 65+	Men 65+	Lowest Income Group	Highest Income Group
Emotional/mental health										
- Q2 2021	56.0	61.2	59.3	65.3	62.2	65.5	75.1	79.2	65.4	65.8
- Q1 2021	57.7	62.4	58.6	65.6	59.4	65.9	77.6	77.2	62.6	67.0
- Q4 2020	56.7	67.5	58.4	62.5	62.1	66.5	73.1	77.7	59.1	66.5
- Q3 2020	57.7	63.8	59.3	61.1	61.6	62.2	76.0	79.6	61.3	65.7
Physical Health										
- Q2 2021	59.1	65.2	60.0	66.2	58.2	61.7	64.1	66.3	60.8	66.5
- Q1 2021	63.2	64.8	57.0	66.2	55.4	58.2	63.5	66.0	53.8	66.1
- Q4 2020	59.7	68.6	56.5	63.4	56.6	57.7	64.4	65.3	55.1	63.8
- Q3 2020	62.9	67.7	59.1	61.5	57.4	56.2	64.9	67.4	55.3	65.1
Social Health										
- Q2 2021	63.8	64.4	62.3	65.9	64.8	62.8	76.3	73.1	63.9	68.9
- Q1 2021	59.9	65.3	59.3	63.8	59.4	60.6	75.7	73.4	58.1	67.5
- Q4 2020	57.8	65.6	59.9	61.7	61.5	62.2	72.7	74.3	58.9	65.6
- Q3 2020	59.4	63.6	59.8	58.4	62.0	59.7	74.4	72.3	59.3	65.1

HOW AUSTRALIANS FEEL ABOUT THE FUTURE

HOW DOES THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE IN GENERAL MAKE YOU FEEL?



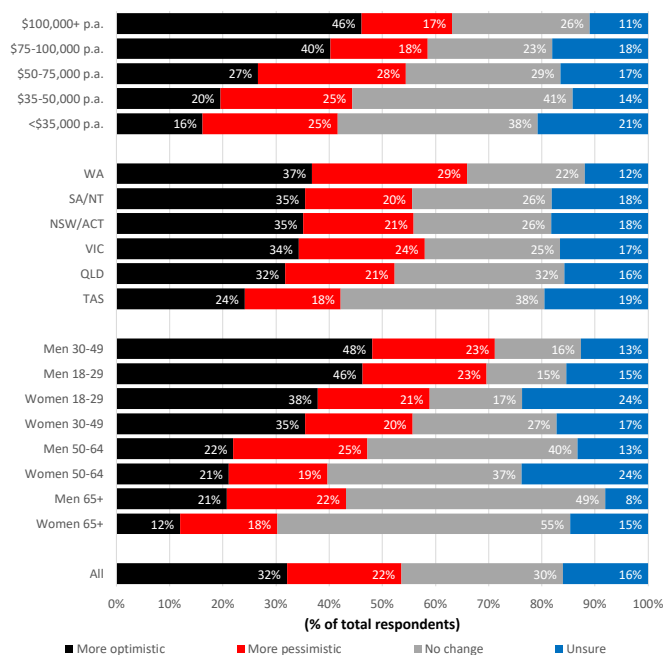
Our feelings towards the future can have a very real impact on our wellbeing - it can make us feel more optimistic or pessimistic about our life ahead.

In Q2, however, the future seemed a little less bright than it did last quarter. When Australians were asked to think about the future, 32% said it made them feel more optimistic, down from 34% in the previous survey.

While a similar number (22%) were more pessimistic, the number of people who saw no change ahead increased slightly to 30% (27% in Q1).

But nearly 1 in 5 Australians remain unsure of their feelings - though this number fell slightly to 16% in Q2 from 17% in the Q1 survey.

HOW DOES THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE IN GENERAL MAKE YOU FEEL?



By gender and age, the number of optimists was highest for men aged 30-49 (48%) and 18-29 (46%). Optimism was also relatively high for women aged 18-29 (38%) and 30-49 (35%). Older Australians were far less optimistic - only 1 in 5 men (22%) and women (21%) aged 50-64 and men over the age of 65 (21%) expressed optimism, and only 12% of women over the age of 65.

Optimism was broadly similar across most states, ranging from 37% in WA to 32% in QLD. TAS was the outlier with optimists numbering just 24%. Interestingly, WA also had the highest number of pessimists in the country (29%) and noticeably ahead of VIC (24%) the next highest.

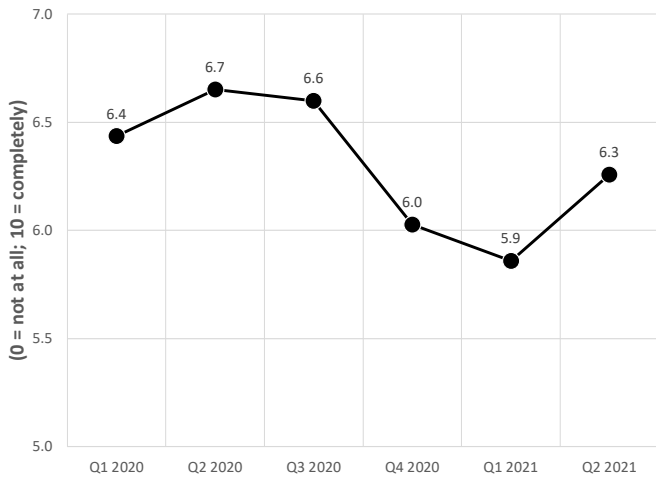
Having money also seems to impact how we view the future. Almost 1 in 2 (46%) of Australians earning over \$100,000 p.a. felt optimistic about the future. This stepped down in each income category to just 16% (who were also the most uncertain of the future at 21%).

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WELLBEING

Since May 2021, Australia has experienced a number of COVID cases across the country which have escalated significantly at the time of writing (with large parts of the country in lockdown or facing restrictions). From June 10-23 when the survey was conducted, Victoria had already moved into lockdown which was later extended in the Greater Melbourne area. But towards the end of the survey period, NSW had also started to implement measures as the number of cases started to rise.

Against this background, we explored the level of concern among Australians over the pandemic, the extent they want their life to return to exactly how it was before the pandemic, if they are considering moving house to more of a lifestyle property or to another state, their top concerns regarding COVID outside of the direct health impacts and what they are most concerned about post the easing of COVID restrictions.

HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT CORONAVIRUS?



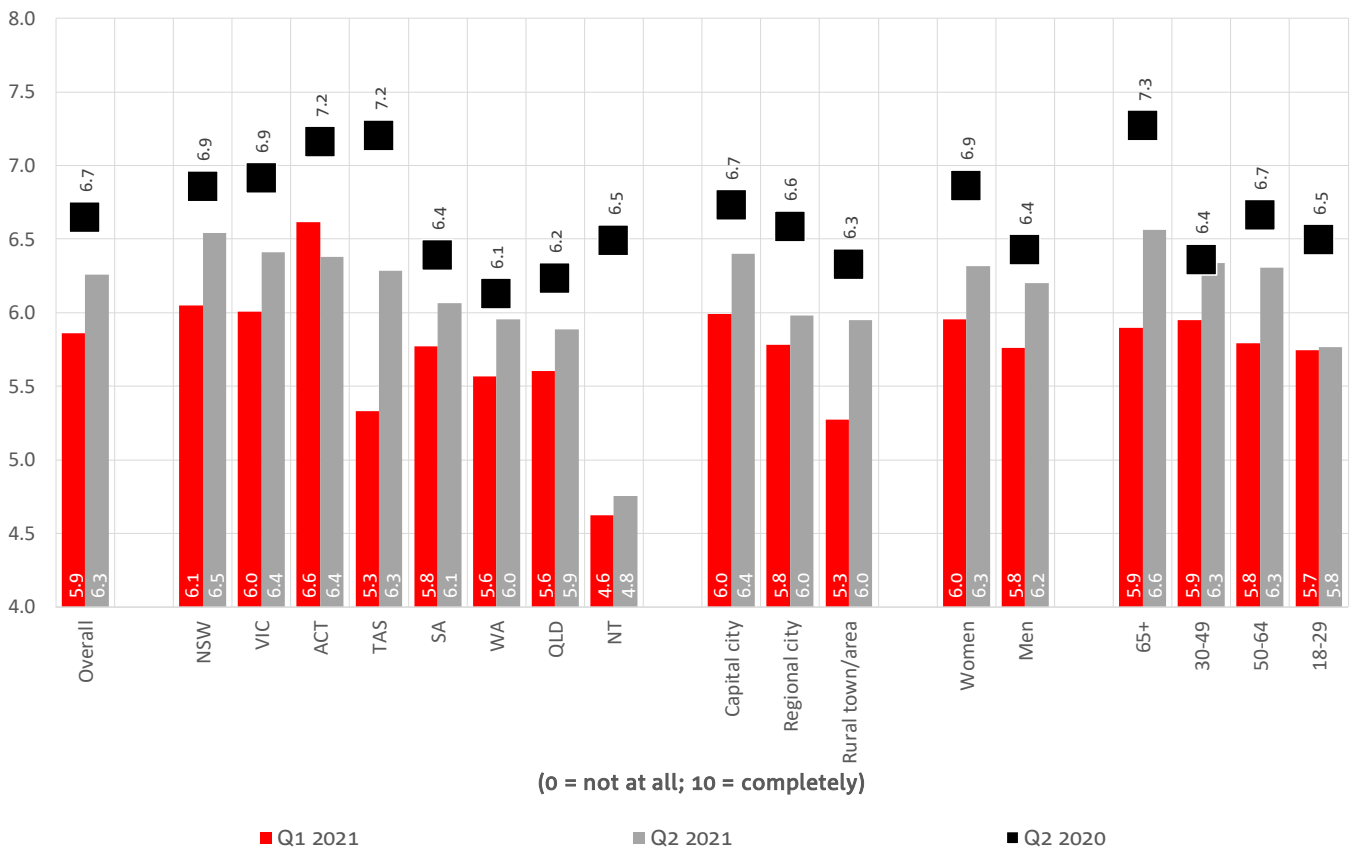
As COVID again started to become more prevalent in the community, the level of concern over the virus also increased after falling for two consecutive quarters. In Q2, the level of concern jumped sharply to 6.3 pts from 5.9 pts in the previous survey but is still below the levels seen through Q1 2020 (when the outbreak started) to Q3 2020.

The level of concern grew in all states. It was highest in NSW (6.5 pts), ahead on VIC (6.4 pts) and the ACT (6.4 pts). It increased most in TAS (up 1.0 pts to 6.3) and was lowest in the NT (4.8 pts). The level of concern was however still below the highs reported in Q2 2020 in all states and territories.

By region, concern was highest in capital cities (6.4 pts), ahead of regional cities (6.0 pts) and rural areas (6.0 pts), where the level of concern also increased the most. Despite these increases, the level of concern in all regions was below their respective peaks

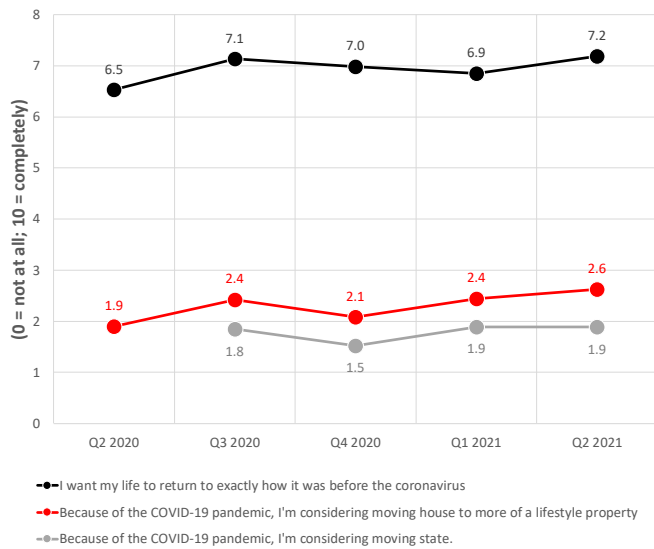
Women (6.3 pts) continue to worry slightly more than men (6.2 pts), although the level of concern rose slightly more for men. Interestingly, the gap in peak levels of concern is also much narrower for men than it is for women.

HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT CORONAVIRUS?



By age, the 65+ group (6.6 pts) replaced the 30-49 (6.3 pts) with the highest level of concern. Concern was also relatively elevated in the 50-64 group (6.3 pts) and was lowest and basically unchanged in the 18-29 age group (5.8 pts). While leading the way now, the level of concern in the 65+ group is still well below the survey high in Q2 2020. It is also lower in the 50-64 and 18-29 age groups. In the 30-49 group, it is now broadly on par with levels recorded at the same time last year.

EXTENT OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS



Have Australians changed their view about their pre-COVID life? It seems their appetite to do so has increased. When asked the rate the extent they agreed with the statement “I want my life to return to exactly how it was before the COVID-19 pandemic”, on average consumers scored a relatively high 7.2 pts (up from 6.9 pts in Q1).

The extent of agreement with this statement did however vary somewhat by state. Consumers living in the NT were in highest agreement (7.7 pts vs. 7.3 pts in Q1), followed by VIC (7.5 pts vs. 7.1 pts) and SA (7.5 pts vs. 6.8 pts). Australians living in TAS (6.5 pts vs. 7.0 pts) and QLD (6.7 pts vs. 6.6 pts) were in least agreement. Interestingly, TAS was also the only state who rated this question lower than in the previous survey

By gender, men (7.3 pts vs. 7.1 pts) remain keener to return to their old lives than women (7.0 pts vs. 6.7 pts), but the appetite to do so increased for both genders. By age, people over the age of 65 (7.9 pts vs. 7.6 pts) remain most keen to return to their old lives, and those in the 18-29 group least keen (6.7 pts vs. 6.4 pts).

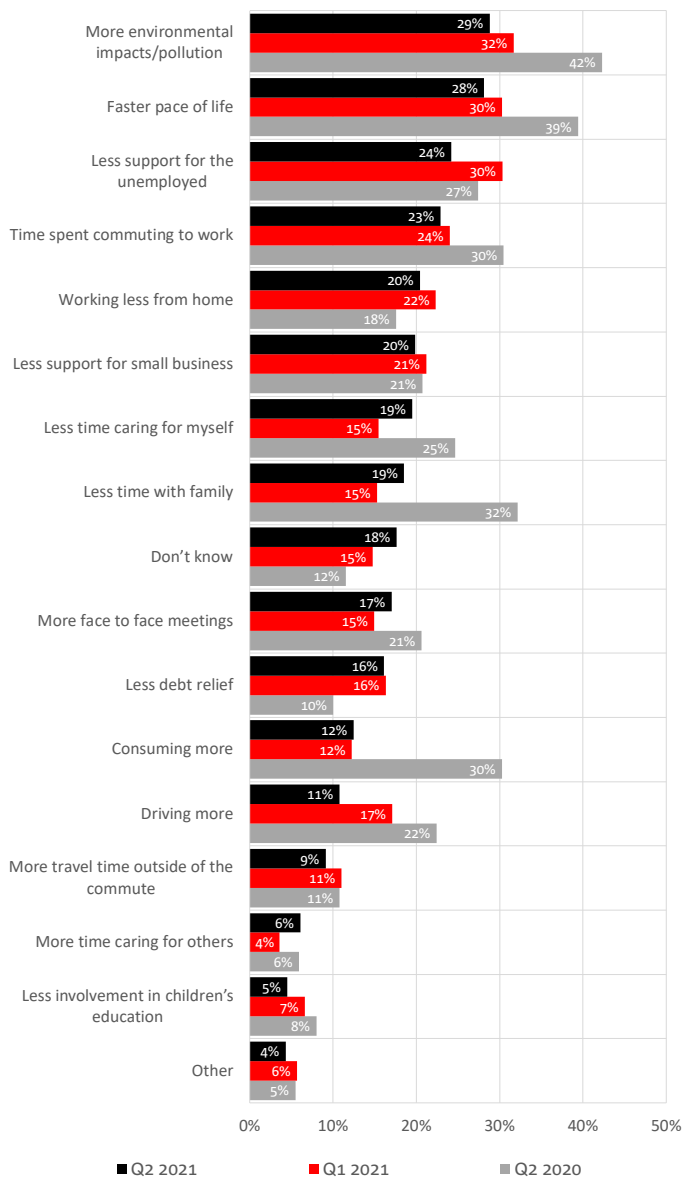
In terms of the statement “Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I’m considering state”, overall agreement was relatively low and unchanged at 1.9 pts. While this statement was scored low across the country, consideration about doing so was somewhat higher in the NT (3.2 pts vs. 1.9 pts in Q1), VIC (2.6 pts vs. 2.4 pts) and NSW (2.2 pts vs. 2.1 pts). It was lowest in QLD and much lower than in the previous survey (1.0 pts vs. 1.6 pts). By gender, men remain much more receptive to the idea of moving state (2.4 pts) than women (1.4 pts). Younger Australians in the 18-29 age group are also the most receptive to the idea of moving interstate because of COVID (2.9 pts), but noticeably less so than in the previous survey (3.4 pts). The level of agreement fell in each successive age group to just 0.6 pts in the over 65 group - although this increased a little from 0.4 pts previously.

NAB’s research also found that relatively few consumers were considering moving to a lifestyle property - although the extent they agreed with this statement increased to 2.6 pts in Q2 (2.4 pts in Q1). By state, consideration was highest in the NT (3.6 pts vs. 2.6 pts), VIC (3.2 pts vs. 2.8 pts) and NSW (2.9 pts vs. 2.7pts), and lowest in the ACT (1.7 pts), SA (1.8 pts) and QLD (1.9 pts). Men (3.0 pts) were again noticeably more receptive to the idea than women (2.3 pts), as were younger Australians (3.8 pts though a little lower than in Q1 at 4.0 pts) than the over 65 group (0.8 pts vs. 0.7 pts) - see table below (figures in parentheses are for previous quarter).

EXTENT OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS: STATE, GENDER & AGE

	I want my life to return to exactly how it was before the coronavirus	Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I'm considering moving house to more of a lifestyle property	Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I'm considering moving state.
Overall	7.2 (6.3)	2.6 (2.4)	1.9 (1.9)
NSW	7.2 (6.9)	2.9 (2.7)	2.2 (2.1)
VIC	7.5 (7.1)	3.2 (2.8)	2.6 (2.4)
QLD	6.7 (6.6)	1.9 (2.2)	1.0 (1.6)
SA	7.5 (6.8)	1.8 (2.1)	1.4 (1.6)
ACT	6.8 (6.8)	1.7 (2.2)	1.4 (1.6)
WA	7.3 (6.6)	2.0 (1.8)	1.3 (0.9)
TAS	6.5 (7.0)	2.4 (1.4)	1.8 (1.1)
NT	7.7 (7.3)	3.6 (2.6)	3.2 (1.9)
Men	7.3 (7.1)	3.0 (2.9)	2.4 (2.5)
Women	7.0 (6.7)	2.3 (2.0)	1.4 (1.3)
18-29	6.7 (6.4)	3.8 (4.0)	2.9 (3.4)
30-49	7.2 (6.7)	3.5 (3.1)	2.5 (2.4)
50-64	7.1 (6.7)	1.7 (1.5)	1.1 (1.0)
65+	7.9 (7.6)	0.8 (0.7)	0.6 (0.4)

WHAT ARE YOU MOST CONCERNED ABOUT POST THE EASING OF CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS?



We noted a significant reduction in the number of Australians who were concerned about some key aspects of life post the easing of COVID restrictions. Although their biggest concern is still returning to a world of more environmental impacts/pollution, the number citing this as a concern fell to 29% in Q2, from 32% in Q1 and 42% one year ago.

Around 28% worried about returning to a faster pace of life but this was also well down from a year ago (39%), and 23% time spent commuting to work (also down heavily from 30% one year ago). Relative to the same time last year, we also observed a large fall in the number of people who were worried about spending less time with their family (19% now; 32% last year), consuming more (12% now; 30% last year) and driving more (11% now; 22% last year).

The survey showed that women were much more concerned about returning to a faster pace of life than men (35% women; 20% men), and also about spending less time caring for themselves (24% women; 14% men) and less support for small business (23% women vs. 16% men). Noticeably more men however were concerned about the time spent commuting to work (27% men; 20% women).

Differences were more pronounced by age. Australians in the 18-29 and over 65 age group worried much more about environmental impacts and pollution.

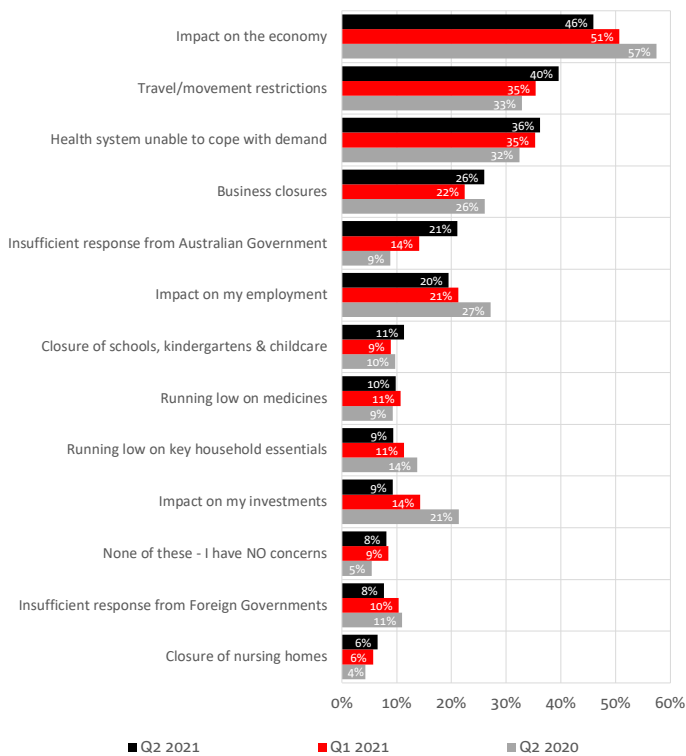
Young people were also most concerned about the faster pace of life, support for the unemployed, time spent caring for themselves, more face-to-face meetings, less debt relief, consuming and driving more and more travel time outside the commute.

In the 30-49 group it was time commuting to work, working less from home, less time with family, driving more and more time outside the commute. Around 3 in 10 people over the age of 65 worried about less support for small business - see table below.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST CONCERNED ABOUT POST THE EASING OF CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS: GENDER & AGE?

	Overall	Men	Women	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
More environmental impacts/pollution	29%	31%	27%	33%	25%	26%	35%
Faster pace of life	28%	20%	35%	35%	27%	22%	27%
Less support for the unemployed	24%	22%	26%	33%	15%	27%	26%
Time spent commuting to work	23%	27%	20%	27%	33%	9%	6%
Working less from home	20%	20%	21%	22%	27%	15%	6%
Less support for small business	20%	16%	23%	21%	14%	23%	31%
Less time caring for myself	19%	14%	24%	26%	24%	11%	6%
Less time with family	19%	16%	21%	21%	26%	7%	13%
Don't know	18%	17%	18%	11%	15%	24%	29%
More face to face meetings	17%	16%	17%	23%	19%	12%	5%
Less debt relief	16%	17%	15%	27%	14%	12%	2%
Consuming more	12%	15%	10%	18%	14%	3%	11%
Driving more	11%	11%	10%	14%	16%	4%	0%
More travel time outside of the commute	9%	12%	7%	12%	12%	6%	0%
More time caring for others	6%	8%	4%	8%	5%	6%	5%

TOP CONCERNS REGARDING CORONAVIRUS OTHER THAN DIRECT HEALTH IMPACTS



The COVID pandemic also raised many concerns outside of its direct impact on personal health. Outside of the direct health concerns, the biggest worry by some margin according to most consumers is still the impact the virus is having on the economy - although this fell to 46% (51% in Q4 and 57% at the same time last year) as the economy continued along the recovery path.

But with international borders still effectively closed and sporadic uncertainty on domestic borders, around 4 in 10 (40%) consumers continued to identify travel movements and restrictions as the area they were next most worried about, and this has risen from 35% in the previous quarter.

Although case numbers remain relatively low, 36% highlighted the ability of the healthcare system to cope, broadly unchanged from 35% in Q1.

Other areas of most concern in Q2 included business closures, which increased to 26% (from 22% in Q1) but was as high as 32% in VIC as the state entered its fifth lockdown. With controversy surrounding the slow rollout of the COVID vaccine across the country, insufficient response from Australian Government was also identified by 1 in 5 (20%) people as a top concern, up from 14% in the last quarter and 9% a year ago.

All other areas were broadly unchanged, except the impact on investments, where the number citing this as a top concern fell to 9%, from 14% in Q1 and 21% one year ago.

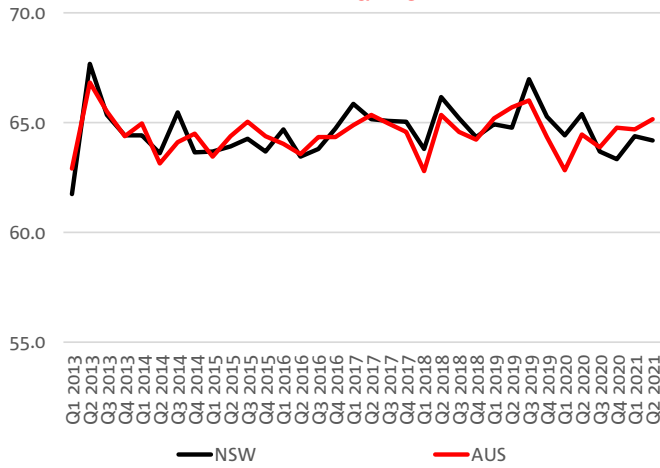
TOP CONCERNS REGARDING CORONAVIRUS OTHER THAN DIRECT HEALTH IMPACTS: STATES

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	ACT	WA	TAS	NT
Impact on the economy	46%	45%	46%	47%	46%	40%	45%	59%	51%
Travel/movement restrictions	40%	38%	43%	40%	35%	35%	39%	36%	50%
Health system unable to cope with demand	36%	32%	30%	41%	46%	39%	47%	49%	36%
Business closures	26%	24%	32%	24%	23%	18%	25%	26%	13%
Insufficient response from Australian Government	21%	19%	23%	19%	24%	24%	22%	27%	24%
Impact on my employment	20%	19%	22%	20%	19%	15%	16%	18%	7%
Closure of schools, kindergartens & childcare	11%	10%	18%	8%	9%	8%	8%	9%	20%
Running low on medicines	10%	10%	8%	11%	11%	11%	10%	10%	12%
Running low on key household essentials	9%	10%	8%	8%	15%	8%	10%	7%	0%
Impact on my investments	9%	10%	11%	7%	5%	11%	11%	3%	12%
None of these - I have NO concerns	8%	9%	6%	9%	8%	16%	7%	6%	0%
Insufficient response from Foreign Governments	8%	8%	7%	6%	8%	13%	9%	2%	12%
Closure of nursing homes	6%	7%	6%	8%	10%	5%	5%	0%	7%

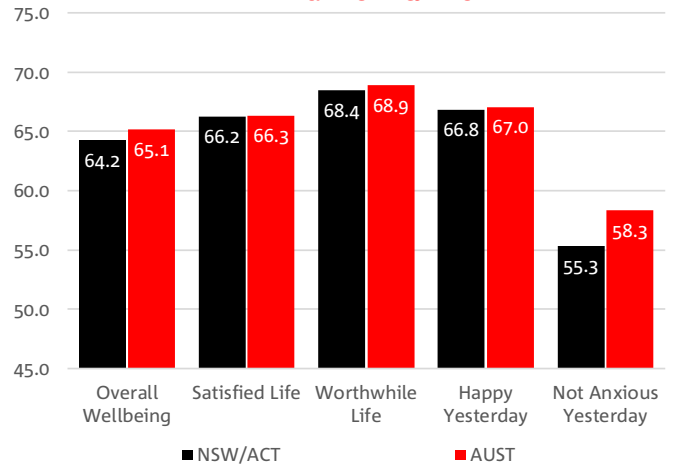
The impact on the economy was the top concern in all states (except WA where the ability of the health system to cope was the main concern). But concern ranged from 59% in TAS to just 40% in the ACT. Among other key take outs, the level of concern over the ability of the health system to cope was noticeably lower in VIC (30%) and NSW (32%), but Victorians were much more worried about business closures (32%) and along with the NT closure of schools, kindergarten and childcare (18% & 20% respectively). People in SA were noticeably more concerned about running low on key household essentials (15%) and in the ACT (13%) and NT (12%) by insufficient foreign government response. Around 16% in the ACT had no concerns, compared to 0% in the NT.

APPENDIX 1: WELLBEING BY STATE

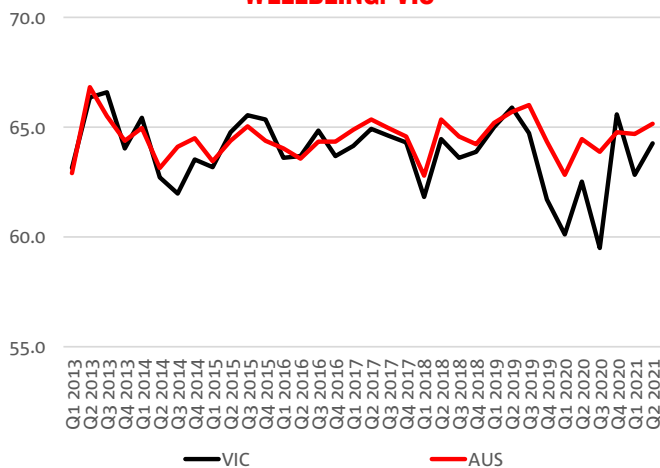
WELLBEING: NSW



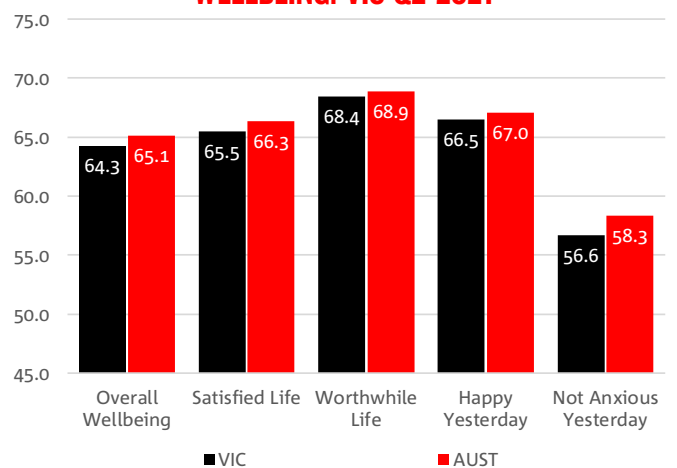
WELLBEING: NSW Q2 2021



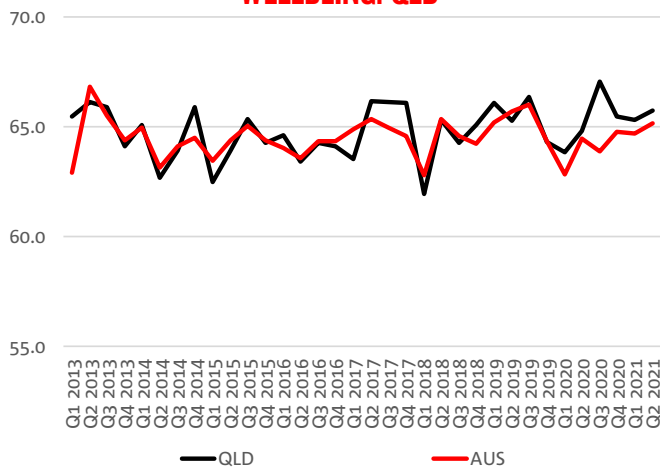
WELLBEING: VIC



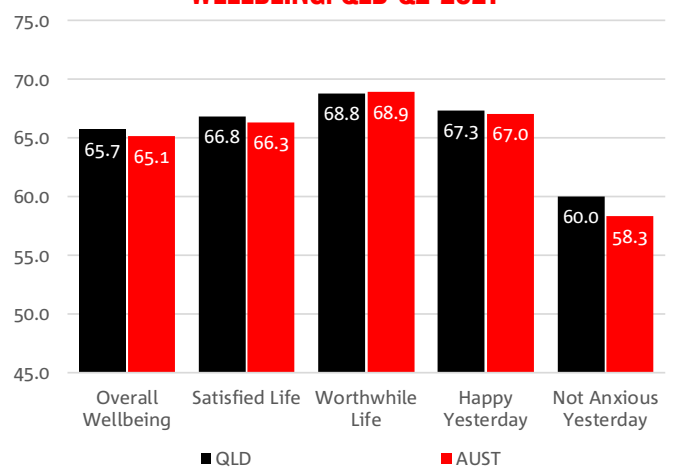
WELLBEING: VIC Q2 2021



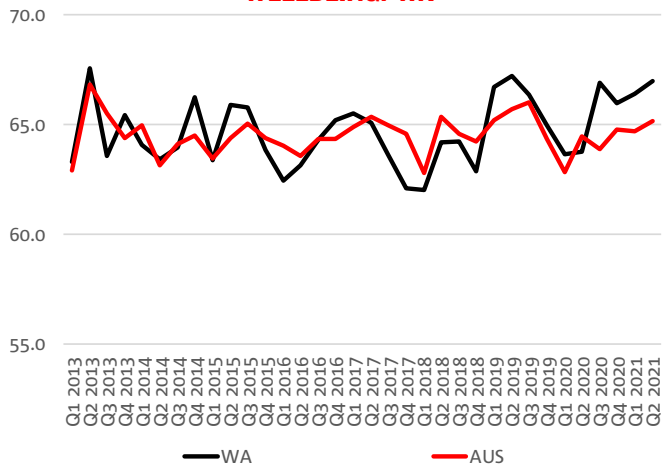
WELLBEING: QLD



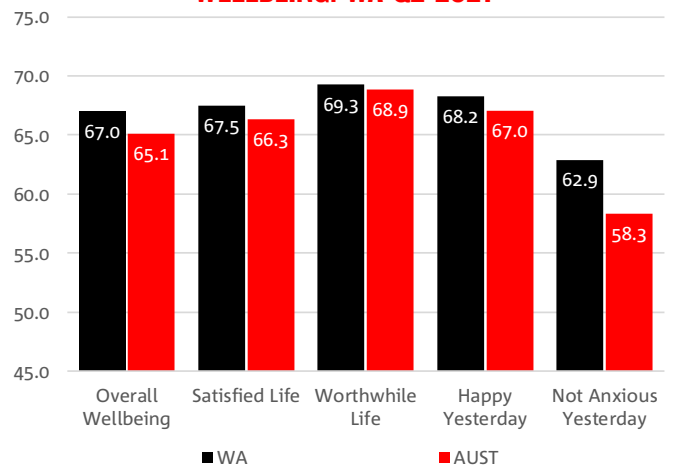
WELLBEING: QLD Q2 2021



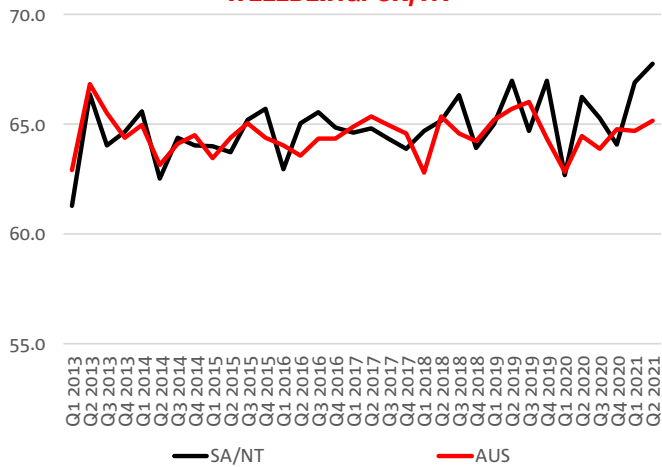
WELLBEING: WA



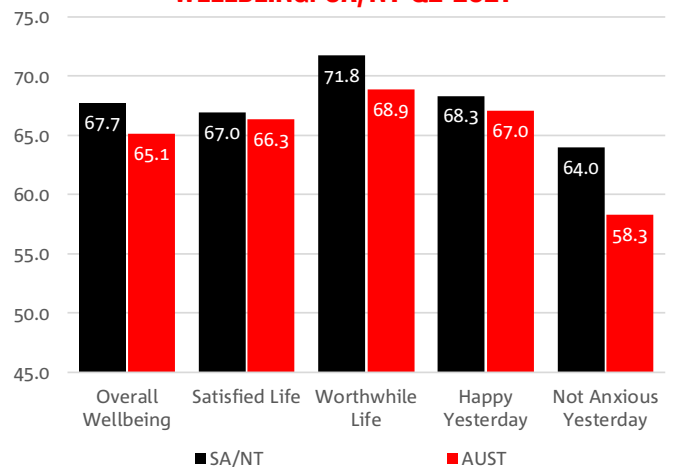
WELLBEING: WA Q2 2021



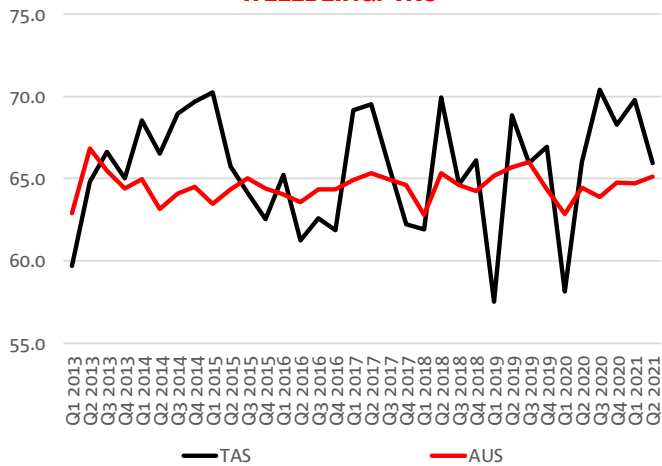
WELLBEING: SA/NT



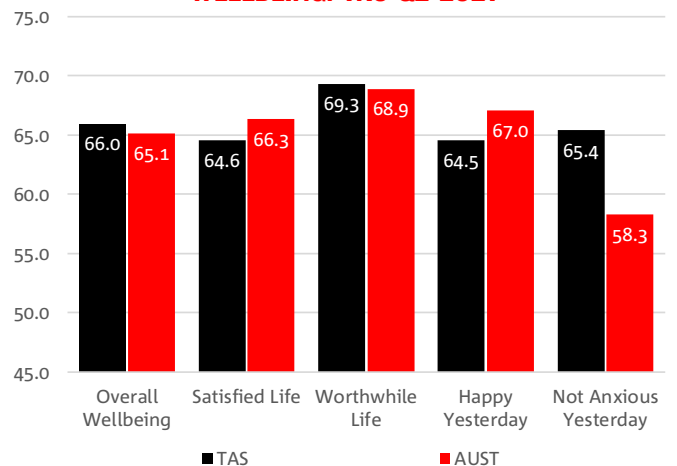
WELLBEING: SA/NT Q2 2021



WELLBEING: TAS



WELLBEING: TAS Q2 2021



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