

The Essential Report

20 April 2020



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Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



AMSRS 

Our researchers are members of the Australian Market and Social Research Society.



About this poll

This report summarises the results of a fortnightly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted online from 16th April 2020 to 19th April 2020 and is based on 1,051 respondents.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of the report.

Note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.



Coronavirus concerns

Q To what extent are you concerned about the threat of Covid-19 (coronavirus) in Australia?

	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03	09/03	10/02
Very concerned	44%	45%	51%	53%	39%	27%	25%
Quite concerned	43%	43%	37%	35%	43%	36%	43%
Not that concerned	11%	9%	10%	10%	14%	28%	26%
Not at all concerned	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%	9%	6%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034	1,096	1,057

	Total	Age group			Location	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Capital	Non-Capital
Very concerned	44%	48%	45%	39%	46%	40%
Quite concerned	43%	40%	44%	46%	42%	45%
Not that concerned	11%	11%	9%	14%	10%	14%
Not at all concerned	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Base (n)	1,051	341	325	385	722	329



- Concern about the threat of Covid-19 has stayed steady falling the softening last week. 44% are very concerned about the outbreak (45% last week) with a further 43% who are quite concerned (43% last week).
- Concern has fallen for the second week among over 55 year olds. The proportion saying they are very concerned has decreased from 54% to 39% over the past two weeks.



Specific Covid-19 concerns

Q To what extent are you concerned about these possible impacts of the Covid-19?

NET: CONCERNED (VERY/SOMEWHAT)	20/04	13/04
The Australian economy as a whole	87%	85%
General unemployment if companies are forced out of business	83%	79%
The physical health of close family members	74%	73%
The impact on my superannuation, savings or investments	67%	63%
My close family members' mental health	64%	61%
My physical health and catching the virus	64%	62%
My economic situation if I lose my job or have less work	59%	58%
My ability to buy food and essential items if stores run out	58%	58%
Children's development by missing out on school	56%	52%
My mental health as a result of social distancing	50%	47%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068

- Economic issues are seen as most concerning when thinking about the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis. 87% say they are concerned (very/somewhat) about the economy as a whole and 83% are concerned about general unemployment.
- Those aged 18-34 were more likely than other age groups to be concerned about the impact on their mental health (67% to 43%), and that of their families (74% to 60%).
- Concern for children is highest among those in households with dependent children (62% are very or somewhat concerned).



Likelihood of developing Coronavirus

Q How likely do you think it is, that you will develop Covid-19?

	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03	09/03
Very likely	7%	5%	8%	8%	8%	7%
Somewhat likely	25%	28%	33%	36%	34%	24%
Somewhat unlikely	52%	49%	45%	45%	45%	43%
Very unlikely	17%	18%	14%	12%	13%	26%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034	1,096

	Total	Age group			Location	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Capital	Non-Capital
Very likely	5%	12%	6%	2%	8%	3%
Somewhat likely	28%	29%	30%	17%	27%	22%
Somewhat unlikely	49%	43%	48%	63%	50%	55%
Very unlikely	18%	17%	16%	18%	15%	19%
Base (n)	1,051	341	325	385	722	329

- Overall, the threat of catching Covid-19 is in line with results from last week.
- There has been an increase among 18-34 year olds in likelihood to catch, with 12% thinking they are very likely to catch Covid-19 (up from 8% last week).



Reaction to Covid-19

Q Which of the following is closer to your personal views of the Covid-19 outbreak?

	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
There has been an over-reaction to the threat of Covid-19	14%	13%	17%	18%	33%
The response to the threat of Covid-19 is about right	63%	59%	46%	39%	39%
The threat of Covid-19 has been under-estimated	24%	29%	37%	43%	28%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034

	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
There has been an over-reaction to the threat of Covid-19	14%	16%	11%	23%	10%	9%
The response to the threat of Covid-19 is about right	63%	58%	67%	56%	64%	67%
The threat of Covid-19 has been under-estimated	24%	26%	22%	21%	26%	24%
Base (n)	1,051	525	526	341	325	385

- The proportion of people judging the response to the Covid-19 outbreak has been steadily increasing for the past four weeks and has now reached 63% (up from 39% last month).



Economic expectations

Q Which of the following is closer to your expectations of what will happen to the economy following the Covid-19 situation?

	20/04	13/04	06/04
The economy will rebound within 2-3 months and grow just as strong or stronger than before Covid-19	11%	12%	11%
The economy will be impacted for 6-12 months or longer and will stagnate or show slow growth thereafter	47%	49%	51%
Covid-19 will have long lasting impact on the economy and the country will fall into a lengthy recession	30%	27%	29%
Unsure	11%	11%	9%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068	1,069

	Gender			Age Group		
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
The economy will rebound within 2-3 months and grow just as strong or stronger than before Covid-19	11%	14%	9%	17%	9%	9%
The economy will be impacted for 6-12 months or longer and will stagnate or show slow growth thereafter	47%	45%	48%	48%	45%	47%
Covid-19 will have long lasting impact on the economy and the country will fall into a lengthy recession	30%	30%	31%	22%	34%	35%
Unsure	11%	12%	11%	13%	12%	10%
Base (n)	1,051	525	526	341	325	385

- Economic expectations are similar to last week, with just under half of people (47%) thinking Covid-19 will impact the economy for up to a year, with slow growth following.



Government response to Covid-19

Q Overall, how would you rate the Government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
Very poor	5%	6%	6%	11%	9%
Quite poor	10%	12%	15%	21%	20%
Neither good, nor poor	21%	20%	21%	24%	26%
Quite good	42%	40%	37%	34%	33%
Very good	23%	23%	21%	11%	12%
NET: Poor	15%	17%	21%	31%	29%
NET: Good	65%	63%	58%	45%	45%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Location	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Capital	Non-Capital
Very poor	5%	7%	2%	6%	5%	3%	5%	5%
Quite poor	10%	11%	9%	17%	8%	6%	11%	8%
Neither good, nor poor	21%	19%	22%	25%	24%	13%	20%	22%
Quite good	42%	40%	43%	38%	43%	43%	42%	40%
Very good	23%	23%	23%	13%	20%	35%	22%	25%
NET: Poor	15%	18%	12%	23%	13%	9%	16%	13%
NET: Good	65%	63%	67%	51%	63%	78%	65%	65%
Base (n)	1,051	525	526	341	325	385	722	329

- The perception that the Government remains high, with 65% now thinking the Government has done a good job (Very/somewhat) in handling the crisis.



State Government response to Covid-19

Q How would you rate your state government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

	20/04	13/04
Very poor	5%	5%
Quite poor	9%	11%
Neither good, nor poor	20%	20%
Quite good	39%	38%
Very good	26%	23%
NET: Poor	14%	17%
NET: Good	66%	63%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068

	Total	NSW	VIC	State QLD	SA	WA
Very poor	5%	5%	6%	3%	3%	4%
Quite poor	9%	12%	5%	11%	8%	7%
Neither good, nor poor	20%	21%	20%	23%	23%	12%
Quite good	39%	37%	38%	47%	43%	34%
Very good	26%	24%	32%	16%	23%	43%
NET: Poor	14%	17%	11%	14%	11%	11%
NET: Good	66%	61%	69%	63%	66%	77%
Base (n)	1,051	322	275	216	88	106

- Nationally, the perception of state governments' handling of the crisis is in line with government, with 66% rating their own state's handling as Very/Quite good (compared to 65%).
- In the past week the rating in Queensland has increased from 52% to 63%, while Victoria has fallen from 76% to 69%. Western Australia and Victoria remain the states with the highest rating.



Easing Restrictions

- Q When do you think governments should start to ease the restrictions on travel and gatherings to allow offices, shops, restaurants, other workplaces and public spaces to start operating again?

	Total	Age Group			Employment Status		
		18-34	35-54	55+	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
As soon as possible	9%	17%	7%	4%	11%	10%	3%
Within the next 1 to 2 weeks	6%	9%	3%	5%	7%	5%	4%
Within the next month	14%	15%	13%	13%	14%	15%	10%
By the end of next month	13%	13%	12%	15%	13%	13%	16%
It is too soon to consider easing restrictions	49%	37%	51%	56%	48%	40%	63%
Unsure	10%	8%	14%	6%	8%	16%	4%
Base (n)	1,051	341	325	385	533	268	202

	Total	NSW	VIC	State		
				QLD	SA	WA
As soon as possible	9%	11%	8%	9%	8%	7%
Within the next 1 to 2 weeks	6%	5%	7%	6%	5%	5%
Within the next month	14%	15%	14%	13%	12%	12%
By the end of next month	13%	14%	13%	15%	14%	14%
It is too soon to consider easing restrictions	49%	44%	53%	46%	48%	54%
Unsure	10%	11%	6%	12%	14%	9%
Base (n)	1,051	322	275	216	88	106

- Half of people think it is too soon to consider lifting restrictions. 29% think restrictions should be lifted within the next month (9% as soon as possible, 6% within the next fortnight and 14% within the next month).
- Those most likely to want an immediate easing of restrictions are aged 18-34 (17%), those in paid employment (11%) and people with a high household income (Over \$104k p/a, 14%).
- People who are retired (63%) and residents of Victoria (53%) and WA (54%) are most likely to think it too soon to lift restrictions.

Government Covid-19 tracking app

Q The Federal Government is developing an app to help stop the spread of Covid-19. The TraceTogether app will track a person’s movements by GPS and record if that person comes into contact with someone who is Covid-19 positive.

People have to voluntarily opt-in to download the app onto their mobile phones before their movements can be tracked. Once logged in, the app would track you wherever you went.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this proposed technology?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I would be uncomfortable if the government was able to track all my movements via an app on my mobile phone	57%	23%	28%	29%	21%	13%	10%
This app would help limit the spread of Covid-19	52%	17%	17%	34%	32%	10%	7%
This app would speed up the removal of physical distancing restrictions	42%	18%	13%	29%	39%	11%	7%
I would download this app onto my mobile phone	38%	33%	15%	23%	28%	14%	19%
I would be concerned with the security of my personal data if this app was on my phone	63%	17%	32%	31%	20%	11%	6%
I'm confident the government will not misuse any data it collects about me via the app	35%	36%	12%	23%	29%	19%	17%



- 38% of people agree (strongly/somewhat) that they would download the proposed app to track the spread of Covid-19, 33% of the population disagree.
- Younger people aged 18-34 are more likely to agree they would download the app (44%) than those aged over 35 (35%). 18-34 year olds are also more likely to agree that the app would help stop the spread of the disease (47%) than those aged over 35 (40%).
- There are security and privacy concerns about the app, with 63% concerned about the security of their personal data. 57% are uncomfortable with the government tracking movements and just 35% confident the government can be trusted not to misuse collected data.



Financial situation during Covid-19 outbreak

Q Which of the following best describes your financial situation during the Covid-19 outbreak?

NET: Agree	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
I do not expect the Covid-19 will impact my income	23%	23%	24%	26%	24%
I have sufficient savings to deal with a short-term loss of income	27%	29%	28%	32%	26%
I will struggle with a short-term loss of income, but will get by	32%	33%	31%	23%	29%
I will be in serious financial stress with short-term loss of income	18%	16%	16%	20%	21%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034

	Total	Household		Employment		
		Have dependent children	Do not have dependent children	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
I do not expect the Covid-19 will impact my income	23%	18%	26%	14%	23%	46%
I have sufficient savings to deal with a short-term loss of income	27%	24%	29%	31%	17%	34%
I will struggle with a short-term loss of income, but will get by	32%	37%	29%	38%	33%	16%
I will be in serious financial stress with short-term loss of income	18%	21%	16%	17%	28%	4%
Base (n)	1,051	405	646	533	268	202

Information about Covid-19

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the information you've received about the Covid-19 outbreak?

NET: Agree	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
I feel informed about the situation and the impact on me and my family	66%	71%	70%	63%	64%
I trust the Government to provide honest and objective information about the Covid-19 outbreak	62%	65%	63%	56%	56%
The information I've received has been clear and consistent	55%	58%	52%	47%	51%
I trust the media to provide honest and objective information about the Covid-19 outbreak	41%	42%	51%	42%	35%
Base (n)	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel informed about the situation and the impact on me and my family	66%	15%	23%	43%	19%	11%	4%
I trust the Government to provide honest and objective information about the Covid-19 outbreak	62%	19%	23%	39%	19%	12%	7%
The information I've received has been clear and consistent	55%	26%	18%	37%	19%	18%	8%
I trust the media to provide honest and objective information about the Covid-19 outbreak	41%	32%	8%	33%	26%	20%	12%



Trust in Institutions

Q How much trust do you have in the following institutions and organisations?

	NET: Total Trust	A lot of trust	Some trust	A little trust	No trust	Unsure	Mar 2019	Sep 2018	Oct 2017	Sep 2016
Federal police	68%	24%	45%	18%	9%	5%	66%	70%	71%	63%
State police	68%	23%	45%	20%	8%	4%	66%	67%	67%	63%
The High Court	61%	21%	40%	23%	10%	6%	58%	61%	61%	57%
The Reserve Bank	60%	16%	44%	23%	10%	7%	49%	50%	49%	47%
The ABC	58%	19%	39%	22%	12%	8%	51%	54%	52%	53%
Courts and the legal system	57%	16%	41%	27%	12%	4%	-	-	-	-
Charitable organisations	54%	12%	42%	27%	13%	6%	50%	47%	46%	43%
Federal Parliament	53%	13%	40%	29%	13%	5%	35%	28%	30%	26%
Your local council	53%	10%	43%	29%	14%	5%	43%	42%	38%	36%
The Commonwealth public service	52%	11%	40%	31%	10%	8%	42%	39%	38%	36%
State Parliament	51%	12%	40%	29%	14%	6%	36%	31%	31%	26%
Environment groups	46%	12%	33%	30%	18%	7%	43%	42%	42%	39%
Trade unions	42%	8%	34%	29%	21%	9%	31%	25%	25%	25%
Business groups	40%	6%	34%	37%	15%	9%	31%	29%	28%	27%
Religious organisations	35%	8%	27%	28%	31%	6%	27%	28%	26%	26%
Political parties	33%	5%	28%	38%	22%	7%	22%	15%	18%	14%



- There have been large increases in the trust in institutions and organisations from last year.
- Trust in the following all significantly increased from last year: federal parliament (35% to 53%), state parliament (36% to 51%), local councils (43% to 53%), the Commonwealth public service (42% to 52%), the Reserve bank (49% to 60%), business groups (31% to 40%), trade unions (31% to 42%), religious organisations (27% to 35%) and political parties (22% to 33%).
- Federal and state police (68% trust) remain the most trusted institutions in the list.



Appendix: Household income definitions*

NET: Lower Income	Up to \$51,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
NET: Mid Income	\$52,000 to \$103,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
NET: High Income	More than \$104,000 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a fortnightly online omnibus conducted by Qualtrics.

Every two weeks, the team at Essential considers issues that are topical, and a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated regularly (such as political preference and leadership approval), while others are unique to each week and reflect current media and social issues.

The response rate varies each week, but usually delivers 1000+ interviews. In theory, with a sample of this size, there is 95 per cent certainty that the results are within 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire population had been polled. However, this assumes random sampling, which, because of non-response and less than 100% population coverage cannot be achieved in practice. Furthermore, there are other possible sources of error in all polls including question wording and question order, interviewer bias (for telephone and face-to-face polls), response errors and weighting.

The online omnibus is live from the Wednesday night and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants. Essential Research uses the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyse the data. The data is weighted against Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data.

All Essential Research staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour.

