

The Essential Report

27 April 2020



The Essential Report

Date: 27/04/2020

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 23rd April 2020 to 26th April 2020 and is based on 1,054 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?

	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03	09/03	10/02
Very concerned	39%	44%	45%	51%	53%	39%	27%	25%
Quite concerned	44%	43%	43%	37%	35%	43%	36%	43%
Not that concerned	13%	11%	9%	10%	10%	14%	28%	26%
Not at all concerned	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%	9%	6%
Base (n)	1,054	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	39%	39%	42%	37%	41%	36%
Quite concerned	44%	47%	39%	47%	45%	44%
Not that concerned	13%	10%	15%	14%	12%	15%
Not at all concerned	3%	4%	4%	2%	2%	5%
Base (n)	1,054	343	332	379	720	334

- Concern about the threat of Covid-19 has lessened this again week, with 39% saying they are very concerned (down from 44% last week) and 44% saying they are quite concerned.
- Concern in both capital and regional areas has eased, with the proportion very concerned in capital cities falling from 46% to 41%, while in regional areas it has moved from 40% to 36%.



Coronavirus concerns

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

NET: CONCERNED (VERY/SOMEWHAT)	27/04	20/04	13/04
The Australian economy as a whole	85%	87%	85%
General unemployment if companies are forced out of business	83%	83%	79%
The physical health of close family members	69%	74%	73%
The impact on my superannuation, savings or investments	63%	67%	63%
My close family members' mental health	60%	64%	61%
My physical health and catching the virus	59%	64%	62%
My economic situation if I lose my job or have less work	57%	59%	58%
Children's development by missing out on school	52%	56%	52%
My ability to buy food and essential items if stores run out	50%	58%	58%
My mental health as a result of social distancing	47%	50%	47%
Base (n)	1,054	1,051	1,068

	Very concerned	Quite concerned	Not that concerned	Not at all concerned	Unsure
The Australian economy as a whole	47%	38%	11%	2%	2%
General unemployment if companies are forced out of business	41%	42%	11%	4%	2%
The physical health of close family members	32%	37%	23%	7%	2%
The impact on my superannuation, savings or investments	32%	32%	21%	11%	5%
My close family members' mental health	23%	37%	26%	12%	2%
My physical health and catching the virus	25%	33%	29%	11%	2%
My economic situation if I lose my job or have less work	29%	28%	19%	18%	7%
Children's development by missing out on school	20%	32%	26%	13%	8%
My ability to buy food and essential items if stores run out	18%	32%	33%	33%	14%
My mental health as a result of social distancing	20%	26%	28%	23%	2%

- Economic issues are still the most concerning consequences of the Covid-19 crisis – 47% say they are very concerned about the economy as a whole and 41% are very concerned about general unemployment.
- Those aged 18-34 are more likely than other age groups to be concerned about the impact on their mental health (29% very concerned, 17% 35+), their close family members' mental health (30%, 20% 35+) and their ability to buy food (27%, 15% 35+).
- Concern for children is highest among those in households with dependent children (31% are very concerned).



Likelihood of developing Coronavirus

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

	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03	09/03
Very likely	5%	7%	5%	8%	8%	8%	7%
Somewhat likely	21%	25%	28%	33%	36%	34%	24%
Somewhat unlikely	50%	52%	49%	45%	45%	45%	43%
Very unlikely	23%	17%	18%	14%	12%	13%	26%
Base (n)	1,054	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%	10%	6%	1%	7%	3%
Somewhat likely	21%	29%	21%	15%	22%	20%
Somewhat unlikely	50%	41%	48%	59%	50%	50%
Very unlikely	23%	20%	24%	25%	22%	27%
Base (n)	1,054	343	332	379	720	334

- The likelihood of catching Covid-19 has decreased again this week, with fewer people saying they are very/somewhat likely to contract the virus (27%, down from 32% last week).
- 18-34 are most likely to say they are very or somewhat likely to catch Covid-19 (39%) compared to 22% of those over 35.



Reaction to Covid-19

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

	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
There has been an over-reaction to the threat of Covid-19	15%	14%	13%	17%	18%	33%
The response to the threat of Covid-19 is about right	68%	63%	59%	46%	39%	39%
The threat of Covid-19 has been under-estimated	18%	24%	29%	37%	43%	28%
Base (n)	1,054	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	15%	18%	12%	21%	15%	10%
The response to the threat of Covid-19 is about right	68%	65%	70%	63%	67%	72%
The threat of Covid-19 has been under-estimated	18%	18%	18%	16%	18%	18%
Base (n)	1,054	526	528	343	332	379

- Two-thirds of people (68%) now believe the reaction to the threat of Covid-19 has been about right, with the proportion saying that the threat has been underestimated decreasing for a fourth week to just 18%.
- 18-34 year olds are most likely to say that there has been an over-reaction to the threat of Covid-19 (21%) compared to those over 35 (12%).



Economic expectations

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

	27/04	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	13%	11%	12%	11%
The economy will be impacted for 6-12 months or longer and will stagnate or show slow growth thereafter	49%	47%	49%	51%
Covid-19 will have long lasting impact on the economy and the country will fall into a lengthy recession	28%	30%	27%	29%
Unsure	10%	11%	11%	9%
Base (n)	1,054	1,051	1,068	1,069

	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		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	13%	14%	11%	20%	11%	8%
The economy will be impacted for 6-12 months or longer and will stagnate or show slow growth thereafter	49%	53%	46%	53%	49%	47%
Covid-19 will have long lasting impact on the economy and the country will fall into a lengthy recession	28%	27%	30%	17%	30%	36%
Unsure	10%	6%	13%	10%	9%	9%
Base (n)	1,054	526	528	343	332	379



Government response to Covid-19

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

	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
Very poor	4%	5%	6%	6%	11%	9%
Quite poor	9%	10%	12%	15%	21%	20%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	21%	20%	21%	24%	26%
Quite good	44%	42%	40%	37%	34%	33%
Very good	26%	23%	23%	21%	11%	12%
NET: Poor	13%	15%	17%	21%	31%	29%
NET: Good	70%	65%	63%	58%	45%	45%
Base (n)	1,054	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	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%	2%	4%	4%
Quite poor	9%	10%	8%	15%	8%	5%	10%	7%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	18%	16%	24%	16%	11%	18%	15%
Quite good	44%	46%	43%	45%	46%	42%	43%	46%
Very good	26%	22%	30%	10%	26%	40%	25%	27%
NET: Poor	13%	15%	11%	21%	13%	7%	14%	11%
NET: Good	70%	68%	73%	55%	72%	82%	68%	74%
Base (n)	1,054	526	528	343	332	379	720	334

- For the third week in a row, the perception that the Government has done a good job handling the situation (very/somewhat good) has increased (now 70%, up from 65%).



- The ratings have increased most among those not in paid employment (up 5% to 64%), Labor voters (up 5% to 66%) and those with dependent children (up 5% to 70%).



State Government response to Covid-19

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

	27/04	20/04	13/04
Very poor	4%	5%	5%
Quite poor	9%	9%	11%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	20%	20%
Quite good	41%	39%	38%
Very good	30%	26%	26%
NET: Poor	13%	14%	16%
NET: Good	70%	66%	64%
Base (n)	1,054	1,051	1,068

	Total	NSW	VIC	State QLD	SA	WA
Very poor	4%	7%	3%	3%	1%	3%
Quite poor	9%	11%	6%	10%	5%	9%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	19%	14%	20%	17%	12%
Quite good	41%	39%	40%	47%	43%	31%
Very good	30%	24%	37%	20%	34%	45%
NET: Poor	13%	18%	9%	13%	6%	12%
NET: Good	70%	63%	77%	67%	77%	76%
Base (n)	1,054	323	272	217	84	109

- Across the country, the overall perception of states' handling of the crisis is in line with government rating their own state's handling as Very/Quite good (both 70%).

- Victoria and South Australia now lead the state government response ratings (both 77%), with New South Wales lowest rated at 63%.



Financial situation during Covid-19 outbreak

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

	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
I do not expect the Covid-19 will impact my income	27%	25%	23%	24%	26%	24%
I have sufficient savings to deal with a short-term loss of income	26%	27%	29%	28%	32%	26%
I will struggle with a short-term loss of income, but will get by	31%	31%	33%	31%	23%	29%
I will be in serious financial stress with short-term loss of income	16%	17%	16%	16%	20%	21%
Base (n)	1,054	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034

	Household			Employment		
	Total	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	27%	22%	30%	17%	29%	52%
I have sufficient savings to deal with a short-term loss of income	26%	25%	27%	31%	18%	25%
I will struggle with a short-term loss of income, but will get by	31%	36%	28%	35%	33%	18%
I will be in serious financial stress with short-term loss of income	16%	17%	15%	17%	20%	5%
Base (n)	1,054	349	705	546	261	219



Attitudes towards the tracing app

Q The Federal Government is developing an app to trace people who test positive for Covid-19 have been in contact with. The app wouldn't track your location, but it would use Bluetooth to record any other phones around you who also had had this app. If you then tested positive for Covid-19, an identifier would allow government officials to find anyone else who may have been exposed Covid-19.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about the suggested Covid-19 tracing app?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I would be concerned with the security of my personal data if this app was on my phone	57%	22%	28%	28%	21%	14%	8%
This app would help limit the spread of Covid-19	53%	18%	20%	33%	29%	10%	8%
This app would speed up the removal of physical distancing restrictions	46%	20%	14%	32%	34%	11%	9%
I'm confident the government will adequately protect any data it collects about me via the app	41%	30%	12%	29%	29%	14%	16%
I would download this app onto my mobile phone	40%	32%	17%	23%	28%	12%	20%



NET: Agree	Voting Intention				
	Total	Labor	NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
I would be concerned with the security of my personal data if this app was on my phone	57%	64%	48%	60%	66%
This app would help limit the spread of Covid-19	53%	49%	63%	52%	45%
This app would speed up the removal of physical distancing restrictions	46%	44%	54%	43%	33%
I'm confident the government will adequately protect any data it collects about me via the app	41%	35%	53%	31%	33%
I would download this app onto my mobile phone	40%	36%	47%	45%	29%
Base (n)	1,054	327	402	93	129

- 57% of participants agree that they would be concerned with the security of their personal data if this app was on my phone and 40% agree that they would download the app.
- 53% agree that the app would help limit the spread of Covid-19 and another 46% agree that the app would speed up the removal of physical distancing restrictions.
- Only 41% agree that they are confident that the government will adequately protect any data it collects about via the app.
- Broadly, Coalition voters are more likely to agree with positive statements about the app and its data security.



Easing restrictions on elective surgeries

- Q On 21 April, the Prime Minister announced that the National Cabinet had agreed to ease some restrictions from the weekend onwards. These include resuming elective surgery, IVF treatments, and allowing residents of aged care facilities to receive two visitors a day. Do you think it is the right time to ease these restrictions, have they been eased too soon, or has it taken too long for them to be eased?

	Total	Age Group		
		18-34	35-54	55+
Restrictions have been eased too soon	36%	44%	40%	26%
Right time to ease these restrictions	57%	49%	54%	67%
It has taken too long for them to be eased	7%	7%	7%	7%
Base (n)	1,054	343	332	379

- 57% of participants believe it's the right time to ease restrictions on elective surgeries and aged care facility visitation – but a third (36%) think they have been eased too soon.
- 18-34 year olds are most likely to say the restrictions have been eased too soon (44%, 33% for 35+); whereas, 67% of those over 55 think now is the right time.

Tax reforms to reduce debt from Covid-19

Q To what extent do you support or oppose the following suggested tax reforms to help reduce any debt Australia may have, as a result of the Covid-19 stimulus packages?

	NET: Support	NET: Oppose	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Prevent companies who are registered in offshore tax havens (such as Switzerland) from accessing Covid-19 government support	64%	9%	43%	20%	20%	5%	4%
Simplify the taxation system to a flat tax rate	43%	18%	16%	27%	27%	10%	8%
Removal of franking credits	32%	16%	15%	17%	27%	10%	16%
Removal of negative gearing	32%	25%	14%	19%	30%	12%	13%
Implement a tax on the value of property or money passed on when someone dies	18%	49%	5%	12%	22%	16%	33%



NET: Support	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Prevent companies who are registered in offshore tax havens (such as Switzerland) from accessing Covid-19 government support	64%	66%	61%	48%	61%	80%
Simplify the taxation system to a flat tax rate	43%	48%	38%	40%	39%	48%
Removal of franking credits	32%	36%	28%	36%	32%	28%
Removal of negative gearing	32%	36%	22%	34%	32%	32%
Implement a tax on the value of property or money passed on when someone dies	18%	23%	13%	27%	17%	10%
Base (n)	1,054	526	528	343	332	379

- Participants most support preventing companies who are registered in offshore tax havens from accessing Covid-19 government support (64%) and are least supportive of implementing an inheritance tax (18%) to reduce any debt as a result of the Covid-19 stimulus.
- Those aged over 55 are most likely to oppose removal of franking credits (39%), negative gearing (33%) and inheritance tax (63%), however they are most likely to support preventing companies registered in offshore tax havens from accessing Covid-19 government support, (80%).

Institutions which consider public safety

Q With regards to the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, to what extent do you think the following institutions consider the safety of the public when making business decisions?

	Will always act in their own interests, even if it endangers people or is detrimental to the public	Will act in their own interests as long as it does not endanger people or is detrimental to the public	Will prioritise the safety of the people and the public's best interests	Unsure
Cruise line companies	41%	29%	13%	17%
The big four banks	33%	39%	14%	14%
Insurance companies	32%	38%	13%	17%
Real estate agencies	29%	38%	16%	17%
Sporting administrators	26%	37%	21%	16%
Pharmaceutical companies	18%	38%	31%	14%
Small banks (excluding CBA, NAB, ANZ and Westpac)	17%	48%	20%	15%
Super funds	17%	40%	23%	20%
Supermarkets	15%	38%	36%	11%
Aged care facilities	14%	32%	39%	14%

- 41% of participants believe that cruise line companies will always act in their own interests, even if it endangers people or is detrimental to the public; while only 14% say the same is true for aged care facilities.
- 48% of participants believe that small banks (excluding CBA, NAB, ANZ and Westpac) will act in their own interests as long as it does not endanger people or is detrimental to the public – compared to 39% saying the same for the big four banks.



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.

