

The Essential Report

18 May 2020



The Essential Report

Date: 18/05/2020

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 14th May to 17th May 2020 and is based on 1,073 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?

	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03	09/03	10/02
Very concerned	33%	34%	32%	39%	44%	45%	51%	53%	39%	27%	25%
Quite concerned	47%	49%	46%	44%	43%	43%	37%	35%	43%	36%	43%
Not that concerned	16%	14%	18%	13%	11%	9%	10%	10%	14%	28%	26%
Not at all concerned	4%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%	9%	6%
Base (n)	1,073	1,067	1,093	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	33%	32%	33%	35%	35%	30%
Quite concerned	47%	46%	45%	50%	46%	48%
Not that concerned	16%	17%	18%	13%	15%	16%
Not at all concerned	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Base (n)	1,073	339	349	385	730	343

- In the only significant change from last week, the proportion of 35-54 year olds who are very concerned about the threat of Covid-19 drops from 39% to 33%.



Likelihood of developing Coronavirus

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

	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03	09/03
Very likely	6%	6%	5%	5%	7%	5%	8%	8%	8%	7%
Somewhat likely	25%	24%	26%	21%	25%	28%	33%	36%	34%	24%
Somewhat unlikely	48%	48%	46%	50%	52%	49%	45%	45%	45%	43%
Very unlikely	21%	21%	23%	23%	17%	18%	14%	12%	13%	26%
Base (n)	1,073	1,067	1,093	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	6%	8%	8%	3%	7%	4%
Somewhat likely	25%	25%	29%	21%	26%	24%
Somewhat unlikely	48%	43%	42%	59%	48%	49%
Very unlikely	21%	24%	21%	17%	19%	24%
Base (n)	1,073	339	349	385	730	343



Government response to Covid-19

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

	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
Very poor	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%	6%	11%	9%
Quite poor	7%	9%	9%	9%	10%	12%	15%	21%	20%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	16%	20%	17%	21%	20%	21%	24%	26%
Quite good	41%	39%	38%	44%	42%	40%	37%	34%	33%
Very good	32%	32%	28%	26%	23%	23%	21%	11%	12%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	13%	14%	13%	15%	17%	21%	31%	29%
TOTAL: Good	73%	71%	66%	70%	65%	63%	58%	45%	45%
Base (n)	1,073	1,067	1,093	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	3%	5%	2%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%
Quite poor	7%	8%	7%	10%	9%	3%	7%	7%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	18%	15%	25%	16%	10%	15%	20%
Quite good	41%	38%	43%	47%	38%	38%	43%	35%
Very good	32%	31%	33%	14%	32%	47%	31%	35%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	13%	8%	14%	13%	5%	11%	11%
TOTAL: Good	73%	69%	76%	61%	70%	85%	74%	70%
Base (n)	1,073	524	549	339	349	385	730	343



State Government response to Covid-19

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

	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04
Very poor	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Quite poor	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	11%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	16%	18%	17%	20%	20%
Quite good	39%	39%	38%	41%	39%	38%
Very good	33%	34%	31%	30%	26%	26%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	12%	12%	13%	14%	16%
TOTAL: Good	72%	73%	70%	70%	66%	64%
Base (n)	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068

	Total	NSW	VIC	State		
				QLD	SA	WA
Very poor	3%	5%	3%	3%	2%	0%
Quite poor	8%	7%	10%	8%	5%	4%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	18%	15%	24%	13%	10%
Quite good	39%	43%	38%	39%	39%	33%
Very good	33%	27%	33%	26%	41%	52%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	12%	14%	10%	7%	5%
TOTAL: Good	72%	70%	71%	66%	80%	86%
Base (n)	1,073	352	267	216	85	104

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?

	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04
As soon as possible	9%	13%	10%	10%	9%
Within the next 1 to 2 weeks	13%	12%	9%	7%	6%
Within the next month	23%	22%	21%	18%	14%
By the end of next month	22%	20%	15%	15%	13%
It is too soon to consider easing restrictions	25%	27%	37%	42%	49%
Unsure	8%	6%	8%	8%	10%
Base (n)	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051

	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
As soon as possible	9%	12%	7%	8%	9%	10%
Within the next 1 to 2 weeks	13%	15%	11%	16%	12%	12%
Within the next month	23%	24%	21%	24%	19%	25%
By the end of next month	22%	22%	22%	22%	24%	19%
It is too soon to consider easing restrictions	25%	22%	29%	19%	27%	30%
Unsure	8%	5%	10%	10%	8%	5%
Base (n)	1,073	524	549	339	349	385



- Openness to easing the lockdown restrictions continues to increase, with just a quarter (25%) now believing it's too soon to consider easing restrictions.
- Women (29%) and those over 55 years (30%) are most likely to believe it's too soon to consider easing restrictions.



Belief in Conspiracy Theories

Q Here are some things people have been saying about Covid-19. They're all things that some people say are true and others say aren't true. To what extent do you believe each of the following to true or false?

	TOTAL: True	TOTAL: False	Definitely true	Probably true	Probably false	Definitely false	I don't know enough to make a decision
The outbreak in China is actually much worse than the official Chinese statistics show	77%	11%	33%	44%	7%	4%	12%
The Covid-19 virus was engineered and released from a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan	39%	39%	14%	25%	22%	17%	22%
The number of Covid-19 deaths have been exaggerated by the media and governments to scare the population	20%	71%	7%	13%	23%	48%	10%
Bill Gates played a role in the creation and spread of Covid-19	13%	71%	4%	9%	17%	55%	15%
The Covid-19 virus is not dangerous and is being used to force people to get vaccines	13%	79%	4%	10%	14%	65%	8%
The 5G wireless network is being used to spread the Covid-19 virus	12%	75%	4%	8%	14%	61%	13%



TOTAL: True	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
The outbreak in China is actually much worse than the official Chinese statistics show	77%	79%	75%	69%	75%	85%
The Covid-19 virus was engineered and released from a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan	39%	40%	39%	41%	39%	37%
The number of Covid-19 deaths have been exaggerated by the media and governments to scare the population	20%	23%	16%	30%	21%	10%
Bill Gates played a role in the creation and spread of Covid-19	13%	14%	13%	20%	13%	8%
The Covid-19 virus is not dangerous and is being used to force people to get vaccines	13%	17%	10%	20%	15%	6%
The 5G wireless network is being used to spread the Covid-19 virus	12%	15%	9%	20%	13%	4%
Base (n)	1,073	524	549	339	349	385

- There is widespread belief that the outbreak in China is actually much worse than the official Chinese statistics show with three-quarters (77%) believe this to be definitely, or probably true.
- Around the same number of people believe it's true that the Covid-19 virus was engineered and released from a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan as believe it to be false (both 39%).
- Only a small minority believe other conspiracy theories to be true.



Changing attitudes to people

Q As a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, have your views and opinions changes about each of the following groups of people?

	More positive view	My views haven't changed	More negative view
Health workers and care staff	56%	40%	4%
People with mental health issues	23%	69%	8%
People who are unemployed	21%	69%	10%
People who are homeless	21%	72%	7%

- Over half of people now feel more positive towards health and care workers as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak (56%).
- Around one in five people now feel more positive towards people with mental health issues (23%), those who are unemployed (21%) or homeless (21%).

Employment and Job prospects – Long-term unemployed

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about looking for work when the Covid-19 restrictions are eased?

THOSE WHO WERE UNEMPLOYED BEFORE COVID-19 AND WILL BE LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT ONCE RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED (n=135)

	TOTAL: Agree	TOTAL: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I'm confident I'll be able to find a well-paying job in my field at my level of experience	29%	43%	6%	23%	28%	21%	22%
I'm confident there will be many appropriate jobs for me	25%	45%	6%	19%	31%	21%	24%

- 43% of people who were unemployed before the Covid-19 outbreak disagree that they'll be able to find a well-paying job in their field at their level of experience and 45% disagree there will be appropriate jobs for them.



Employment and Job prospects – Recently unemployed

Q Once the Covid-19 outbreak is over and restrictions are eased, how long do you think it will be before you are back in paid work?

THOSE WHO LOST WORK DUE TO COVID-19 (n=134)

	TOTAL
I don't think I'll find paid work again	10%
I think it will take a long time for me to find paid work	36%
I don't think I'll be back straight away but I'm confident I'll find paid work fairly quickly	36%
I'll be back in paid work straight away	18%
I won't be looking for paid work after the restrictions are eased	1%
Base (n)	134

- Less than one in five of those who have been made unemployed since Covid-19 think they'll be back in work straight away (18%).
- 36% think it will take them a long time to find paid work and 10% think they may not find paid work again.

Employment and Job prospects – Employed

Q To what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about work after the Covid-19 outbreak?

THOSE WHO ARE STILL IN EMPLOYMENT (n=488)

	TOTAL: Agree	TOTAL: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I'm confident I'll receive a pay rise soon after things are back to normal	21%	50%	6%	16%	28%	24%	27%
I'm confident I'll be able to get a promotion if I want one	22%	44%	6%	16%	34%	22%	22%
I don't think my wages will keep up with increases in the cost of living	48%	19%	17%	31%	33%	13%	6%

- There is low optimism for wage growth following Covid-19. Just 21% agree (strongly/somewhat) that they expect a pay rise soon after things are back to normal and 22% expect to be able to gain a promotion.
- Around half of people (48%) don't think their wages will keep up with increases in the cost of living.



Appendix: Household income definitions*

TOTAL: 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)
TOTAL: 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)
TOTAL: 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.

