

The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Australia | August 2021



Table of contents

1 August 2021 highlights **3**

One in three Australians do not feel a sense
of belonging or acceptance at work or are unsure.
This is an increase from one in four prior to the pandemic. 3

2 The Mental Health Index™ **6**

Mental Health Index™ sub-scores 7
Optimism 8
General psychological health 9
Financial risk 10
Demographics 11
Employment 11
Emergency savings 11

3 Mental Health Index™ (regional) **12**

4 Mental Health Index™ (industry) **14**

5 The Mental Stress Change score **15**

6 Mental Stress Change (percentages) **16**

Demographics 17
Geography 17
Employment 17

7 The Mental Stress Change (industry) **19**

8 Spotlight **20**

Productivity 20
Discretionary effort 20
Presenteeism 21
Productivity loss 24
Engagement 26
Workplace belonging and acceptance 28

9 Overview of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™ **34**

Methodology 34
Calculations 34
Additional data and analyses 34

August 2021 highlights

Key insight: One in three Australians do not feel a sense of belonging or acceptance at work or are unsure. This is an increase from one in four prior to the pandemic.

More than half of Australians do their job when feeling unwell at least one day per week

- Those who work when feeling unwell have significantly lower isolation scores than the national average.
- 60% of parents work when feeling unwell at least one day per week compared to 40% of non-parents.
- 47% of people who never work when feeling unwell have a mental health score one point above the pre-2020 benchmark.

On average, Australians report giving 84% of their energy to work on a typical day, compared to the benchmark of 89% prior to 2020

- Those who report giving more energy to their work have better mental health than those who report giving less effort.
- Among the group of those who work when feeling unwell, the average amount of energy put into work is 73%, which is 11% lower than 84% of individuals who feel well.

The mental health of Australians declined in August 2021 and remains nearly 13-points below the pre-2020 benchmark

- The Mental Health Index for August 2021 is -12.8.
- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-28.1) than the overall group (-12.8) and those with emergency savings (-6.9).
- The mental health of Australians has declined in all states in August except for Queensland.

Employees saying that their organization is a great place to work are linked to better mental health

- 66% of Australians who consider their organization a great place to work have among the most favourable mental health scores.
- 15% of Australians who do not consider their organization a great place to work have among the least favourable mental health scores, double the national average.
- Those who recommend their organization as a great place to work have a productivity level of 85% compared to 80% among those who are unsure, and 77% among those who would not recommend their organization as a great place to work.

One in three Australians do not feel a sense of belonging or acceptance at work or are unsure. This is an increase from less than one in four prior to the pandemic

- Mental health scores for those who do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work are significantly below the national average and distinctly below those who feel belonging and acceptance at work.
- Across all age groups, the percentage of Australians feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work has decreased from before the pandemic compared to currently.
- Those who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work have among the highest mental health scores and among the best isolation scores, both significantly better than national averages. Further, this group has higher productivity (86%) than those who do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work (71%).

66%

of Australians
consider their
organization

a great place to work

60%

of parents work
when feeling
unwell

at least one day per week

53%

of Australians
do their job

when feeling unwell
at least 1 day per week

32%

of people do
not feel a sense
of belonging

and acceptance
at work or are unsure

Australians who work from home have worse isolation scores than those who work from the jobsite or split their time between the jobsite and home

- Among people working from home full-time or splitting their time between home and the jobsite, their sense of belonging and acceptance has declined from 78% pre-pandemic to 65% currently.

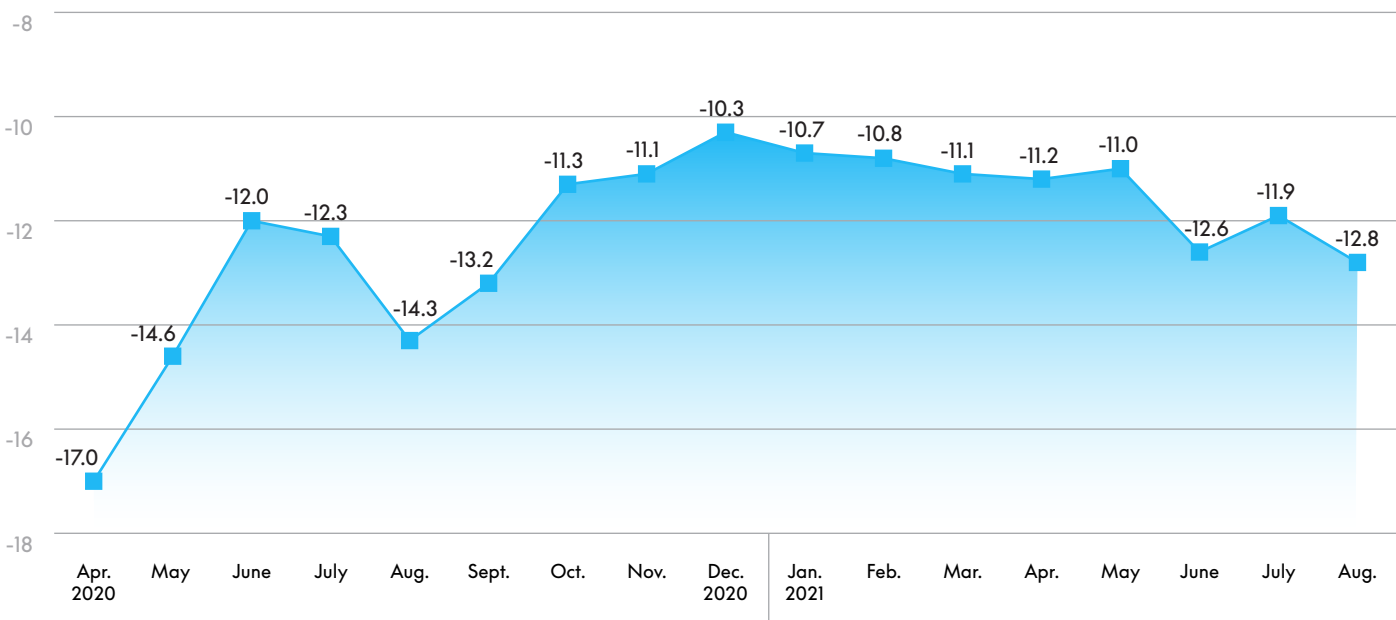
Mental health scores are strongly associated with productivity

- Lower mental health scores correspond to lower productivity and higher mental health scores correspond to higher productivity, a difference of 37 workdays per year.
- The lowest productivity is seen among 12% of people with mental health scores below -40. This group also has the greatest number of unwell days per year (115 days).

The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark¹ of mental health and risk.

The overall Mental Health Index™ for August 2021 is -12.8 points. A nearly 13-point decrease from the pre-COVID-19 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed one per cent of the benchmark population.



¹ The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

MHI Current Month
August 2021

-12.8

July 2021

-11.9

Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of depression (-15.3 points), followed by anxiety (-13.9), isolation (-13.7), work productivity (-12.9), optimism (-12.8), and general psychological health (-5.7). The best sub-score, and the only measure above the benchmark continues to be for financial risk (2.1).

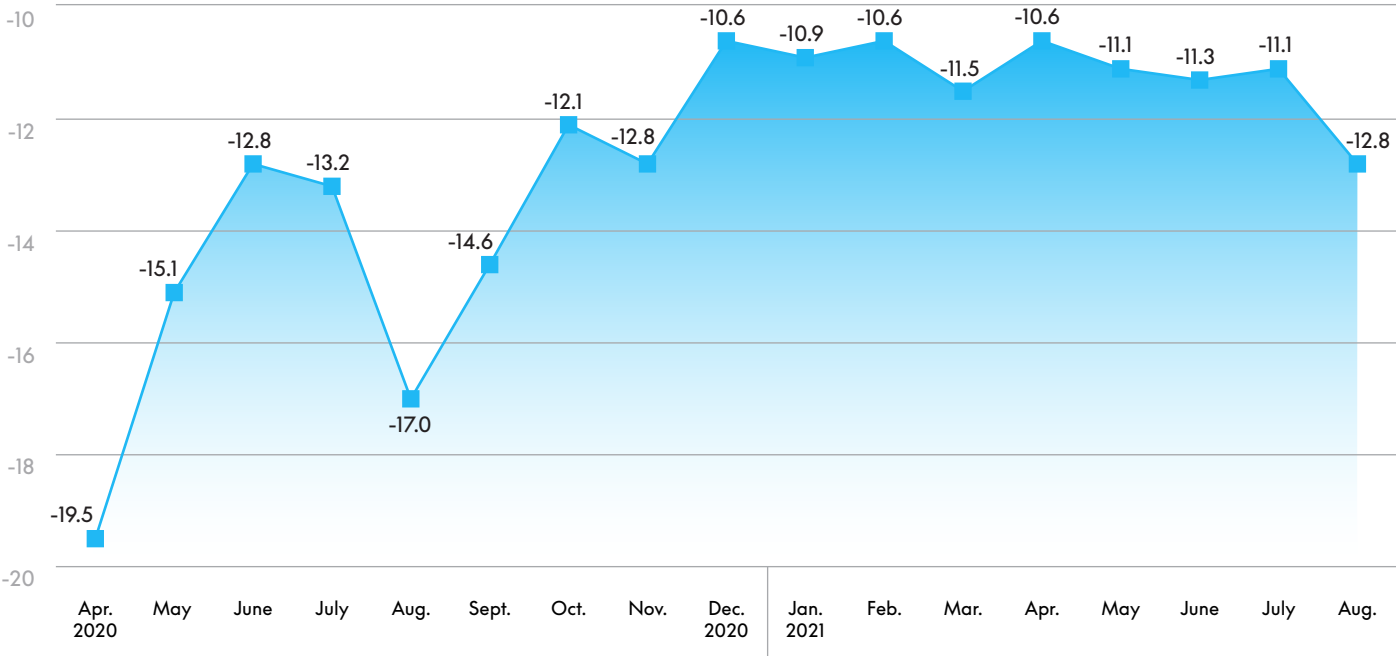
- All mental health sub-scores except for work productivity scores have declined from July 2021.
- With a 0.6-point increase, the work productivity score has seen the greatest improvement from the prior month.
- Despite a 0.4-point decrease from July 2021, financial risk continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores and remains above the pre-2020 benchmark.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores ² 2021	August	July
Depression	-15.3	-13.4
Anxiety	-13.9	-13.1
Isolation	-13.7	-13.2
Work productivity	-12.9	-13.4
Optimism	-12.8	-11.1
Psychological health	-5.7	-5.2
Financial risk	2.1	2.5

2 The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

Optimism

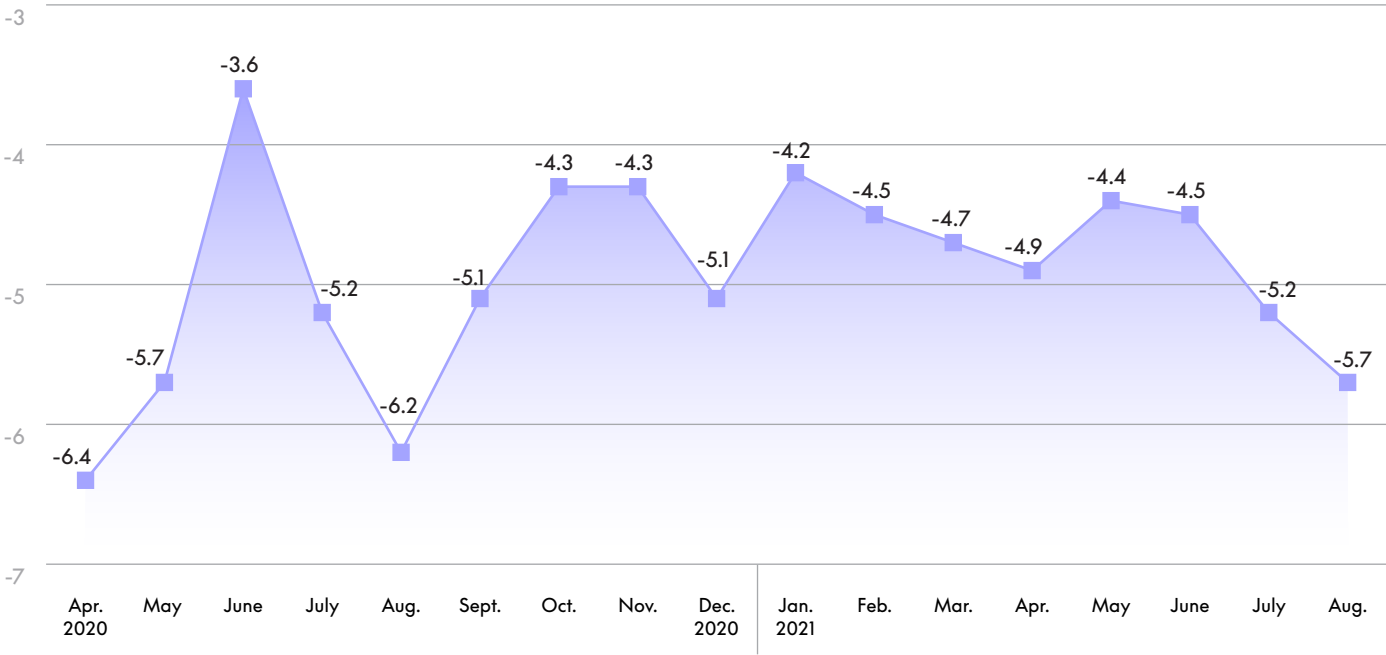
Since April 2020, optimism scores have remained significantly below the benchmark. Since December 2020, scores have fluctuated modestly through July 2021. In August 2021, the optimism sub-score has declined 1.7-points to -12.8, the lowest score in eight months.



General psychological health

The psychological health measure assesses individuals' self-perception of their overall level of psychological health.

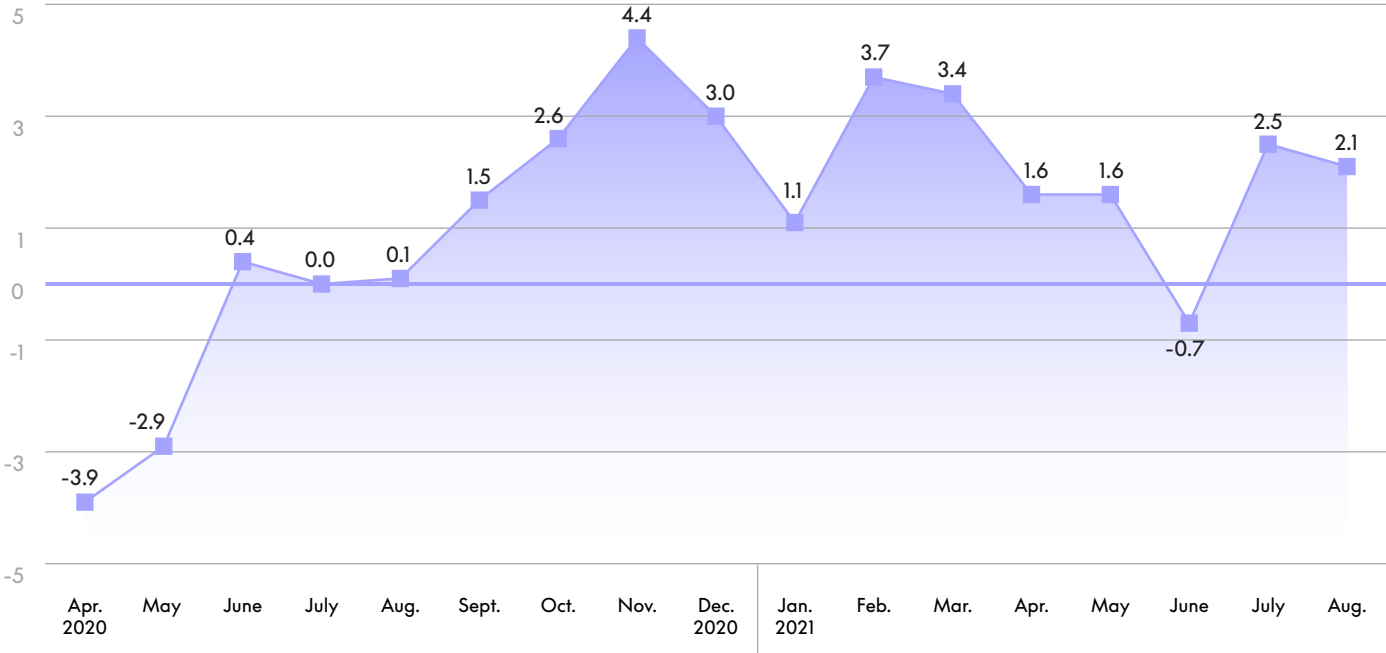
Since the launch of the MHI in April 2020, the general psychological health score fluctuated from a low of -6.4 to a high of -3.6. Since January 2021, scores have fluctuated modestly, however, in July 2021, a sharp decline was observed. The decline continues in August, falling to -5.7, nearly 6-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.



Financial risk

The financial risk sub-score measures the level of individuals' emergency savings.

From April 2020 to November 2020, the financial risk of Australians showed improvement. The financial risk score declined sharply through January 2021 and recovered in February 2021. Since February, the financial risk scores declined to -0.7, the lowest in more than one year. In July, the financial risk score rebounded to 2.5 but has fallen modestly (-0.4-points) to 2.1 in August. Despite this decline, the financial risk score continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores.



Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In August 2021, the mental health score of women is -14.7 compared to -10.7 for men.
- In each of the past 17 months, mental health scores are better the older the age cohort.
- Differences in mental health scores between those with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. More than one year later, this pattern continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (-14.9) compared to those without children (-11.5).

Employment

- Overall, six per cent of respondents are unemployed³ and nineteen per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-26.9), followed by those reporting fewer hours (-21.6), those not currently employed (-19.2), and those employed with no change to salary or hours (-9.7).
- Managers have a lower mental health score (-14.7) than non-managers (-11.0).
- Individuals working for organizations with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (-8.3).
- Sole proprietors/self employed have the lowest mental health score (-21.2).

Emergency savings

- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-28.1) than the overall group. Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of -6.9.

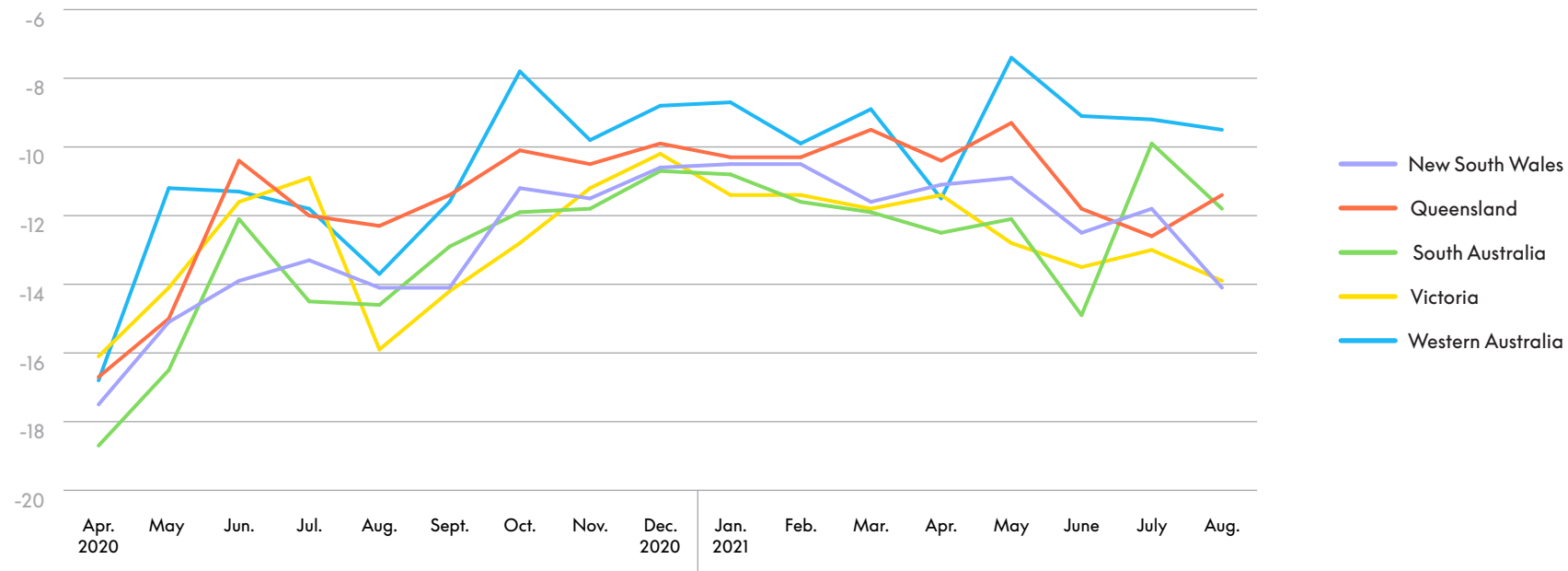
3 MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Regional mental health scores since October 2020 have remained inconsistent except for Western Australia.

While all regions apart from Victoria showed improvements in May 2021, the mental health scores in June 2021 declined in all regions. After increases in July in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, the mental health of Australians has declined in all states except for Queensland in August 2021.

- With a significant 2.3-point decrease from the prior month, New South Wales has the lowest mental health score (-14.1).
- The mental health of Queenslanders improved in August by 1.2-points, the only improvement observed this month.



Employment status	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-9.7	-8.8
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-21.6	-22.8
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-26.9	-24.3
Not currently employed	-19.2	-20.2
Age group	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Age 20-29	-21.1	-21.3
Age 30-39	-15.3	-13.6
Age 40-49	-14.5	-13.3
Age 50-59	-11.2	-10.2
Age 60-69	-3.9	-3.6
Number of children	Aug. 2021	July 2021
No children in household	-11.5	-10.7
1 child	-14.2	-13.7
2 children	-15.8	-13.8
3 children or more	-13.5	-11.9

Region	Aug. 2021	July 2021
New South Wales	-14.1	-11.8
Victoria	-13.9	-13.0
Queensland	-11.4	-12.6
South Australia	-11.8	-9.9
Western Australia	-9.5	-9.2
Gender	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Men	-10.7	-8.9
Women	-14.7	-14.3
Household income	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Household Income \$30K/annum	-28.7	-32.0
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-15.9	-14.6
\$60k to <\$100K	-14.2	-13.4
\$100K to \$150K	-10.6	-8.8
\$150K and over	-8.0	-7.1

Employer size	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-21.2	-21.2
2-50 employees	-11.1	-9.2
51-100 employees	-16.0	-15.4
101-500 employees	-11.6	-11.2
501-1,000 employees	-12.8	-11.1
1,001-5,000 employees	-13.9	-12.5
5,001-10,000 employees	-11.4	-10.2
More than 10,000 employees	-8.3	-5.8
Manager	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Manager	-14.7	-11.4
Non-manager	-11.0	-11.2

Numbers highlighted in orange are the most negative scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in green are the least negative scores in the group.

Available upon request:

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

Mental Health Index™ (industry)

Individuals working in Wholesale Trade have the lowest mental health score in August (-19.6), followed by individuals in Food Services (-15.4), and Construction (-14.8).

Individuals employed in Public Administration (-5.6), Manufacturing (-8.4), and Transportation and Warehousing (-10.7) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Those employed in Food Services, and Administrative and Support services have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

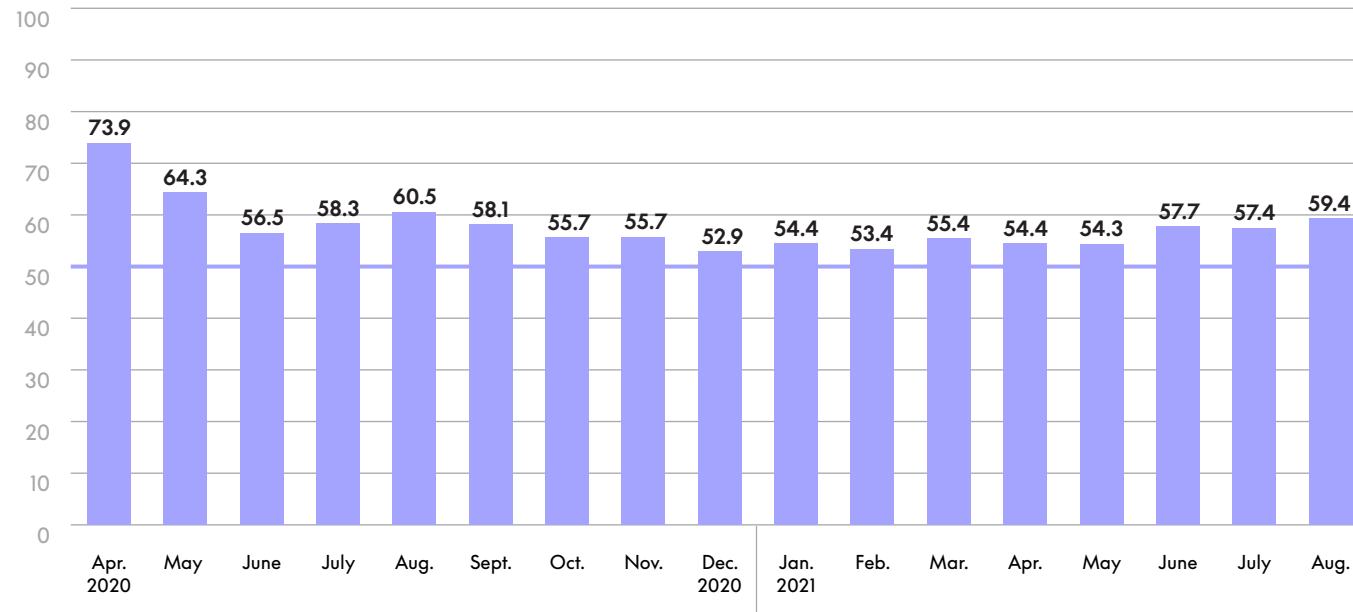
Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	August 2021	July 2021	Change
Food Services	-15.4	-19.2	3.8
Other	-11.4	-14.1	2.7
Administrative and Support services	-13.1	-15.5	2.4
Construction	-14.8	-15.5	0.7
Transportation and Warehousing	-10.7	-10.8	0.2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-10.9	-11.0	0.1
Retail Trade	-13.5	-13.0	-0.5
Manufacturing	-8.4	-6.5	-2.0
Public Administration	-5.6	-3.6	-2.0
Educational Services	-13.9	-11.5	-2.4
Health Care and Social Assistance	-13.3	-9.4	-3.9
Finance and Insurance	-14.7	-10.3	-4.4
Wholesale Trade	-19.6	-12.1	-7.5

The Mental Stress Change score

The Mental Stress Change score (MStressChg) is a measure of the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month. **The Mental Stress Change score for August 2021 is 59.4.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 26 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with eight per cent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress since April 2020 indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the Australian population.



- ▲ More mental stress
- 50 = No change from prior month
- ▼ Less mental stress

MStressChg Current
Month—August 2021

59.4

MStressChg
July 2021

57.4

Mental Stress Change (percentages)

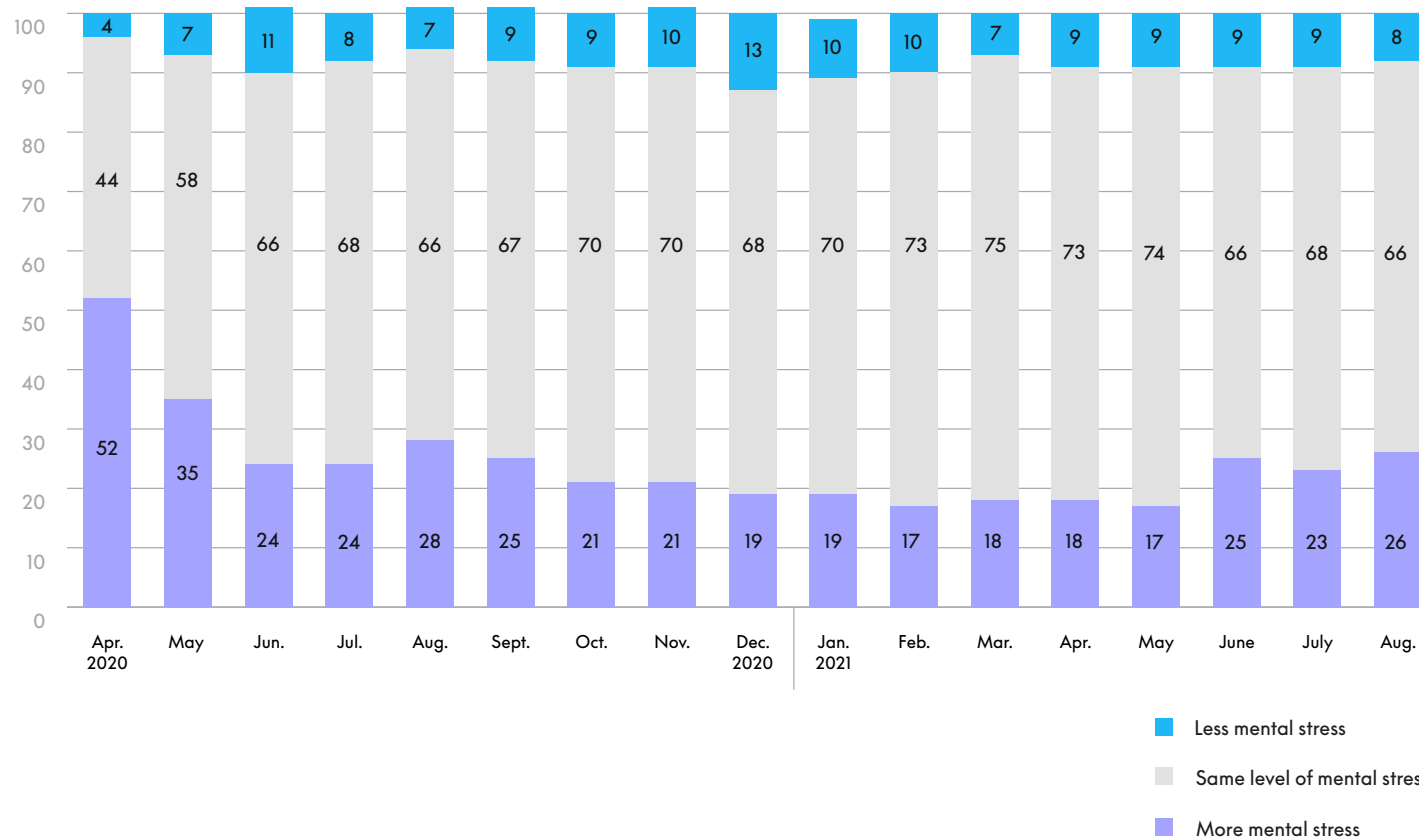
Mental Stress Change tracks stress changes each month.

The percentages of those experiencing more stress, the same level of stress, and less stress for each month of the survey are shown in the graph.

For more than one year, the percentage of those experiencing more mental stress than the previous month has steadily decreased; however, the data showing this decline is too insignificant to lower the overall Mental Stress Change score to below 50 (the level at which stress is lower than the previous month). As the proportion of individuals reporting the same level of stress or more stress than the previous month continues to outweigh the proportion reporting less mental stress, the population will continue to feel the effects of significantly increased stress and will not be able to reach a more sustainable and healthy level of stress.

In April 2020, 52 per cent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. The number of respondents reporting increased month-over-month mental stress is 26 per cent in August 2021, while 66 per cent of respondents report the same level of mental stress and eight per cent report a decrease in mental stress.

Mental Stress Change by month



Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI in April 2020, younger people have experienced a greater increase in mental stress month over month compared to older respondents.
- Since April 2020, women have had larger increases in mental stress compared to men. In August 2021, the mental stress change score for women is 61.1 compared to 57.5 for men.

Geography

- The greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in New South Wales (63.3), followed by South Australia (58.8), Western Australia (58.5), Victoria (58.4), and Queensland (55.1).

Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced hours (71.3), followed by employed people with reduced salary (62.5), unemployed people (60.5), and employed people with no change to salary or hours (57.0).
- Managers have a greater increase in mental stress (62.6) than non-managers (57.1).

Employment status	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	57.0	55.1
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	71.3	71.1
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	62.5	61.4
Not currently employed	60.5	58.0
Age group	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Age 20-29	67.5	61.4
Age 30-39	59.5	58.5
Age 40-49	60.0	57.7
Age 50-59	58.2	56.9
Age 60-69	54.1	53.9
Number of children	Aug. 2021	July 2021
No children in household	59.0	56.8
1 child	60.0	59.2
2 children	60.5	56.7
3 children or more	57.6	58.9

Region	Aug. 2021	July 2021
New South Wales	63.3	58.2
Victoria	58.4	57.0
Queensland	55.1	56.6
South Australia	58.8	57.0
Western Australia	58.5	57.5
Gender	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Men	57.5	55.1
Women	61.1	59.3
Household income	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Household Income \$30K/annum	66.2	68.6
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	60.3	57.4
\$60k to <\$100K	59.5	58.1
\$100K to \$150K	60.0	54.2
\$150K and over	57.3	59.0

Employer size	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	64.0	66.9
2-50 employees	58.0	56.8
51-100 employees	62.4	54.4
101-500 employees	57.8	57.1
501-1,000 employees	58.7	60.3
1,001-5,000 employees	61.0	58.2
5,001-10,000 employees	60.8	56.2
More than 10,000 employees	58.3	53.3
Manager	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Manager	62.6	58.1
Non-manager	57.1	56.8

Numbers highlighted in orange are the most negative scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in green are the least negative scores in the group.

Available upon request:

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

The Mental Stress Change (industry)

Individuals employed in Wholesale Trade have the most significant increase in mental stress (67.2), followed by individuals employed in Finance and Insurance (63.3), and Educational Services (61.4).

Mental Stress Change scores for individuals employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (54.8), Manufacturing (55.4), and Transportation and Warehousing (55.5) industries are less steep compared to the prior month.

Mental Stress changes from the last two months are shown in the table.

Industry	August 2021	July 2021
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	54.8	58.6
Manufacturing	55.4	54.8
Transportation and Warehousing	55.5	53.9
Public Administration	56.5	51.6
Construction	56.7	55.1
Retail Trade	56.7	55.1
Other	58.3	59.5
Food Services	59.6	62.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	60.7	57.8
Administrative and Support services	60.9	57.5
Educational Services	61.4	55.1
Finance and Insurance	63.3	61.1
Wholesale Trade	67.2	56.8

Spotlight

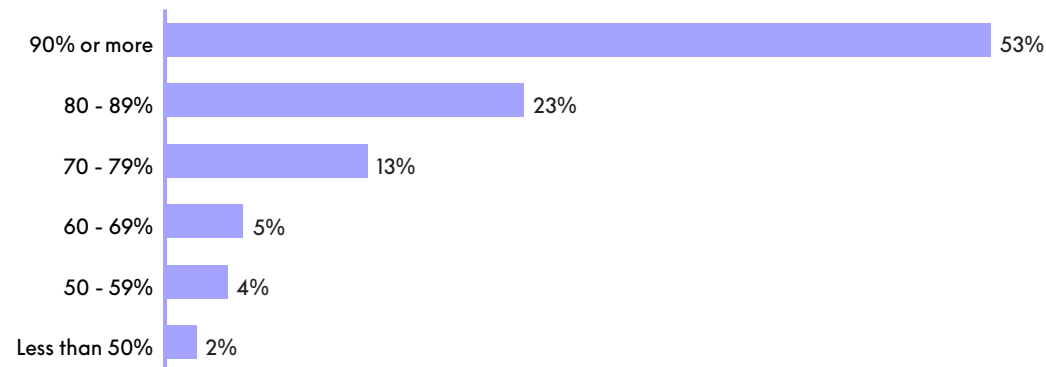
Productivity

Discretionary effort

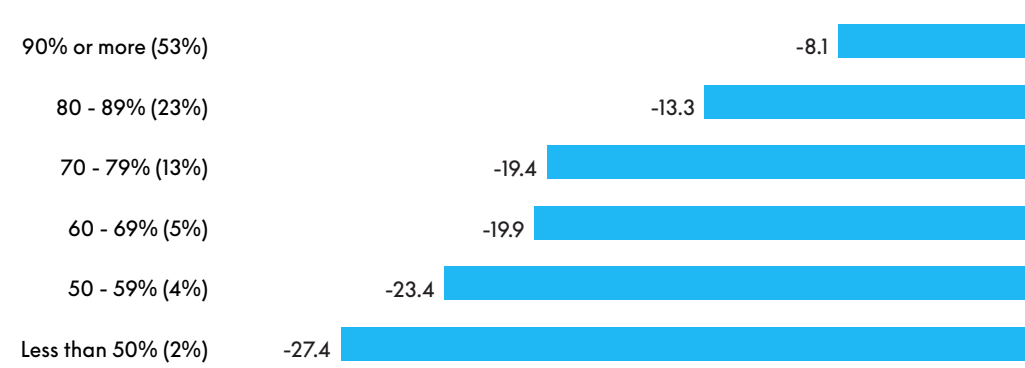
In August 2021, Australians were asked how much energy they give to their work on a typical day. Among respondents in August, the average energy given to their work is 84 per cent compared to the pre-2020 benchmark of 89 per cent.

- More than half (53 per cent) of Australians report giving 90 per cent or more of their energy to their work and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-8.1).
- Two per cent report putting in less than 50 per cent of their energy into work and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-27.4).
- Respondents under the age of 30 are less likely (45 per cent) to give 90 per cent or more of their energy into work compared to respondents older than 50 (59 per cent).

Energy given to work on a typical day



MHI score by energy given to work on a typical day

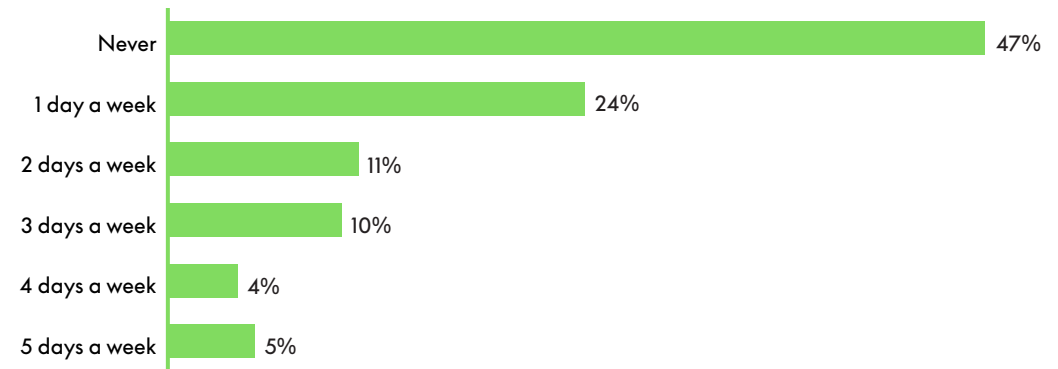


Presenteeism

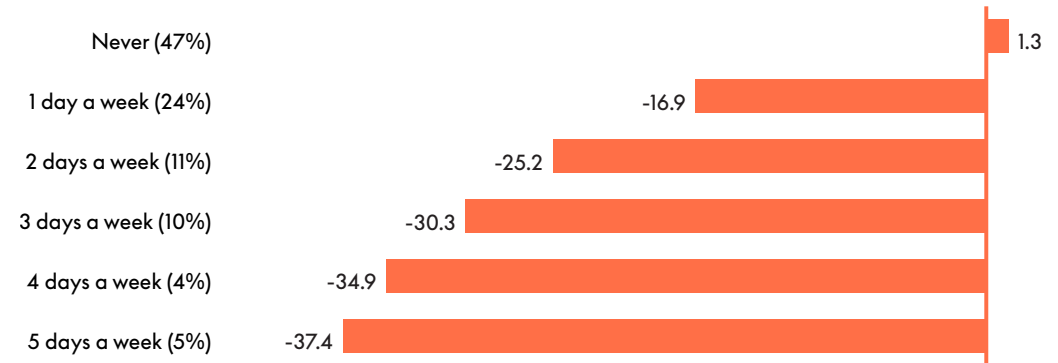
Presenteeism refers to productivity loss when someone is working while unwell⁴. Respondents were asked how often they worked when feeling unwell, physically, or psychologically, in a typical week.

- More than half (53 per cent) report doing their job when feeling unwell at least 1 day per week. The mental health scores among this group are significantly below those who report never working while feeling unwell.
- The most favourable mental health score, at nearly one-point above the pre-2020 benchmark (1.3), is seen among 47 per cent of people reporting that they never work when feeling unwell.
- Sixty per cent of parents work when feeling unwell at least one day per week compared to 40 per cent of non-parents.
- Employed people with no change to salary or hours are 65 per cent more likely to report not working when feeling unwell compared to those who are employed with reduced salary.

Number of days working when feeling unwell



MHI score by number of days working when feeling unwell



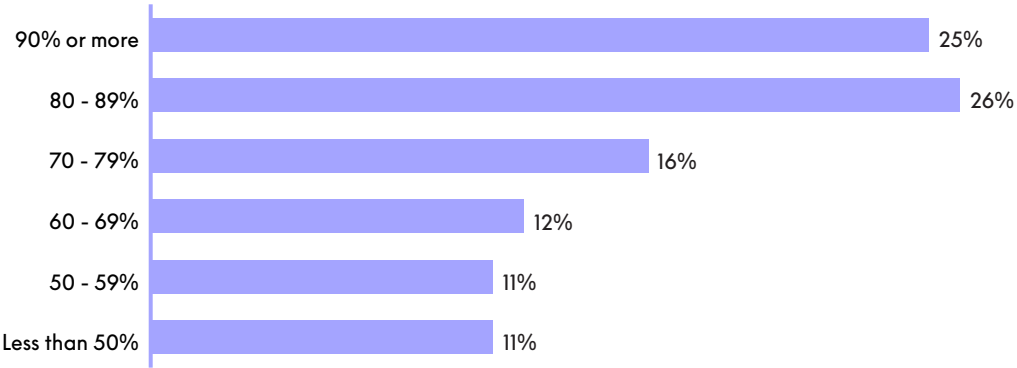
⁴ Schultz, Chen, and Edington, The cost and impact of health conditions on presenteeism to employers: a review of the literature, *Pharmacoeconomics*. 2009; 27(5): 365-78. doi: 10.2165/00019053-200927050-00002.

Work effort when feeling unwell

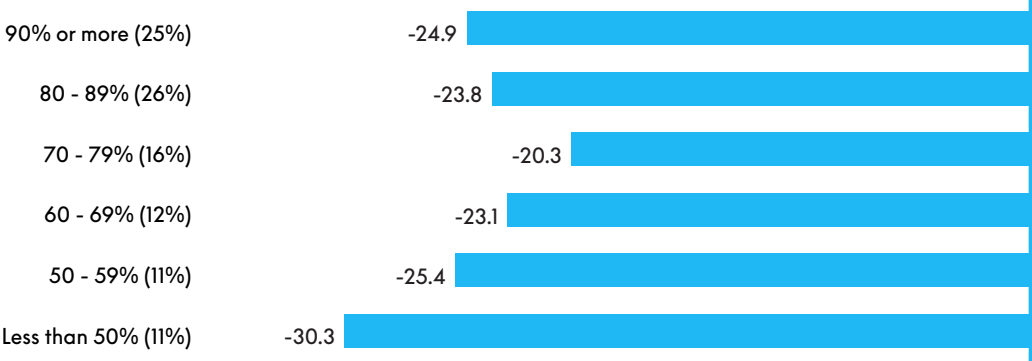
Respondents who reported working when feeling unwell, physically, or psychologically, at least one day per week were asked how much energy they give to their work.

- Among this group, the average amount of energy put into work each day when feeling unwell is 73 per cent, 11 per cent less than when they feel well.
- One-quarter (25 per cent) report giving 90 or more per cent of their energy into work while being unwell, this group has a distinctly lower mental health score (-24.9) compared to the national average (-12.8).

Energy given to work when feeling unwell

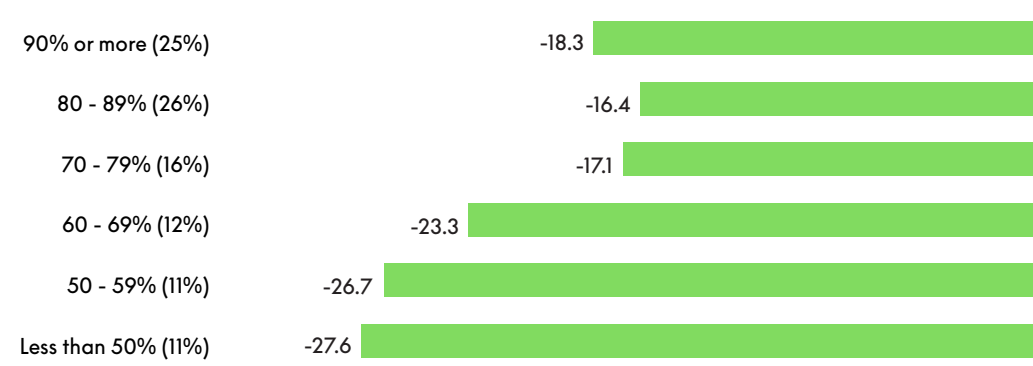


MHI score by energy given to work when feeling unwell



- Those who work when feeling unwell have significantly lower isolation scores than the national average.
- Eleven per cent give less than 50 per cent of their energy to work when they are unwell, and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-30.3) as well as the worst isolation score (-27.6).

Isolation score by energy given to work when feeling unwell



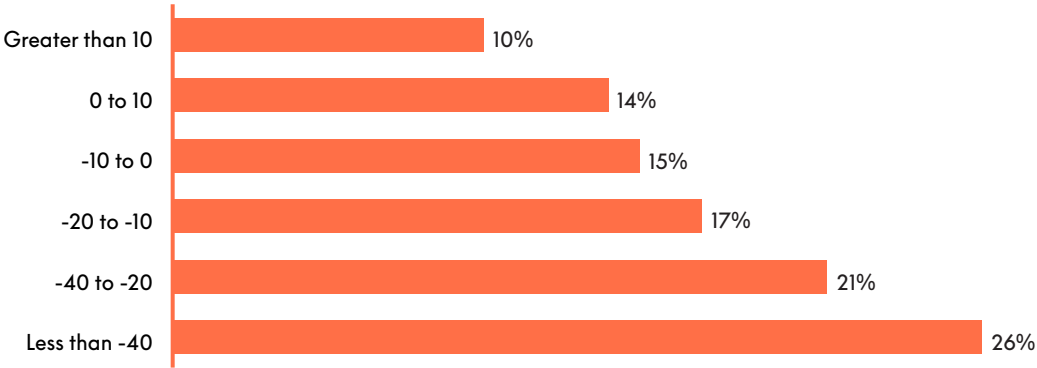
Productivity loss

Productivity, as it is defined here, is impacted by three main elements: absenteeism, discretionary effort, and presenteeism.

While absenteeism contributes to a loss in productivity, benchmark data indicates that this is a small proportion of the overall loss. The greater impacts to productivity loss are from discretionary effort and presenteeism. The following section estimates⁴ the productivity loss using the discretionary effort and presenteeism data collected in August 2021.

- Mental health scores are strongly associated with productivity. Lower mental health scores correspond to greater productivity loss and higher mental health scores correspond to less productivity loss.
- Twelve per cent of respondents have a mental health score of -40 or lower. The productivity loss of this group is 16 per cent lower than the 17 per cent of respondents who have a mental health score of 10 or higher.

Average productivity loss by MHI score



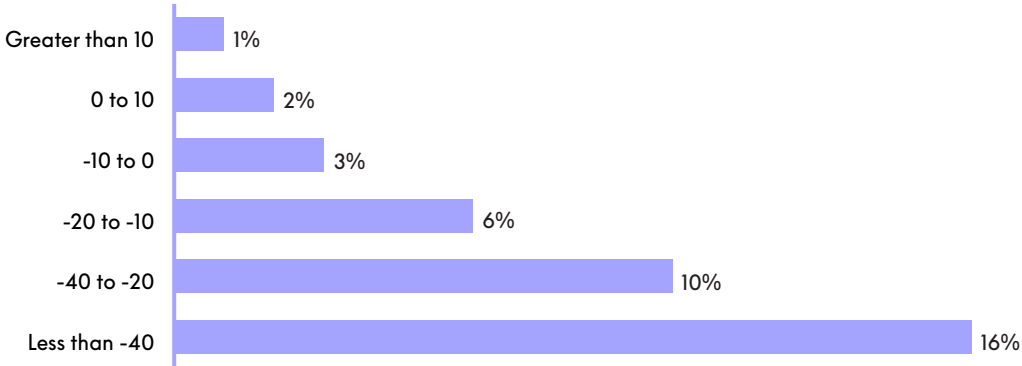
4 The premise of this estimate assumes an average of 240 workdays per year.

Losses due to presenteeism

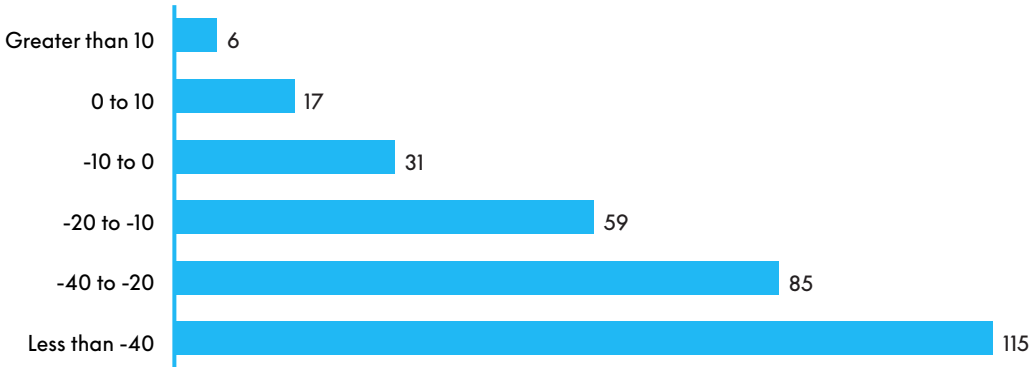
Nearly forty per cent (38 per cent) of the respondent group have mental health scores below -20. Among this group, presenteeism has a greater contribution to productivity loss than discretionary effort.

- Presenteeism-related productivity losses account for one per cent of those with the highest mental health scores, corresponding to an average of six unwell days per year.
- The highest productivity losses are seen among 12 per cent with mental health scores below -40. This group also has the greatest number of unwell days per year (115 days).

Average productivity loss due to presenteeism by MHI score



Average days unwell by MHI score

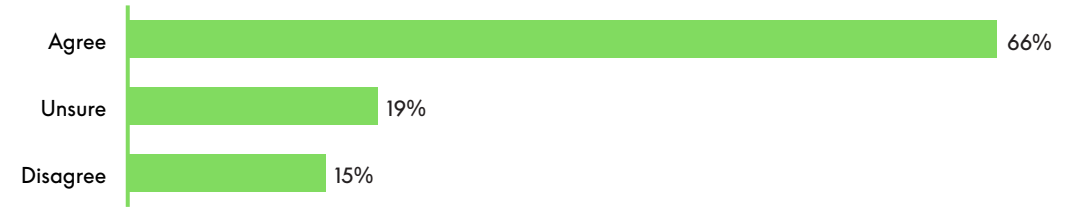


Engagement

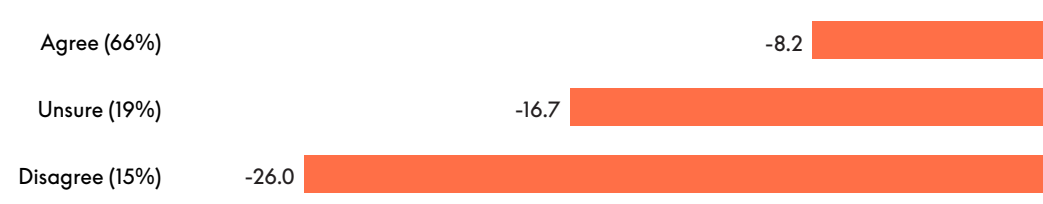
Respondents were asked whether they would recommend their organization as a great place to work.

- Nearly two-thirds (66 per cent) consider their organization a great place to work, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-8.2).
- The least favourable mental health score (-26.0) is seen among 15 per cent who do not consider their organization a great place to work.

My organization is a great place to work



MHI score by my organization is a great place to work



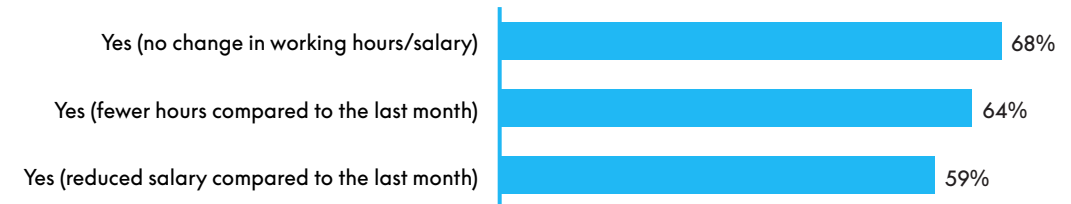
- Sixty-eight per cent of people employed with no change to salary or hours recommend their organization as a great place to work compared to 64 per cent of employed people working fewer hours, and 59 per cent of employed people with reduced salary.

Individuals who recommend their organization as a great place to work have 85 per cent productivity compared to 80 per cent among those who are unsure, and 77 per cent among those who would not recommend their organization as a great place to work .

My organization is a great place to work (age)



My organization is a great place to work (employment status)



My organization is a great place to work (productivity)



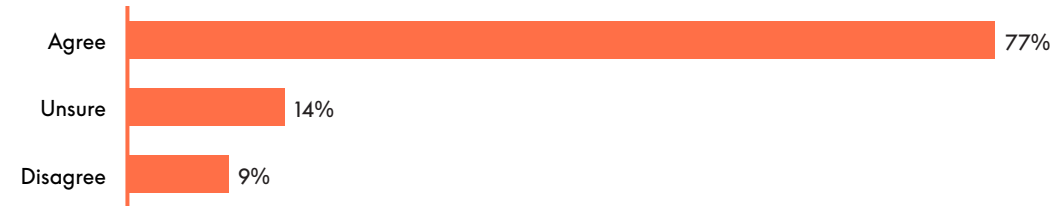
Workplace belonging and acceptance

Workplace belonging and acceptance pre-pandemic

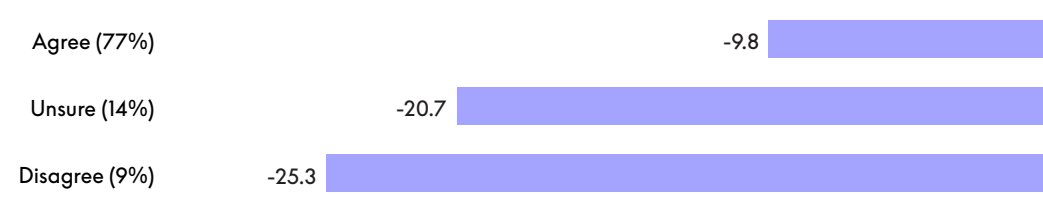
Respondents were asked whether they felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic.

- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) felt unsure or did not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic. These individuals have mental health scores significantly below the national average and significantly below those who felt belonging and acceptance at work.
- More than three-quarters (77 per cent) felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-9.8).

Sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic



MHI score by sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic

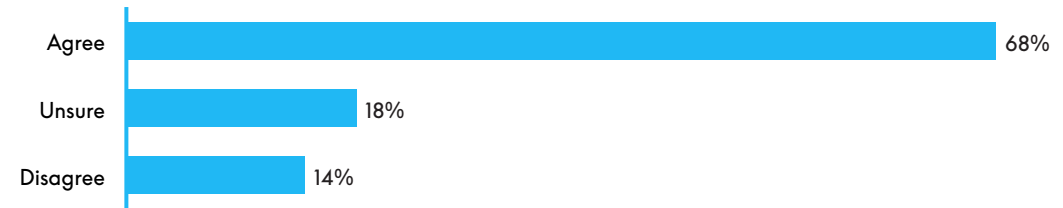


Workplace belonging and acceptance currently

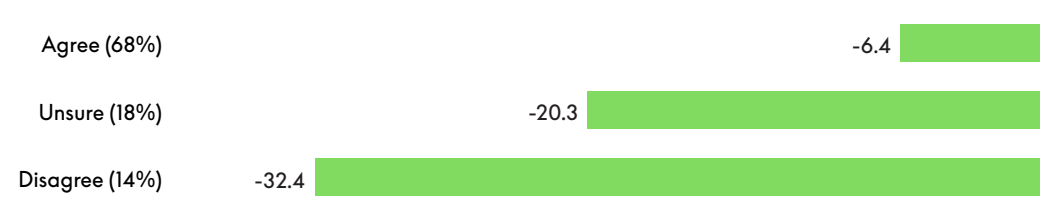
Respondents were asked whether they have felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work during the past month.

- While 77 per cent report having felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work prior to the pandemic, only 68 per cent have that same feeling currently.
- The highest mental health score (-6.4) and the best isolation score (-7.4) are seen among the group who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently. Both scores are significantly better than the national averages.
- Nearly one-third (32 per cent) feel unsure or do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently. Both groups have mental health and isolation scores distinctly below those who feel belonging and acceptance at work.

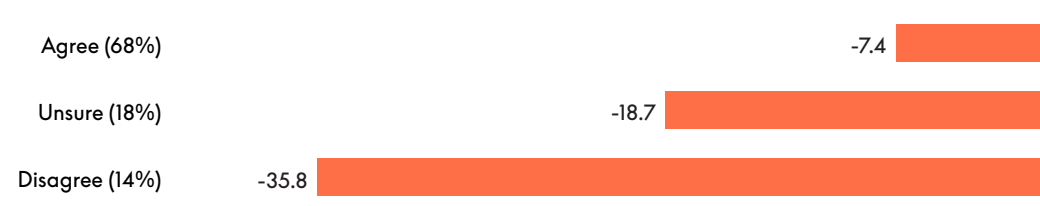
Sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



MHI score by sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



Isolation score by sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



Among the group of nearly 800 Australians who completed both the April 2021 and August 2021 survey results:

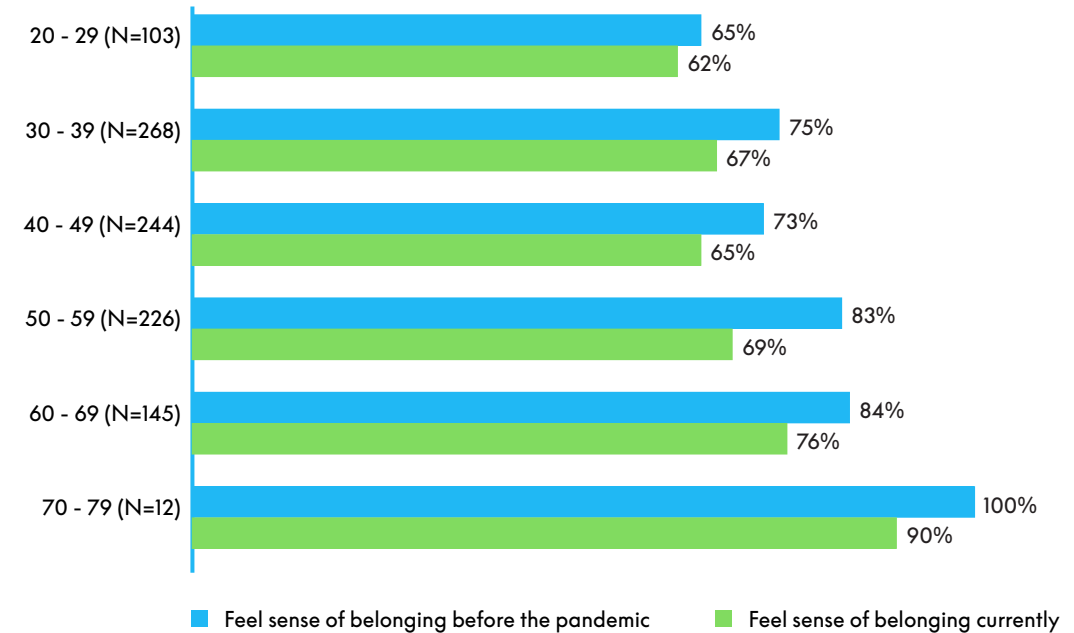
- Seventy-one per cent who are working at the jobsite feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work.
- Those who are working exclusively from home have worse isolation scores (-12.2) than those working from the jobsite (-8.7) and those splitting time between home and the jobsite (-11.6).
- Among individuals working from home full-time or splitting their work between the home and the jobsite during the pandemic, their sense of belonging and acceptance has declined from 78 per cent pre-pandemic to 65 per cent currently.

The [July 2021 MHI report](#) showed that for 41 per cent of Australians, working at the jobsite full-time is their ideal work situation, 33 per cent want to work from home-part-time and 26 per cent want to work from home full-time. Considering the results of July 2021 and August 2021 for the same respondents, the isolation score for those who want to work at the jobsite full-time is -8.0 compared to -10.9 for those who want to work from home part-time, and -18.5 for those who want to work from home full-time.

Sense of belonging and acceptance: a comparison of groups

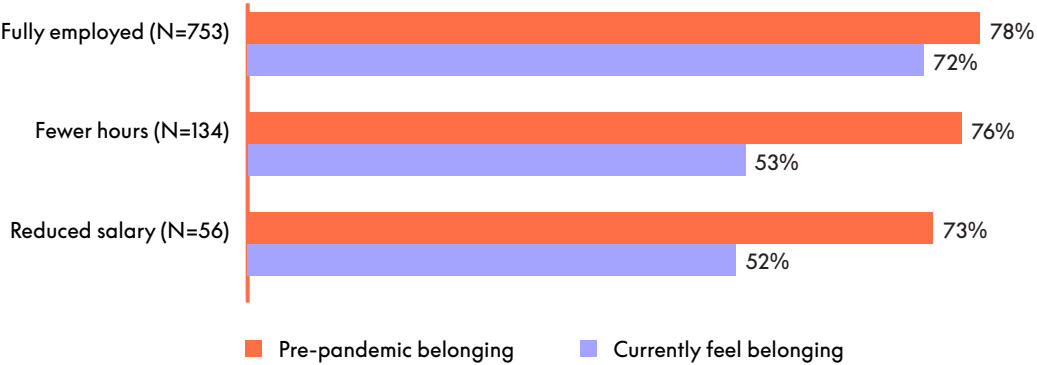
- Across all age groups, the percentage of Australians reporting feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work has decreased from before the pandemic compared to currently.
- While there is a decrease in feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work across all age groups compared to before the pandemic, the proportion of people who report a sense of belonging and acceptance at work increases with older age groups.

Feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic and currently (age)



Employed people with no change to salary or hours have greatest sense of belonging and acceptance at work both pre-pandemic (78 per cent) and in the past month (72 per cent) compared to those working fewer hours (76 per cent to 53 per cent) and those with reduced salary (73 per cent to 52 per cent).

Feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic and currently (employment status)



**Sense of belonging and acceptance at work:
productivity**

Individuals who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work have higher productivity (86 per cent) than those who do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work (73 per cent).

Productivity among those who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



Overview of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

The mental health and wellbeing of a population is essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index™ provides a measure of the current mental health status of employed adults in each geography compared to benchmarks collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by business and government.

The Mental Health Index™ report has three parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index™ (MHI), which is a measure of change compared to the benchmark of mental health and risk.
2. A Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score, which measures the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month.
3. A spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 1,000 people who live in Australia and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants are selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in Australia. The same respondents

take part each month to remove a sampling bias. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™ has been published monthly since April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between July 30 and August 5, 2021.

Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index™, the first step leverages a response scoring system turning individual responses to each question into a point value. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. Everyone's scores are added and then divided by a total number of possible points to get a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores.

To demonstrate change, the current month's scores are then compared to the benchmark and the prior month. The benchmark comprises data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. This was a period of relative social stability and steady economic growth. **The change compared to the benchmark is the Mental Health Index™. A score of zero in the Mental Health Index™ reflects no change, positive scores reflect improvement, and negative scores reflect decline.**

A Mental Stress Change score is also reported given that increasing and prolonged mental stress is a potential contributor to changes in mental health. It is reported separately and is not part of the calculation of the Mental Health Index™. The Mental Stress Change score is (percentage reporting less mental stress + percentage reporting the same level of mental stress * 0.5) * -1 + 100. The score reflects a comparison of the current to the prior month. **A Mental Stress Change score of 50 reflects no change in mental stress from the prior month. Scores above 50 reflect an increase in mental stress and scores below 50 reflect a decrease in mental stress.** The range is from zero to 100. A succession of scores over 50, month over month, reflects high risk.

Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdown of sub-scores, and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses, are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any sub-group is available upon request. Contact MHI@lifeworks.com



About LifeWorks

LifeWorks is a world leader in providing digital and in-person solutions that support the total wellbeing of individuals. We deliver a personalized continuum of care that helps our clients improve the lives of their people and by doing so, improve their business.

For more information, visit:

 [LifeWorks.com](https://www.lifeworks.com)

 twitter.com/LifeWorks

 linkedin.com/company/lifeworks