

# The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Australia | July 2021



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# July 2021 highlights

## Key insight: Better mental health associated with Australians who have the option to work from home at least some of the time

New outbreaks coupled with a slow vaccine rollout have resulted in recurrent lockdowns across the country. According to the July 2021 Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™, 35 per cent of working Australians want mandated vaccination for return to the workplace while another 23 per cent are unsure.

## Relationships with work peers is important for resilience

- 73% indicate that their relationship with work peers has remained the same compared to before the pandemic and this group has among the highest mental health scores (-8.0).
- 13% report a worsened relationship with their work peers and this group has among lowest mental health scores (-24.9).
- Managers are more than three times as likely as non-managers to report an improved relationship with their work peers compared to before the pandemic.

## Organizations that support personal wellbeing have people with better mental health

- 65% report that the culture of their organization supports their personal wellbeing, and this group has among the highest mental health scores (-9.5).
- 17% of people do not believe that the culture of their organization supports their personal wellbeing, and this group has among the lowest mental health scores (-24.3).

## The mental health of Australians improves modestly in July 2021 but remains below the pre-2020 benchmark

- The Mental Health Index for July is 12-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.
- People without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-25.2) than the overall group (-11.9) and those with emergency savings (-6.7).
- Ten per cent of people have taken sick time from work due to their mental health in the last six months.
- For the seventh consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score (-19.8).

### Better mental health associated with Australians who have the option to work from home at least some of the time

- 69% indicate that working from home has a positive impact on their mental health.
- 48% indicate that their job cannot be done from home and this group has among the lowest mental health scores (-11.8).
- 29% indicate that their job can be done from home full-time, and this group has among the highest mental health scores (-7.2), followed by 24% who indicate that their job can be done from home part-time (-11.3).
- Non-managers are more than 40 per cent more likely than managers to report that their job cannot be done from home.

### Commuting time is the leading reason for a preference to work from home

- 32% indicate that the lack of commuting time is the most important reason why they want to work from home.
- Women are twice as likely as men to want to work from home to avoid tension/conflict with co-workers.
- People who want to work from home to avoid tension/conflict with management have missed an average of seven days of work in the last six months, followed by 6.7 days among people who want to work from home because their team is virtual.

**69%**

of Australians  
say that working  
from home

has a positive impact  
on their mental health

**65%**

report that  
the culture of their  
organization

supports their  
personal wellbeing

**32%**

report that a  
lack of commuting  
time

is the most important reason  
to work from home

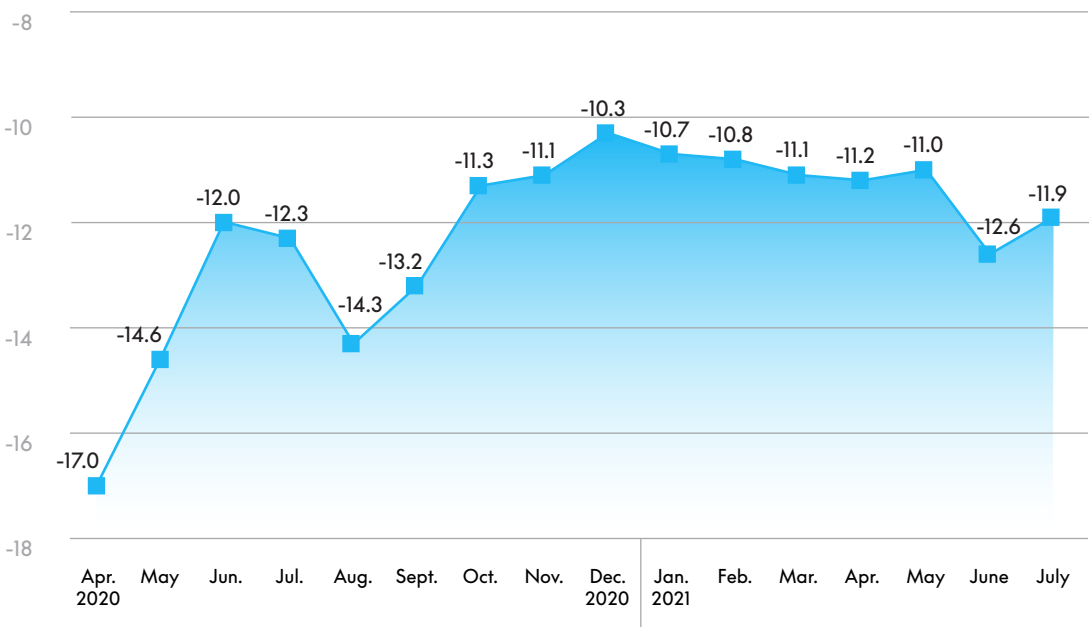
**27%**

have missed  
at least one day  
of work

for their mental health

# The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark<sup>1</sup> of mental health and risk. **The overall Mental Health Index™ for July 2021 is -11.9 points.** A 10-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.



<sup>1</sup> The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

MHI Current Month  
July 2021

-11.9

June 2021

-12.6

## Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of work productivity (-13.4), followed by depression (-13.4), isolation (-13.2), anxiety (-13.1), optimism (-11.1), and general psychological health (-5.2). The best sub-score, and the only measure above the benchmark is financial risk (2.5).

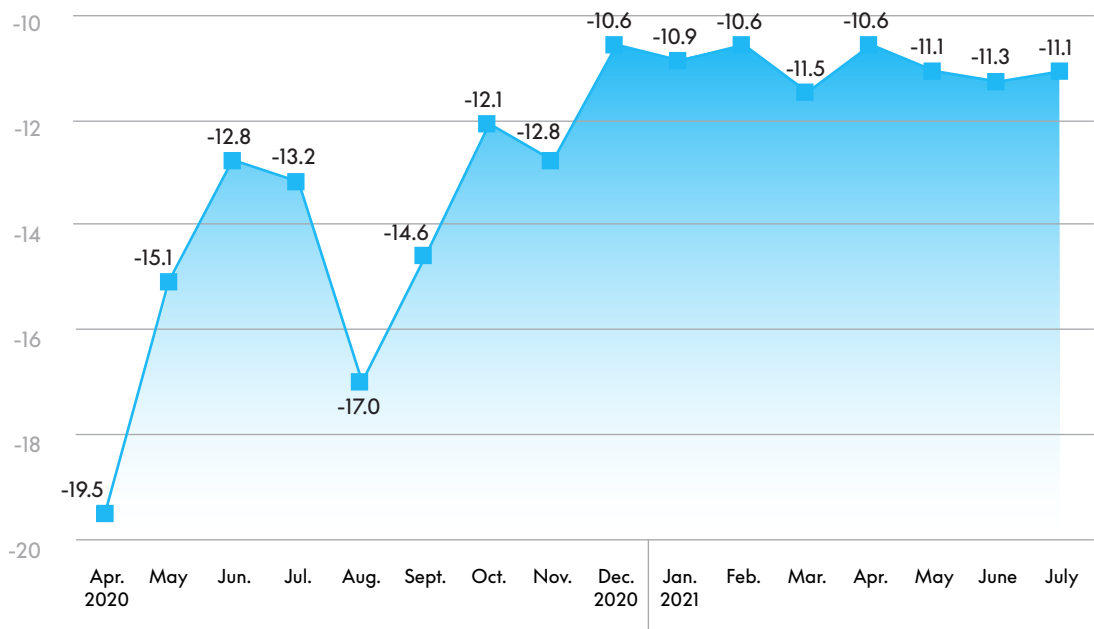
- Isolation and general psychological health have declined from June 2021 results.
- With a 3.2-point increase, the financial risk score has had the greatest improvement from the prior month; it continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores and is above the pre-2020 benchmark.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores <sup>2</sup> 2021	July	June
Work productivity	-13.4	-14.1
Depression	-13.4	-15.2
Isolation	-13.2	-13.1
Anxiety	-13.1	-13.8
Optimism	-11.1	-11.3
Psychological health	-5.2	-4.5
Financial risk	2.5	-0.7

<sup>2</sup> The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

# Optimism

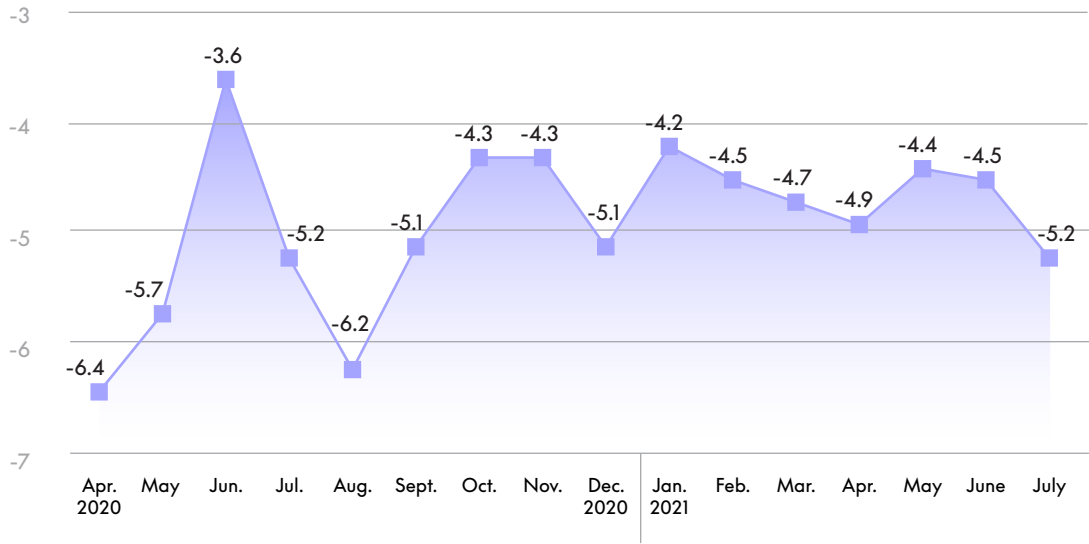
Since April 2020, optimism scores have remained significantly below the benchmark. Despite some months of modest improvement, including a peak in December 2020 (-10.6). Since December, scores have fluctuated modestly and the optimism score in July 2021 remains nearly equal to the prior month, at 11-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.



# General psychological health

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

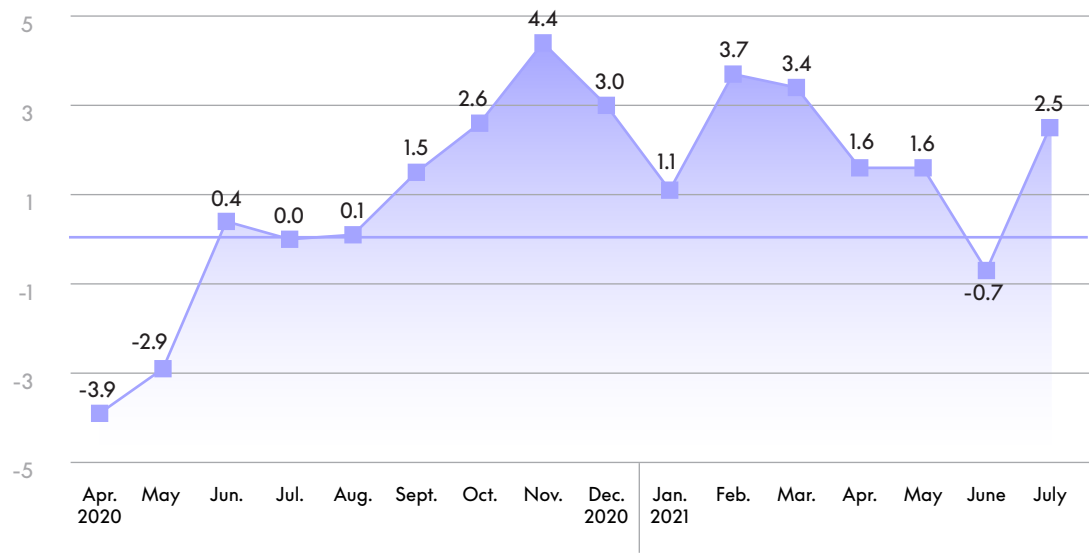
Since the launch of the MHI in April 2020, the general psychological health score fluctuated from a low of -6.4 to a high of -3.6. Since January 2021, scores have fluctuated modestly, however, in July 2021, a sharp decline has been observed to -5.2.





# Financial risk

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, financial risk scores have declined to a score of -0.7 in June 2020, the lowest in more than one year. After a 2.3-point decline from May to June 2021, the financial risk score rebounded in July 2021 to 2.5 and continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores.



## Demographics

- Since the start of the MHI, women have had a significantly lower mental health score than men. In July 2021, the mental health score of women is -14.3 compared to -8.9 for men.
- In each of the past fifteen months, mental health scores have improved with age.
- Differences in mental health scores between people with and without children have been seen 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 (-13.5) compared to those without children (-10.7).

## Employment

- Overall, seven per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>3</sup> and sixteen per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-24.3), followed by those reporting fewer hours (-22.8), and those not currently employed (-20.2).
- Managers have a slightly lower mental health score (-11.4) than non-managers (-11.2).
- Individuals working for organizations with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (-5.8).
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the lowest mental health score (-21.2).

## Emergency savings

- People without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-25.2) than the overall group. Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of -6.7.

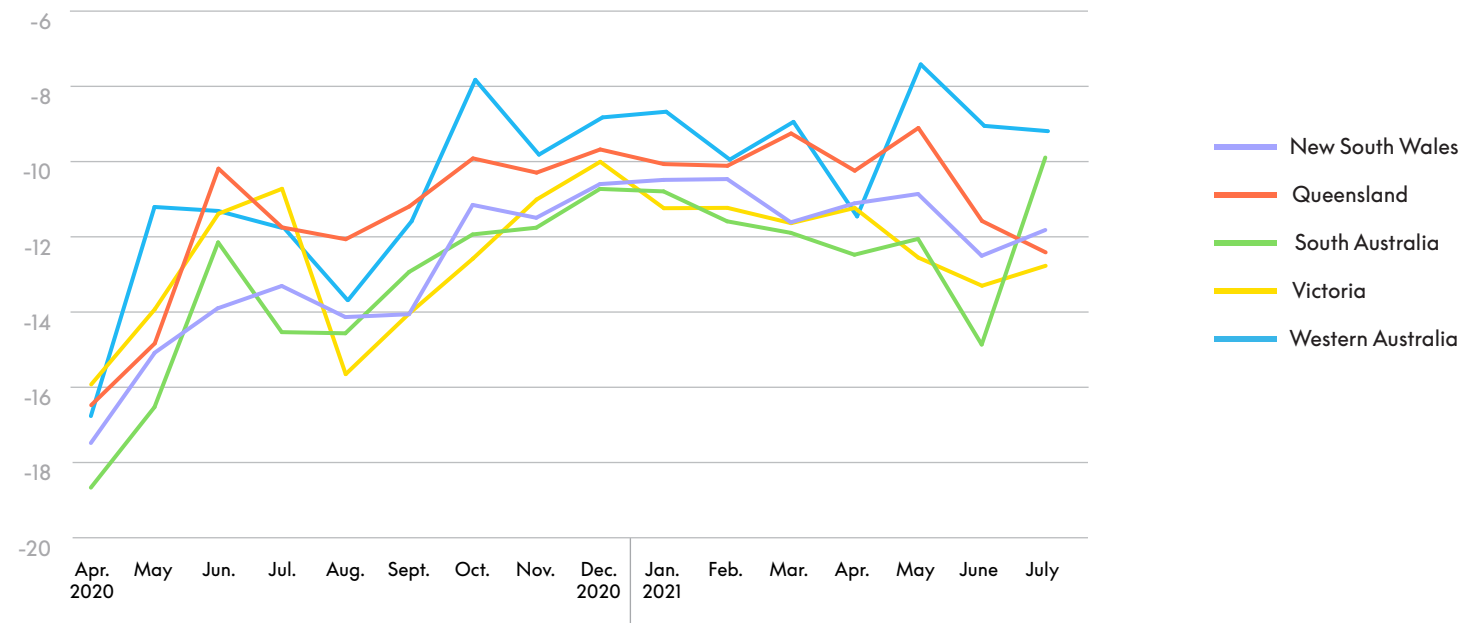
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3 MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Regional mental health scores since October 2020 have remained consistent. While all regions apart from Victoria showed improvements in May 2021, the mental health scores in June 2021 declined in all regions. In July 2021, mental health scores in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales have improved over the prior month.

- The strongest mental health score is observed in Western Australia (-9.2), nearly equal to the prior month.
- Despite a 0.5-point improvement from prior month, Victoria has the lowest mental health score (-13.0).
- The greatest improvement in mental health is observed in South Australia, with a 5.0-point increase from June 2021.



Employment status	July 2021	June 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-8.8	-9.7
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-22.8	-21.4
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-24.3	-27.9
Not currently employed	-20.2	-21.5
Age group	July 2021	June 2021
Age 20-29	-21.3	-18.9
Age 30-39	-13.6	-16.3
Age 40-49	-13.3	-12.6
Age 50-59	-10.2	-9.9
Age 60-69	-3.6	-5.2
Number of children	July 2021	June 2021
No children in household	-10.7	-11.9
1 child	-13.7	-13.0
2 children	-13.8	-13.7
3 children or more	-11.9	-15.1

Region	July 2021	June 2021
New South Wales	-11.8	-12.5
Victoria	-13.0	-13.5
Queensland	-12.6	-11.8
South Australia	-9.9	-14.9
Western Australia	-9.2	-9.1
Gender	July 2021	June 2021
Men	-8.9	-11.3
Women	-14.3	-13.7
Household income	July 2021	June 2021
<\$30K/annum	-32.0	-24.5
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-14.6	-14.6
\$60K to <\$100K	-13.4	-15.2
\$100K to <\$150K	-8.8	-9.5
\$150K or more	-7.1	-6.7

Employer size	July 2021	June 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-21.2	-12.6
2-50 employees	-9.2	-11.0
51-100 employees	-15.4	-15.8
101-500 employees	-11.2	-13.2
501-1,000 employees	-11.1	-10.7
1,001-5,000 employees	-12.5	-11.0
5,001-10,000 employees	-10.2	-7.2
More than 10,000 employees	-5.8	-7.5
Manager	July 2021	June 2021
Manager	-11.4	-12.0
Non-manager	-11.2	-11.5

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)

For the seventh consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score (-19.8). This score continues to be significantly lower than the next lowest scores: individuals in Food Services (-19.2), and Information and Cultural Industries (-19.0).

Individuals employed in Public Administration (-3.6), Manufacturing (-6.5), and Health Care and Social Assistance (-9.4) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Individuals employed in Retail Trade and Wholesale Trade have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

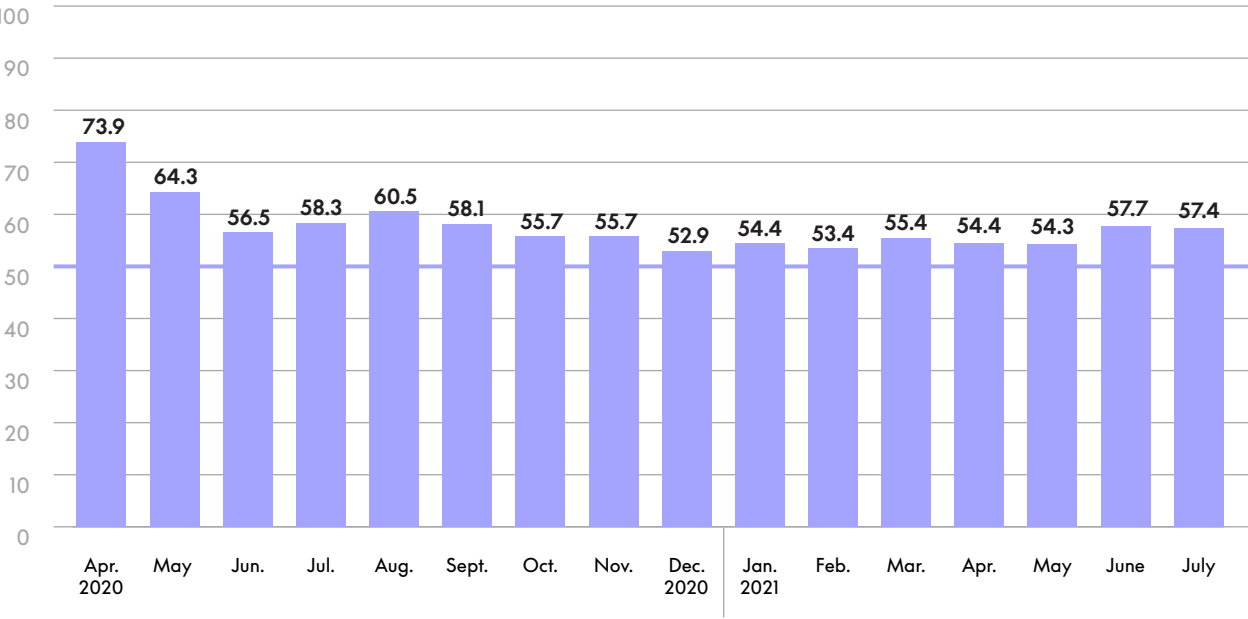
Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	July 2021	June 2021	Change
I am a student	-19.8	-31.3	11.5
Retail Trade	-13.0	-17.5	4.4
Wholesale Trade	-12.1	-16.5	4.4
Educational Services	-11.5	-15.0	3.5
Public Administration	-3.6	-6.5	2.9
Finance and Insurance	-10.3	-13.3	2.9
Manufacturing	-6.5	-8.0	1.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-11.0	-12.1	1.1
Health Care and Social Assistance	-9.4	-10.5	1.1
Other	-14.1	-13.3	-0.8
Transportation and Warehousing	-10.8	-9.8	-1.1
Information and Cultural Industries	-19.0	-16.9	-2.1
Food Services	-19.2	-13.8	-5.5
Administrative and Support services	-15.5	-9.2	-6.3
Construction	-15.5	-8.1	-7.4

# 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 July 2021 is 57.4.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 23 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 9 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—July 2021

57.4

MStressChg June 2021

57.7

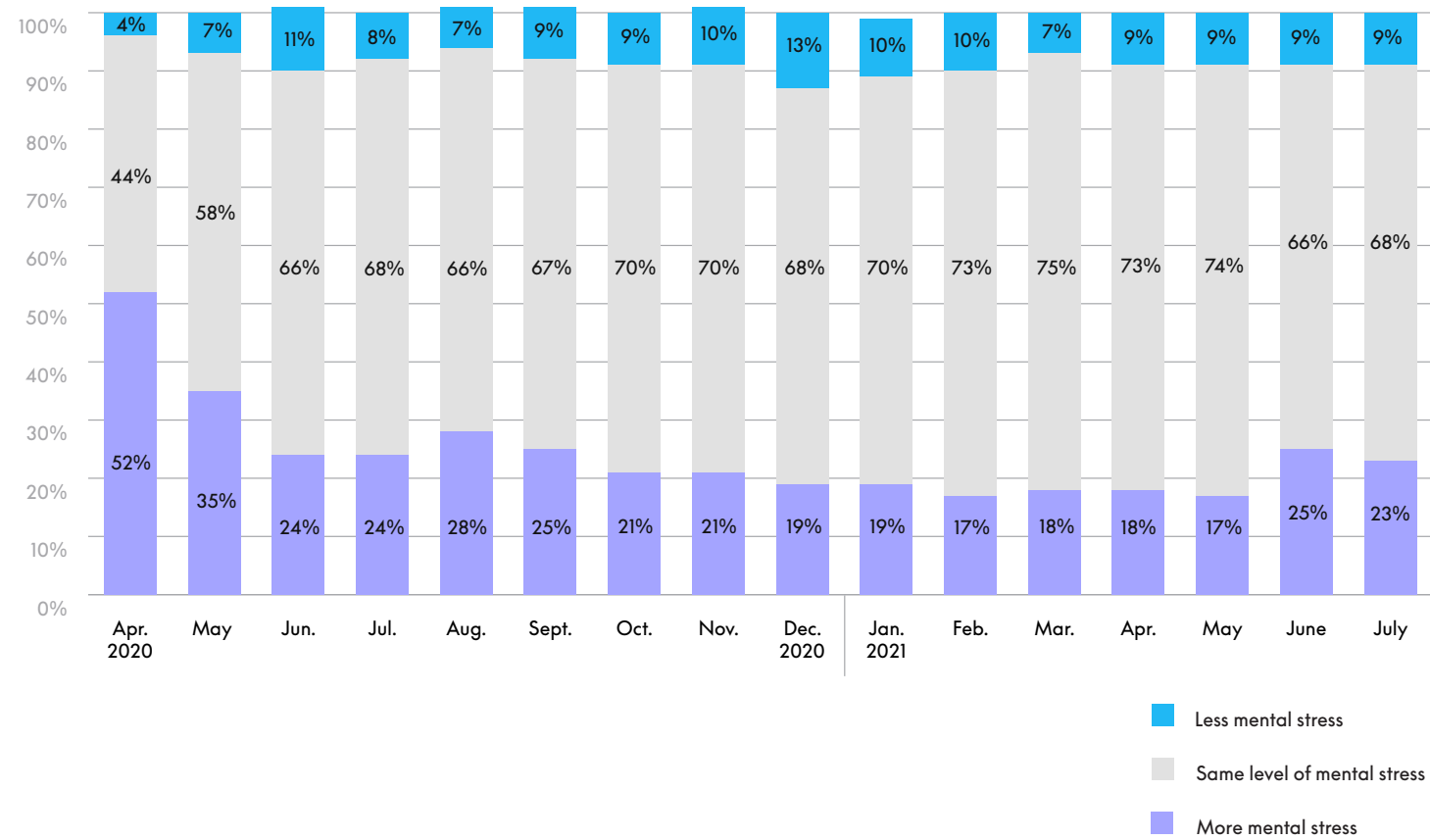
# Mental Stress Change (percentages)

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. Those reporting increased month-over-month mental stress reduced to 23 per cent in July 2021, while 68 per cent of respondents report the same level of mental stress and 9 per cent report a decrease in mental stress.

Mental Stress Change by month



## Demographics

- Since the start of the MHI in April 2020, younger people are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress month over month, when compared to older respondents.
- Since April 2020, women have had larger increases in mental stress compared with men. In July 2021, the mental stress change score of women is 59.3 compared to 55.1 for men.

## Geography

- The greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in New South Wales (58.2), followed by Western Australia (57.5), Victoria (57.0), South Australia (57.0), and Queensland (56.6).

## Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced hours (71.1), followed by employed people with reduced salary (61.4), unemployed people (58.0), and employed people with no change to salary or hours (55.1).
- Managers have a greater increase in mental stress (58.1) than non-managers (56.8).



Employment status	July 2021	June 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	55.1	55.6
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	71.1	70.2
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	61.4	69.4
Not currently employed	58.0	56.5
Age group	July 2021	June 2021
Age 20-29	61.4	55.4
Age 30-39	58.5	63.9
Age 40-49	57.7	57.1
Age 50-59	56.9	55.7
Age 60-69	53.9	51.9
Number of children	July 2021	June 2021
No children in household	56.8	57.5
1 child	59.2	57.7
2 children	56.7	57.1
3 children or more	58.9	61.7

Region	July 2021	June 2021
New South Wales	58.2	57.2
Victoria	57.0	58.9
Queensland	56.6	55.7
South Australia	57.0	56.8
Western Australia	57.5	61.3
Gender	July 2021	June 2021
Men	55.1	58.2
Women	59.3	57.3
Household income	July 2021	June 2021
<\$30K/annum	68.6	66.1
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	57.4	58.4
\$60K to <\$100K	58.1	56.8
\$100K to <\$150K	54.2	58.0
\$150K or more	59.0	56.8

Employer size	July 2021	June 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	66.9	60.3
2-50 employees	56.8	56.3
51-100 employees	54.4	59.1
101-500 employees	57.1	58.6
501-1,000 employees	60.3	53.7
1,001-5,000 employees	58.2	57.8
5,001-10,000 employees	56.2	62.7
More than 10,000 employees	53.3	54.5
Manager	July 2021	June 2021
Manager	58.1	59.5
Non-manager	56.8	55.8

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)

In July 2021, people working in Wholesale Trade have the most significant increase in mental stress (62.8), followed by those employed in Information and Cultural Industries (62.5), and those working in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (62.1).

Individuals working in Information and Cultural Industries have the most significant increase in mental stress (64.5), followed by full-time post-secondary students (63.6), and those employed in Food Services (62.9).

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

Industry	July 2021	June 2021
Public Administration	51.6	56.1
Transportation and Warehousing	53.9	48.8
Manufacturing	54.8	55.8
Retail Trade	55.1	56.2
Educational Services	55.1	59.3
Construction	55.1	54.7
Wholesale Trade	56.8	60.8
Administrative and Support services	57.5	60.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	57.8	55.6
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	58.6	63.1
Other	59.5	54.4
Finance and Insurance	61.1	61.5
Food Services	62.9	54.4
I am a student	63.6	72.7
Information and Cultural Industries	64.5	63.2

# Spotlight

## Vaccination for return to the workplace

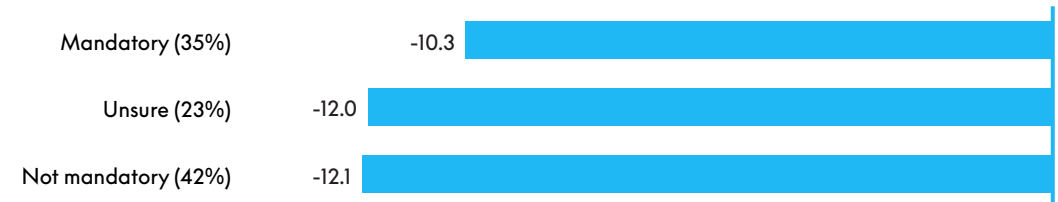
In July 2021, Australians were asked whether they want their employer to mandate vaccination for return to the workplace.

- More than one-third (35 per cent) want mandated vaccination for return to the workplace and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-10.3).
- Forty-two per cent do not want to mandate vaccination for return to the workplace and a further 23 per cent are unsure.
- Managers are 60 per cent more likely than non-managers to want mandatory vaccination for return to the workplace.
- Employed people with no change to hours or salary are 60 per cent more likely to want mandatory vaccination for return to the workplace than employed people with reduced salary.

### Vaccination for return to the workplace



### MHI score by vaccination for return to the workplace

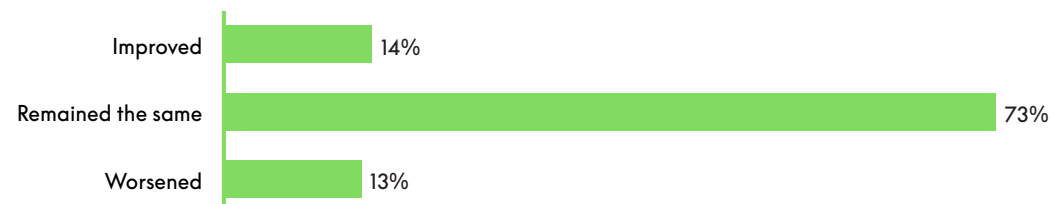


## Relationship with work peers

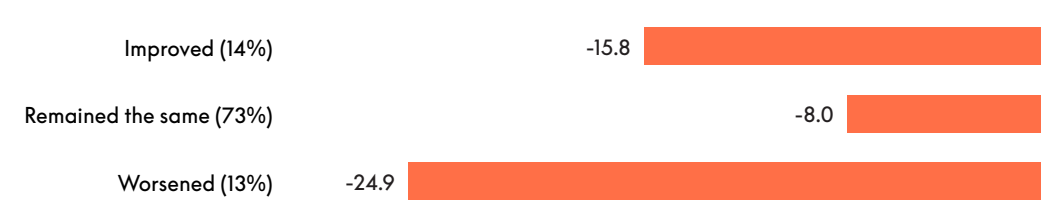
Respondents were asked about their relationship with work peers compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) indicate that their relationship with work peers has remained the same compared to before the pandemic and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-8.0).
- Thirteen per cent report a worsened relationship with their work peers and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-24.9).
- Managers are more than three times as likely than non-managers to report an improved relationship with their work peers compared to before the pandemic.
- Parents are nearly three times more likely than non-parents to report an improved relationship with their work peers compared to before the pandemic.

### Relationship with work peers compared to before the pandemic



### MHI score by relationship with work peers compared to before the pandemic



# Support for personal wellbeing

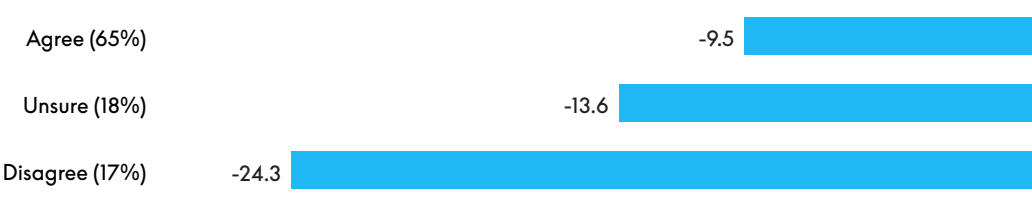
Respondents were asked whether the culture of their organization supports their personal wellbeing.

- Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) report that the culture of their organization supports their personal wellbeing, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-9.5).
- The lowest mental health score (-24.3) is seen among 17 per cent of respondents that do not believe that the culture of their organization supports their personal wellbeing.
- Employed people with no change to salary or hours are 30 per cent more likely than employed people with reduced salary to report that the culture of their organization supports their personal wellbeing.

## The culture of my organization supports my personal wellbeing



## MHI score by the culture of my organization supports my personal wellbeing



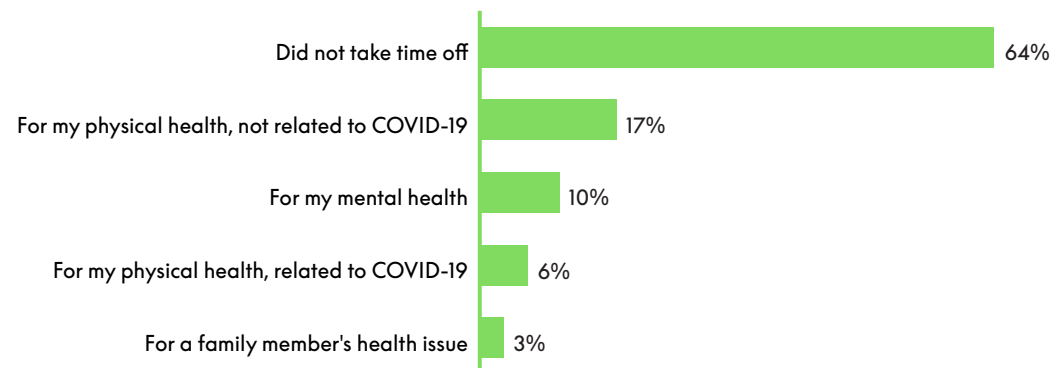
## Time off from work for illness

### Reasons for missed time from work

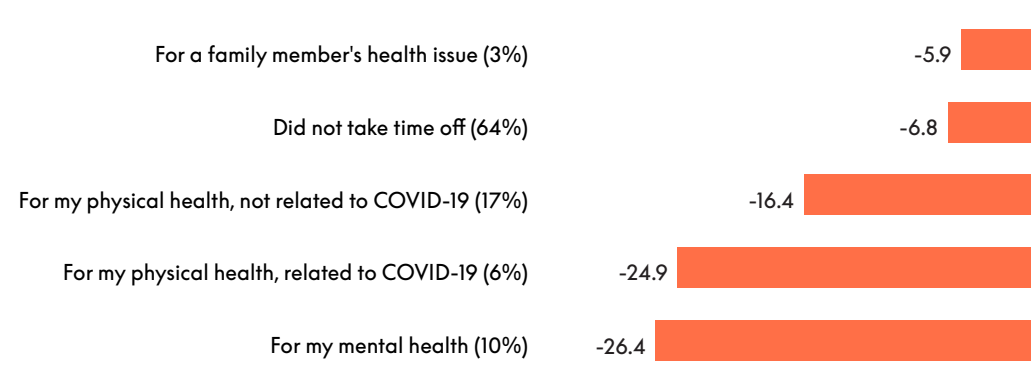
Respondents were asked whether they have taken time off from work because of illness in the past six months.

- Nearly two thirds (64 per cent) have not taken time off from work in the past six months due to illness.
- Seventeen per cent report taking time off from work for their physical health, not related to COVID-19, and six per cent that took time off from work for a COVID-19-related physical health issue.
- Ten per cent have taken time off from work due to their mental health in the last six months and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-26.4).
- Parents are more than three times as likely as non-parents to have taken time off from work for a COVID-19-related physical health issue than non-parents.

### Reasons for taking time off from work due to illness in the last six months



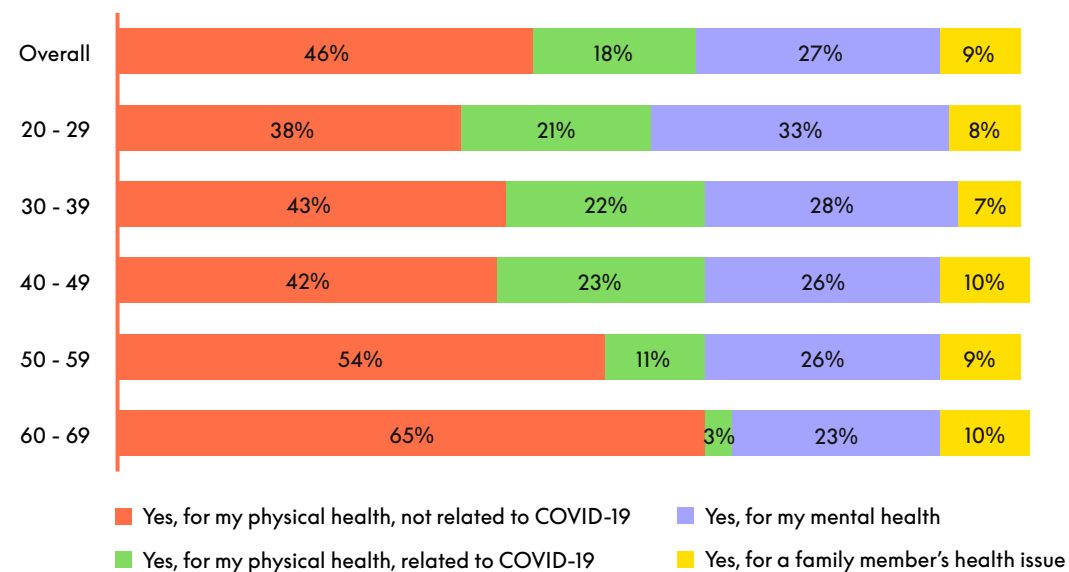
### MHI score by reasons for taking time off from work due to illness in the last six months



Among those who took time off from work due to illness during the last six months, 27 per cent of people missed work because of their mental health.

- Thirty-three per cent of people aged 20-29 missed work time because of their mental health compared to 26 per cent among those 40-59.
- Thirty-eight per cent of people aged 20-29 missed time because of their physical health, not related to COVID-19, compared to 65 per cent of people aged 60-69.
- Twenty-two per cent of people aged under 50 years of age missed work because of their physical health related to COVID-19 compared to three per cent of people older than 60.

Reasons individuals missed at least one day of work by age group

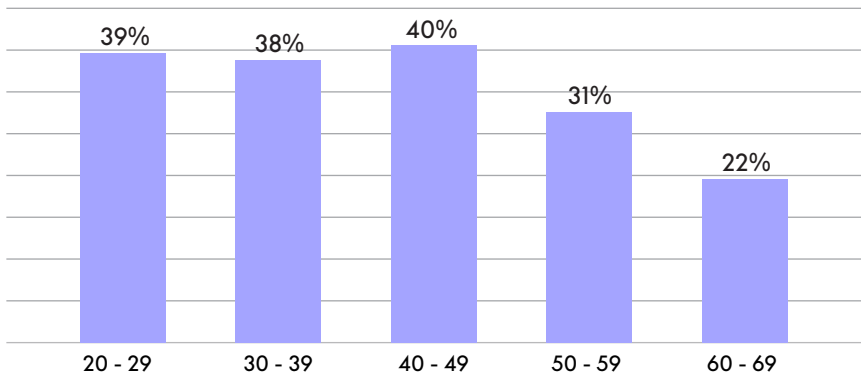


# Number of days missed from work

Respondents who have taken time off from work due to illness in the past six months were asked how many workdays were missed.

The percentage of people who have missed at least one day from work due to illness decreases beyond the age of 50. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents between 20-49 years of age report missing at least one day of work due to illness compared to 28 per cent among those 50-69 years of age.

At least one missed day during the last six months due to illness by age





# Work location

## Work from home option

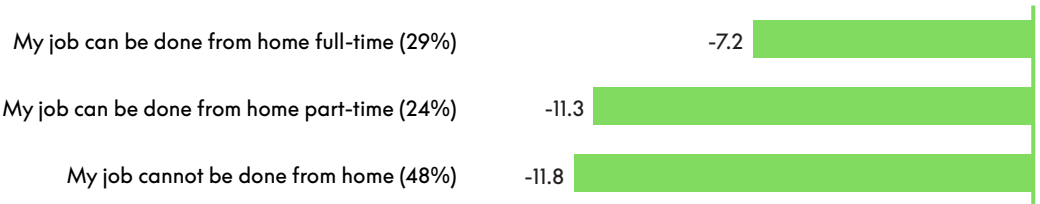
Respondents were asked whether their job function is one that could be done from home.

- Nearly half (48 per cent) report that their job cannot be done from home and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-11.8).
- Nearly thirty per cent (29 per cent) indicate that their job can be done from home full-time, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-7.2), followed by 24 per cent who report that their job can be done from home part-time (-11.3).
- Non-managers are more than 40 per cent more likely than managers to report that their job cannot be done from home.

## Work location



## MHI score by work location

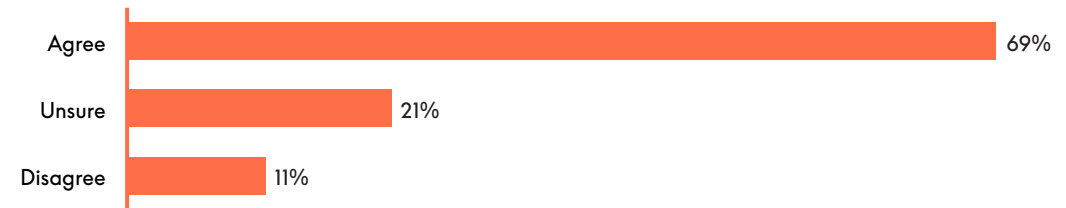


## Impact of work from home on mental health

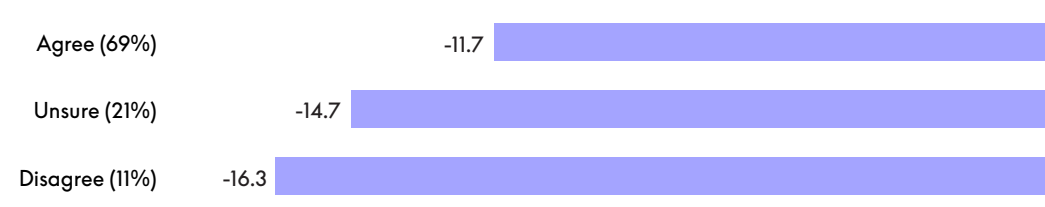
Respondents who report that their job can be done from home either full-time or part-time were asked whether working from home has a positive impact on their mental health.

- More than two-thirds (69 per cent) indicate the working from home has a positive impact on their mental health and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-11.7).
- Eleven per cent report that working from home does not have a positive impact on their mental health, and this group reports the least favourable mental health score (-16.3).

### Working from home has a positive impact on my mental health



### MHI score by working from home has a positive impact on my mental health



## Ideal work situation

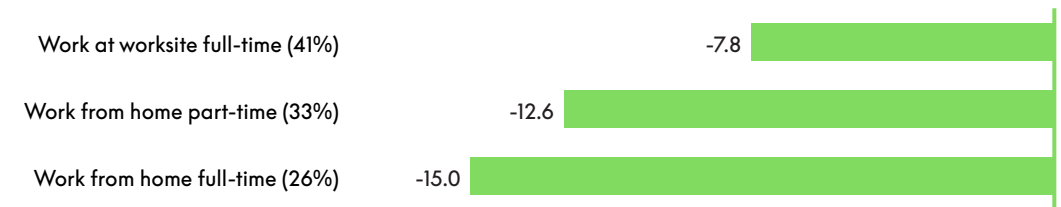
Respondents were asked what their ideal work situation would be.

- Forty-one per cent report working full-time at their worksite is the most ideal work situation and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-7.8).
- Twenty-six per cent report that full-time work from home is their most ideal work situation and another 33 per cent indicate that working from home part-time is the most ideal.
- Twenty-four per cent of women would prefer to work from home full-time compared to 29 per cent of men.
- Thirty-eight per cent of women would prefer to work from home part-time compared to 27 per cent of men.
- Forty-four per cent of men would prefer to work from the worksite full-time compared to 39 per cent of women.
- Parents are 50 per cent more likely than non-parents to indicate that working from home full-time would be their ideal work situation.

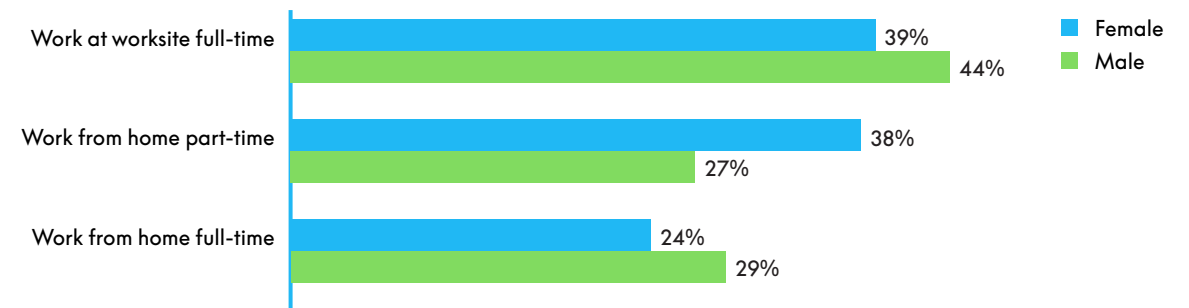
## Ideal work situation



## MHI score by ideal work situation



## Ideal work situation by gender

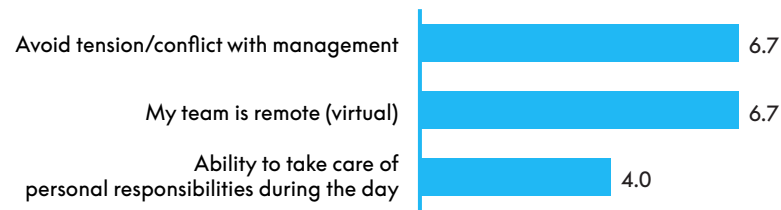


## Reasons for wanting to work from home

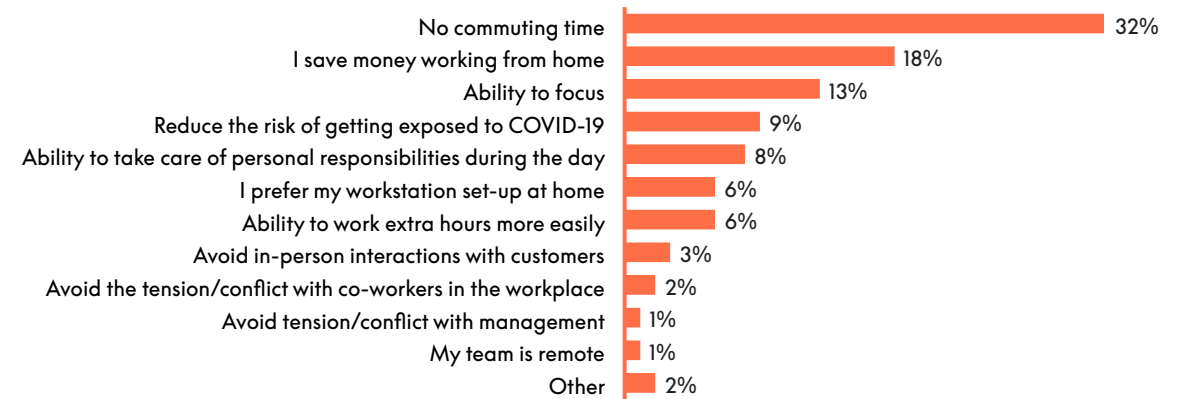
Respondents who indicate that their ideal work situation would be to work from home some or all the time were asked for the most important reason why they want to work from home.

- More than one-third (32 per cent) indicate that the lack of commuting time is the most important reason why they want to work from home.
- While only 3 per cent report avoiding in-person interaction with customers as the most important reason why they want to work from home, this group has the least favourable mental health score (-25.7).
- People who want to work from home to avoid tension/conflict with management have missed the greatest number of days during the past six months, an average of nearly seven days of work, followed by people who want to work from home because their team is virtual (6.7 days), and those who prefer to work from home to take care of personal responsibilities during the day (4 days).
- Women are twice as likely as men to want to work from home to avoid tension/conflict with co-workers.

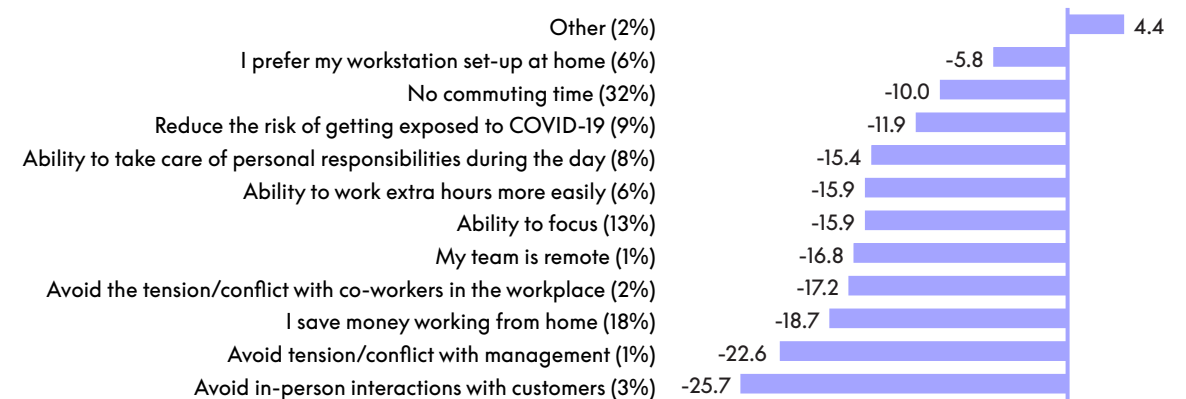
### Top three most days missed by the most important reason people want to work from home



## Most important reason for working from home



## MHI score by most important reason for wanting to work from home

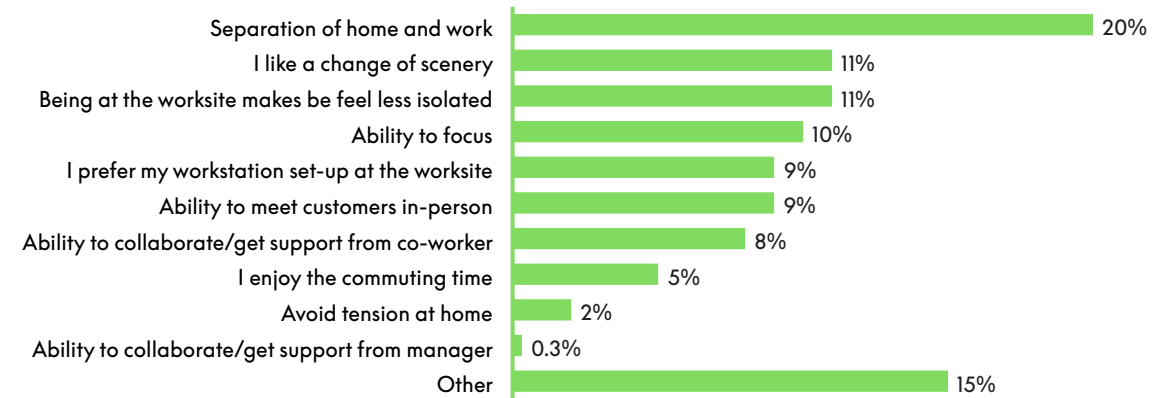


## Reasons for wanting to work from worksite

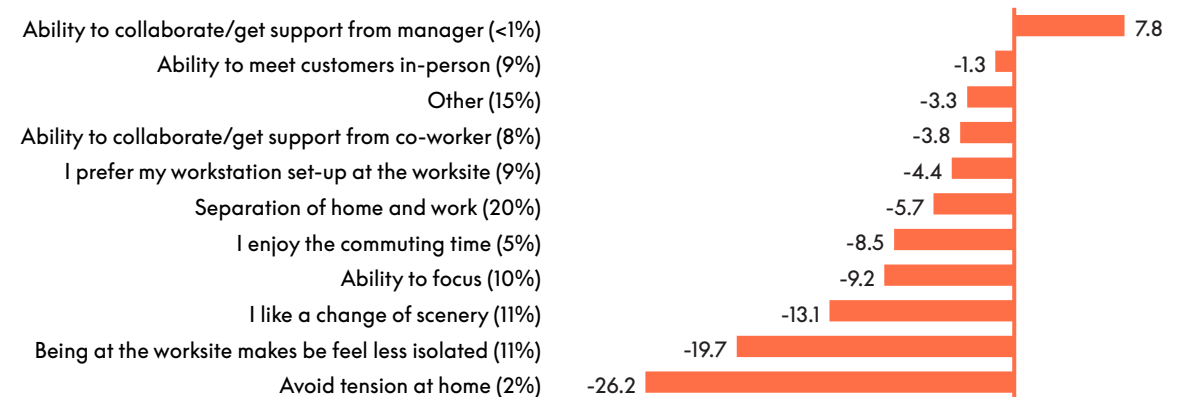
Respondents who indicate that their ideal work situation would be working at the worksite some or all the time were asked the most important reason why they want to work from the worksite.

- Twenty per cent report that separation of home and work is the most important reason why they want to work from the worksite some or all the time.
- Less than one per cent report a desire to return to the worksite to collaborate with/get support from their manager. Eight per cent indicate that a reason to return to the worksite is the ability to collaborate with /get support from co-workers
- Non-managers are twice as likely as managers to indicate that separation of home and work is the most important reason for wanting to work from the worksite at least some of the time.

## Most important reason for working from worksite



## MHI score by most important reason for working from worksite

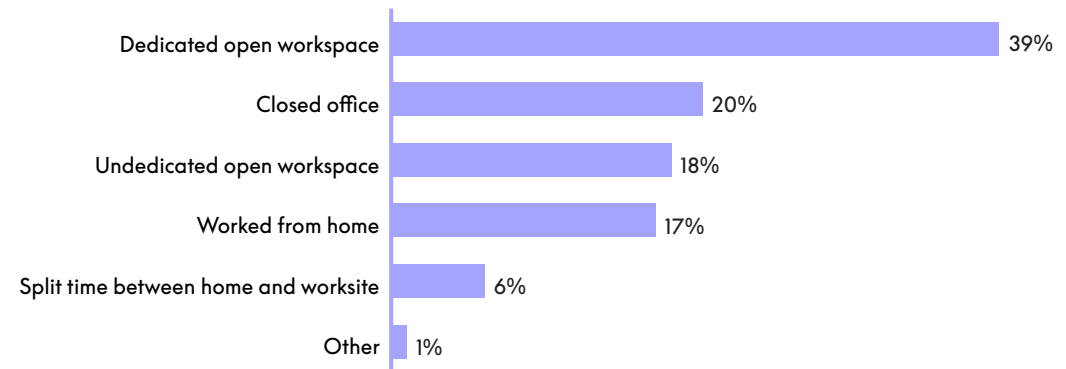


## Pre-pandemic workspace

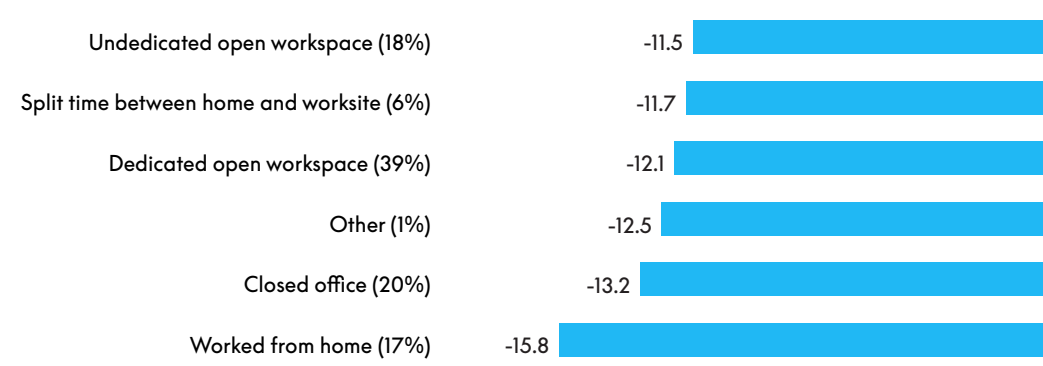
Respondents who indicate that their job function is one that can be done from home some or all the time were asked about the type of workspace they had prior to the pandemic.

- Nearly 40 per cent (39 per cent) had a dedicated open workspace (e.g., cubicle) prior to the pandemic, followed by 20 per cent who had a closed office.
- Eighteen per cent had an undedicated open workspace pre-pandemic and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-11.5), followed closely by those who split their time before home and worksite (-11.7).

## Pre-pandemic workspace

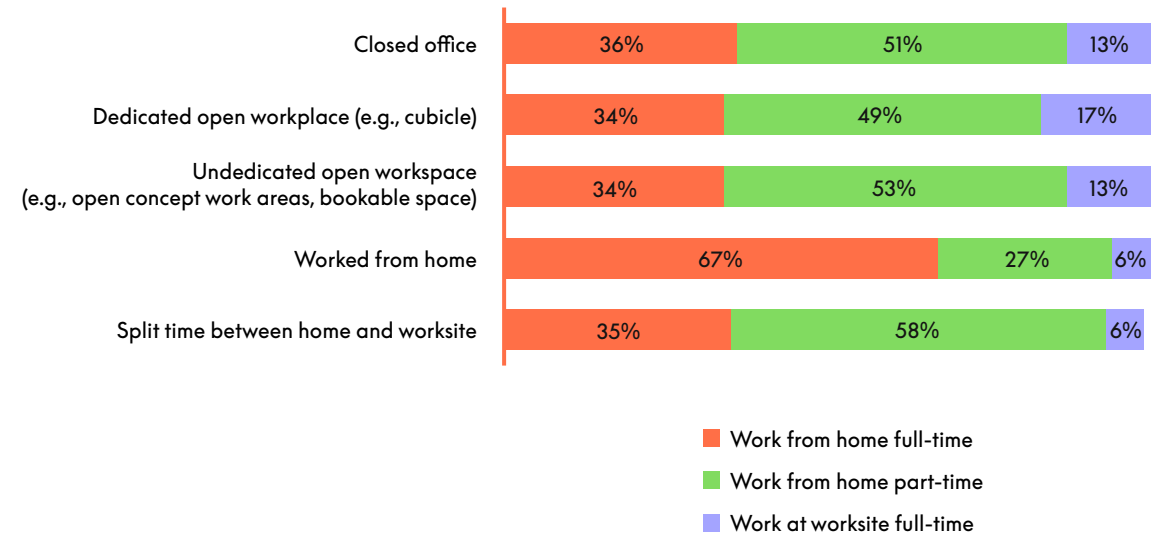


## MHI score by pre-pandemic workspace



- Managers are twice as likely as non-managers to report having a closed office prior to the pandemic.
- Employed people with reduced salary are more than twice as likely as employed people with no change to salary or hours to report having worked from home prior to the pandemic.
- More than 80 per cent of people who worked in a closed office, a dedicated open workspace or an undedicated open workspace before the pandemic say that their ideal work situation is to work from home part-time or full-time.
- Two-thirds (67 per cent) of people who worked from home prior to the pandemic want to continue to work from home and another 27 per cent want to work from home part-time.
- Among the six per cent of people who split their time between home and the worksite before the pandemic, 58 per cent want to continue to split their time, 35 per cent want to work from home full-time and 6 per cent want to go to the worksite full-time.

### Ideal work situation by pre-pandemic workspace



# 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 Australians who are living 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™ is published monthly starting in April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between June 30 to July 12, 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](mailto: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.

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