The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Australia | September 2021

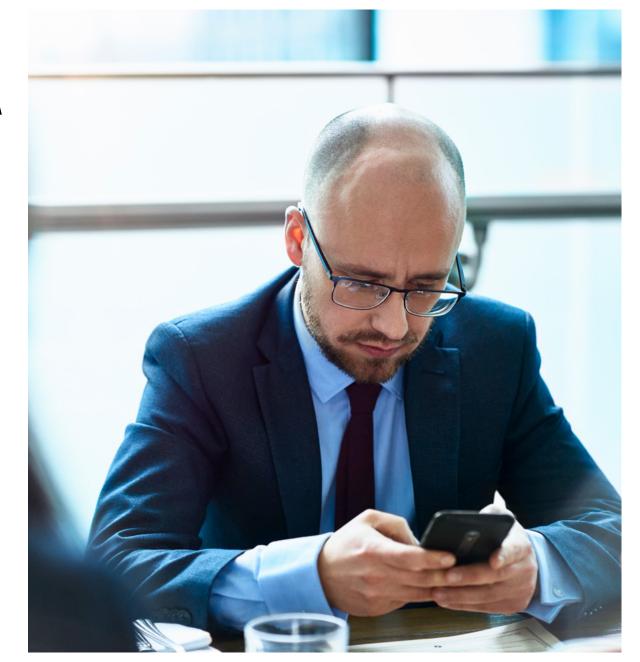




Table of contents

1 September 2021 highlights	3
One in five Australians resigned from their job	
because of feeling underappreciated	3
2 The Mental Health Index™	5
Mental Health Index™ sub-scores	6
Optimism	7
General psychological health	8
Demographics	10
Employment	10
Emergency savings	10

3 Mental Health Index™ (regional)	1
4 Mental Health Index™ (industry)	13
5 The Mental Stress Change score	14
6 Mental Stress Change (percentages)	15
6 Mental Stress Change (percentages) Demographics	15 16
Demographics	16

8	Spotlight	19
Em	notion	19
Tur	rnover	20
	Voluntary turnover	20
	Turnover during the pandemic	21
	Job satisfaction and salary increase	22
Jol	b stress	23
W	orking preferences	24
Wo	orkplace changes	25
9	Overview of the Mental Health Index	
	by LifeWorks™	26
Me	ethodology	26
Ca	lculations	26
Ad	ditional data and analyses	26

September 2021 highlights

Key insight: One in five Australians resigned from their job because of feeling underappreciated

One-in-five Australians resigned from their job during the pandemic because of feeling underappreciated

- 34% of Australians report an increase in job stress in 2021 compared to 2020.
- 15% resigned due to increased mental stress/strain at work and this group has among the least favourable mental health scores (-30.9).
- Managers are more than twice as likely than non-managers to report resigning during the pandemic.

More than one-third of Australians are thinking about leaving their job or are unsure

- 34% of Australians who are thinking about leaving their job or are unsure have mental health scores more than two times worse than those who are not thinking about leaving their jobs.
- Older employees are more likely to consider leaving their jobs because of feeling underappreciated.

Australians with poorer mental health are more likely to leave a job that they are happy with for a salary increase

Nearly one-quarter of Australians would leave a job that they
are happy with for a salary increase of 10% or less, and this group
has among the lowest mental health scores.

The mental health of Australians continues its decline, dropping to its lowest point in since September 2020

- The Mental Health Index for September 2021 is more than 13-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.
- All mental health sub-scores apart from work productivity and financial risk have declined compared to August 2021.
- The optimism and general psychological health sub-scores are at the lowest levels since September 2020.
- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-27.2) than the overall group (-13.3) and those with emergency savings (-8.6).
- Consistent with findings from June 2020, August 2020, and January 2021 MHI reports, individuals reporting positive emotions (calm, gratitude, happiness, and hopefulness)
 have a significantly higher mental health score (-1.4) than those reporting negative emotions (anger, apathy/indifference, disbelief, frustration, helplessness, worry/anxiety) (-26.3).



- 76% would leave a job that they are happy with for an increase in salary.
- The 24% of Australians who would not leave a job that they are happy with for more money have among the highest mental health scores (-7.3), six points higher than the overall average (-13.3).

Managers continue to have poorer mental health and have been experiencing more mental strain than non-managers

- In September 2021, the mental health score of managers is -14.1 compared to -11.9 for non-managers.
- Managers also have a greater increase in mental stress (61.7) than non-managers (56.5).
- Managers are 80 per cent more likely than non-managers to have resigned during the pandemic.

When asked what workplace changes Australians want to see, nearly one-third report flexibility in working hours

- Half of Australians indicate that their employer has not asked them about their working preferences and this group has among the lowest mental health scores.
- $\bullet \quad 26\%$ of Australians want to have flexibility in their work location.
- 19% of Australians want more/better support for their personal wellbeing.

34% of Australians are thinking about leaving their job

or are unsure and have lower mental health scores

34% of Australians report an increase

in job stress compared to 2020

33% report that their employer has asked them

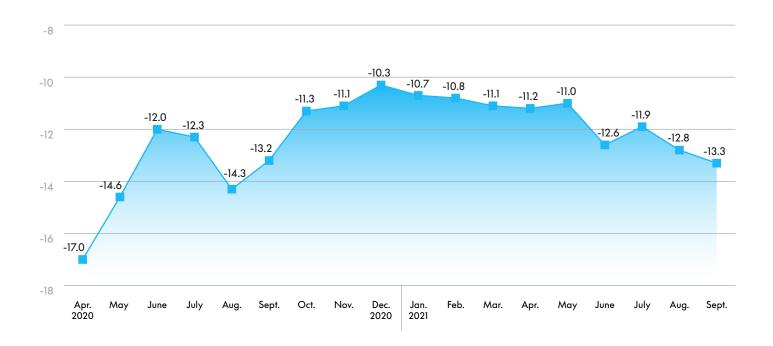
about their working preferences and this group has higher mental health scores 31% of Australians want flexibility in work hours

and 26% want flexibility in work location



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 September 2021 is -13,3 points. A 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.



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



MHI Current Month September 2021

-13.3

August 2021

-12.8

Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index[™] sub-score is for the risk measure of depression (-15.8), followed by optimism (-14.6), anxiety (-14.4), isolation (-14.3), work productivity (-12.2), and general psychological health (-6.3). The best sub-score, and the only measure above the benchmark continues to be for financial risk (4.1).

- All mental health sub-scores apart from work productivity and financial risk have declined compared to August 2021.
- The financial risk sub-score has seen the most significant improvement (+2.0 points) from the prior month, continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores, and remains above the pre-2020 benchmark.

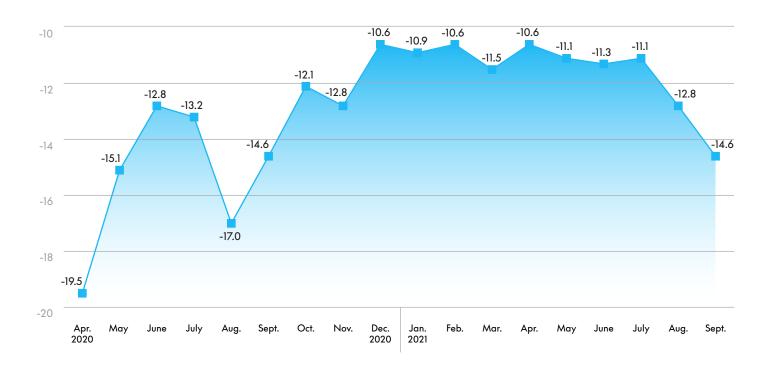
Mental Health Index [™] Sub-scores ² 2021	September	August
Depression	-15.8	-15.3
Optimism	-14.6	-12.8
Anxiety	-14.4	-13.9
Isolation	-14.3	-13. <i>7</i>
Work productivity	-12.2	-12.9
Psychological health	-6.3	-5.7
Financial risk	4.1	2.1

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 September 2021, the optimism sub-score continues its decline a further 1.8-points to -14.6, the lowest score in one year.

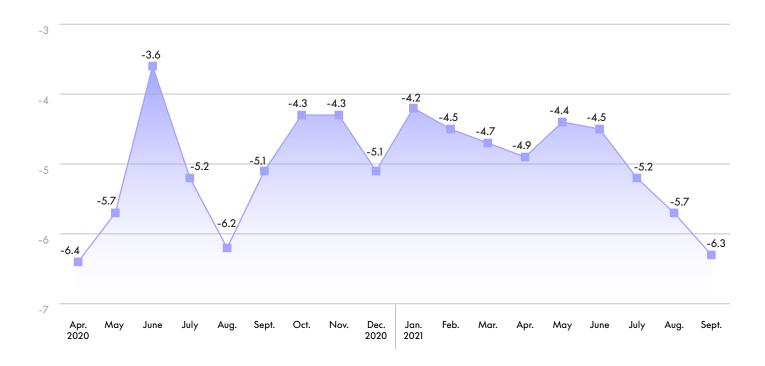




General psychological health

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 general psychological health of Australians continues its decline for a fourth month, down 0.6-points to a near-low of -6.3.

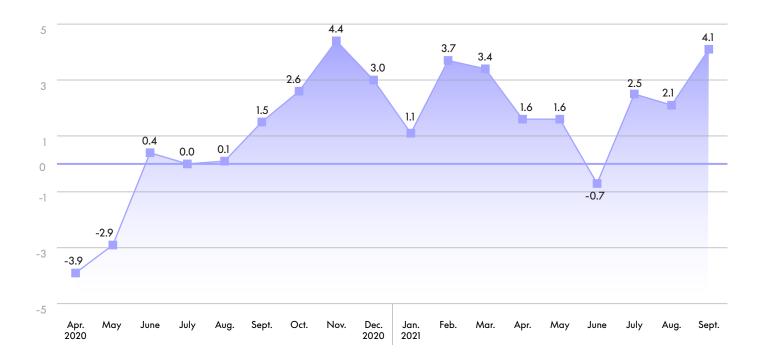




Financial risk

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 fell modestly to 2.1 in August. In September 2021, a significant 2-point increase is observed reaching a near-high of 4.1-points. The financial risk score continues to be the strongest of all mental health sub-scores.





Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In September 2021, the mental health score of women is -15.9 compared to -10.3 for men.
- In each of the past 18 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 (-14.7) compared to those without children (-12.4).

Employment

- Overall, seven per cent of respondents are unemployed³
 and 19 per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-26.2), followed by those reporting fewer hours (-23.7), and those not currently employed (-21.1).
- Managers have a lower mental health score (-14.3) than non-managers (-11.9).
- Respondents working for companies with 5,001-10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (-8.5).
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the lowest mental health score (-21.0).

 Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-27.2) than the overall group. Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of -8.6.

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

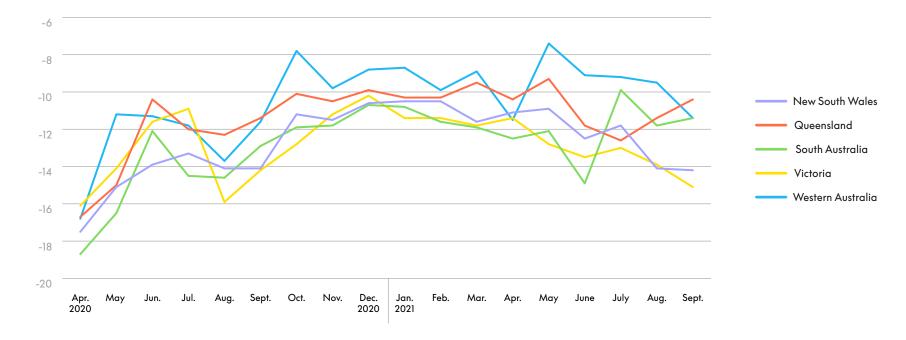


Emergency savings

Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Regional mental health scores since October 2020 have remained inconsistent except for Western Australia. After increases in July in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, the mental health of Australians declined in all states except for Queensland in August 2021. In September 2021, Queensland continues to improve along with South Australia while Victoria, New South Wales, and Western Australia have declined.

- After two months of improvements, including 1-point in September, the strongest mental health score is in Queensland (-10.4).
- With a 1.2-point decrease from the prior month, Victoria has the lowest mental health score (-15.1).





Employment status	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-9.6	-9.7
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-23.7	-21.6
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-26.2	-26.9
Not currently employed	-21.1	-19.2
Age group	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Age 20-29	-21.5	-21.1
Age 30-39	-15.1	-15.3
Age 40-49	-15.2	-14.5
Age 50-59	-11.1	-11.2
Age 60-69	-5.9	-3.9
Number of children	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
No children in household	-12.4	-11.5
1 child	-15.4	-14.2
2 children	-14.7	-15.8
3 children or more	-10.3	-13.5

Region	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
New South Wales	-14.2	-14.1
Victoria	-15.1	-13.9
Queensland	-10.4	-11.4
South Australia	-11.4	-11.8
Western Australia	-11.4	-9.5
Gender	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Men	-10.3	-10.7
Women	-15.9	-14.7
Household income	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
\$30K/annum	-27.3	-28.7
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-17.0	-15.9
\$60k to <\$100K	-15.6	-14.2
\$100K to \$150K	-10.1	-10.6
\$150K and over	-8.0	-8.0

Employer size	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-21.0	-21.2
2-50 employees	-13.8	-11.1
51-100 employees	-14.3	-16.0
101-500 employees	-11. <i>7</i>	-11.6
501-1,000 employees	-10.2	-12.8
1,001-5,000 employees	-12.2	-13.9
5,001-10,000 employees	-8.5	-11.4
More than 10,000 employees	-12.4	-8.3

Manager	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Manager	-14.3	-14.7
Non-manager	-11.9	-11.0

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 Food Services have the lowest mental health score in August (-23.3), followed by individuals in Construction (-17.4), and Retail Trade (-17.0).

Individuals employed in Public Administration (-6.5), Manufacturing (-7.2), and Transportation and Warehousing (-9.8) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Those employed in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, Wholesale Trade, Educational Services, and Other services (except Public Administration) have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

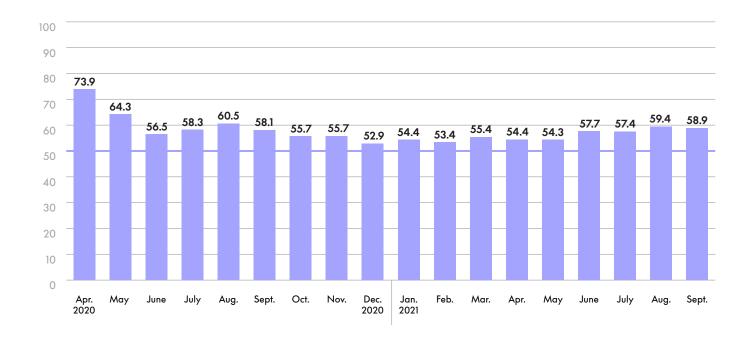
Industry	September 2021	August 2021	Change
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-15.9	-23.8	7.9
Wholesale Trade	-13.3	-19.6	6.3
Other services (except Public Administration)	-14.1	-16.6	2.4
Educational Services	-11.8	-13.9	2.1
Health Care and Social Assistance	-11.8	-13.3	1.5
Manufacturing	-7.2	-8.4	1.2
Administrative and Support services	-12.1	-13.1	1.0
Transportation and Warehousing	-9.8	-10. <i>7</i>	0.8
Finance and Insurance	-14.9	-14.7	-0.1
Public Administration	-6.5	-5.6	-0.9
Other	-13.8	-11.4	-2.4
Construction	-17.4	-14.8	-2.6
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-13.9	-10.9	-3.0
Retail Trade	-17.0	-13.5	-3.4
Food Services	-23.3	-15.4	-7.9



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 September 2021 is 58.9. This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 25 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.



MStressChg Current Month— September 2021

58.9

MStressChg August 2021

59.4

▲ More mental stress

50 = No change from prior month

Less mental stress



Mental Stress Change (percentages)

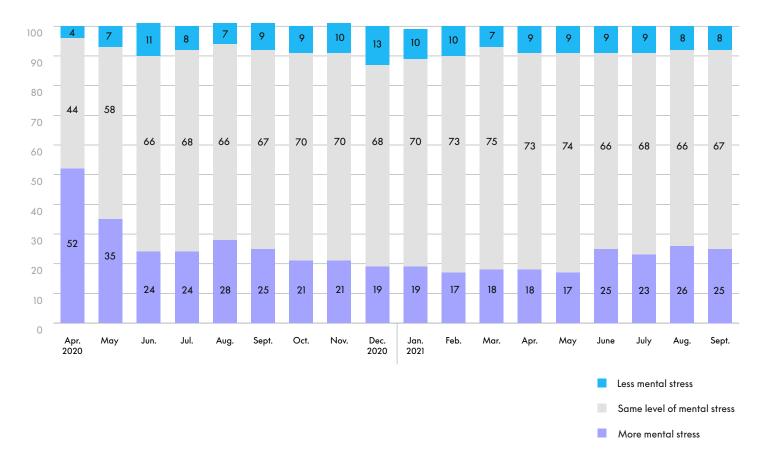
Mental Stress Change tracks stress changes each month.

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 25 per cent in September 2021, while 67 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 April 2020, women have had larger increases in mental stress compared to men. In September 2021, the mental stress change score for women is 61.3 compared to 56.1 for men.

Geography

 The greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in New South Wales (61.3), followed by Western Australia (61.0), Victoria (58.9), South Australia (55.4), and include Queensland (54.8).

Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (68.2), followed by employed people with reduced hours (67.8), unemployed people (63.0), and employed people with no change to salary or hours (56.1).
- Managers have a greater increase in mental stress (61.7) than non-managers (56.5).



Employment status	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	56.1	<i>57</i> .0
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	67.8	71.3
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	68.2	62.5
Not currently employed	63.0	60.5
Age group	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Age 20-29	60.9	67.5
Age 30-39	59.6	59.5
Age 40-49	61.4	60.0
Age 50-59	57.7	58.2
Age 60-69	53.4	54.1
Number of children	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
No children in household	57.1	59.0
1 child	60.0	60.0
2 children	64.7	60.5
3 children or more	58.8	57.6

Region	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
New South Wales	61.3	63.3
Victoria	58.9	58.4
Queensland	54.8	55.1
South Australia	55.4	58.8
Western Australia	61.0	58.5
Gender	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Men	56.1	57.5
Women	61.3	61.1
Household income	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
\$30K/annum	59.0	66.2
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	60.9	60.3
\$60k to <\$100K	60.1	59.5
\$100K to \$150K	57.3	60.0
\$150K and over	57.1	57.3

Employer size	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	62.7	64.0
2-50 employees	58.6	58.0
51-100 employees	59.8	62.4
101-500 employees	58.1	57.8
501-1,000 employees	56.0	58.7
1,001-5,000 employees	55.1	61.0
5,001-10,000 employees	57.8	60.8
More than 10,000 employees	61.5	58.3
<u> </u>		

Manager	Sept. 2021	Aug. 2021
Manager	61.7	62.6
Non-manager	56.5	57.1

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 working in Food Services have the most significant increase in mental stress (73.1), followed by individuals employed in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (65.0), and Finance and Insurance (64.9).

Mental Stress Change scores for individuals employed in Manufacturing (50.8), Administrative and Support services (52.9), and Transportation and Warehousing (55.0) are less steep when compared to the prior month.

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

Industry	September 2021	August 2021
Manufacturing	50.8	55.4
Administrative and Support services	52.9	60.9
Transportation and Warehousing	55.0	55.5
Wholesale Trade	55.4	67.2
Other	55.5	58.3
Public Administration	57.7	56.5
Retail Trade	58.1	56.7
Educational Services	58.9	61.4
Other services (except Public Administration)	59.5	63.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	59.9	60.7
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	60.3	54.8
Construction	61.1	56.7
Finance and Insurance	64.9	63.3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	65.0	73.7
Food Services	73.1	59.6



Spotlight

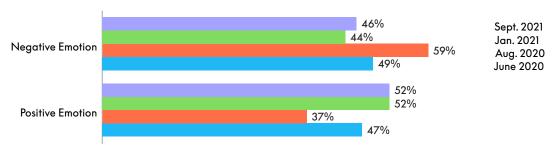
Emotion

Nearly 18 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the primary emotions reported by Australians in September 2021 are more likely to be positive.

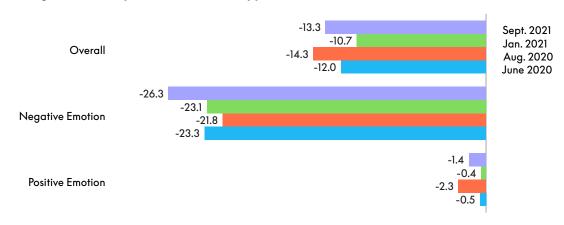
- In August 2020, 59 per cent of Australians reported a negative emotion (anger, apathy/indifference, disbelief, frustration, helplessness, worry/anxiety); this declined to 46 per cent in September 2021.
- Women are twice as likely to report worry/anxiety as their primary emotion than men.

The overall mental health score declined 1.3-points from June 2020 to September 2021. Those reporting negative emotions (anger, apathy/indifference, disbelief, frustration, helplessness, worry/anxiety) declined 3.0-points while the mental health scores of those reporting positive emotions (calm, gratitude, happiness, and hopefulness) declined 0.9-points.

Longitudinal comparison of emotion type



Longitudinal comparison of emotion type and MHI score





Turnover

Voluntary turnover

Respondents were asked whether they are thinking of leaving their job.

- Nearly two-thirds (66 per cent) are not thinking about leaving their job and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-8.0).
- More than one-third (34 per cent) are either thinking about leaving their job or are unsure. The mental health scores of this group are more than two times worse than those who are not thinking about leaving their jobs.
- Employed people with reduced salary are 80 per cent more likely to be thinking about leaving their job than employed people with no change to salary or hours.
- Respondents under 40 years old are 60 per cent more likely to be thinking about leaving their job than respondents over the age of 50.

As age increases, so does the proportion of respondents reporting feeling underappreciated in their job. Thirteen per cent of those aged 50 and older are thinking of leaving their job because they feel underappreciated compared to eight per cent of those under 50.

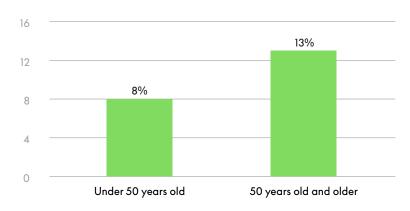
Thinking about leaving my job



MHI score by thinking about leaving my job



Feeling underappreciated as the reason for thinking about leaving a job (age group)





Turnover during the pandemic

Respondents were asked whether they resigned from a job during the pandemic.

- Ninety-two per cent did not resign from their job during the pandemic, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-11.8).
- Eight per cent resigned from a job during the pandemic, and this group has a significantly lower mental health score (-23.3).
- One-in-five (20 per cent) resigned from their job due to feeling underappreciated.
- Parents are 60 per cent more likely than non-parents to report resigning during the pandemic.
- Managers are 80 per cent more likely than non-managers to report resigning during the pandemic.

Percentage of repondents who resigned from a job during the pandemic



MHI score by percentage of respondents who resigned from a job during the pandemic



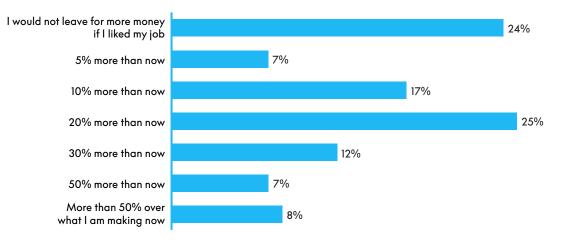


Job satisfaction and salary increase

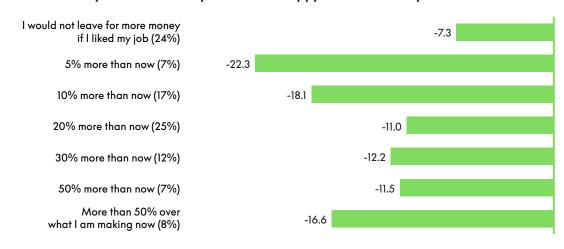
Respondents were asked whether they would leave a job that they are happy with for a salary increase.

- Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) would not leave a job they are happy with for an increase in salary and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-7.3), six points higher than the overall score (-13.3).
- More than three-quarters of Australians (76 per cent) would leave a job that they are happy with for an increase in salary.
- Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) would leave a job that they
 are happy with for an increase of 10 per cent or less. This group
 has the least favourable mental health score.
- Seven per cent of respondents would leave a job that they are happy with for a five per cent salary increase.
- Parents are more likely than non-parents to leave a job they like for more money.

Would you leave a job that you are happy with for a salary increase?



MHI score by I would leave a job that I am happy with for a salary increase





Job stress

Respondents were asked how job stress in 2021 has changed since 2020.

- More than half (57 per cent) report that job stress has remained the same in 2021 compared to 2020, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-6.6).
- More than one-third (34 per cent) report an increase in job stress in 2021 compared to 2020, and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-24.4).
- Respondents under 30 years of age are two and a half times more likely than those 50 and older to report a decrease in job stress in 2021.
- Managers are nearly 50 per cent more likely to report increased job stress than non-managers.

Change in job stress compared to 2020



MHI score by change in job stress compared to 2020



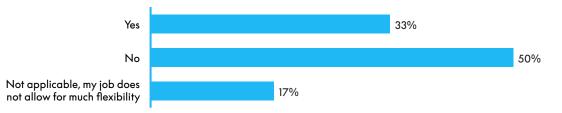


Working preferences

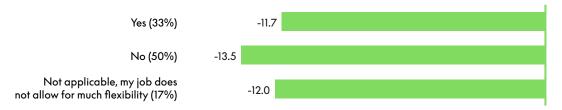
Respondents were asked whether their employer has asked what their working preferences are.

- Half (50 per cent) report that their employer has not asked them about their working preferences and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-13.5).
- One-third (33 per cent) report that their employer has asked them about their working preferences and this group has the most favourable mental health score (--11.7).
- Managers are more than 60 per cent more likely than non-managers to report that their employer has asked about working preferences.

Has your employer asked about working preferences?



MHI score by whether your employer has asked about working preferences



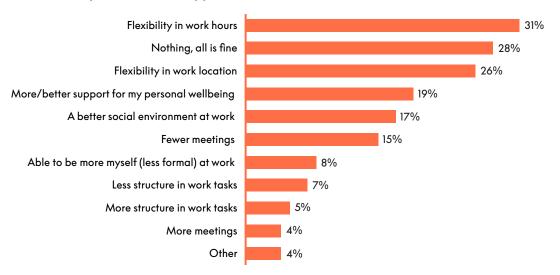


Workplace changes

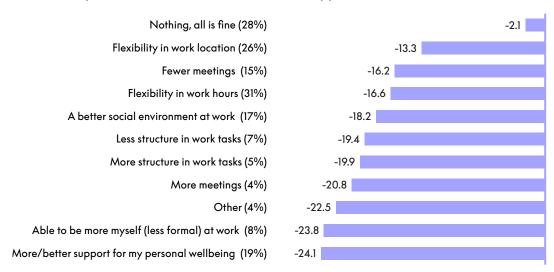
Respondents were asked what they would like to see happen at work over the next few months.

- Nearly one-third (31 per cent) report wanting to see flexibility in working hours and 26 per cent want to see flexibility in work location.
- More than one-quarter (28 per cent) of people report being satisfied with their work experience and this group has the highest mental health score (-2.1).
- Nearly one in five (19 per cent) report wanting more/better support for their personal wellbeing and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-24.1).
- Managers are nearly 35 per cent more likely than non-managers to report wanting fewer meetings.

What would you like to see happen at work over the next few months?



MHI score by what individuals would like to see happen at work over the next few months





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:

- 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 September 2 and 10, 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 IndexTM. 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.

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