

The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Australia | September 2022

 **TELUS** Health

LifeWorks



Table of contents

1 What you need to know for September 2022	3	3 Mental Health Index™ (regional)	12	6 Overview of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™	29
2 The Mental Health Index™	5	4 Mental Health Index™ (industry)	14	Methodology	29
Mental health risk	6	5 Spotlight	15	Calculations	29
Mental Health Index™ sub-scores	7	Trust between employees and employers	15	Additional data and analyses	29
Anxiety	8	Work effort	19		
Isolation	9	Stress	21		
Financial risk	10	Isolation	22		
Demographics	11	Relationship quality	23		
Employment	11	Mental health issues	26		
Emergency savings	11				

What you need to know for September 2022

1. Despite modest improvement over the last two periods, working Australians continue to experience significant mental strain.

- At 64.5, the mental health of Australians is nearly unchanged from the prior period.
- 34% of Australians have a high mental health risk, 42% have a moderate mental health risk, and 24% have a low mental health risk.
- Anxiety and isolation have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for two years.
- 30% feel alone more often and this group has a mental health score nearly 20 points below the national average.
- Younger people (under 40) are more likely to feel alone more often.
- The financial risk sub-score declined the most in September; 26% of Australians say inflation is the leading cause of stress.
- The mental health score declined most sharply in New South Wales and increased most significantly in South Australia.

2. More than one in ten working Australians report an erosion of trust with their employer since the pandemic.

- 37% indicate that a change in workplace culture is the reason for a decline in trust between employees and their employer.
- 25% indicate that a perceived change in how employee wellbeing is/was handled led to the decline in trust.
- 13% believe that changes in communication caused the decline in trust.
- Positive changes in communication, culture, and the perception of how work was handled during the pandemic are the top reasons for improved trust between employer and employees.

3. Mental health and wellbeing issues is the factor most likely to have a negative impact on the effort given to work.

- Mental health and wellbeing (15%), recognition (11%), and the relationship with the co-workers (10%) are factors most likely to have a negative impact on the effort given to work.
- 25% identify co-worker relationships as having the most positive impact on their work effort.
- 16% identify their mental health/wellbeing as having the most positive impact on their work effort.

25%

say that a change in the handling of employee wellbeing led to a decline in trust

26%

say inflation is the leading cause of stress

26%

say their mental health worsened since the pandemic

25%

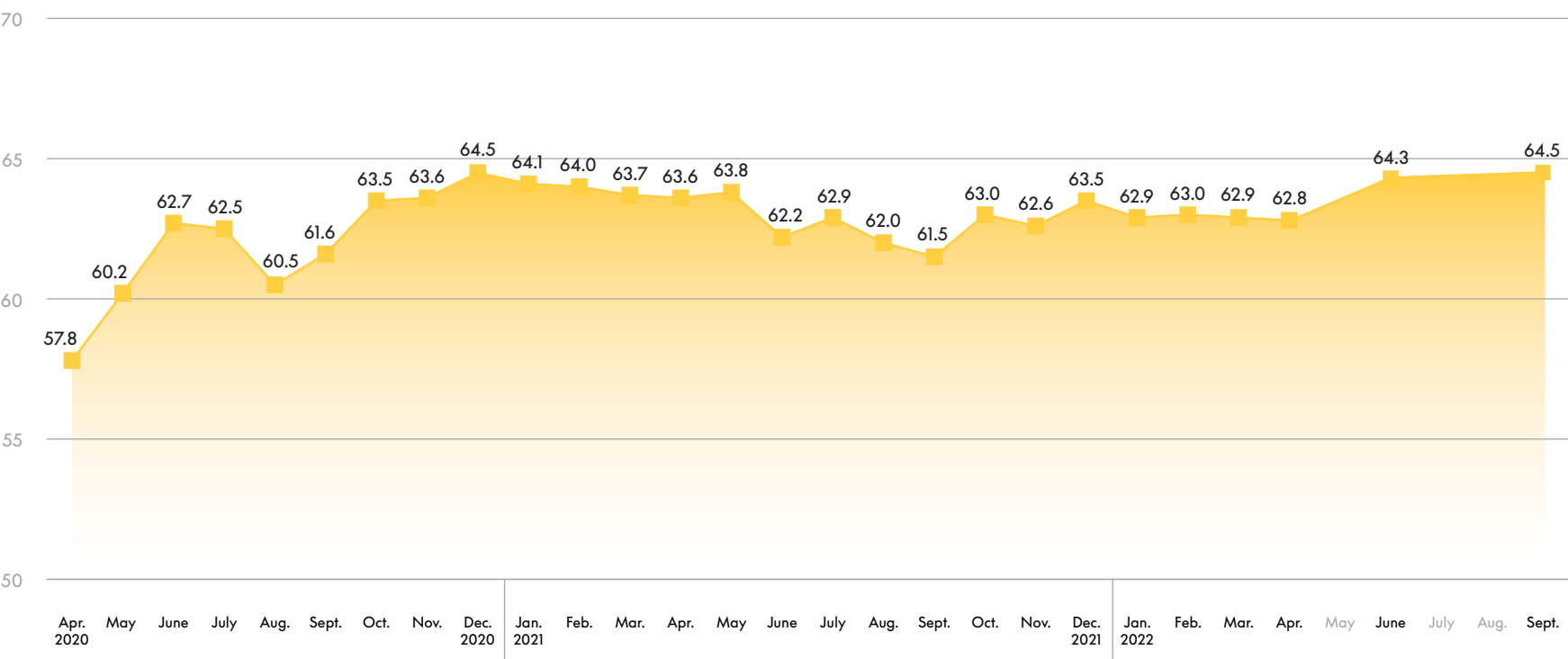
say co-workers have the most positive impact on their work effort

4. Women are nearly twice as likely than men to identify isolation as the reason for their mental health decline.

- 19% of working Australians self-report a mental health condition or issue; a further 14% are unsure.
- 26% say their mental health condition or issue worsened since the pandemic and the mental health of this group is nearly 28 points below the national average.
- 53% attribute the decline in their mental health to having more personal stress.
- 20% attribute the decline in their mental health to feeling isolated.
- 8% attribute the decline in their mental health to having more work stress.

The Mental Health Index™

The overall Mental Health Index for September 2022 is 64.5 points¹. The score is nearly unchanged from the prior period, showing modest improvement in three months.



MHI Current Month
September 2022

64.5

June 2022

64.3

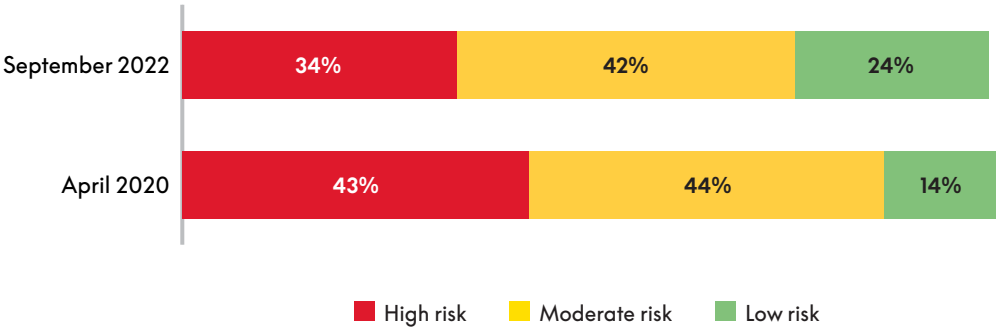
- Distressed 0-49
- Strained 50-79
- Optimal 80-100

¹ Beginning in May 2022, corresponding to year 3 of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™, scores are represented as absolute. The move to absolute scores has been taken given the degree of change that has occurred over the last two years. It is unlikely that a return to pre-pandemic levels will be realized hence the reference relative to that benchmark is no longer relevant.

Mental health risk

In September 2022, 34 per cent of Australians have a high mental health risk, 42 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 24 per cent have a low mental health risk. Thirty-eight per cent of people in the high-risk group report a mental health condition or issue, 13 per cent report a mental health condition or issue in the moderate-risk group, and five per cent of people in the low-risk group report a mental health condition or issue.

In contrast, in April 2020, at the launch of the Index and near the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 43 per cent of Australians had a high mental health risk, 44 per cent had a moderate mental health risk, and 14 per cent had a low mental health risk.



Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of anxiety (57.4), followed by isolation (59.1), work productivity (62.6), depression (62.8), optimism (68.5), and financial risk (68.8). General psychological health (71.8) is the most favourable mental health measure in September 2022.

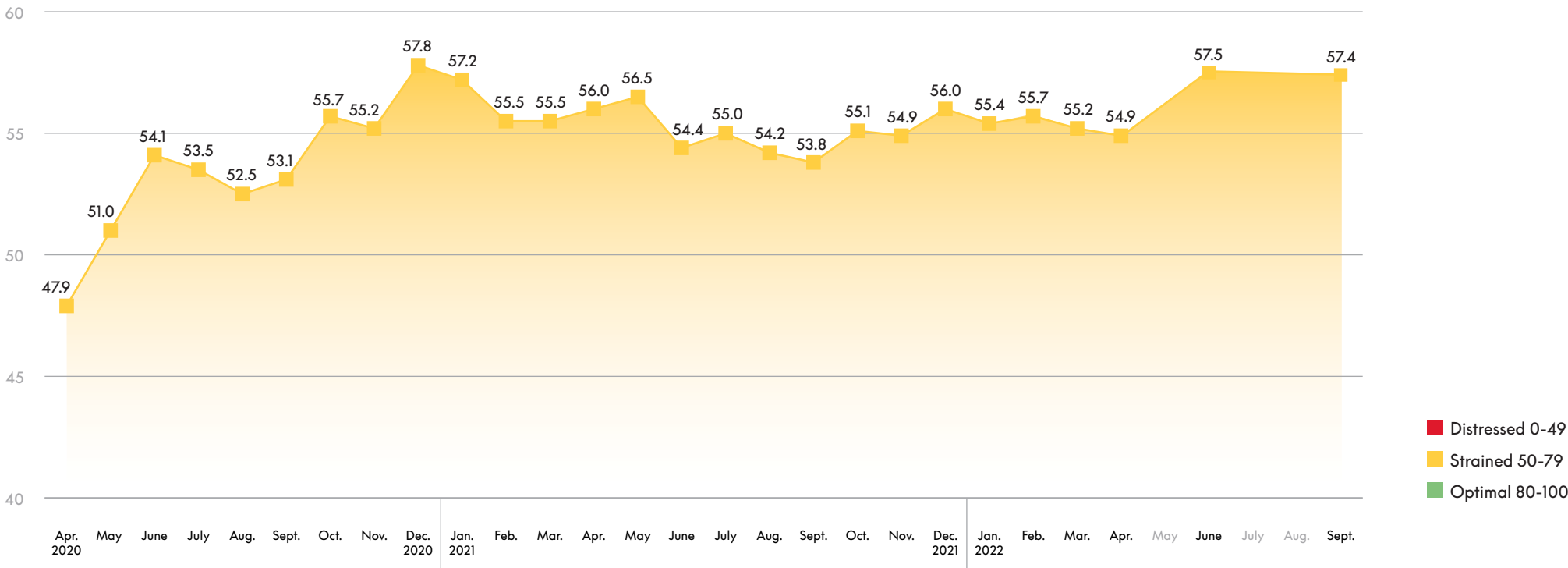
- Anxiety, isolation, and financial risk scores have declined compared to the prior period.
- The financial risk score declined most significantly (1.3 points) compared to June 2022 to 68.8.
- With a 2.1-point increase, the optimism sub-score has seen the greatest improvement from June 2022.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores ¹	September 2022	June 2022
Anxiety	57.4	57.5
Isolation	59.1	59.3
Work productivity	62.6	62.5
Depression	62.8	62.8
Optimism	68.5	66.4
Financial risk	68.8	70.1
General psychological health	71.8	70.9

¹ The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

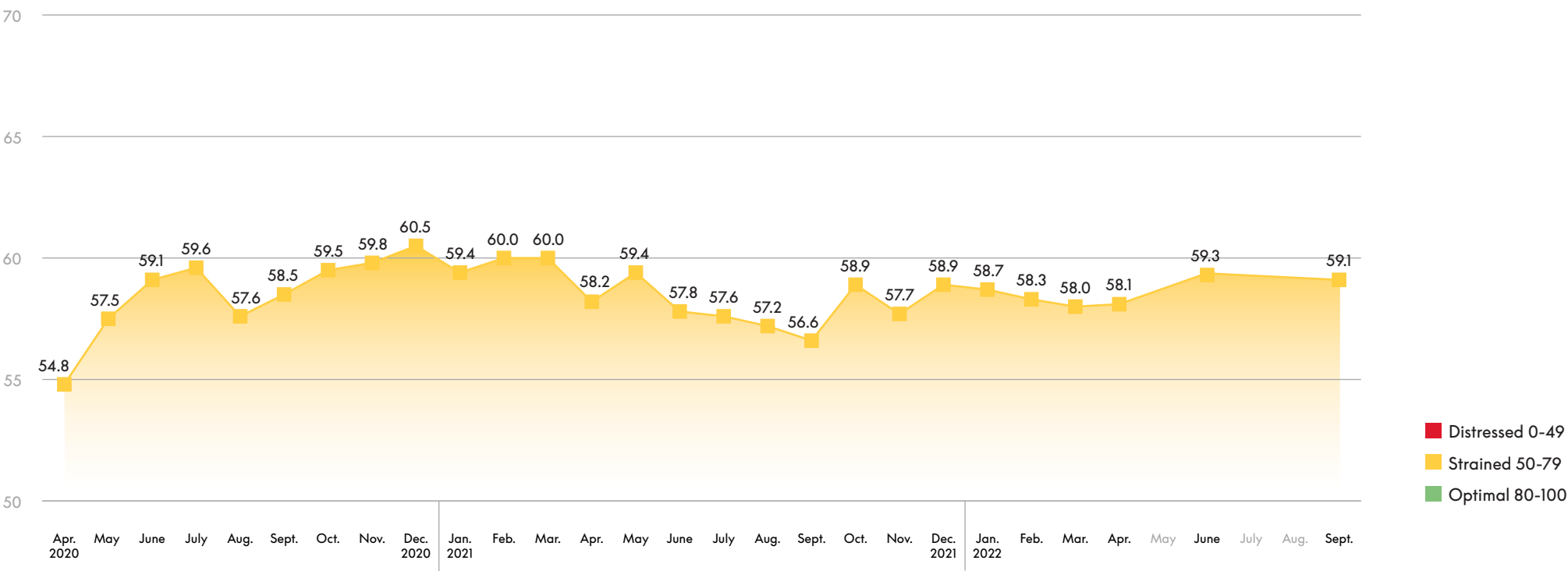
Anxiety

The anxiety score showed improvement from the launch of the Index in April 2020 through December 2020. A declining trend was observed through September 2021 followed by variability through April 2022. A sharp improvement occurred from April to June 2022 and in September 2022 the score remains nearly unchanged from June. The anxiety score is the lowest mental health sub-score for the second consecutive period.



Isolation

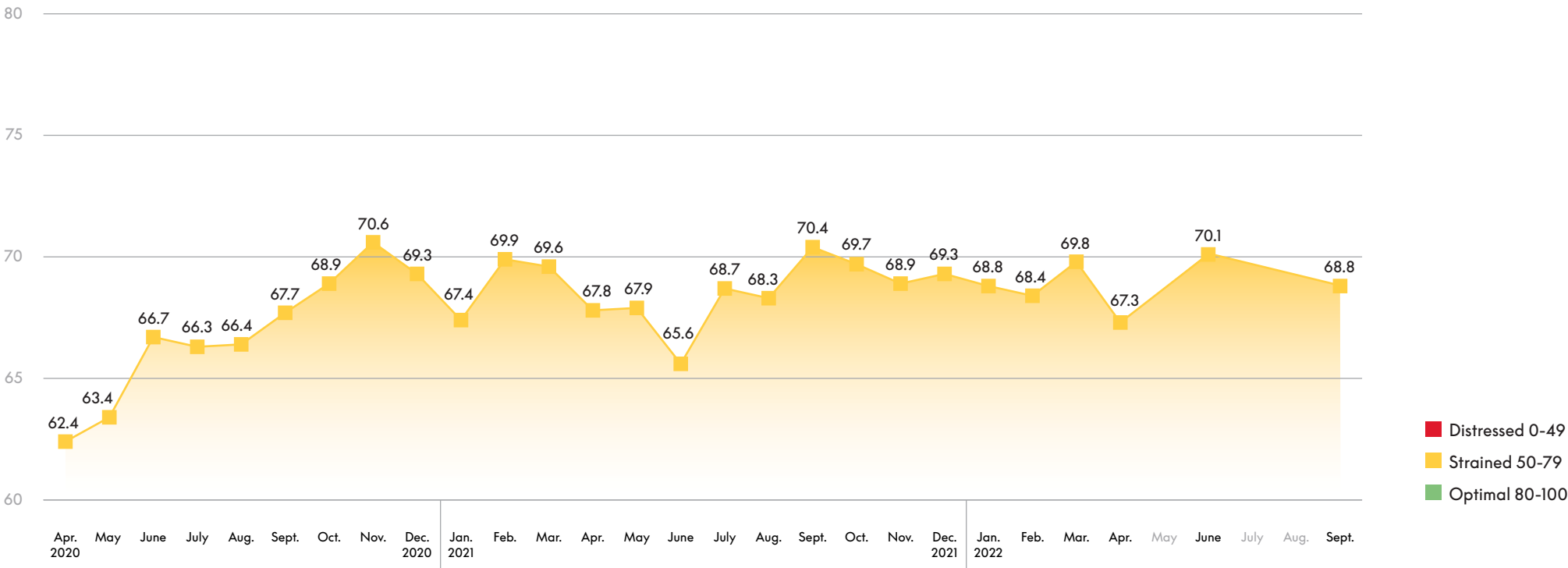
The isolation sub-score increased dramatically from April to July 2020 and, following a one-month decline, improved through December 2020. A period of decline followed through September 2021. In September 2022, the isolation score is nearly unchanged from the prior period and is at a level consistently observed in the first year of the pandemic.



Financial risk

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

The financial risk score of Australians followed an increasing trend from April 2020 to November 2020 followed by periods of variability. In June 2022, a significant 2.8 point improvement was observed increasing the score sharply from the prior period. The financial risk sub-score declined 1.3 points in the current period to 68.8 in September 2022.



Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In September 2022, the mental health score of women is 62.0 compared to 67.6 for men.
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age.
- 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 two years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (63.6) than those without children (65.0).

Employment

- Overall, four per cent of respondents are unemployed³ and eight per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals working fewer hours compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (52.0), followed by those not currently employed (62.0), and those with no change to salary or hours (66.1).
- Managers have a higher mental health score (65.1) than non-managers (64.3).
- Individuals who are self-employed have the lowest mental health score (59.1)
- Respondents working for companies with 5,001-10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (68.8).

Emergency savings

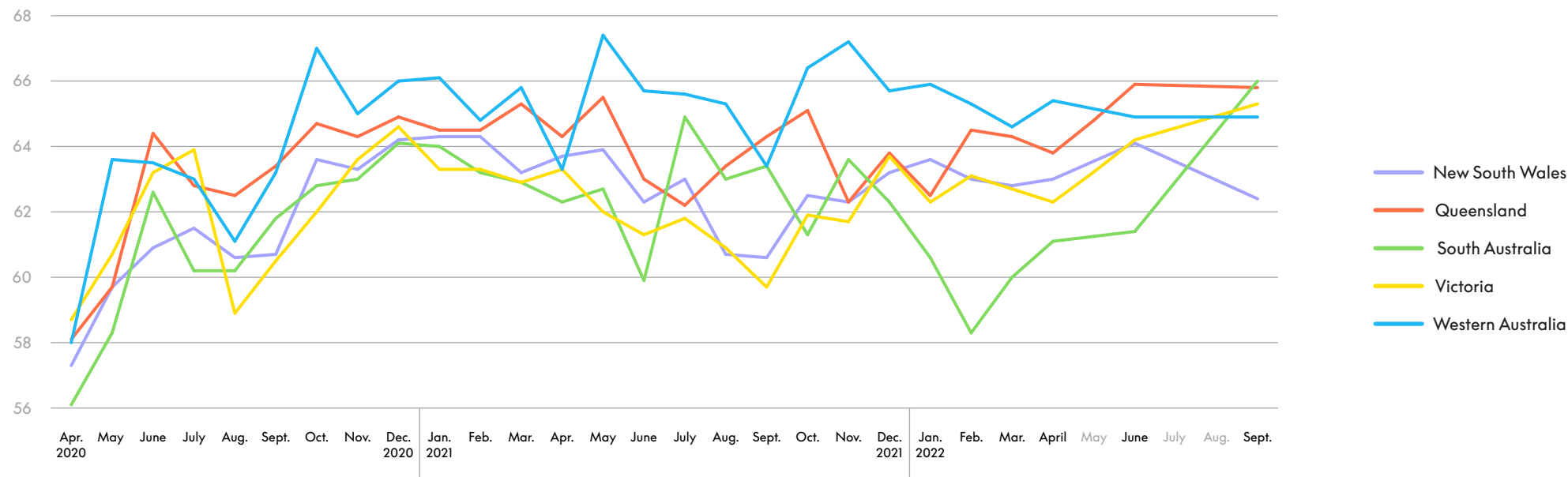
- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (50.2) than the overall group (64.5). Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of 70.1.

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. In September 2022, mental health scores improved in South Australia and Victoria while scores declined sharply in Western Australia and are nearly unchanged in Queensland and New South Wales.

- With a 1.7-point decline, the mental health score in New South Wales is the lowest (62.4).
- The mental health score in South Australia improved 4.6 points over the prior period and is the strongest state in the country at 66.0 .



Employment status	Sept. 2022	June 2022
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	66.1	65.8
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	52.0	52.9
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	n/a	56.7
Not currently employed	62.0	56.4
Age group	Sept. 2022	June 2022
Age 20-29	53.2	57.4
Age 30-39	59.5	60.7
Age 40-49	63.3	60.9
Age 50-59	66.2	66.9
Age 60-69	72.9	70.3
Number of children	Sept. 2022	June 2022
No children in household	65.0	65.3
1 child	64.5	63.2
2 children	62.1	61.4
3 children or more	65.1	62.0

Province	Sept. 2022	June 2022
New South Wales	62.4	64.1
Victoria	65.3	64.2
Queensland	65.8	65.9
South Australia	66.0	61.4
Western Australia	64.9	64.9
Gender	Sept. 2022	June 2022
Men	67.6	66.6
Women	62.0	62.3
Household income	Sept. 2022	June 2022
<\$30K/annum	52.7	56.7
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	59.0	59.4
\$60K to <\$100K	63.9	63.6
\$100K to <\$150K	65.7	64.6
\$150K or more	71.9	71.1

Employer size	Sept. 2022	June 2022
Self-employed/sole proprietor	59.1	59.1
2-50 employees	65.8	66.1
51-100 employees	62.1	61.5
101-500 employees	64.3	63.8
501-1,000 employees	64.5	65.9
1,001-5,000 employees	65.9	65.2
5,001-10,000 employees	68.8	67.0
More than 10,000 employees	66.5	65.8
Manager	Sept. 2022	June 2022
Manager	65.1	64.4
Non-manager	64.3	64.7

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

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

Mental Health Index™ (industry)

The lowest mental health score in September 2022 is among individuals employed in Food Services (61.3), and Wholesale Trade (61.8).

Those employed in Transportation and Warehousing (69.8), Public Administration (69.3), and Educational Services (66.4) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	September 2022	June 2022	Change
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	65.9	56.5	9.4
Administrative and Support services	64.3	60.2	4.0
Transportation and Warehousing	69.8	66.6	3.3
Food Services	61.3	58.1	3.2
Construction	65.3	62.9	2.5
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	64.5	62.6	1.9
Retail Trade	62.5	61.3	1.2
Educational Services	66.4	65.5	0.9
Other	64.9	64.3	0.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	62.6	62.5	0.1
Public Administration	69.3	69.6	-0.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	62.9	64.5	-1.6
Other services (except Public Administration)	58.6	61.5	-2.9
Manufacturing	65.4	69.9	-4.6
Finance and Insurance	64.5	69.3	-4.7
Wholesale Trade	61.8	67.6	-5.8

Spotlight

Trust between employees and employers

Australians were asked how trust between employees and their employer has changed compared to before the pandemic.

- Three-quarters (75 per cent) indicate there has been no change in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (66.0).
- More than one in ten (14 per cent) report a decline in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic. This group has the lowest mental health score (58.4), six points below the national average (64.5).
- More than one in ten (11 per cent) report improved trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic.
- Managers are more than twice as likely as non-managers to report improved trust between employees and their employer.
- Parents are 40 per cent more likely than non-parents to report improved trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic.

Change in trust between employees and employer compared to before the pandemic



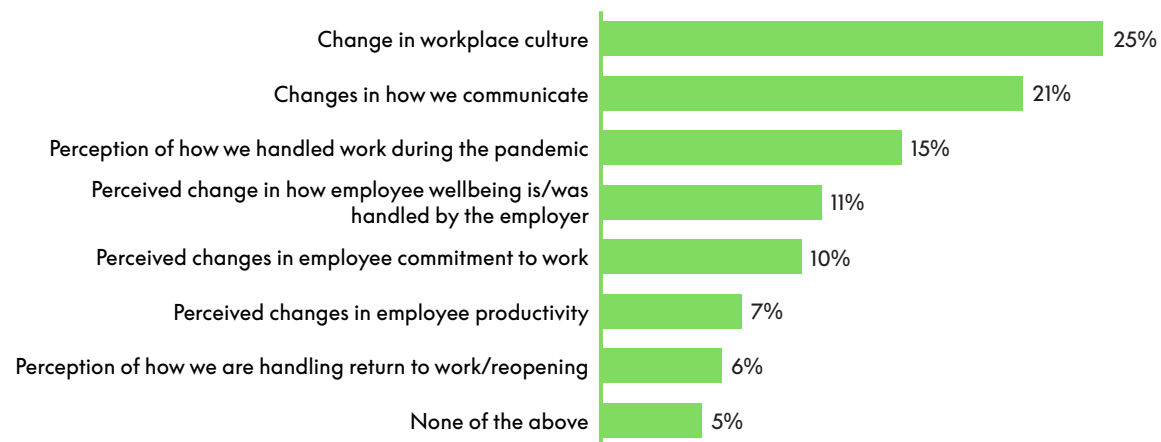
MHI score by change in trust between employees and employer compared to before the pandemic



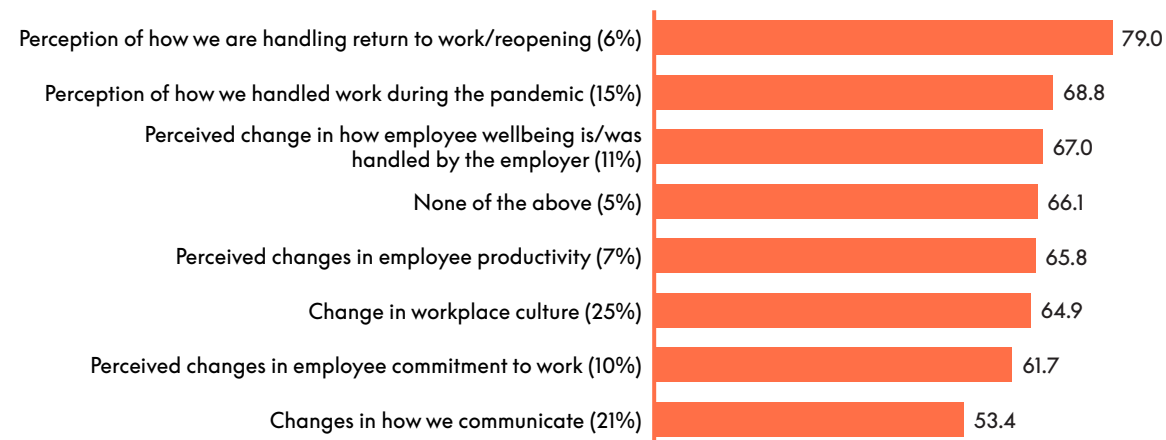
Australians reporting **improved** trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic were asked why the level of trust changed.

- One-quarter (25 per cent) indicate that a change in workplace culture is the reason for improved trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic, 21 per cent report a change in communication, and 15 per cent report perception of how work was handled during the pandemic.
- Respondents reporting increased trust because of how return to work/reopening is/was being handled have the highest mental health score (79.0), followed by those reporting increased trust due to the perception of how work was handled during the pandemic (68.8), and those who report increased trust because of perceived changes in how employee wellbeing is/was handled (67.0).

Causes of improved trust between employees and employers



MHI score by causes of improved trust between employees and employers



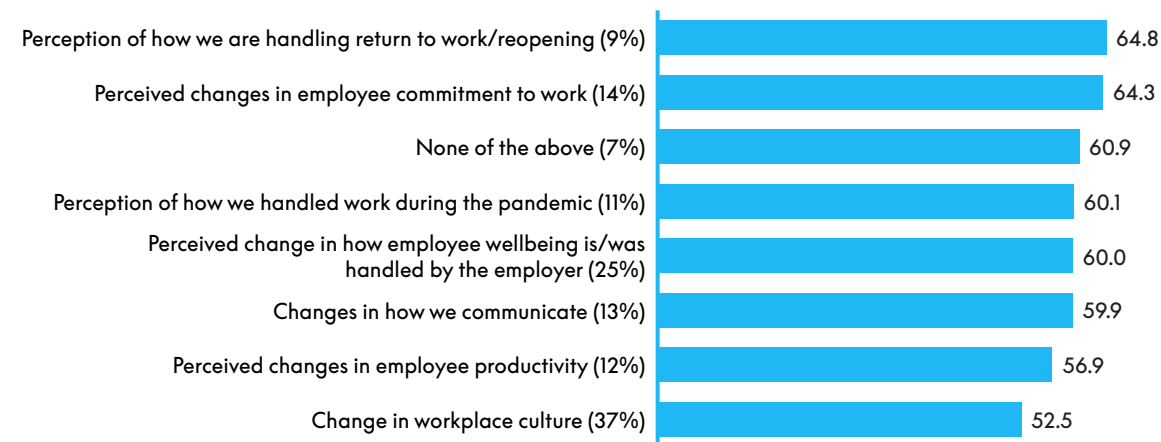
Australians reporting a **decline** in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic were asked why the level of trust changed.

- Nearly two in five (37 per cent) indicate that a change in workplace culture is the reason for a decline in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic, 25 per cent report a perceived change in how employee wellbeing is/was handled contributed to the decline, and 14 per cent report perceived changes in employee commitment to work as the reason for the decline in trust.
- Respondents reporting decreased trust because of change in workplace culture have the lowest mental health score (52.5), followed by those reporting decreased trust due to perceived changes in employee productivity (56.9), and those reporting decreased trust because of changes in communication (59.9).

Causes of a decline in trust between employees and employers



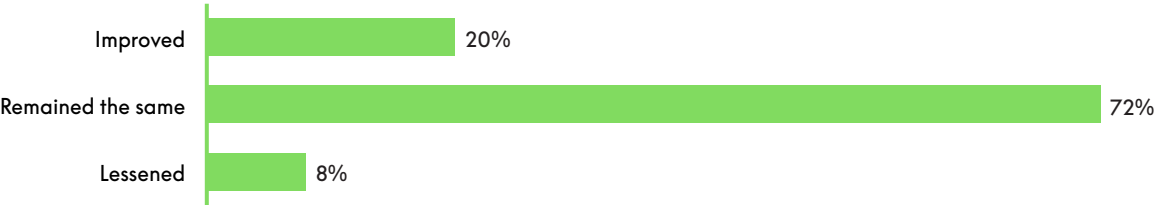
MHI score by causes of a decline in trust between employees and employers



Managers were asked how trust of their employees has changed compared to before the pandemic.

- Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) indicate there has been no change in their trust of employees compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (66.8).
- Nearly one in ten (8 per cent) report a decline in trust compared to before the pandemic, and these managers have the lowest mental health score (54.5), ten points below the national average (64.5).
- One in five (20 per cent) report an improvement in trust compared to before the pandemic, and the mental health of this group (63.5) is nearly 10 points above those who report a decline (54.5).

Managers: change in trust of employees compared to before the pandemic



MHI score by change in trust of employees compared to before the pandemic



Work effort

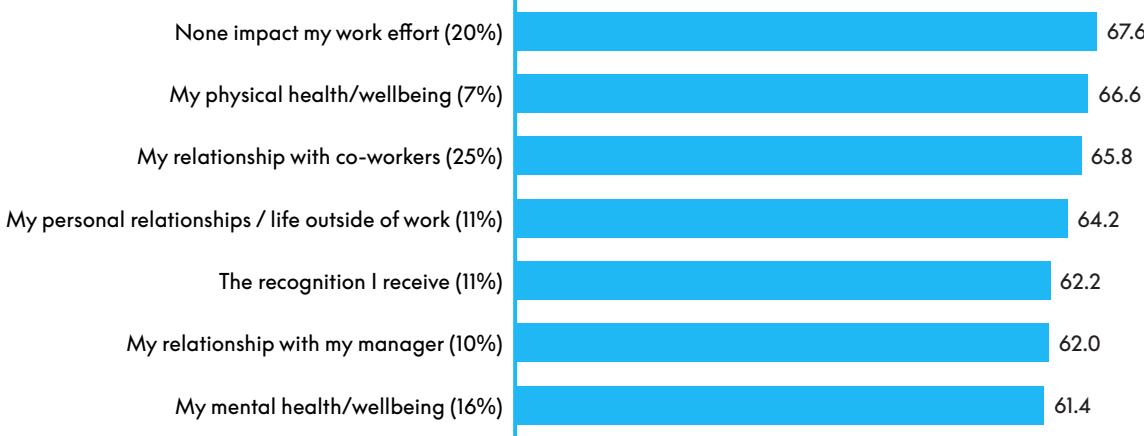
Australians were asked which factors most **positively** impact the effort given to their work.

- One in four (25 per cent) indicate that relationships with co-workers most positively impacts the effort given to their work.
- Sixteen per cent report that their mental health/wellbeing most positively impacts the effort given to their work, and 11 per cent indicate that the recognition they receive has the most positive impact on their work effort.
- Individuals under 40 are twice as likely as those over 50 to report that the recognition they receive most positively impacts their work effort.

Factors that positively impact the effort given to work



MHI score by factors that positively impact the effort given to work

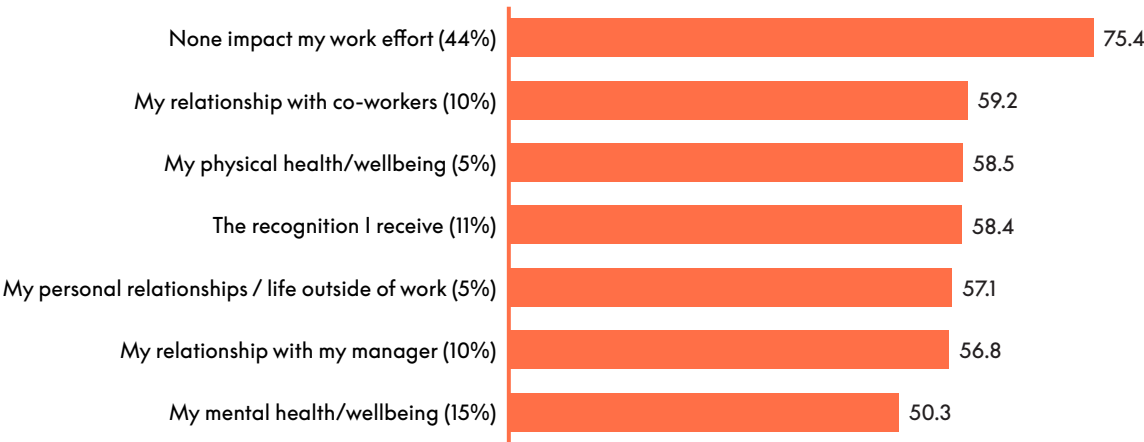


- Australians were asked which factors most **negatively** impact the effort given to their work.
- More than one in ten (15 per cent) report that their mental health/wellbeing most negatively impacts the effort given to their work, followed by 11 per cent indicating that the recognition they receive has the most negative impact on their work effort.
 - Respondents over 50 are 80 per cent more likely than those under 40 to indicate that none of the factors impact the effort given to their work.

Factors that negatively impact the effort given to work



MHI score by factors that negatively impact the effort given to work

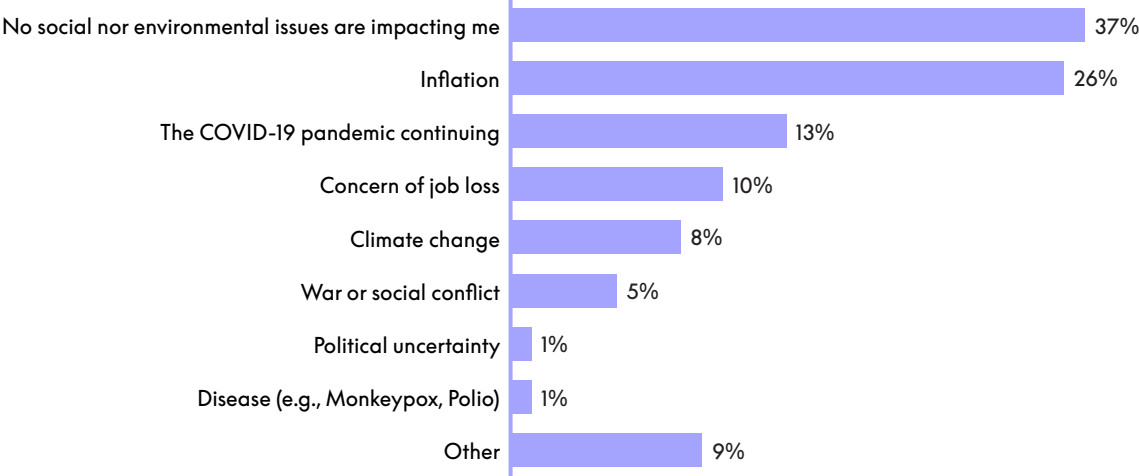


Stress

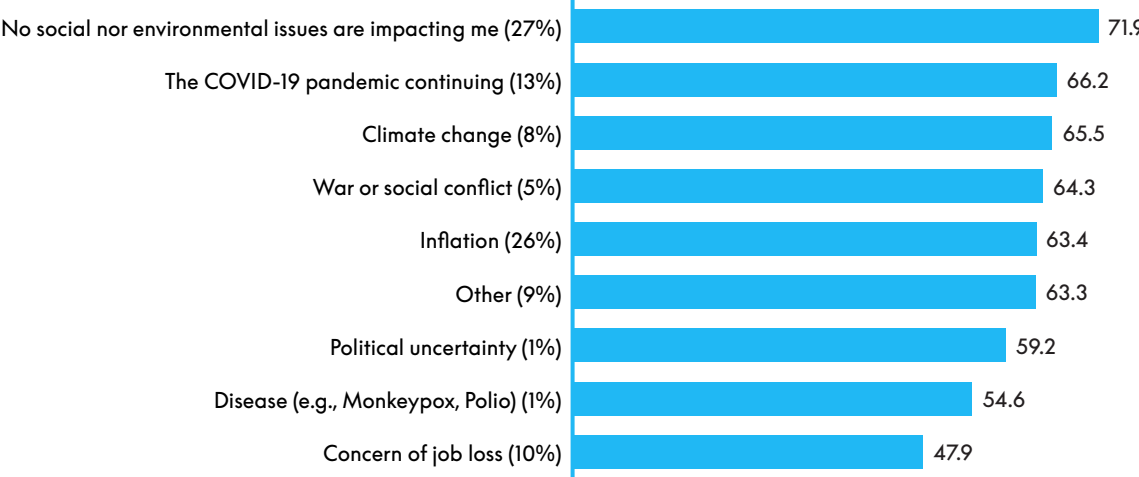
Australians were asked about issues causing the most stress.

- More than one-quarter (26 per cent) identify inflation as the biggest stressor.
- Thirteen per cent are stressed about continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and 10 per cent are concerned about job loss. Those who are most stressed over the prospect of job loss have the lowest mental health score (47.9), nearly 17 points below the national average (64.5).

Issues that cause the most stress



MHI score by issues that cause the most stress

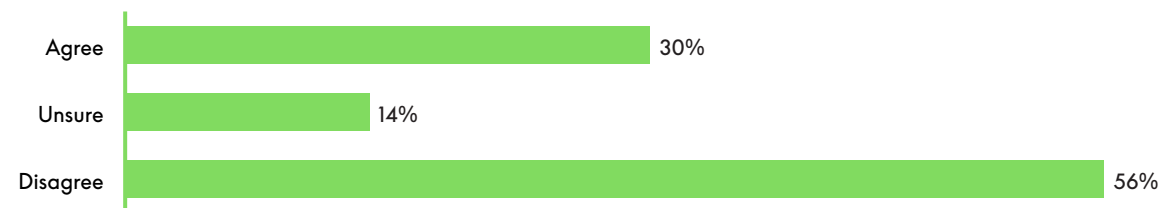


Isolation

Australians were asked whether they feel alone more often.

- Nearly one-third (30 per cent) feel alone more often. This group has the lowest mental health score (44.9), nearly 33 points below those who do not feel alone more often and nearly 20 points below the national average (64.5). This group also has the lowest isolation score (23.1), more than 58 points below those who do not feel alone more often.
- More than half (56 per cent) do not feel alone more often. This group has the most favourable mental health score (77.5) and the most favourable isolation score (81.3).
- Respondents under 40 are nearly twice as likely as those over 50 to feel alone more often.

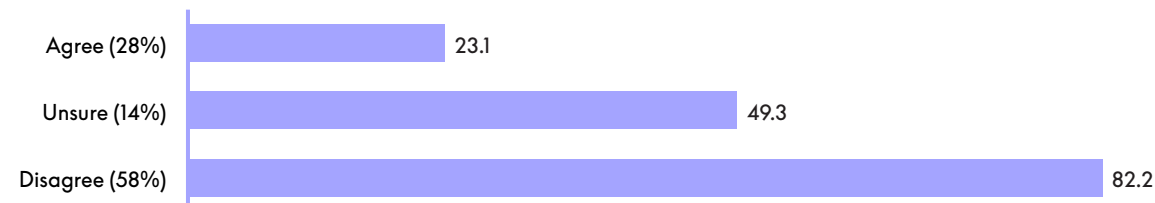
I feel alone more often



MHI score by I feel alone more often



Isolation score by I feel alone more often

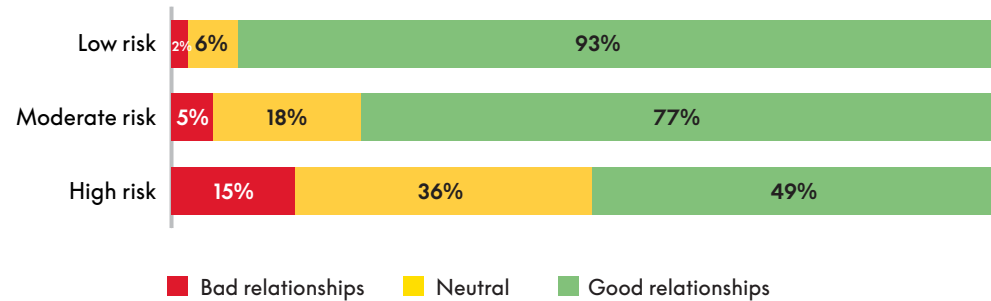


Relationship quality

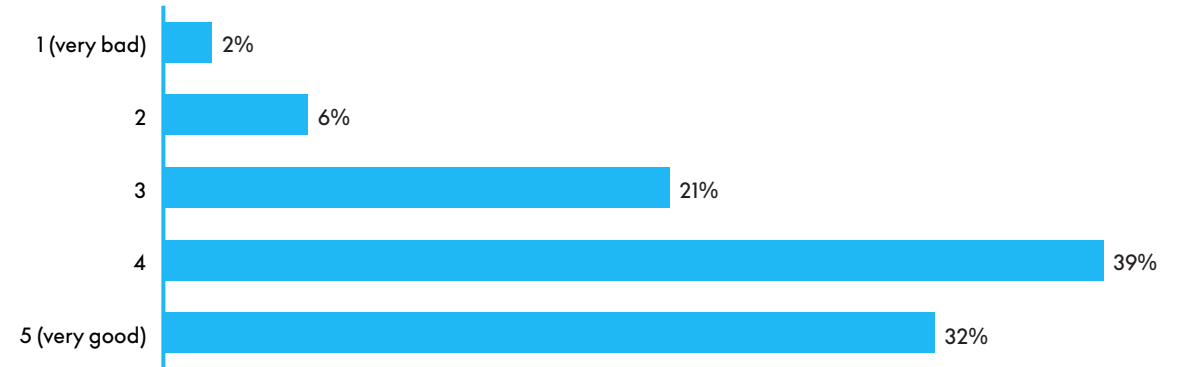
Australians were asked to rate the quality of family relationships on a scale from one to five, with one being “very bad” and five being “very good”.

- More than seven in ten (71 per cent) rate the quality of family relationships as four or more. The mental health of this group is significantly higher than those who rate the quality of family relationships as bad or very bad.
- Individuals with a low mental health risk are nearly twice as likely than those with a high mental health risk to rate the quality of family relationships more favourably.

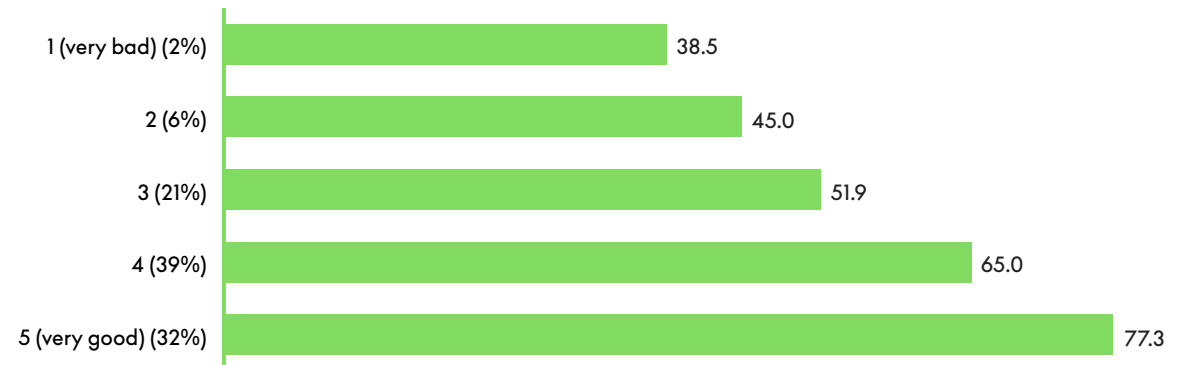
Mental health risk by quality of family relationships



Quality of family relationships



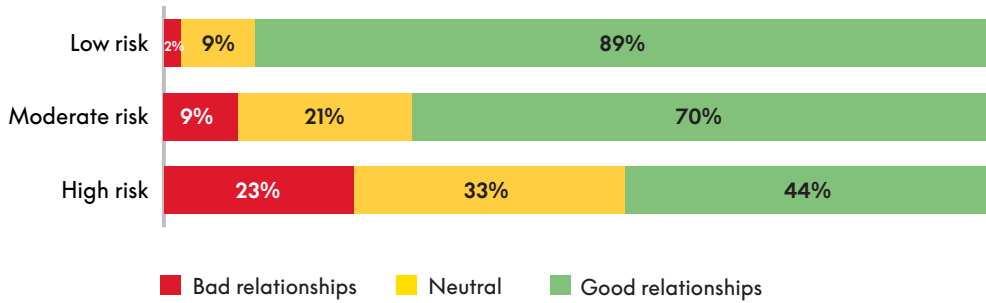
MHI score by quality of family relationships



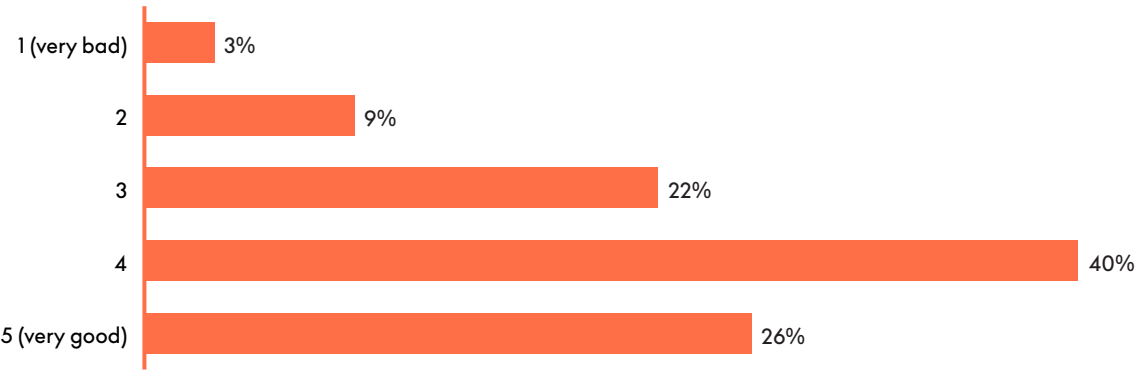
Australians were asked to rate the quality of their friendships on a scale from one to five, with one being “very bad” and five being “very good”.

- Two-thirds (66 per cent) rate the quality of their friendships as four or more. The mental health of this group is significantly higher than those who rate the quality of friendships as bad or very bad.
- Individuals with a low mental health risk are twice as likely as those with a high mental health risk to rate the quality of their friendships more favourably.

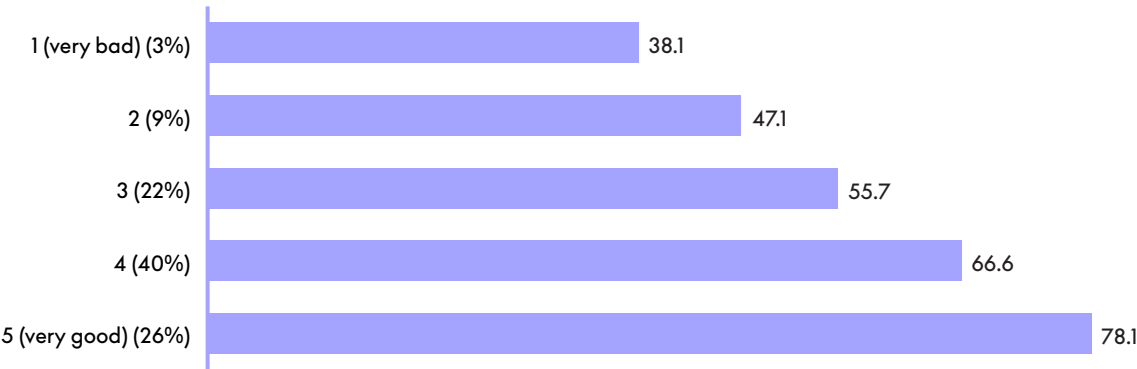
Mental health risk by quality of friendships



Quality of friendships



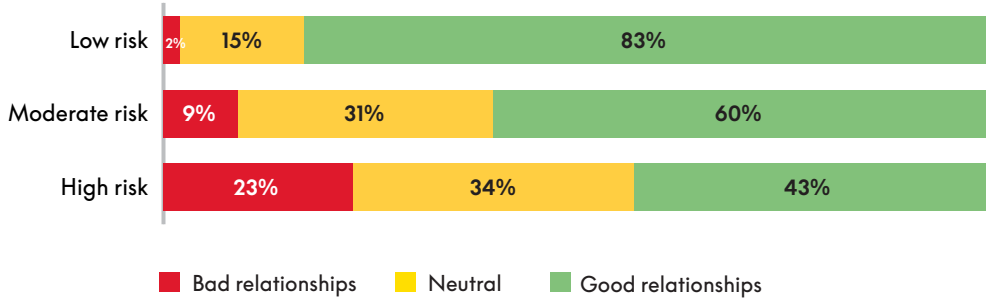
MHI score by quality of friendships



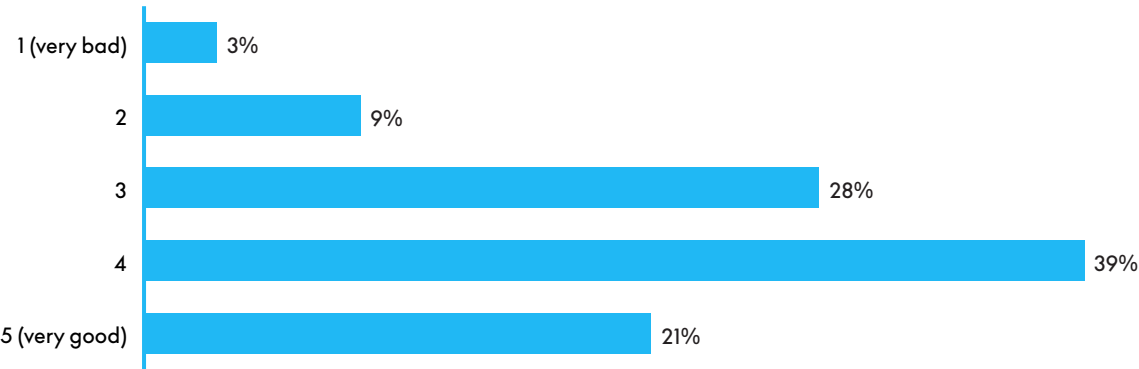
Australians were asked to rate the quality of co-worker relationships on a scale from one to five, with one being “very bad” and five being “very good”.

- Three in five (60 per cent) rate the quality of co-worker relationships as four or more. The mental health of this group is significantly higher than those who rate the quality of co-worker relationships as bad or very bad.
- Individuals with a low mental health risk are nearly twice as likely as those with a high mental health risk to rate the quality of co-worker relationships more favourably.

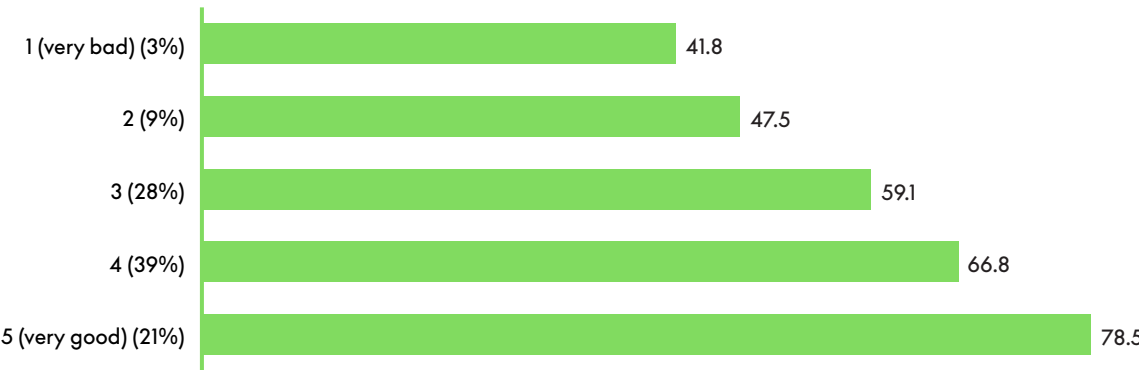
Mental health risk by quality of co-worker relationships



Quality of co-worker relationships



MHI score by quality of co-worker relationships



Mental health issues

Australians were asked to self-report a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health condition or issue.

- Nearly one in five (19 per cent) report having a mental health condition or issue and the mental health score of this group (48.2) is 16 points below the national average (64.5).
- Fourteen per cent are unsure about whether they have a mental health condition or issue and the mental health score of this group (52.7) is nearly 12 points below the national average (64.5).
- Respondents under 40 are nearly twice as likely as those over 50 to self-report a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health condition/issue.

Do you have a mental health condition or issue?



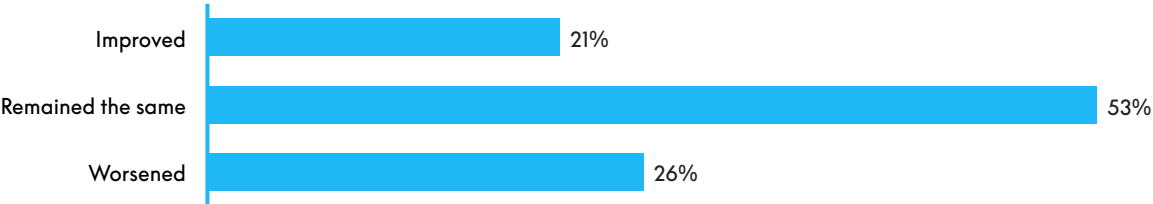
MHI score by do you have a mental health condition or issue



Australians reporting a mental health condition or issue were asked whether it has changed compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

- More than one-quarter (26 per cent) report their mental health condition or issue worsened compared to before the pandemic, and this group has a mental health score (36.7), nearly 28 points below the national average (64.5).
- More than one in five (21 per cent) indicate their mental health condition or issue improved compared to before the pandemic, yet the mental health of this group (52.4) is 12 points below the national average.
- Managers and parents are more likely to report an improvement in their mental health condition or issue compared to before the pandemic.

Change in mental health condition or issue compared to before the pandemic



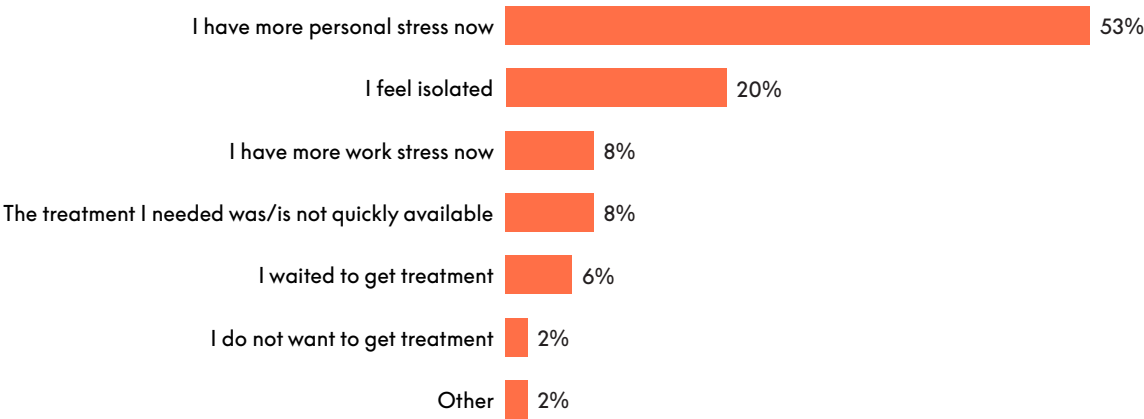
MHI score by change in mental health condition/issue when compared to before the pandemic



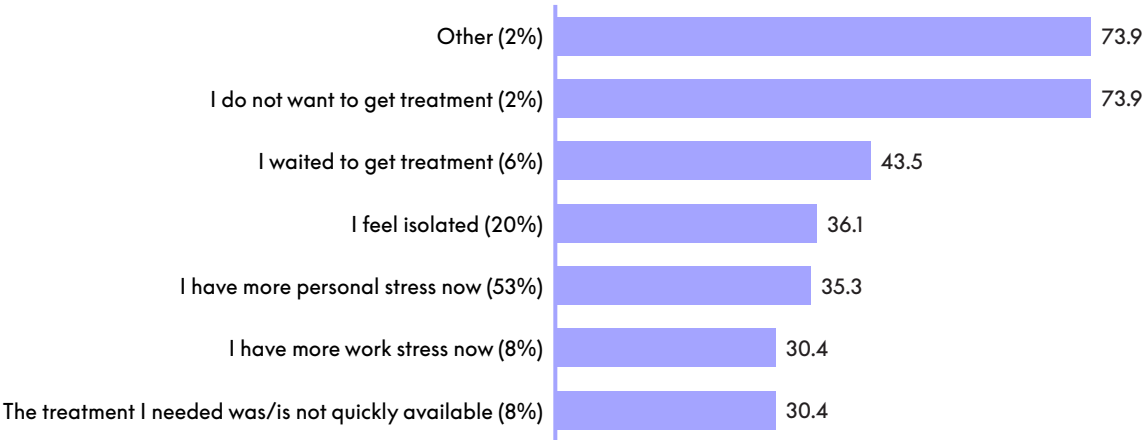
Australians reporting a worsening of their mental health condition or issue compared to before the pandemic were asked why their condition or issue worsened.

- More than half (53 per cent) indicate they have more personal stress, 20 per cent report feeling isolated, and 8 per cent report more work stress as reasons for their worsened mental health condition/issue.
- The mental health scores of these groups are significantly lower than the national average. Most notably, the mental health score of respondents who feel isolated (36.1) is more than 28 points lower than the national average (64.5).
- Women are 80 per cent more likely than men to identify isolation as the reason for their worsened mental health condition/issue.
- Respondents without children are three times more likely than parents to identify isolation as the reason for their worsened mental health condition or issue.

Reason for worsened condition or issue



MHI score by reason for worsened condition or issue



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. 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 two parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index™ (MHI).
2. 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. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report was collected between September 12 and September 22, 2022.

Calculations

Beginning in May 2022, corresponding to year 3 of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™, scores are represented as absolute. The move to absolute scores has been taken given the degree of change that has occurred over the last two years. It is unlikely that a return to pre-pandemic levels will be realized hence, the reference relative to that benchmark is no longer relevant.

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. Distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale:

Distressed 0 - 49 **Strained** 50-79 **Optimal** 80 - 100

Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdowns 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



LifeWorks is a wholly owned subsidiary of TELUS now operating as part of TELUS Health as a result of its recent acquisition.

About TELUS Health

TELUS Health is a global healthcare company serving people in more than 160 countries delivering both digital innovation and clinical services to improve total physical, mental and financial health and wellness across the full spectrum of primary and preventative care. By leveraging the power of technology to deliver connected solutions and services both in-person and virtually, TELUS Health is improving access to care and revolutionizing the flow of information while facilitating collaboration, efficiency, and productivity for physicians, pharmacists, health authorities, allied healthcare professionals, insurers, employers and people globally, progressing its vision of transforming healthcare and empowering people to live healthier lives.

Our clinical team is composed of renowned and passionate health professionals around the world delivering best-in-class people-centric care to hundreds of thousands of employers, professionals and their families.

For more information, please visit: www.telushealth.com.