



The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly LifeWorks).

Australia | January 2023



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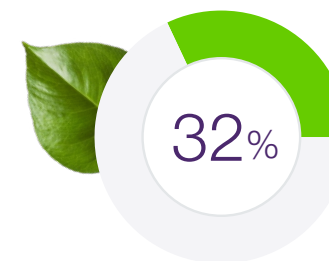
What you need to know for January 2023.

1. Despite improvement since April 2022, the mental health of working Australians continues to be significantly strained.

- At 64.9, the mental health of Australians improved modestly from since September 2022
- 31% of Australians have a high mental health risk, 44% have a moderate mental health risk, and 25% have a low mental health risk
- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity continue to be the lowest mental health sub-scores
- The mental health score of managers is slightly higher than the score of non-managers and the national average
- South Australia and Western Australia have the lowest mental health scores while Victoria has the highest score

2. One-third of Australians avoid being with or interacting with others and this behaviour largely started or worsened since the pandemic.

- The mental health score of respondents who avoid being with or interacting with others is more than 13 points below the national average
- 54% say their avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began
- 23% of Australians have difficulty controlling their emotions and the mental health score of this group is more than 17 points below the national average
- 52% say difficulty controlling their emotions started or worsened since the pandemic began
- Younger respondents (under 40 years of age) are 50% more likely to avoid being with or interacting with others and more than twice as likely as individuals over 50 years of age to have difficulty controlling their emotions



avoid being with or interacting with others and this started or worsened since the pandemic.



of parents **would most value mental health support** for their 18+ children.



have cut back on health-related expenses because of inflation.



say **financial pressure** is the reason for relationship decline.

3. One in five Australians have cut back on health-related expenses due to inflation.

- 60% have cut back on discretionary spending
- 42% are staying home more
- 6% have cut back on prescription medication
- Parents are twice as likely as non-parents to cut back on expenses related to their health, including prescription medication
- Individuals without emergency savings are at least twice as likely to cut back on prescription medication and expenses related to their health compared to individuals with emergency savings
- The mental health score of respondents who cut back on prescription medication is more than 14 points below the national average; respondents who cut back on expenses related to their health have a mental health score nearly 10 points below the national average

4. Nearly one-quarter of Australians say financial pressure is the reason for a decline in their marital/partner relationship.

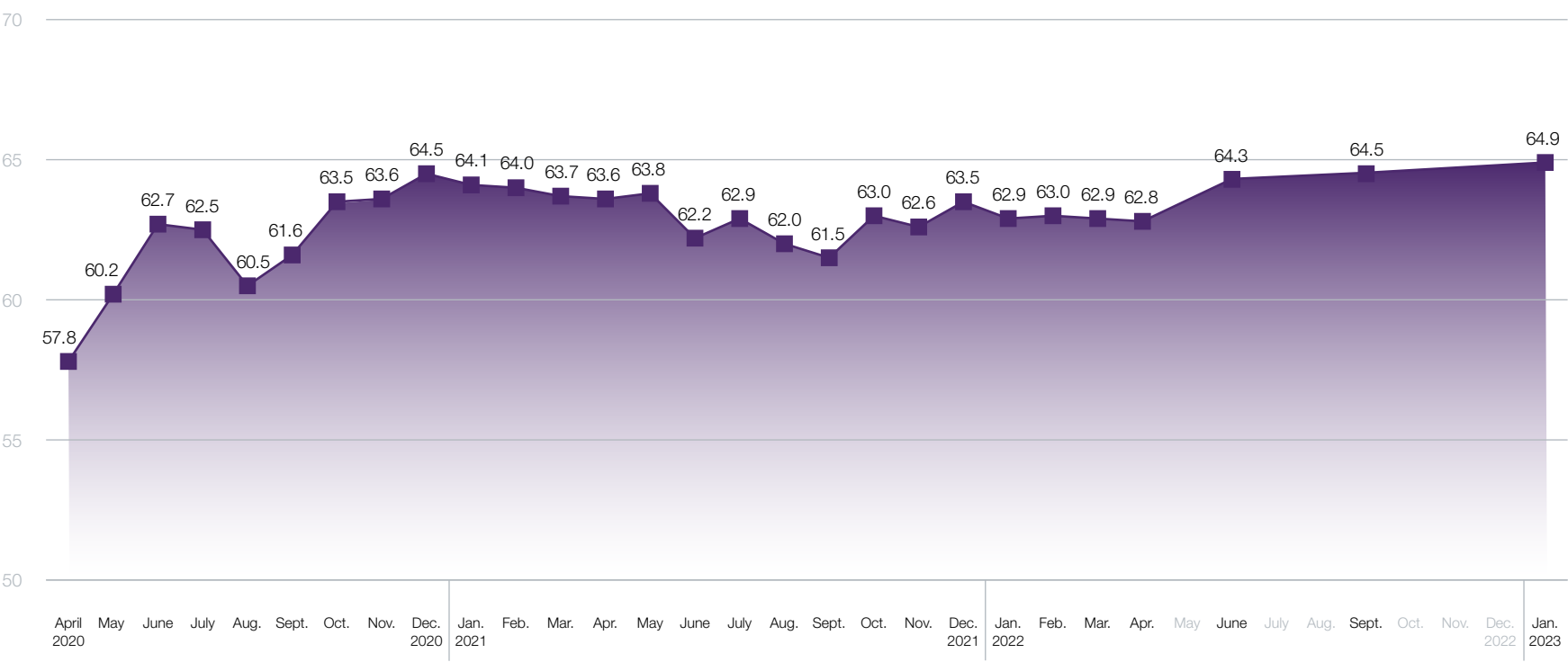
- More than one in ten Australians report a decline in the marital/personal relationships since the pandemic began
- 24% say financial pressure is the reason for a decline in their marital/partner relationship
- Women and parents are 50 per cent more likely than their counterparts to report financial pressure as the reason for a decline in their relationship
- The mental health score of respondents indicating that their marital/partner relationship has declined because of work stress is 25 points below the national average
- The mental health score of respondents indicating that their marital/partner relationship has declined because of financial pressure is 21 points below the national average

5. More than one in four parents would most value mental health support for their children 18 years of age and older.

- 24% of parents with children under 18 years of age are concerned about their children's behaviour; among them, 42% say the behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic
- 23% of parents with children 18 years of age and older are concerned about their children's behaviour; among them, 48% say the behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic
- The mental health and work productivity scores of parents concerned about their children's behaviour are lower than parents not concerned about their children's behaviour
- 41% of parents with children under 18 years of age say flexible work is most valued support from their employer as it relates to the wellbeing of their children
- 26% of parents with children 18 years of age and older and 19% of parents with children under 18 years of age most value mental health support for their children

The Mental Health Index.

The overall Mental Health Index for January 2023 is 64.9 points, a modest improvement from the prior period.



MHI Current Month
January 2023

64.9

September 2022

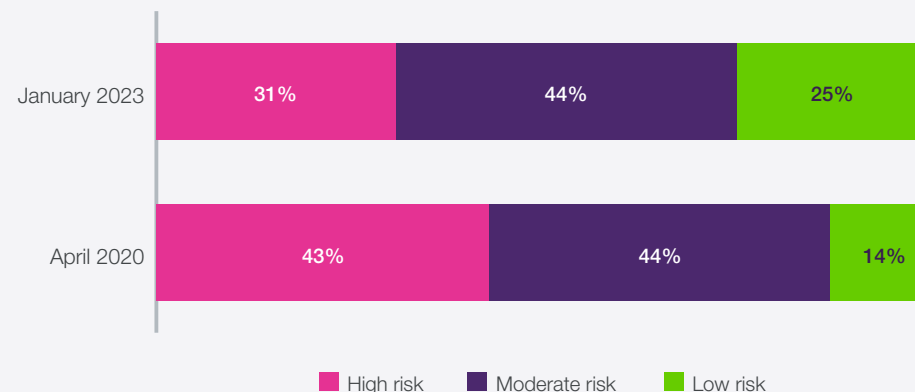
64.5

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



Mental health risk.

In January 2023, 31 per cent of Australians have a high mental health risk, 44 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 25 per cent have a low mental health risk. Approximately 30 per cent of people in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven per cent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one per cent of people in the low-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression.



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.

Since June 2022, the lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score continues to be anxiety (57.8). Isolation (61.5), work productivity (64.2), depression (65.6), optimism (66.6), and financial risk (69.4) follow. General psychological health (70.5) is the most favourable mental health measure in January 2023.

- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for three consecutive periods
- Optimism and general psychological health scores have declined from the prior period
- The isolation sub-score increased most significantly, up 2.4 points from September 2022

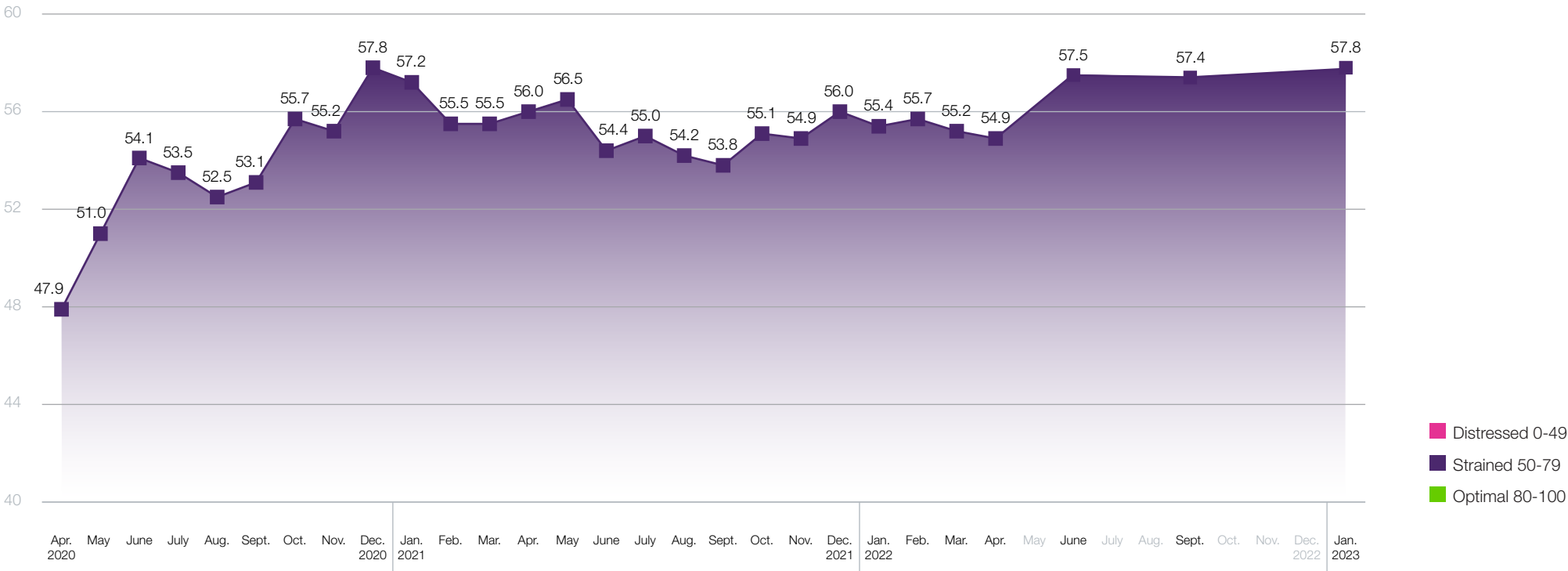
Mental Health Index Sub-scores ¹	January 2023	September 2022
Anxiety	57.8	57.4
Isolation	61.5	59.1
Work productivity	64.2	62.6
Depression	64.6	62.8
Optimism	66.6	68.5
Financial risk	69.4	68.8
Psychological health	70.5	71.8



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

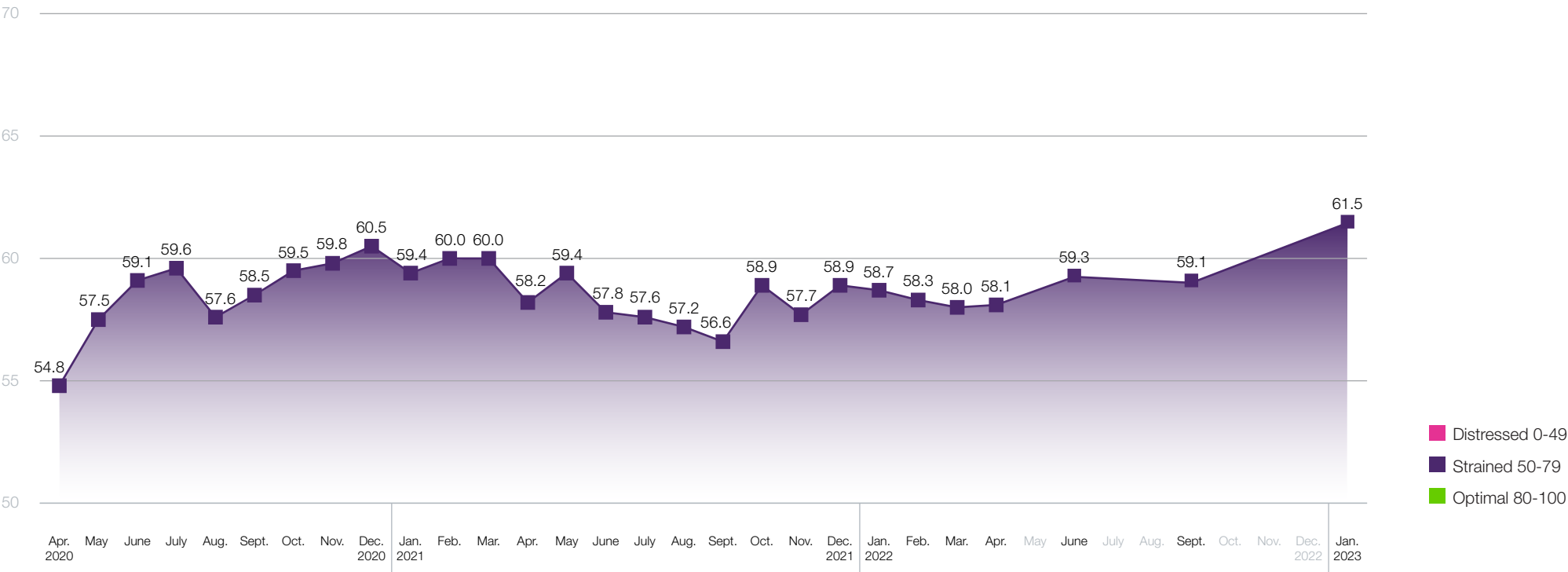
Anxiety

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 remained nearly unchanged in September 2022. Despite a modest improvement in January 2023, the anxiety score is the lowest mental health sub-score for the third consecutive period.



Isolation

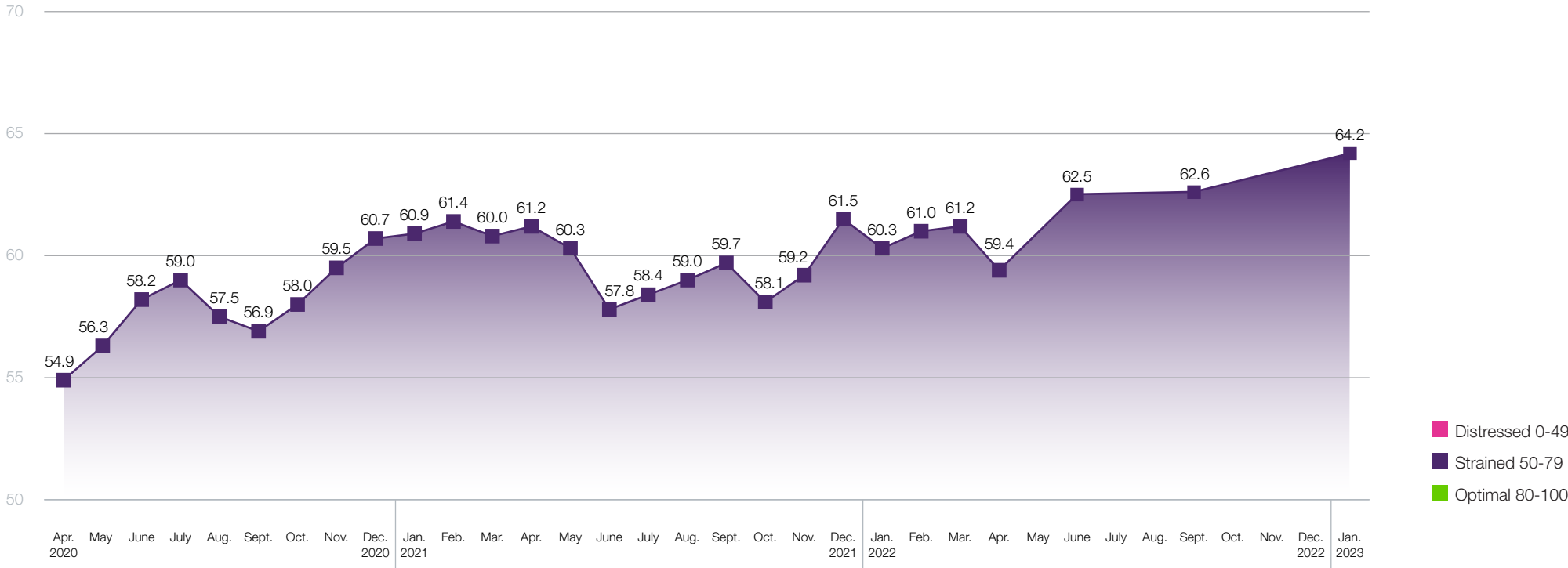
The isolation sub-score increased dramatically from April to July 2020 and, following a one-month decline, improved through December 2020. A period of decline followed through September 2021. After some inconsistency through the remainder of 2021, scores fell through March 2022 but improved in June 2022. A significant increase is observed from September 2022 to January 2023, reaching the highest point since the launch of the Index and the onset of the pandemic.



Work productivity

The work productivity sub-score measures the impact of mental health on work productivity and goals.

The work productivity sub-score has made incremental improvements since April 2020. Despite some declines in June and October 2021 and April 2022, the trend has increased. The work productivity sub-score continues to improve in January 2023 to 64.2, the highest score since the launch of the Index and the pandemic.



Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In January 2023, the mental health score of women is 62.5 compared to 68.1 for men
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age
- Differences in mental health scores between individuals with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. Nearly three years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for individuals with at least one child (63.1) than individuals without children (65.8)

Employment

- Overall, four per cent of respondents are unemployed² and nine per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary
- Individuals working fewer hours compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (52.6), followed by respondents reporting reduced salary (55.1), individuals not currently employed (62.4), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (66.3)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (66.1) than non-managers (64.4)
- Respondents working for companies with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (66.9)
- Self-employed individuals have the lowest mental health score (62.1)

Emergency savings

- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (49.2) than the overall group (64.9). Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of 70.7

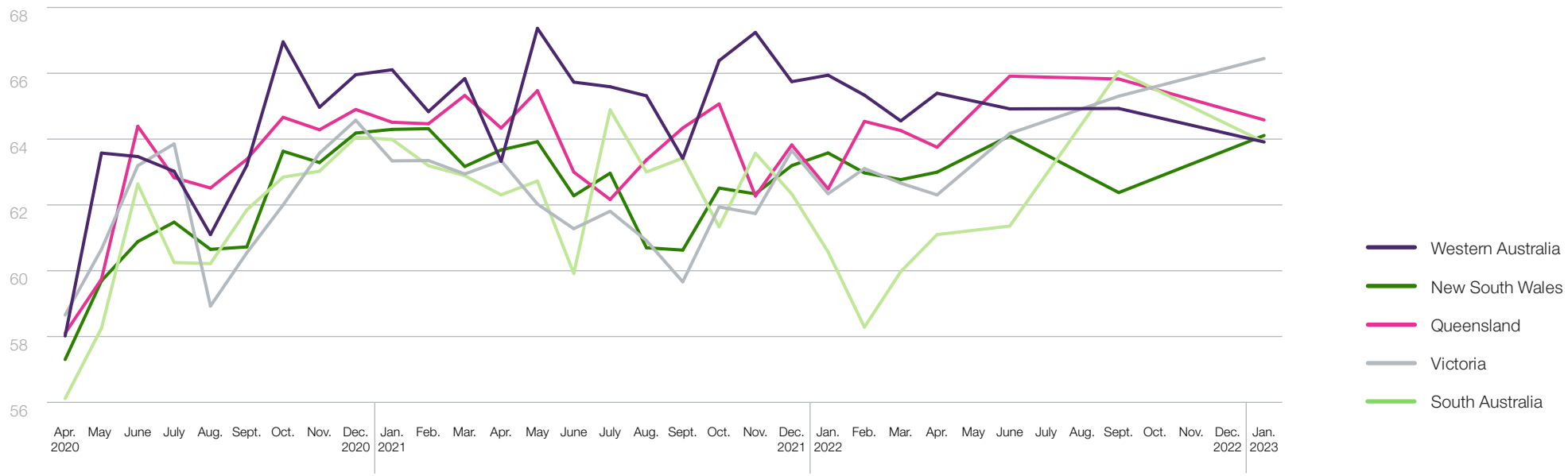


² MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

Mental Health Index (regional).

Regional mental health scores since October 2020 have remained inconsistent. In January 2023, mental health scores improved in New South Wales and Victoria while scores declined in all other states.

- South Australia (63.9) and Western Australia (63.9) both reported the lowest mental health scores following 2.1-point and 1.0-point declines respectively
- The mental health score in Victoria improved 1.1 points over the prior period and has the highest mental health score (66.4) in the country



Employment status	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	66.3	66.1
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	52.6	52.0
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	55.1	39.4
Not currently employed	62.4	62.0
Age group	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
Age 20-29	52.7	53.2
Age 30-39	60.1	59.5
Age 40-49	62.8	63.3
Age 50-59	68.0	66.2
Age 60-69	71.4	72.9
Number of children	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
No children in household	65.8	65.0
1 child	63.1	64.5
2 children	62.4	62.1
3 children or more	65.2	65.1

States	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
New South Wales	64.1	62.4
Victoria	66.4	65.3
Queensland	64.6	65.8
South Australia	63.9	66.0
Western Australia	63.9	64.9
Gender	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
Men	68.1	67.6
Women	62.5	62.0
Household income	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
<\$30K/annum	54.2	52.7
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	60.6	59.0
\$60K to <\$100K	64.4	63.9
\$100K to <\$150K	64.9	65.7
\$150K or more	71.4	71.9

Employer size	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
Self-employed/sole proprietor	62.1	59.1
2-50 employees	65.9	65.8
51-100 employees	65.0	62.1
101-500 employees	64.7	64.3
501-1,000 employees	65.3	64.5
1,001-5,000 employees	62.7	65.9
5,001-10,000 employees	64.8	68.8
More than 10,000 employees	66.9	66.5
Manager	Jan. 2023	Sept. 2022
Manager	66.1	65.1
Non-manager	64.4	64.3

Numbers highlighted in pink 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 January 2023 is among individuals employed in Administrative and Support services (59.0) followed by individuals working in Food Services (59.7).

Australians employed in Manufacturing (70.9), Finance and Insurance (70.0), and Public Administration (69.8) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.



Industry	January 2023	September 2022	Change
Wholesale Trade	69.7	61.8	7.9
Other services (except Public Administration)	64.7	58.6	6.1
Manufacturing	70.9	65.4	5.6
Finance and Insurance	70.0	64.5	5.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	66.1	62.9	3.2
Health Care and Social Assistance	65.4	62.6	2.8
Construction	66.8	65.3	1.5
Educational Services	67.1	66.4	0.7
Public Administration	69.8	69.3	0.5
Retail Trade	62.2	62.5	-0.3
Transportation and Warehousing	68.5	69.8	-1.4
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	62.5	64.1	-1.6
Food Services	59.7	61.3	-1.6
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	62.8	65.9	-3.1
Other	61.0	64.9	-3.9
Administrative and Support services	59.0	64.3	-5.2
Technology ³	64.1	-	-

3 New for 2023: Technology.

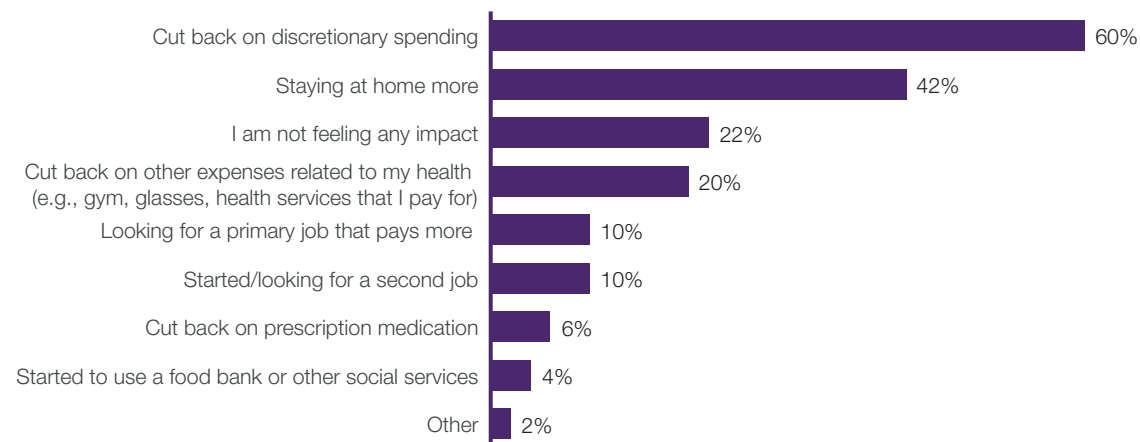
Spotlight

Inflation

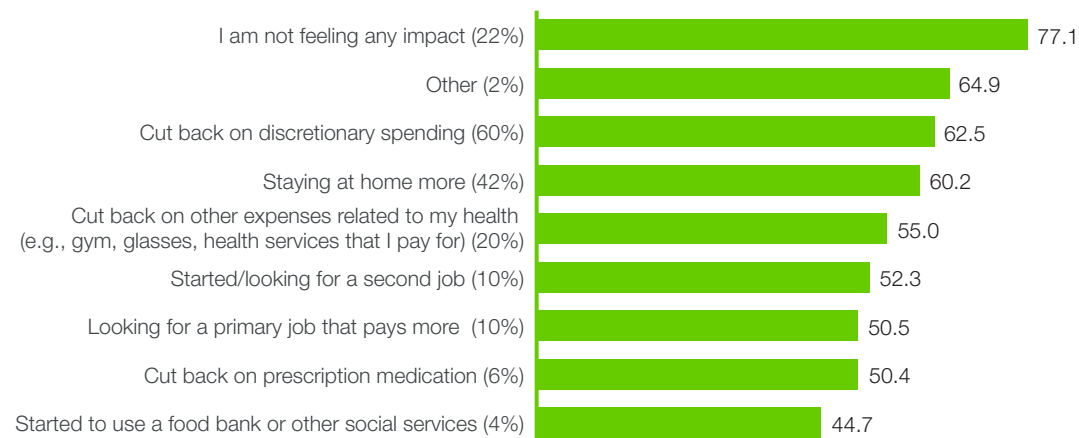
Australians were asked about the impact they have experienced because of inflation.

- Three in five (60 per cent) have cut back on discretionary spending, 42 per cent are staying at home more often, and 20 per cent have cut back on expenses related to their health
- More than one in five (22 per cent) are not feeling any impact, and this group has the highest mental health score (77.1), more than 12 points above the national average (64.9)
- Parents are twice as likely as non-parents to cut back on expenses related to their health
- Parents are nearly twice as likely as non-parents to cut back on prescription medication
- Individuals without emergency savings are three times more likely to cut back on prescription medication compared to respondents with emergency savings
- Individuals without emergency savings are nearly twice as likely to cut back on expenses related to their health compared to respondents without emergency savings
- Individuals with emergency savings are two and a half times as likely to not feel any impact due to inflation compared to individuals without emergency savings

Impact experienced due to inflation.



MHI score by “Impact experienced due to inflation.”



Avoidance

Australians were asked whether they avoid being with or interacting with others.

- Nearly one-third (32 per cent) avoid being with or interacting with others, and this group has the lowest mental health score (51.6), more than 13 points below the national average (64.9)
- More than half (53 per cent) do not avoid being with or interacting with others, and this group has the highest mental health score (74.8), nearly 10 points above the national average
- Respondents under 40 years of age are 50 per cent more likely than individuals over 50 to avoid being with or interacting with others
- More than half (54 per cent) report their avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began, and this group has the second lowest mental health score (50.3), more than 14 points below the national average (64.9)



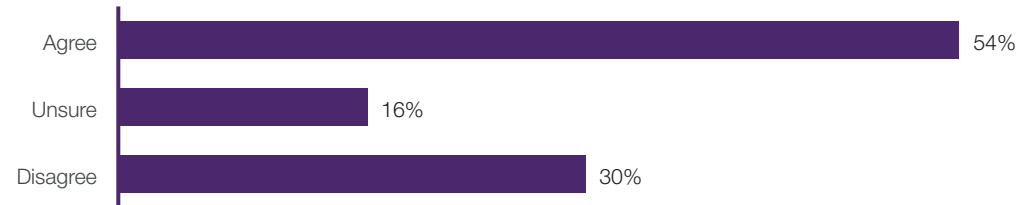
I avoid being with or interacting with others.



MHI score by “I avoid being with or interacting with others.”



This avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began.



MHI score by “This avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began.”

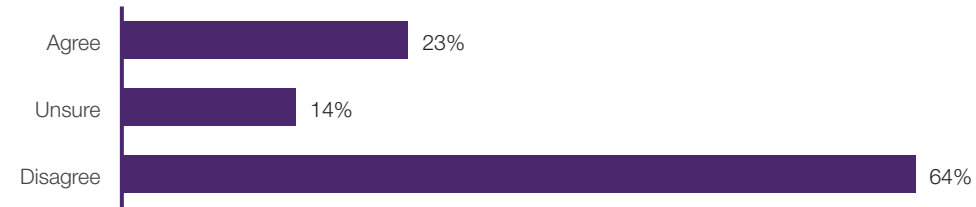


Control

Australians were asked whether they often have difficulty controlling their emotions.

- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) often have difficulty controlling their emotions, and this group has the lowest mental health score (47.5), more than 17 points below the national average (64.9)
- Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) do not have difficulty controlling their emotions, and this group has highest mental health score (73.0), nearly eight points above the national average (64.9)
- Respondents under 40 years of age are more than twice as likely as individuals over 50 to have difficulty controlling their emotions
- Individuals without emergency savings are nearly twice as likely as respondents with emergency savings to have difficulty controlling their emotions
- More than half (52 per cent) report the difficulty controlling their emotions started or worsened since the pandemic began, and this group has the lowest mental health score (44.5), more than 20 points below the national average (64.9)

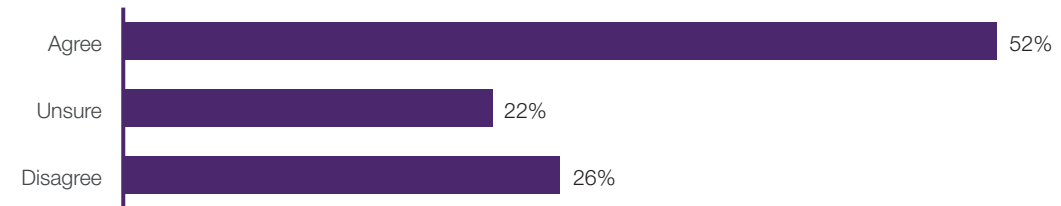
I often have difficulty controlling my emotions.



MHI score by "I often have difficulty controlling my emotions."



This difficulty started or worsened since the pandemic began.



MHI score by "This difficulty started or worsened since the pandemic began."



Marital/partner relationships

Australians were asked how their marital/partner relationship has changed compared to before the pandemic.

- Twelve per cent indicate their marital/partner relationship has declined compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the lowest mental health score (48.1), nearly 17 points below the national average (64.9)
- More than one in ten (12 per cent) report their marital/partner relationship has improved compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the highest mental health score (70.7), nearly six points above the national average (64.9)
- Three-quarters (76 per cent) indicate that nothing has changed in their marital/partner relationship compared to before the pandemic, and this group has a mental health score (68.3) more than three points above the national average (64.9)
- Respondents under 40 years of age are nearly twice as likely as individuals over 50 years of age to report their marital/partner relationship improved compared to before the pandemic



Change in marital/partner relationship compared to before the pandemic.



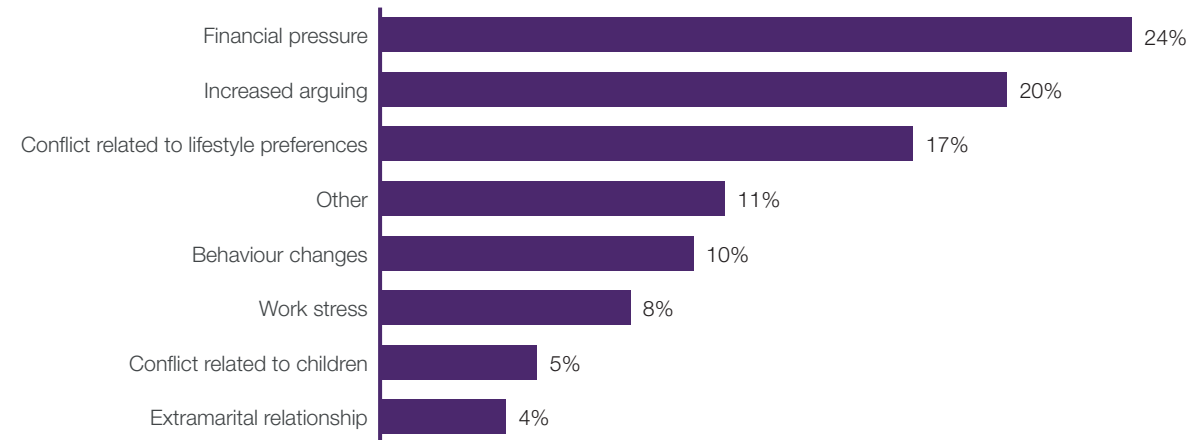
MHI score by “Change in marital/partner relationship compared to before the pandemic.”



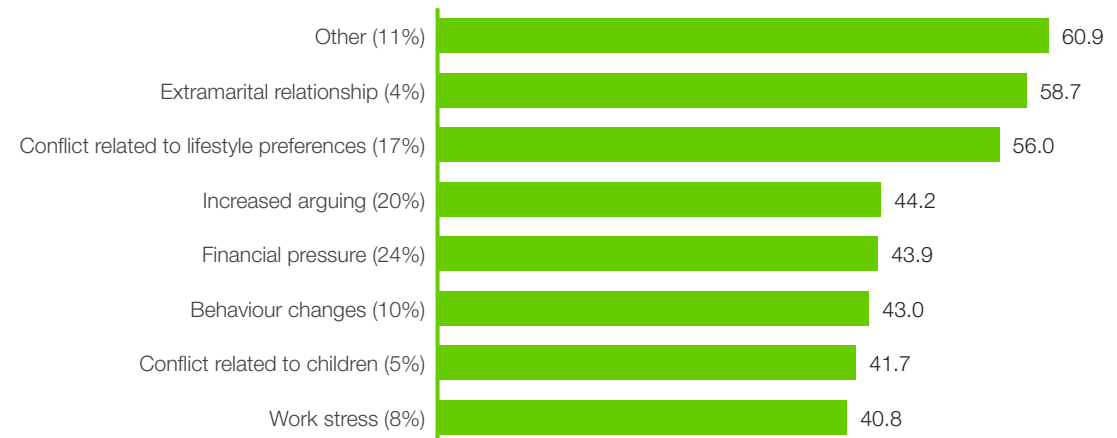
Australians reporting a decline in their marital/partner relationship were asked for the reasons.

- Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) report financial pressure, 20 per cent report increased arguing, 17 per cent report behaviour changes, and 17 per cent report conflict related to lifestyle preferences as reasons for a decline in their relationship
- The lowest mental health score (40.8) is among 8 per cent reporting work stress as the reason for a decline in their relationship
- Respondents under 40 years of age are more than twice as likely as individuals 50 years of age and older to report conflict related to children as the reason for a decline in their relationship
- Respondents over 50 years of age are nearly three times more likely than individuals under 40 years of age to report increased arguing as the reason for a decline in their relationship
- Parents are 50 per cent more likely than non-parents to report financial pressure as the reason for a decline in their relationship
- Women are 50 per cent more likely than men to report financial pressure as the reason for a decline in their relationship

Reason for a decline in marital/partner relationship.



MHI score by “Reason for a decline in marital/partner relationship.”



Wellbeing of children

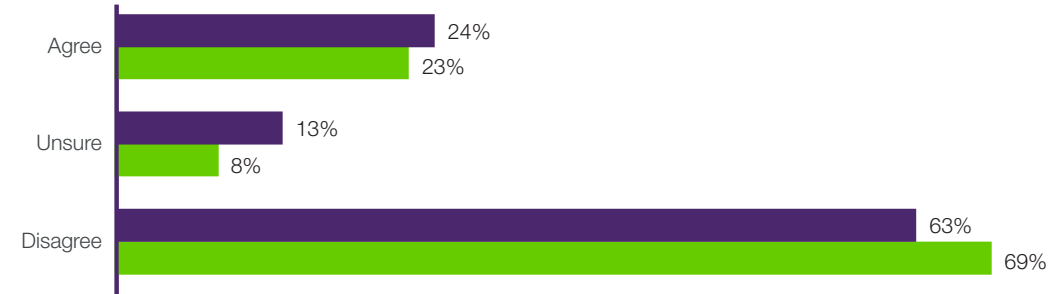
Australian parents were asked whether they are concerned about their children's behaviour.

- Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of parents with children under 18 years of age are concerned about their children's behaviour, similar to 23 per cent of parents with children 18 years of age and older
- The mental health and work productivity scores of parents concerned about their children's behaviour are lower than parents not concerned about their children's behaviour



■ Parents with children under 18 years old
■ Parents whose children are 18 or older

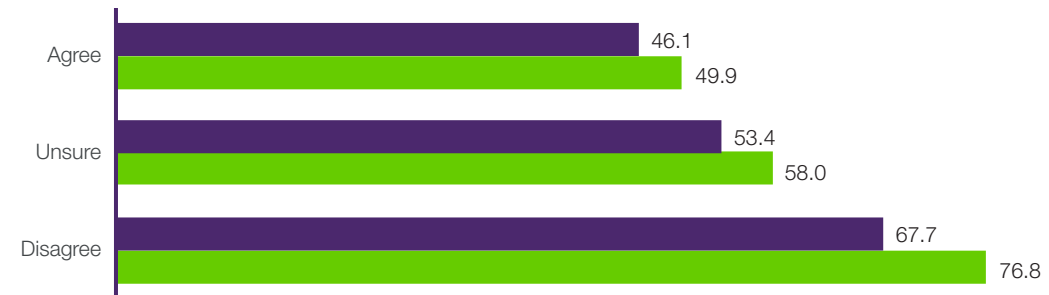
My child or children are experiencing behaviour that I am concerned about.



MHI score by “My child or children are experiencing behaviour that I am concerned about.”



Work productivity score by “My child or children are experiencing behaviour that I am concerned about.”

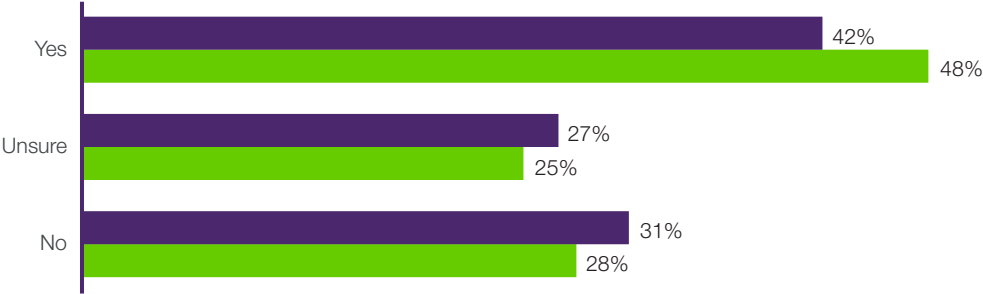


Two in five (42 per cent) of parents with children under 18 years of age report the behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic began, compared to 48 per cent of parents with children 18 years of age and older. The mental health and work productivity scores of parents reporting this behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic began are lower than parents who disagree.



- Parents with children under 18 years old
- Parents whose children are 18 or older

This behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic.



MHI score by “This behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic.”



Work productivity score by “This behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic.”

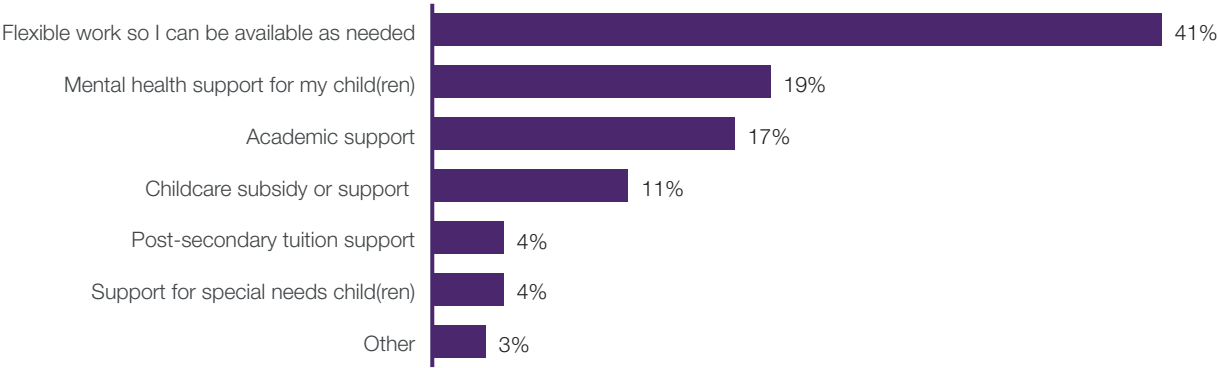


Australian parents were asked what would be most valuable as it relates to the wellbeing of their children.

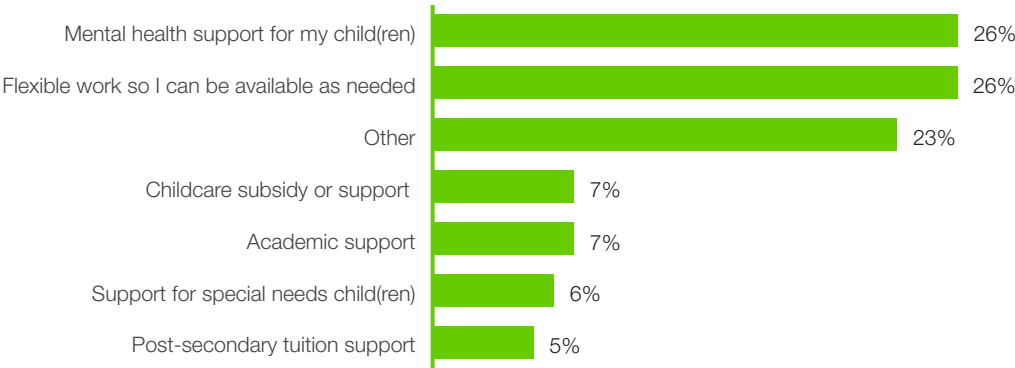
- More than two in five (41 per cent) parents with children under 18 years of age report flexible work as most valued for the wellbeing of their children, 19 per cent report mental health support, and 17 per cent report academic support
- Parents whose children are 18 years old or older report mental health support (26 per cent) and flexible work (26 per cent) as most valued for the wellbeing of their children



Most valued for the wellbeing of children under 18 years of age.



Most valued for the wellbeing of children 18 years of age and older.



Remote work

Australians were asked whether they can work flexibly.

- Nearly one-third (32 per cent) cannot work flexibly, and this group has a mental health score (64.8) similar to the national average (64.9)
- More than one-third (28 per cent) can work flexibly most or all the time, and this group has the highest mental health score (68.6), more than three points above the national average (64.9)



I am able to work flexibly.



MHI score by “I am able to work flexibly.”

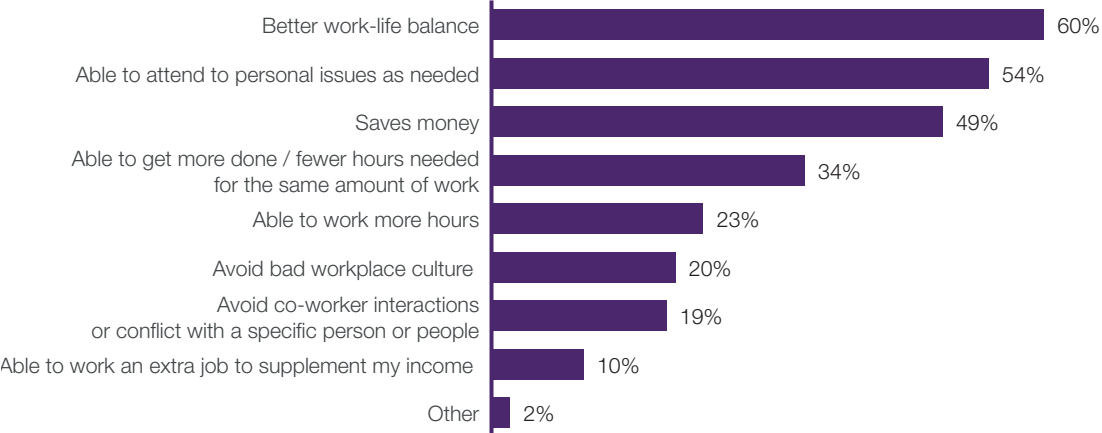


Australians were asked about the advantages they have experienced from remote work.

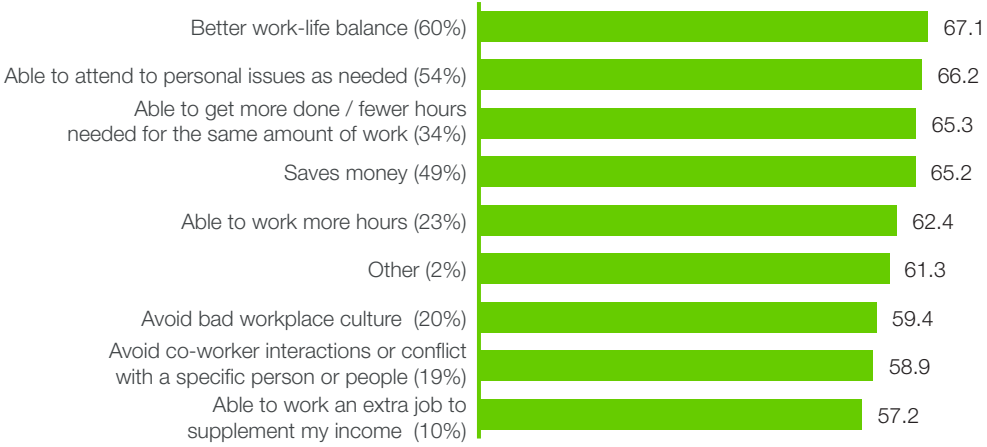
- Three in five (60 per cent) report better work-life balance, 54 per cent report being able to attend personal issues when needed, and 49 per cent report that working remotely saves money
- The lowest mental health score (57.2) is among 10 per cent of respondents reporting being able to work an extra job to supplement their income
- Parents are 40 per cent more likely than non-parents to report working more hours as an advantage of remote work
- Respondents under 40 years of age are more than four times more likely than individuals over 50 years of age to report working an extra job to supplement their income as an advantage of working remotely



Advantages experienced from remote work.



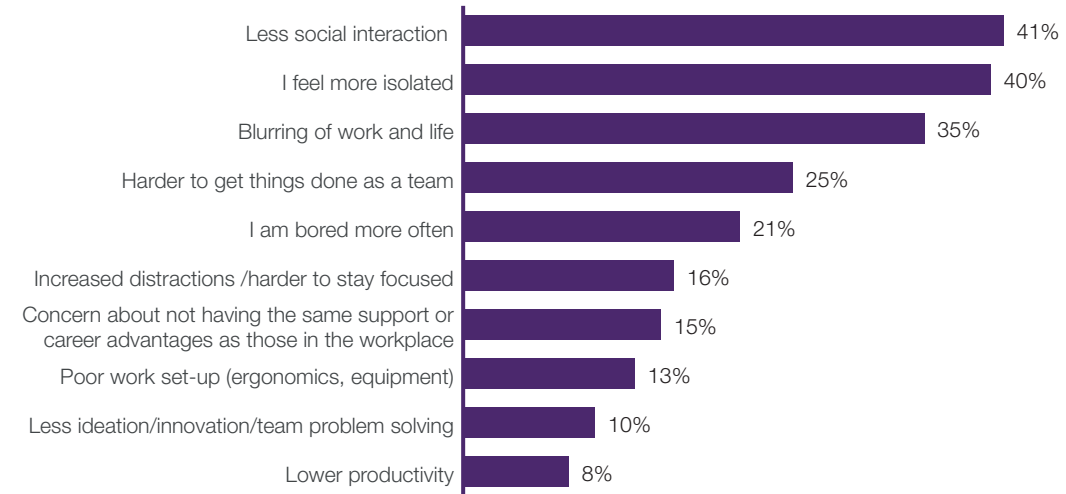
MHI score by “Advantages experienced from remote work.”



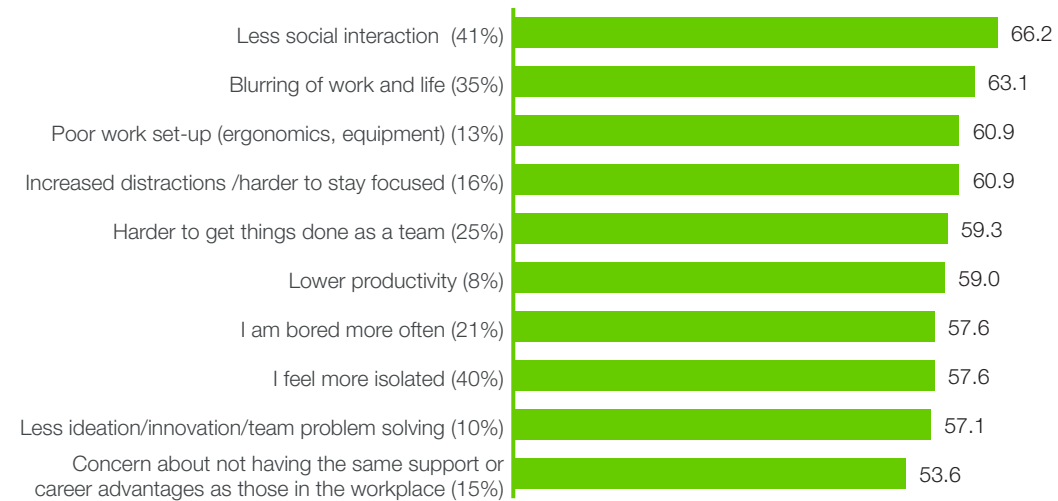
Australians were asked about the disadvantages they have experienced from remote work.

- More than two in five (41 per cent) report having less social interaction as a disadvantage of remote work, 40 per cent report feeling more isolated, and 35 per cent report blurring of work and life
- The lowest mental health score (53.6) is among 15 per cent of individuals concerned about not having the same support or career advantages as those in the workplace
- Respondents under 40 years of age are more than twice as likely as individuals over 50 years of age to be concerned about not having the same support or career advantages as those in the workplace
- Respondents under 40 years of age are 50 per cent more likely than individuals over 50 years of age to be report feeling more isolated.
- Managers are 50 per cent more likely than non-managers to report that it is harder to get things done as a team

Disadvantages experienced from remote work.



MHI score by “Disadvantages experienced from remote work.”



Overview of the Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly 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 January 17 and January 24, 2023.

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





www.telushealth.com

