

Lockdown wellbeing and support survey

FINAL REPORT
27 September 2021



Background

The ACT Government engaged the YourSay Panel to find out how Canberrans were dealing with COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and to identify any additional support needs over coming months.

The research will be used to help inform Government planning around restrictions and to develop or refine relevant supports for individuals, families and businesses across the ACT.

Methodological notes:

- The results have been weighted to reflect relative population proportions based on the ABS Census
- The methodology is biased towards those with internet and computer literacy, which may impact data relating to communication preferences
- In single choice questions, results may not add up to 100% due to rounding



How many?

2,602

Who?

Canberrans 16+

When?

13 – 19 Sep 2021

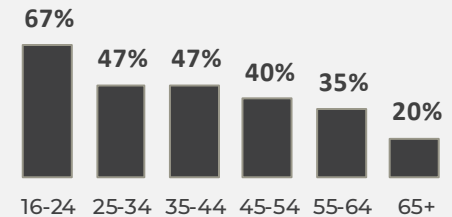
In summary: how are we faring?

- **Canberrans are understandably finding it tough in the current circumstances**, with many feeling more socially isolated than usual and self-rated mental health at its lowest point so far in the pandemic
- **Young people (especially 16-24 year olds) are disproportionately impacted**, being more likely to say they have lost income, face food shortages, are missing medical appointments, and reporting significantly less positive mental health
- **Parents too face challenges**, with around 7 in 10 indicating they find managing remote learning with other commitments difficult and many concerned about the impact of lockdown on their children
- **Despite these challenges a large majority of Canberrans are on board with the current and planned approach** in relation to restrictions and relate some positive, community-centred aspects of the lockdown
- **Canberrans are also feeling very well informed about the situation** from the ACT Government, with positive comments around information sharing and communication provided



Mental health

% fair or poor



Challenges and concerns

% more socially isolated	76%
% lost income	19%
% remote school difficult	71%



ACT Government response

% appropriate response	88%
% feeling informed	92%

In summary: support use and needs

- Most Canberrans are aware of individual support available, with around two in ten using this, most commonly relating to grocery delivery and the Commonwealth COVID-19 Disaster Payment
- Around six in ten Canberra businesses on the Panel are aware of business support available, with the most commonly accessed being the COVID-19 Disaster Payment and Business Support Grants
- Canberrans point to use of wide range of other strategies to help during this time, principally associated with community connection, use of health and essential services, individual self care, and entertainment
- Many also indicate the provision of information and advice is assisting them to keep up-to-date, navigate the current situation and feel supported
- A whole host of often individualised needs are raised, though common areas include support for parenting, increasing opportunities for connection and family support, accessing more virtual resources, retail and services, assistance with income and expenditure, and expanding outdoor access



Financial and business support

AWARE USED

individual support **88%** **22%**business support **61%** **17%**

What else helps?

Community & connections
Essential services & support
Information provision
Self care & entertainment



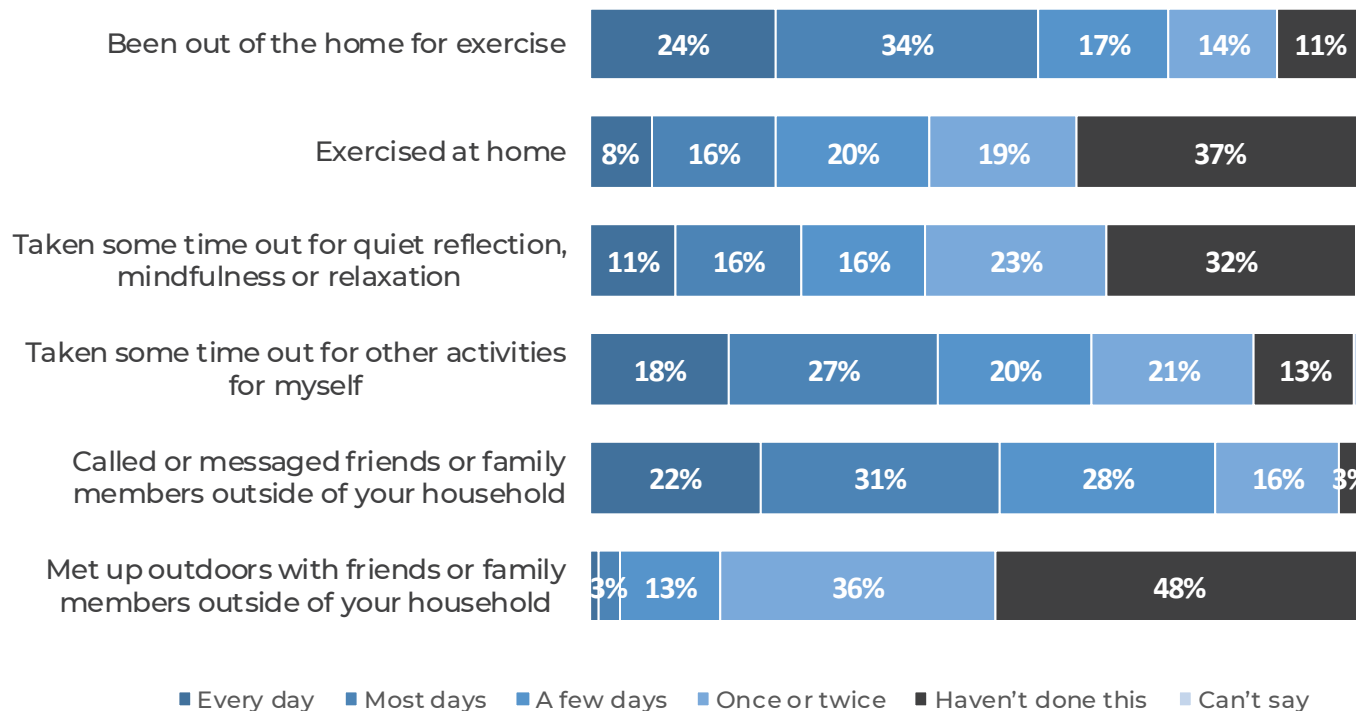
What might help?

Family bubbles / support
More mental health support
More outdoor opportunities
On-site schooling / day care
Income / cost of living support

Health and wellbeing during lockdown

Most Canberrans have been keeping active, taking time out and connecting with others during the lockdown

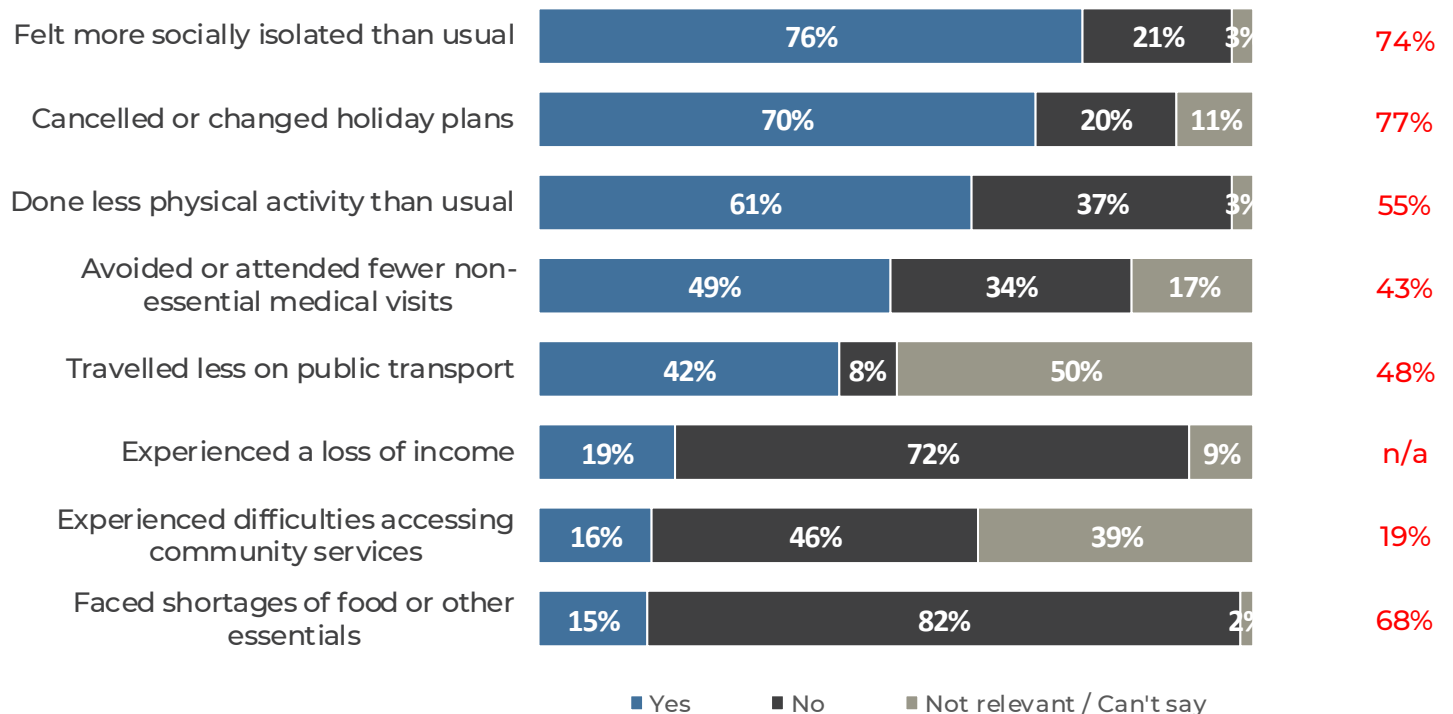
Q. How often have you taken time out in the past week to do any of the following things?



Three-quarters of Canberrans are feeling more socially isolated, while two in ten have experienced income loss

Q. Have you been negatively impacted by the lockdown in any of the following ways?

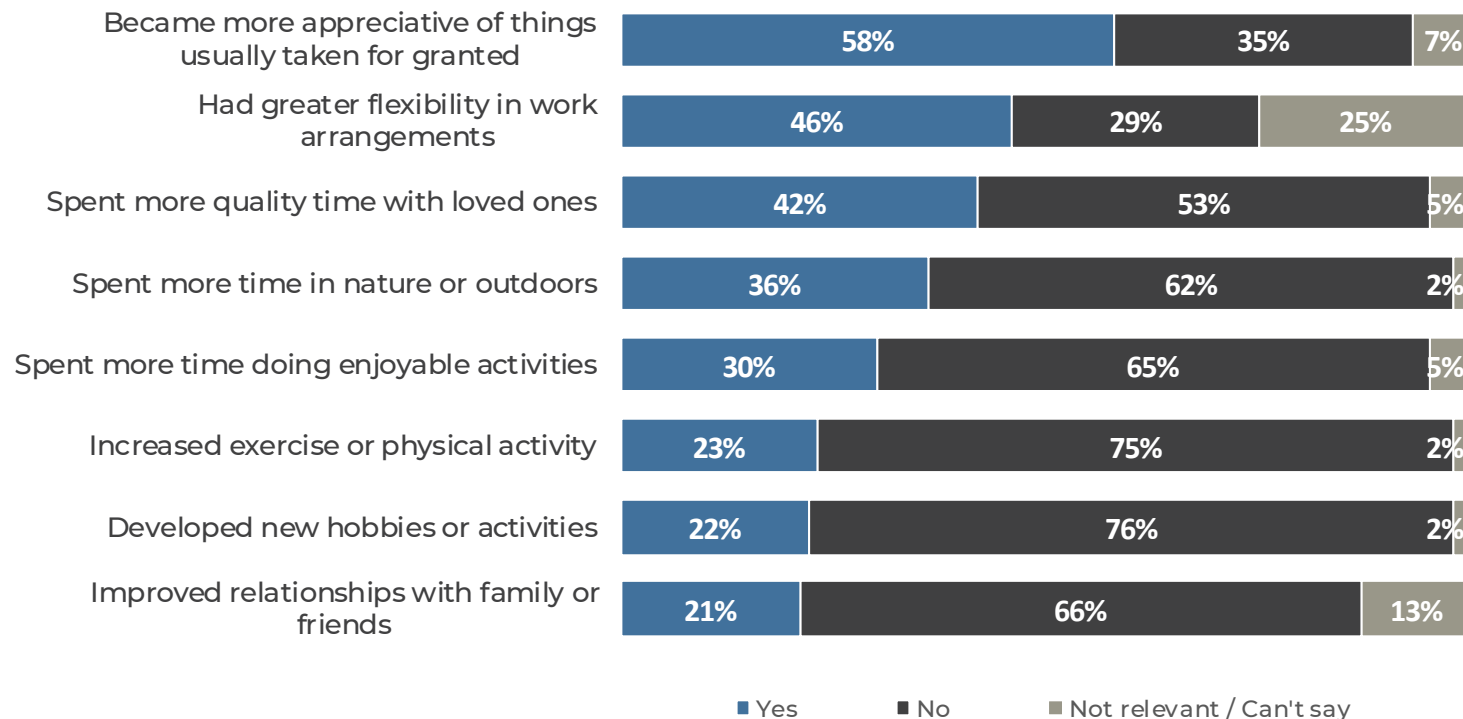
(May 2020)



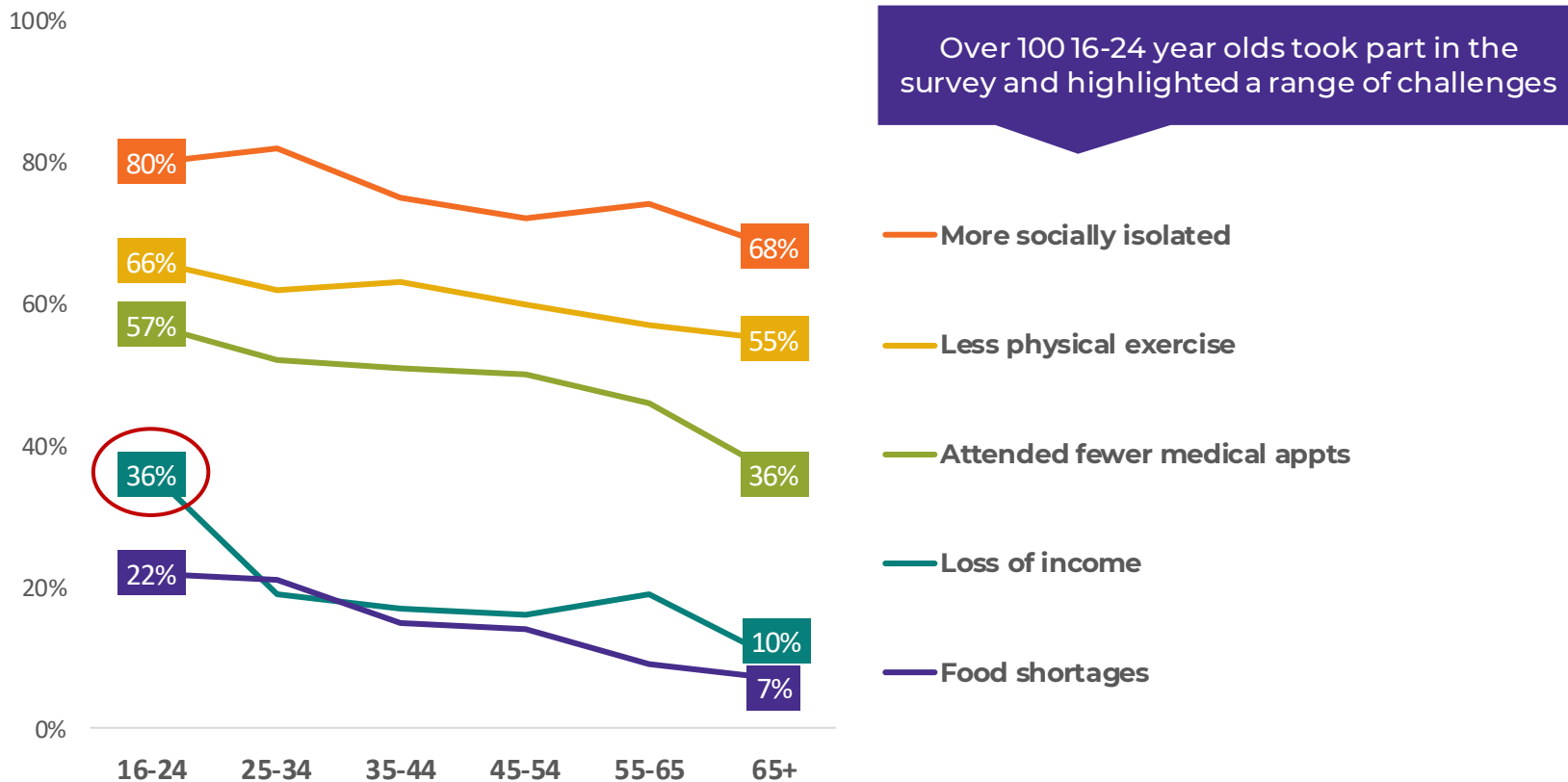
49% of business owners report a loss of income

Positive aspects of lockdown include becoming more appreciative of things and quality time with loved ones

Q. And have you experienced any of these more positive things associated with lockdown?

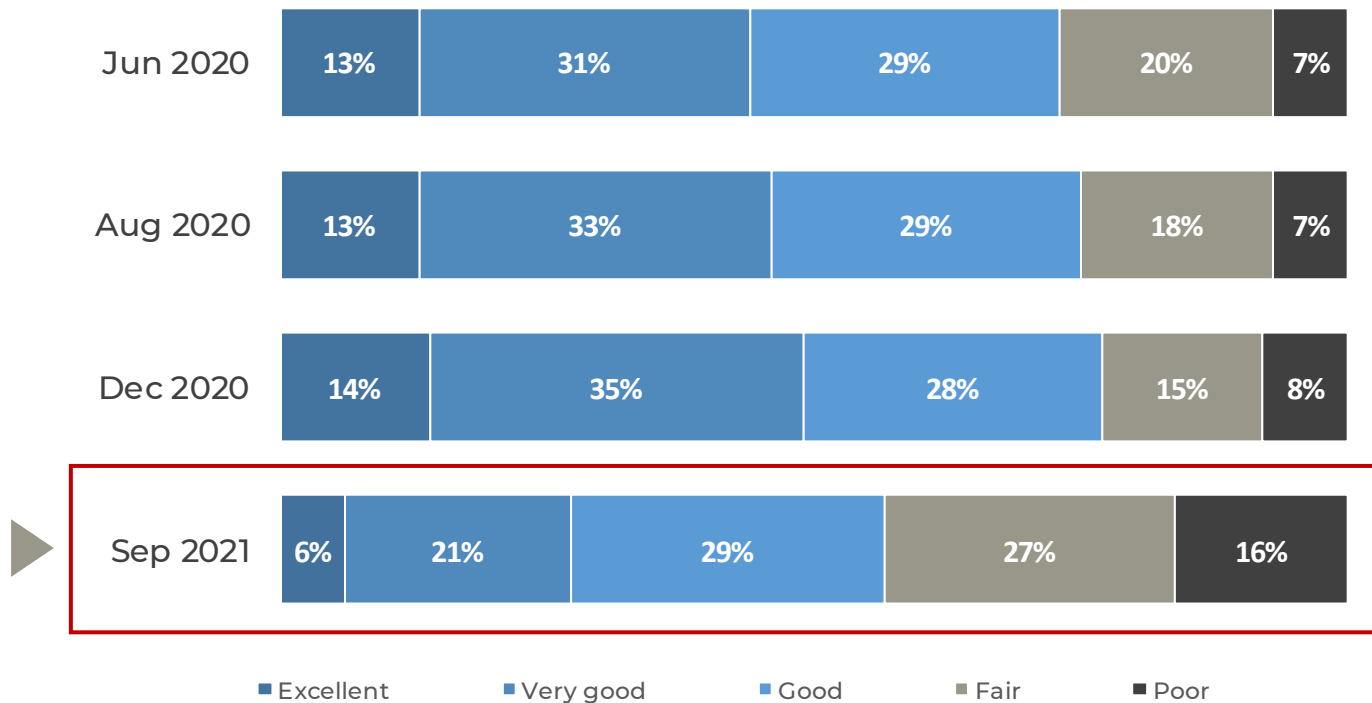


Negative impacts are tending to disproportionately affect younger Canberrans – especially loss of income



Self-rated mental health is the lowest it has been during the pandemic, with more than 4 in 10 rating it as fair or poor

Q. Overall, how would you rate your current mental health and wellbeing?

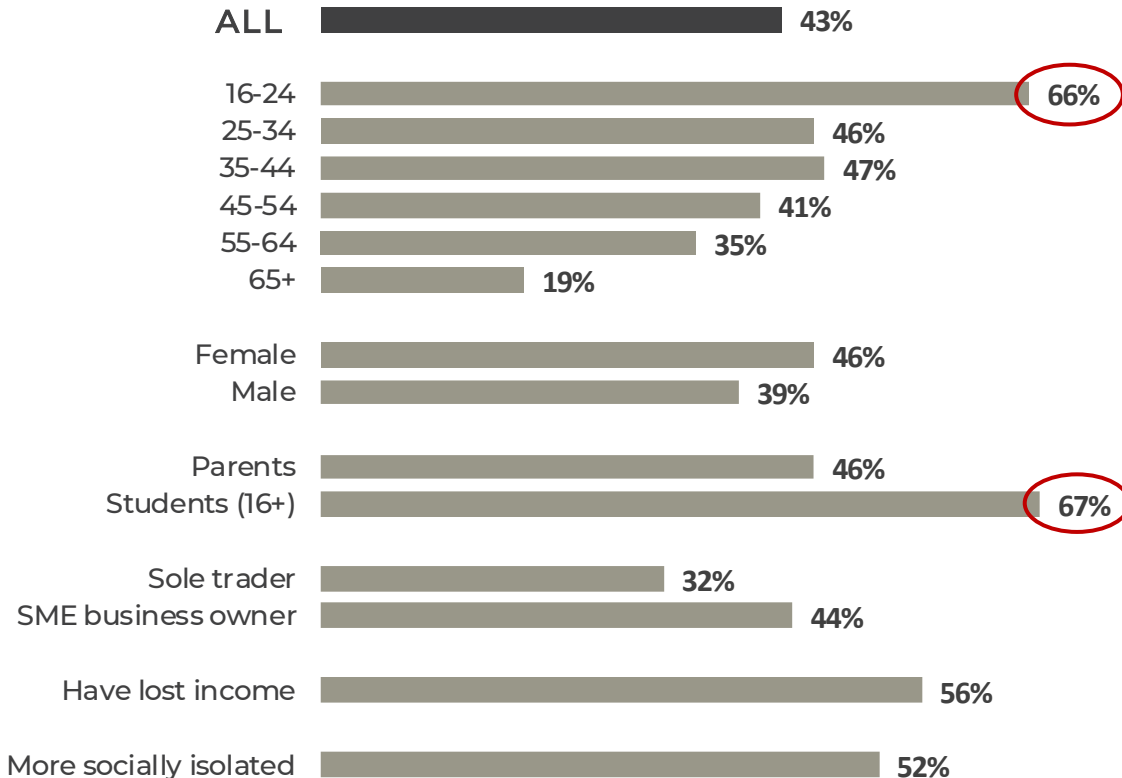


Research from NSW paints a similar picture, with 45% of residents rating their mental health as fair or poor*



Young people are much more likely to feel that they are struggling with their mental health

% rating current mental health as fair or poor

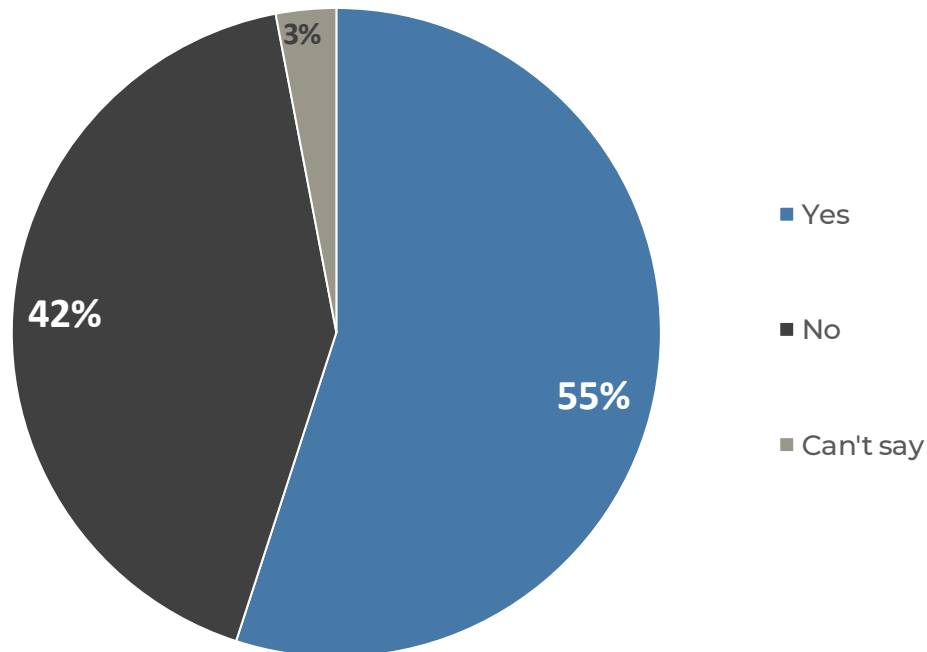


Recent national research from AIHW paints a similar picture, with life satisfaction lower than in last years' lockdown and young people more likely to report challenges to their mental health and wellbeing*



Four in ten Canberrans were not aware of advice and support services accessible via the ACT Health website

Q. Before today, were you aware that you can access mental health and wellbeing advice and support services via the ACT Health website?

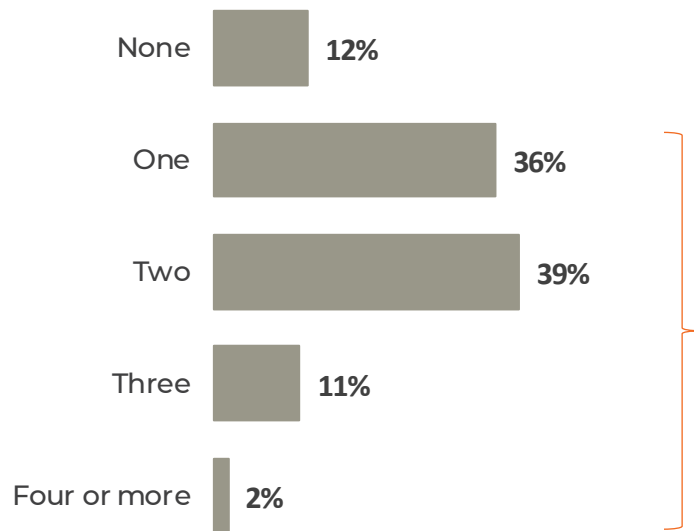


Parenting and remote learning

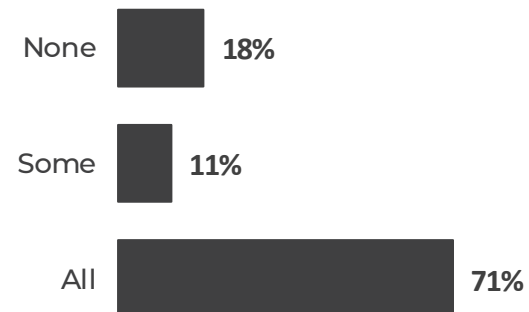


Most parents have all their children undertaking remote learning at home

Q. How many children do you usually have attending school or an early childhood program in the ACT?



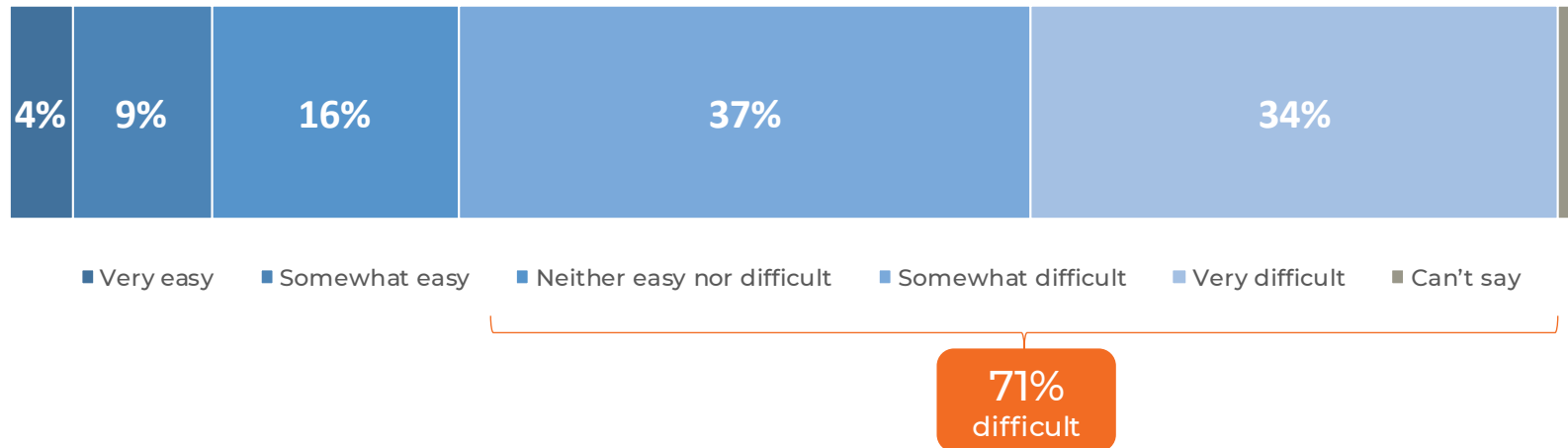
Q. How many of your children are currently schooling at home through remote learning?





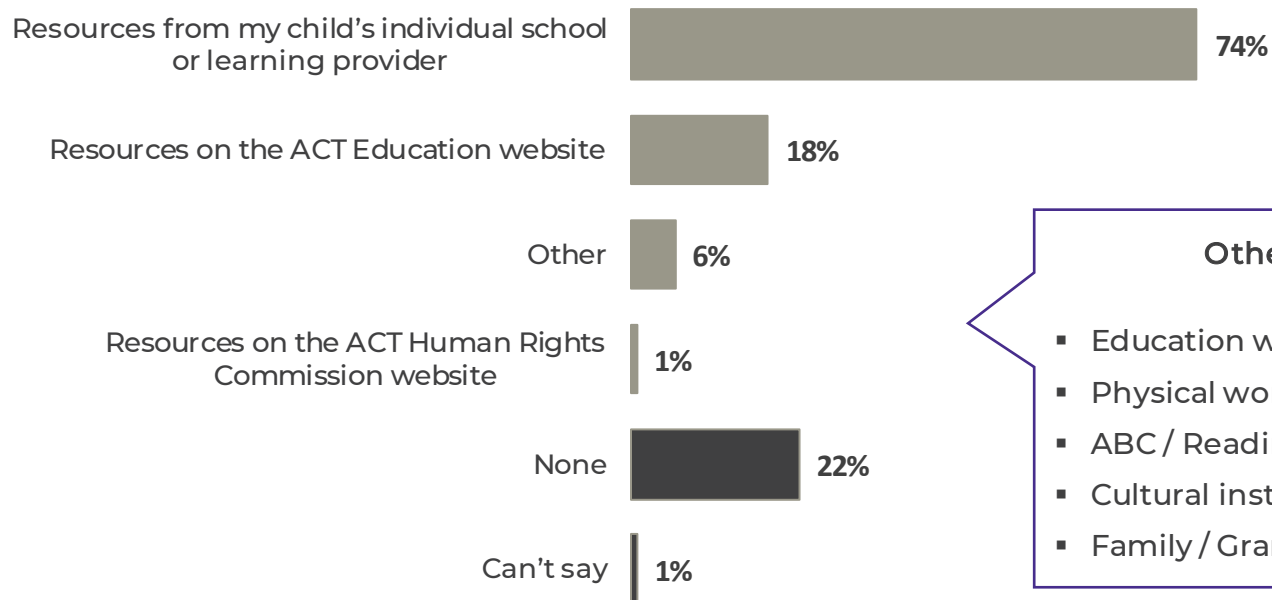
Seven in ten parents undertaking remote learning are finding this difficult to manage with other commitments

Q. Overall, how easy or difficult have you found managing remote learning with other commitments such as work and/or study?



Most commonly, parents are using resources directly from education providers to support remote learning at home

Q. Have you used any of the following resources for children and families?



Others include:

- Education websites
- Physical workbooks
- ABC / Reading Eggs
- Cultural institutions
- Family / Grandparent hook-ups



Other support needs for remote learning – common themes

Q. Is there anything that could be done to help you while you manage remote learning with other commitments?

More hours in the day!

Improved work flexibility, carers leave etc

Not much – impossible situation!

More contact time with teachers

Better / clearer instructions for parents

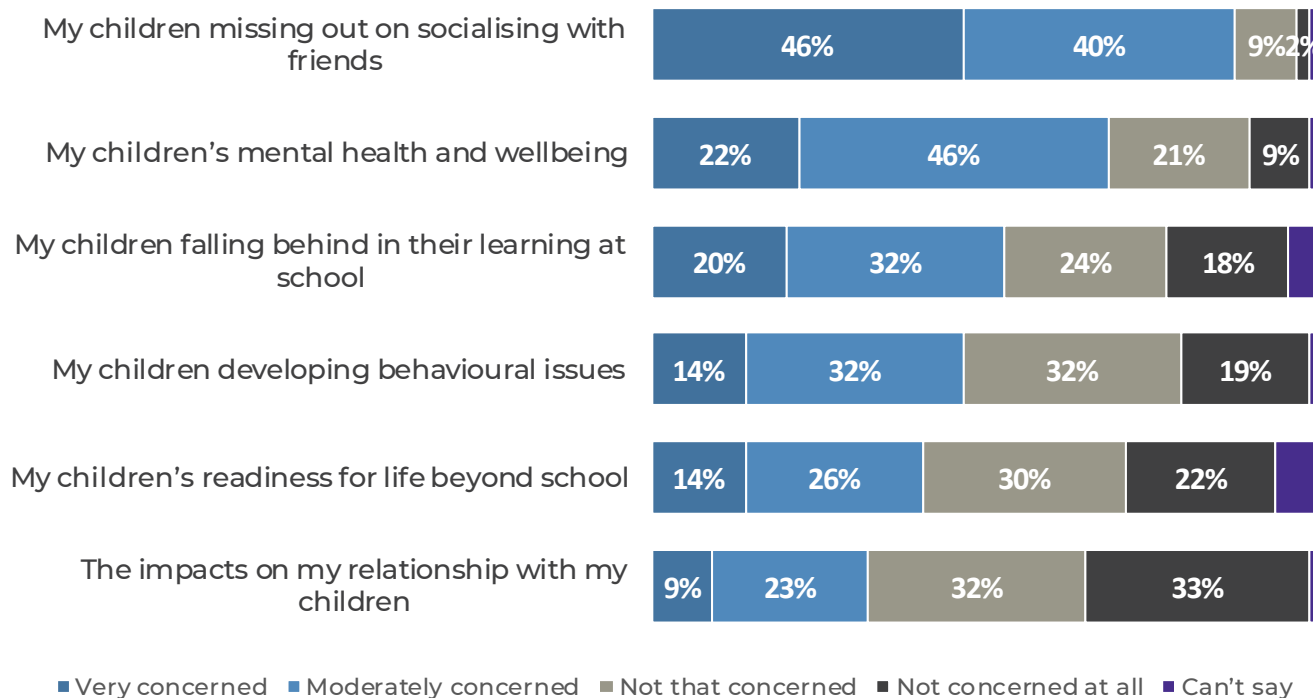
Lower expectations, workloads, hours

Return to school, vaccinate teachers & kids

Open day care for younger kids

More broadly, parents are concerned about their children's social connection and mental health during lockdown

Q. Considering everything, to what extent would you agree with the following statements:

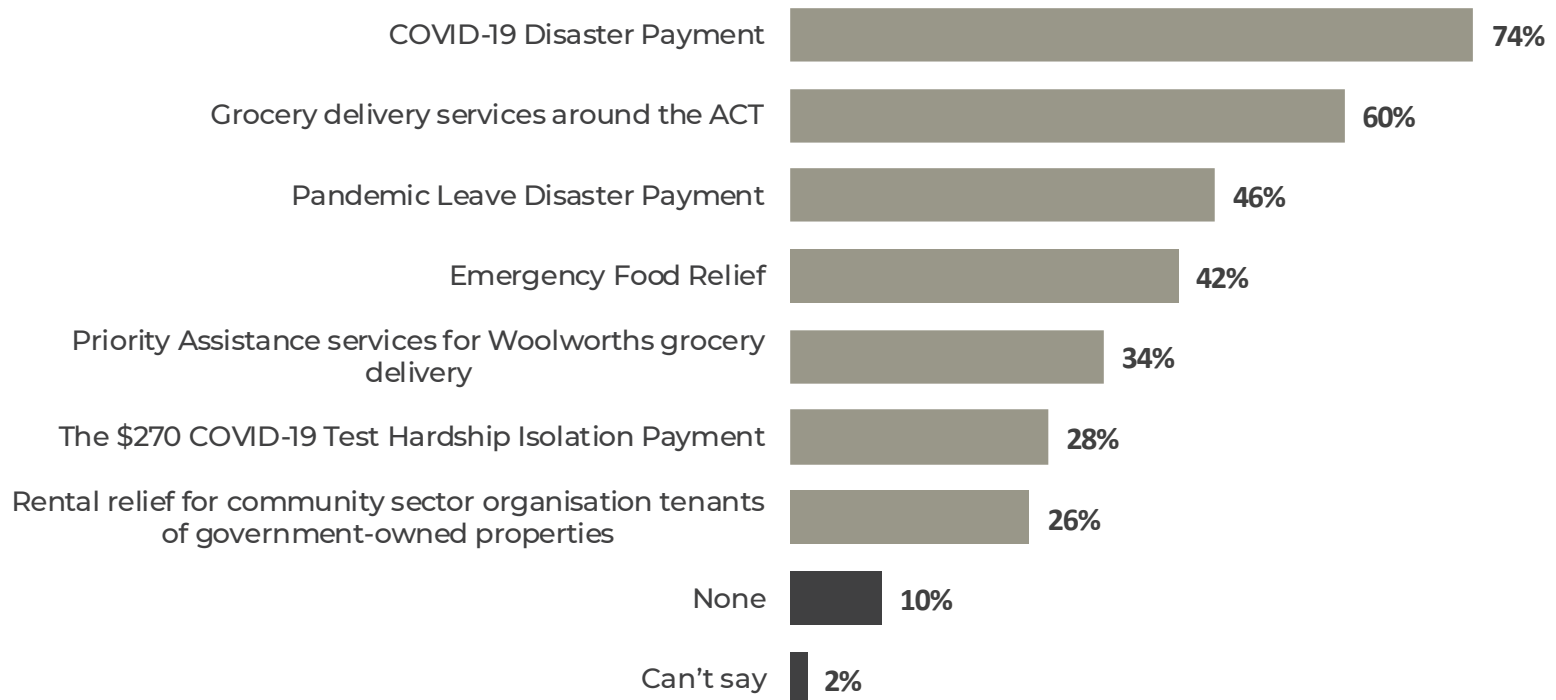


In comparison to national research, Canberrans are more concerned about their children missing out on socialising but are less concerned that their children will fall behind at school or develop behavioural issues*

Awareness and use of support

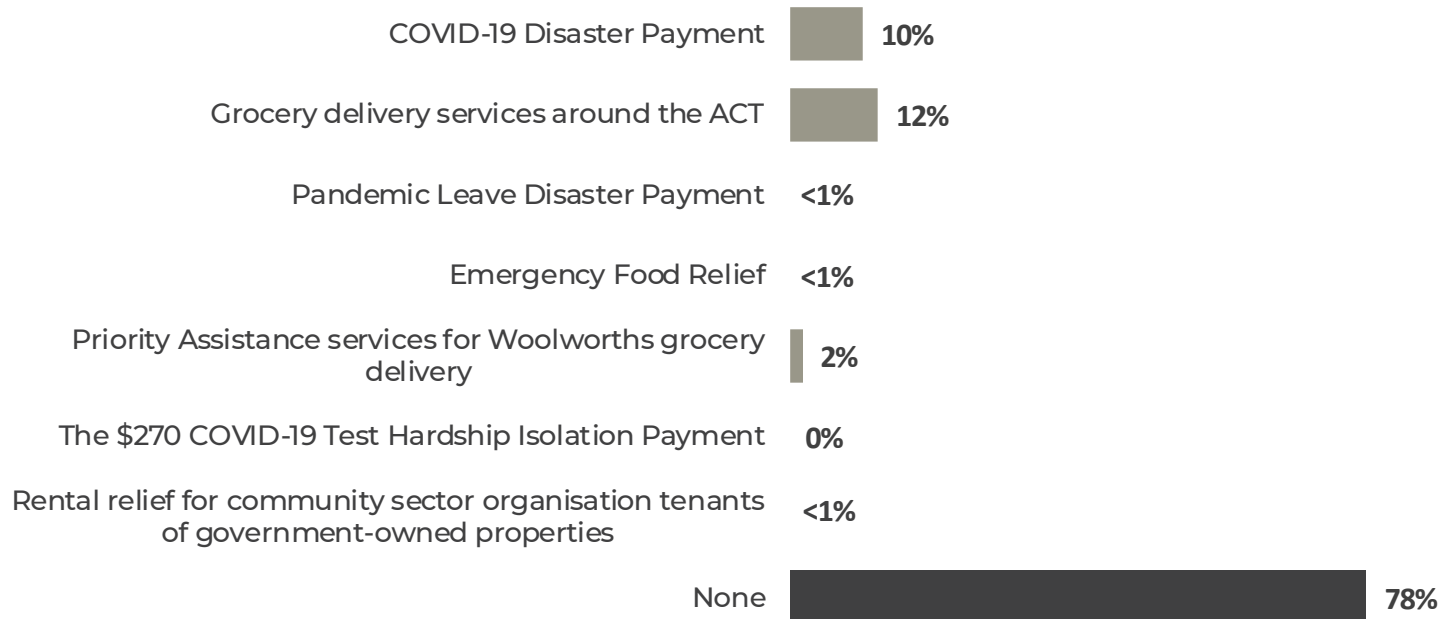
Most Canberrans are aware of Commonwealth financial support, as well as local food programs and services

Q. Before today, were you aware of any of the following supports for individuals in the ACT?



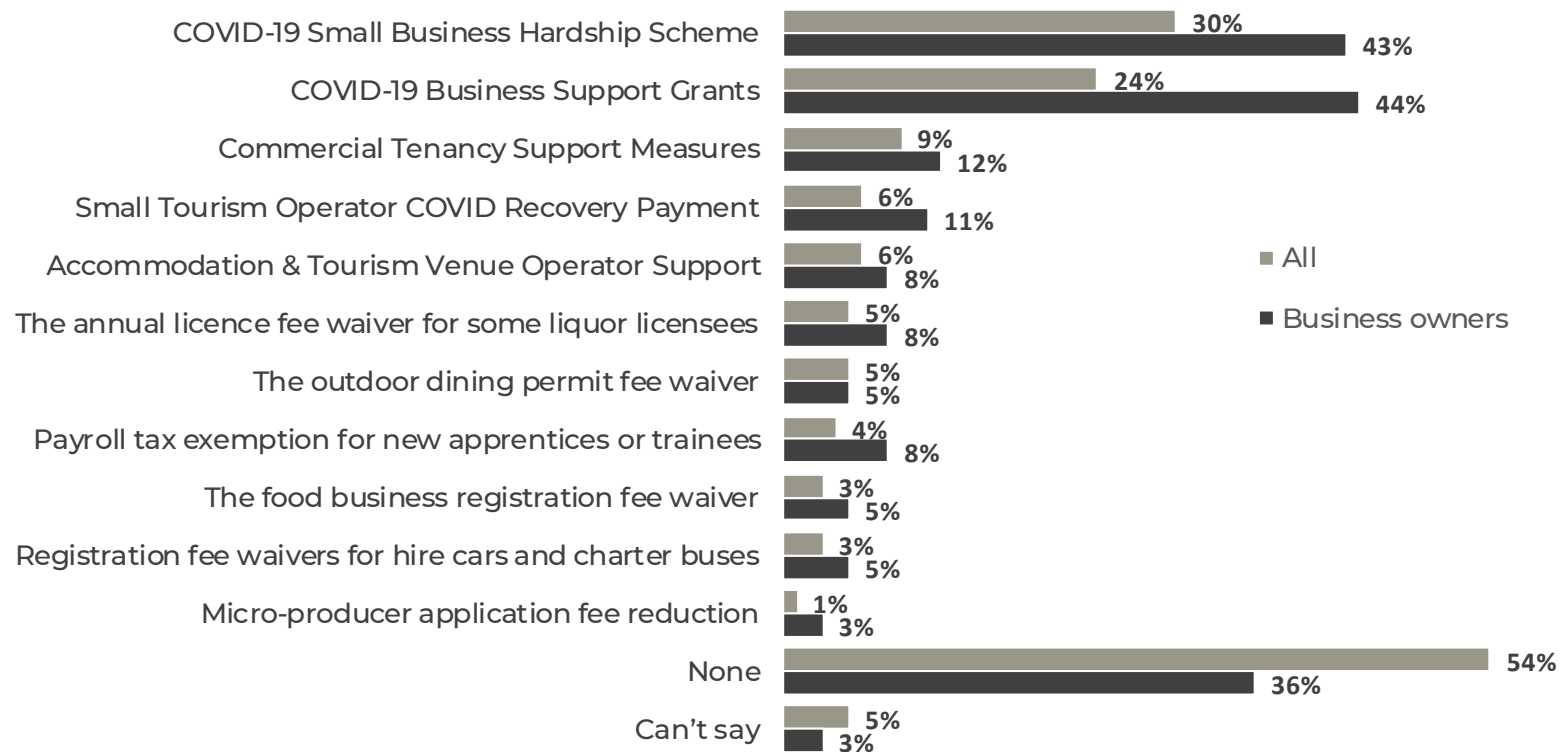
At the time of the survey, around one in ten individuals had accessed the COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Q. And have you accessed any of these individual supports in the last month



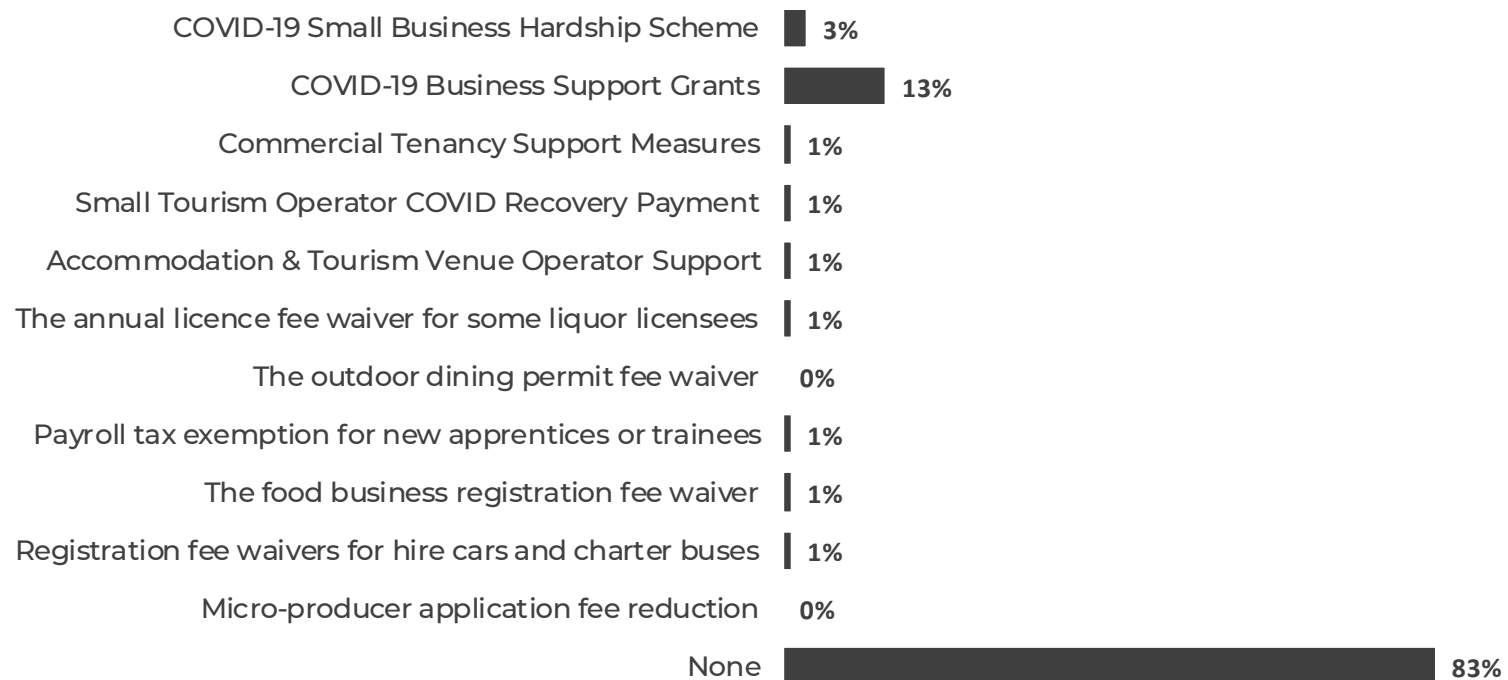
More than four in ten business owners are aware of Business Support Grants and the Small Business Hardship Scheme *

Q. Before today, were you aware of any of the following supports for businesses in the ACT?



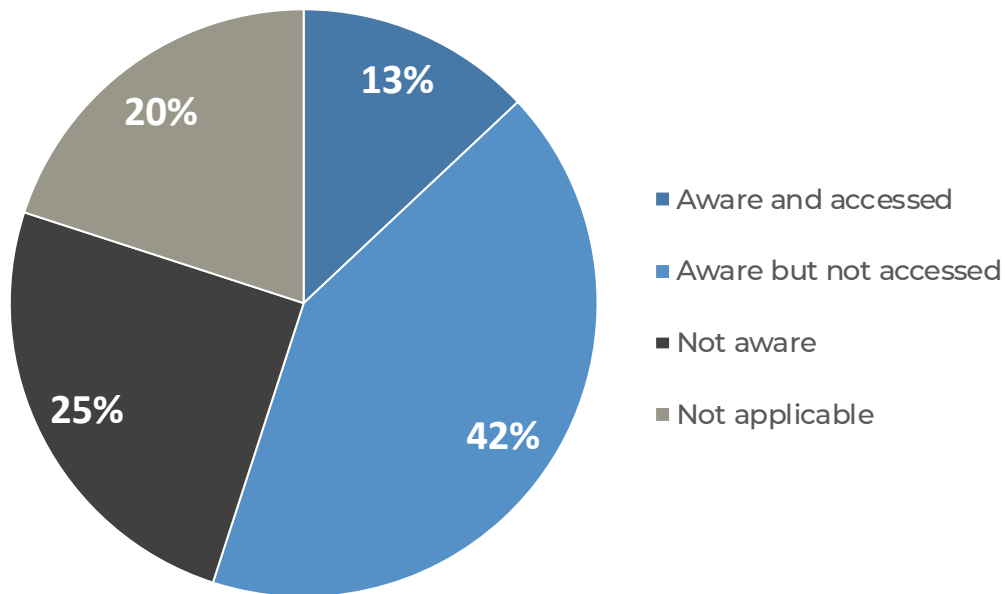
Most business owners on the Panel have not accessed any ACT Government support *

Q. Before today, were you aware of any of the following supports for businesses in the ACT?



Around one in eight businesses on the Panel say they have accessed Commonwealth financial support *

Q. Are you aware of and / or have you accessed any Commonwealth Government support for your business or employees during the recent restrictions?



In most cases, the **COVID-19 Disaster Payment** was mentioned as the Commonwealth support which had been accessed by business respondents

Other forms of support Canberrans are using to help them during the lockdown – common themes

Q. Please tell us about any other support or resources that have helped you during the recent lockdown period...

Connections and community

Including...

Online catch ups with family, friends, community groups, networks etc

Employer support

Bubble buddies/
outdoor meet ups

Community pantries, libraries, volunteer services etc

Essential services and support

Including...

Telehealth

Mental health support services (e.g. Headspace, Lifeline)

Home delivery services and click and collect

Access Canberra services

Information and media

Including...

Daily 11:45 briefing

COVID-19 website, exposure locations

ACT Health social media

ABC News, radio etc

Local Facebook pages

Entertainment and self care

Including...

Getting outdoors

Reading, games, TV, movies etc

Gardening

Hobbies and crafts

Alcohol



Other support needs – some common themes arising

Q. Is there any other specific support or assistance you can think of that would help you during the lockdown?

Family bubbles

Virtual communities, classes etc

Access to library resources

Expand outdoor access, national parks etc

Access to child care / support

More click & collect, access to services, personal care etc

Open gyms, outdoor training

More mental health support

Reduced rates, bills, fees etc

Income support, min wage

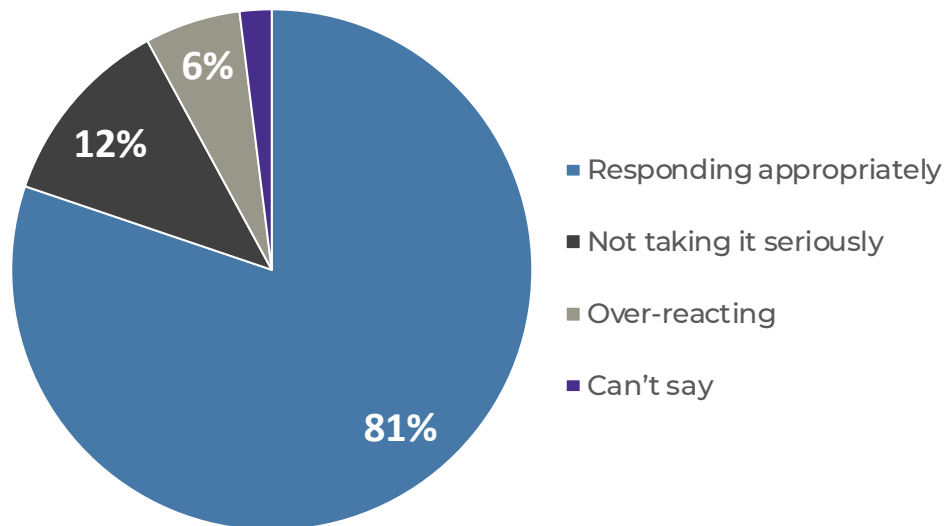
Fewer restrictions for vaccinated

Open more things up / end lockdown

Response and outlook

Eight in ten Canberrans feel that the community is responding appropriately to the current COVID-19 situation

Q. Overall, how would you describe the Canberra community's response to COVID-19?



Why not taking seriously?

- Inadequate mask wearing
- Too many people out and about in community
- Group gatherings / meet ups
- Non-compliant businesses
- Numbers infectious in the community

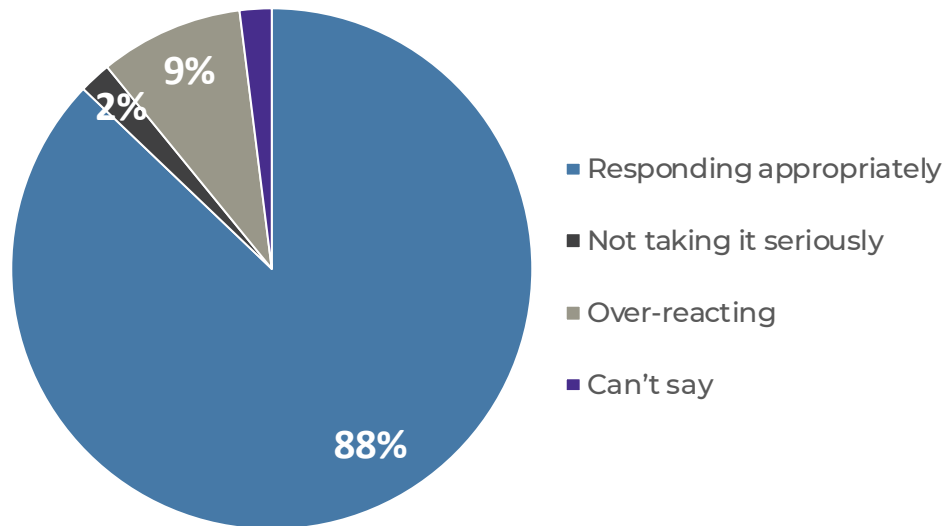
Why over-reacting?

- Low case numbers
- Going to have to live with it
- Mental health impacts
- Economic impacts
- Lockdown not doing anything



Nearly nine in ten feel that the ACT Government is responding appropriately to COVID-19

Q. Overall, how would you describe the ACT Government's response to COVID-19?



Why not taking seriously?

- Need to strengthen compliance – fines not warnings
- Harder border – still NSW risk
- Picnic rule / up to 5 households
- Allowing construction to restart

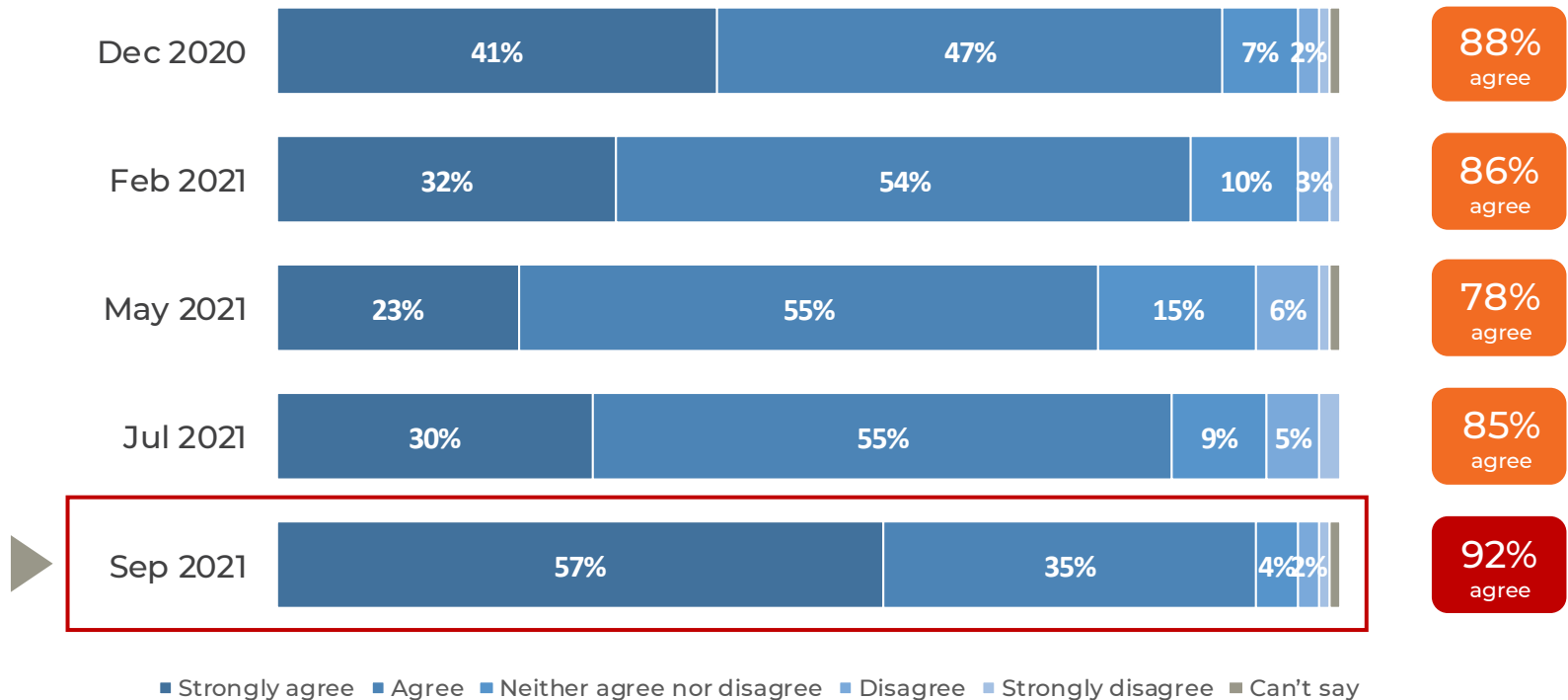
Why over-reacting?

- Disproportionate to risk
- Economic, social, mental health impacts
- Gone on too long – not tenable
- Need to live with it, especially as vaccination is high



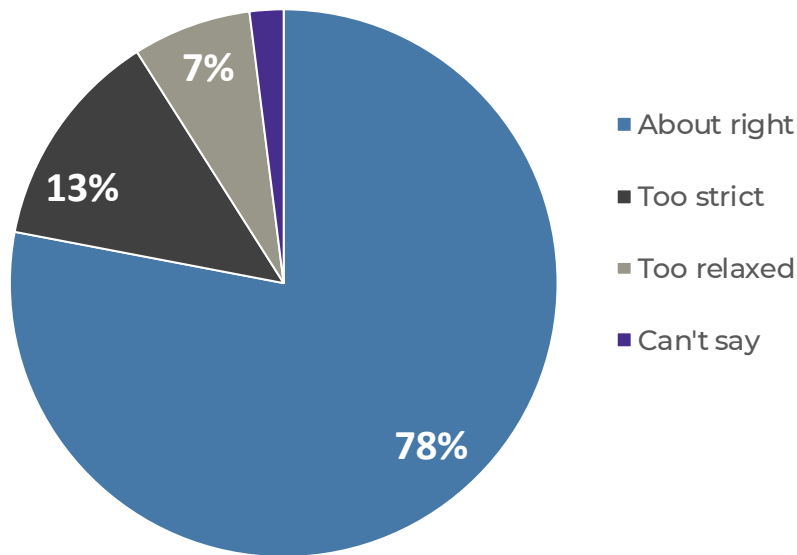
Canberrans' sense of feeling informed about COVID-19 from the ACT Government has risen to a high point

Q. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Overall, I feel I am being kept well informed about COVID-19 by the ACT Government.



Around eight in ten Canberrans believe the restrictions that have been in place in the ACT are about right

Q. Thinking about the lockdown restrictions that have been in place over the past month or so in the ACT, do you think these have been...

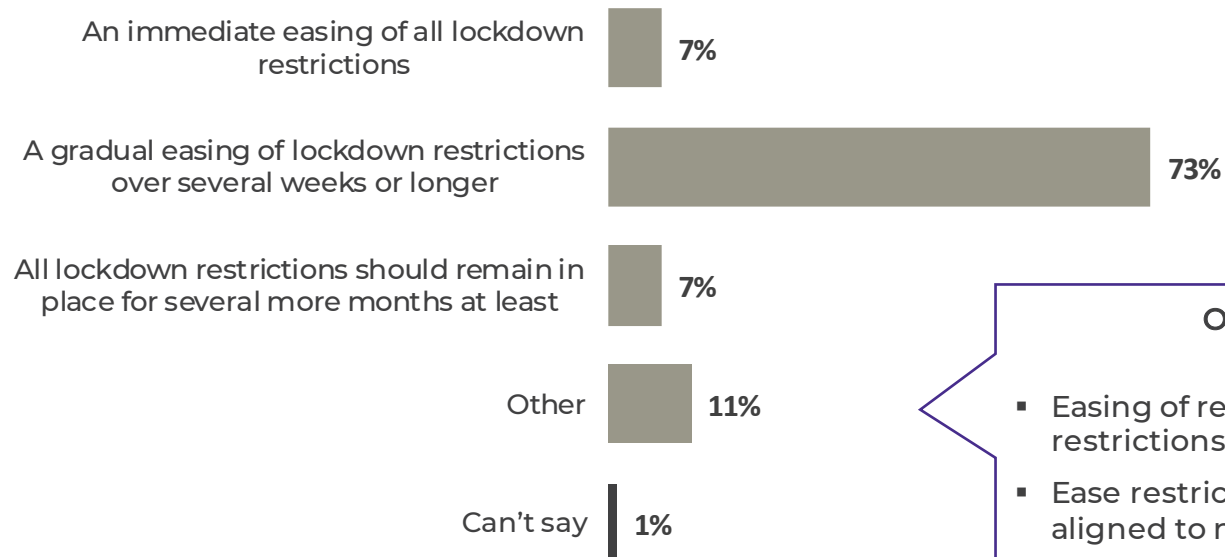


National research suggests Canberrans' views are more aligned with current restrictions than in other jurisdictions

NSW =56% about right
VIC =57% about right*

Largely, Canberrans feel that a gradual easing of restrictions over time is an appropriate course to take

Q. When it comes to easing lockdown restrictions still in place, what approach do you think should be taken in the ACT?



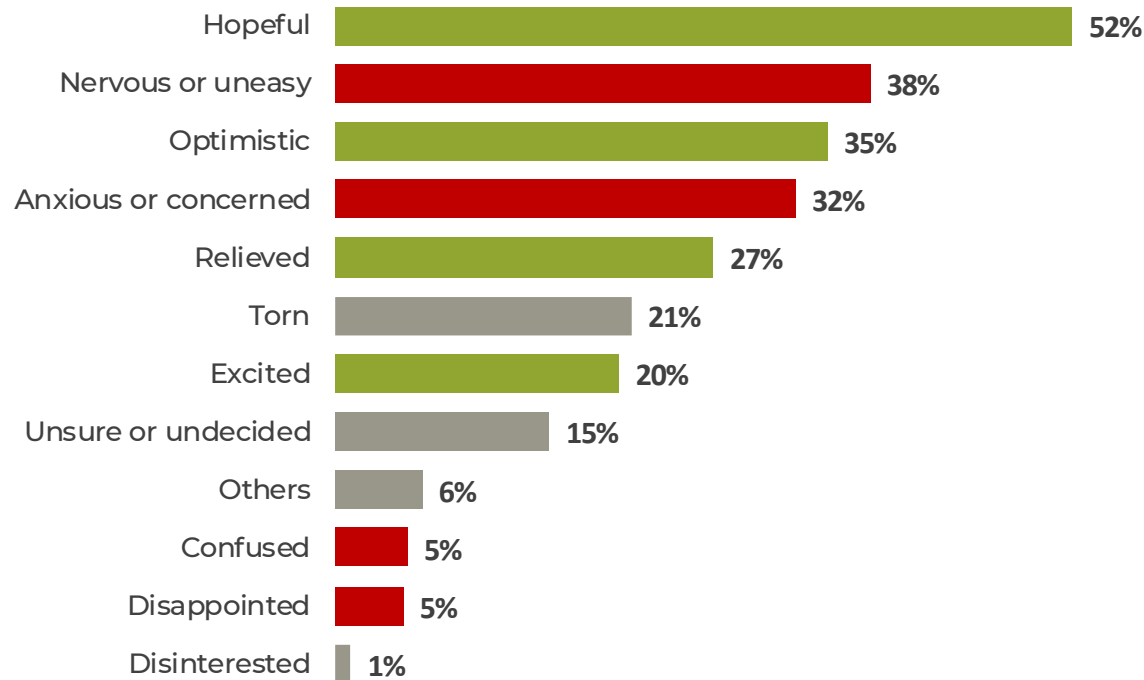
Others include:

- Easing of restrictions / fewer restrictions for fully vaccinated
- Ease restrictions in a way which is aligned to neighbouring NSW regions
- Ease restrictions when population vaccinated is high (80-90%)
- Ease restrictions outdoors



Feelings towards the prospect of opening up in the ACT are mixed, though there is a degree of hope and optimism

Q. And how you are feeling about the prospect of lockdown restrictions being eased or removed in the ACT?





Other comments about lockdown and restrictions – some common themes

Q. Do you have anything else you would like to tell us about in relation to lockdown restrictions in the ACT?

Positive feedback on response and communications, such as daily briefing, online information

Lots of information to navigate, some mixed messages

Positive community response, sense of community

Issues with non-compliance

Concerns with NSW / border incursions

Concern for children and absence of on-site learning

Feelings of distress, isolation, concern etc

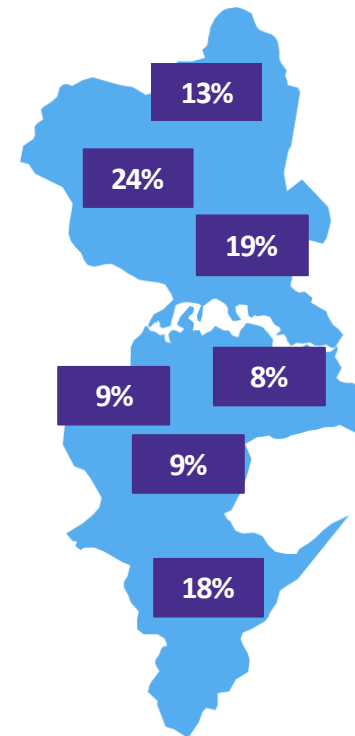
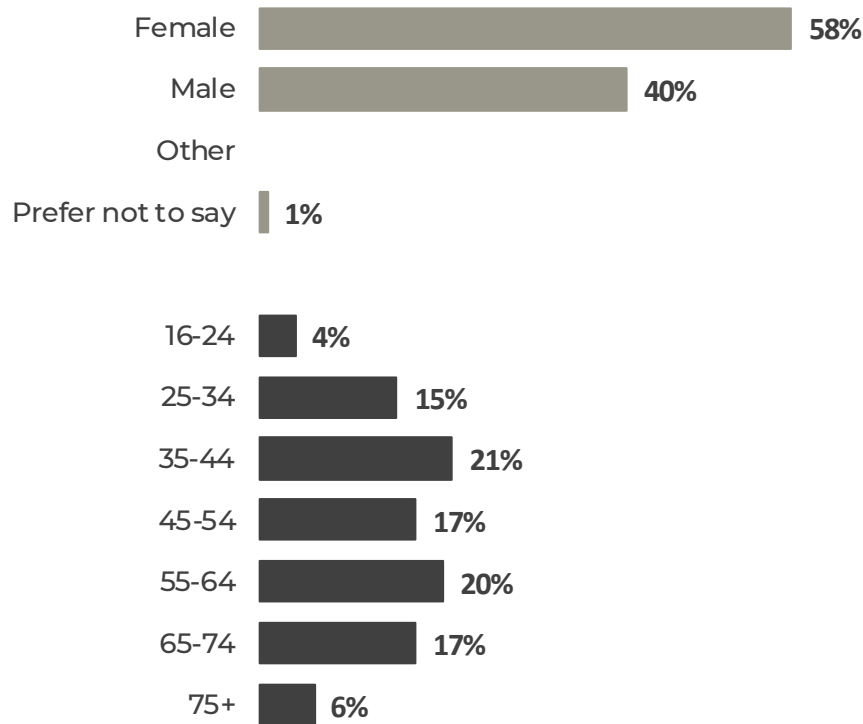
Requests for some opening up, easing (e.g. hairdressers)

Consideration of vaccination rates / status in easing restrictions

Appendix



Survey sample profile (unweighted)



About the YourSay Panel

- Around **6,000** Canberrans have signed up to have their say through the YourSay Community Panel
- The Panel captures the pulse of the community at a given point in time through regular online surveys about a range of topics
- Panellists are recruited through a mix of online and offline channels but must have internet access and an email account to take part
- The Panel closely resembles the overall ACT population by age, gender, region as well as a range of other demographic characteristics
- Members are invited to take part in approximately two activities per month and participation is completely voluntary
- The membership base is highly active with around 4 in 10 members completing each survey on average
- Regular checks are made to ensure results are accurate by comparing them to other independent survey research

6,232

Current members

40%

Survey response rate

40+

Major surveys
completed

11

Rounds of
COVID-19
tracking research



ACT
Government

YOUR SAY
PANEL