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INSTITUTE
APPLIED ECONOMIC &
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Research Insights

Taking the Pulse of the Nation

Australians are changing the way they use transport and recognising the need for face masks as they begin to venture outside home to go about their daily lives.

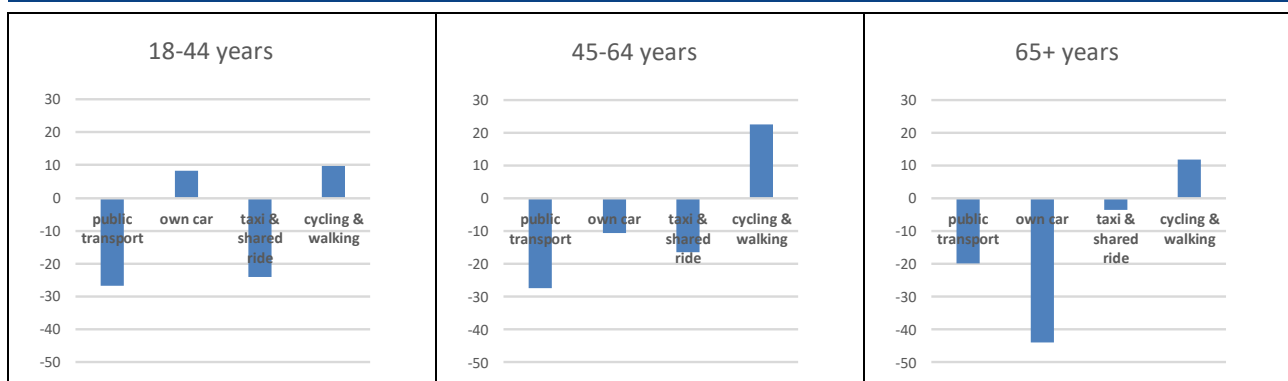
Melbourne Institute's Survey of the Impact of COVID-19 in Australia

Survey Results*: Wave 12 (22-26 June 2020)

Australians are changing their usage of various transportation options. On balance, more people report less usage of trains, trams, buses and taxis, all age-groups are cycling and walking more, and respondents under 45 years are driving their own cars more.

- The practice of social distancing fell with the easing of restrictions. As social and economic interactions increased, discussions turned to the practice of wearing masks to mitigate the emergence of a second wave of coronavirus infections. Compared to 2 weeks ago, there was an increase in the “yes” responses to wearing masks, but revealed preferences about the relative merits of masks in the 5 public areas nominated in the survey remained the same. Wearing masks on public transport and in cinemas & theatres remained high (the proportions increased from 58% to 61% in both cases) while the wearing of masks at parks and beaches remained low (proportion was 27% in both waves). Wearing masks in the workplace increased from 41% to 44% and in supermarkets and shopping centres from 45% to 48%.
- There were no major changes in this week's survey. The 1 percentage point changes in the proportion satisfied with government policies, experiencing mental distress and facing financial stress are within statistical margins of error. This might indicate that the transition to economic recovery is stabilising.
- This survey also asked respondents about the change in their usage of 4 transportation options – public trains, trams and buses, their own cars, taxis (including ride share services) and cycling and walking. Specifically, they were asked whether they have, in the last two weeks, used each transportation option more, less, the same or it was not applicable, compared with the pre-COVID-19 period. Focusing on the difference between the “more” and “less” proportions, the survey showed that there was, on balance, more reliance on cycling and walking (net 14% more), and less usage of public transportation (net 26% less), taxis (net 18% less) and own cars (net 8% less). The big declines in the use of transportation options (with shared spaces) likely reflect concerns about being in contact with others.
- The, on balance, usage of various transportation options also varied across the ages. All age groups have turned away from using public transportation options (trains, trams, buses) as well as the use of taxis and ride share services. All age groups are cycling and walking more and survey respondents under 45 years are driving their own cars more. Having children under 18 years living at home appears to be a factor in the usage of own cars. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents with children living with them are using their own cars more and 25% are using their own cars less. In contrast, respondents with no children living at home are less likely to use their cars (only 17% reported using their own cars more compared to 29% using them less).

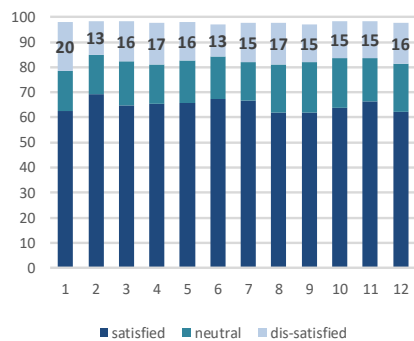
Figure 1: Difference between more and less usage of various transportation options
Net proportions (%) across the age groups (years)



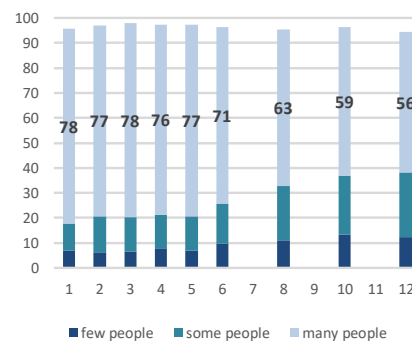
* The survey contains responses from 1200 persons, aged 18 years and over. The sample is stratified by gender, age and location to be representative of the Australian population.

Figure 2: How are Australians coping with COVID-19?
12 weeks of surveys from April 6 to June 26

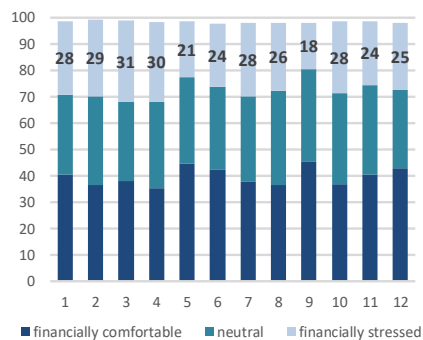
How satisfied are you with government economic policies to support jobs and keep people at work?



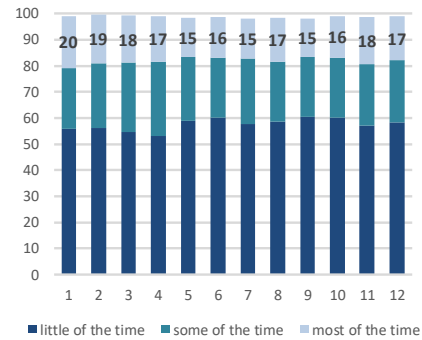
How many people in your neighbourhood do you think are following the recommendations about keeping a physical distance between themselves and others?



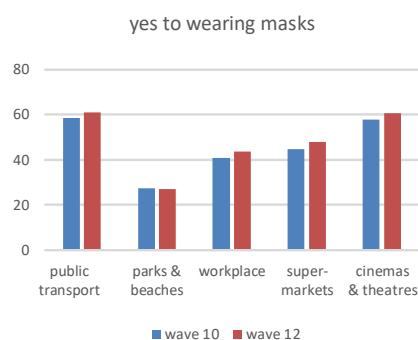
How would you describe your financial conditions, in terms of paying for essential goods and services?



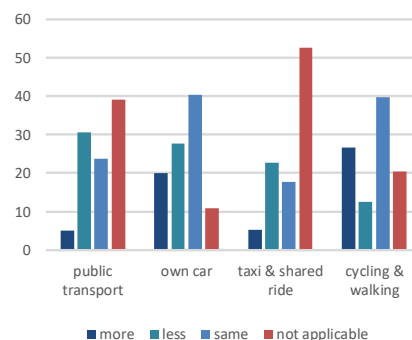
How often did you feel depressed or anxious during the past week?



Do you think that, because of the coronavirus, people should wear a face mask at various public places?



Compared with pre-COVID days, over the past two weeks, have you used more, less, the same of various transportation options?



+ The question about feeling depressed is about assessing symptoms/experiences and not about assessing the presence of a clinical diagnosis or disorder. The proportion in the "don't know/refused" category, is very small and has been excluded from the figures.

Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research

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About the survey

These results have been drawn from *Taking the pulse of the nation* - Melbourne Institute's survey of the impact of COVID-19. The aim of the weekly survey is to track changes in the economic and social wellbeing of Australians living through the effects of the coronavirus pandemic whilst adapting to various changes in Federal and State government policies.

The survey contains responses from 1200 persons, aged 18 years and over each week. The sample is stratified by gender, age and location to be representative of the Australian population.

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