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APPLIED ECONOMIC &  
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## Research Insights

# Taking the Pulse of the Nation

Satisfaction with government economic policies fell in wave 8, possibly reflecting low proportions of people benefiting from JobKeeper and JobSeeker schemes

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

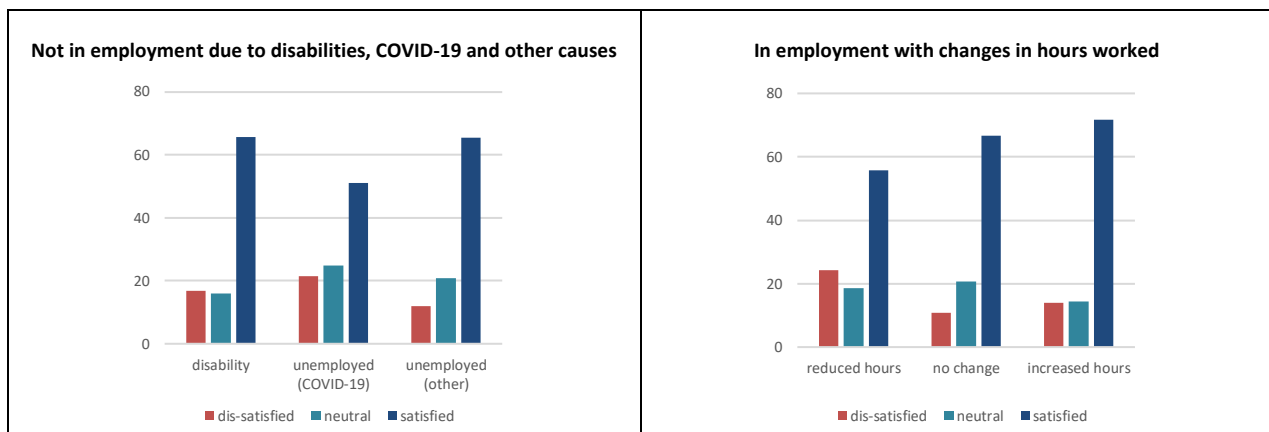
### Survey Results\*: Wave 8 (25-28 May 2020)

*Satisfaction with government economic policies fell to 62%, after averaging around 66% for the previous 5 weeks of the survey. In wave 8, satisfaction was highest amongst those with increased working hours and lowest amongst those who are unemployed (because of COVID-19).*

- Satisfaction with government economic policies to keep people at work fell to 62% in wave 8, after averaging around 66% for the previous 5 waves. As shown in Figure 1, in wave 8, the proportion of people reporting satisfaction was highest amongst those working with increased hours (72%) and lowest amongst those who are unemployed (because of COVID-19) but looking for work (51%).
- A closer look at the survey results amongst the unemployed revealed a stark difference in the proportions expressing dis-satisfaction between those unemployed due to COVID-19 (21%) and those unemployed not due to COVID-19 (12%). This may reflect the uptake of the JobSeeker payments. Information provided over 3 weeks of the survey (waves 6-8) showed that, on average, JobSeeker payments were received by 26% of the unemployed due to COVID-19 and 38% of the unemployed due to other causes.
- Amongst those in employment, workers with reduced working hours had the highest proportion of dissatisfied respondents (24%). The average uptake (based on responses in waves 6-8) of Jobkeeper payments was only 28%.
- Meanwhile, as social distancing falls with the easing of restrictions, concerns have been raised about the possibility of a second wave of coronavirus infections. To gauge 'whether survey respondents are worried about their personal safety, we asked how often they limit their activities (such as shopping, going to a restaurant or taking public transport) because of concerns about contracting COVID-19. About 60% reported limiting activities most to all of the time, which may have some impact on the return to pre-coronavirus levels of economic activities.
- Wave 8 of the survey also saw a small increase in pessimism with a greater proportion re-thinking their expectations about the duration of the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on economic activity. There was also a small increase in the proportion reporting experiencing mental distress and a small decrease in the proportion of survey respondents reporting being financially stressed.

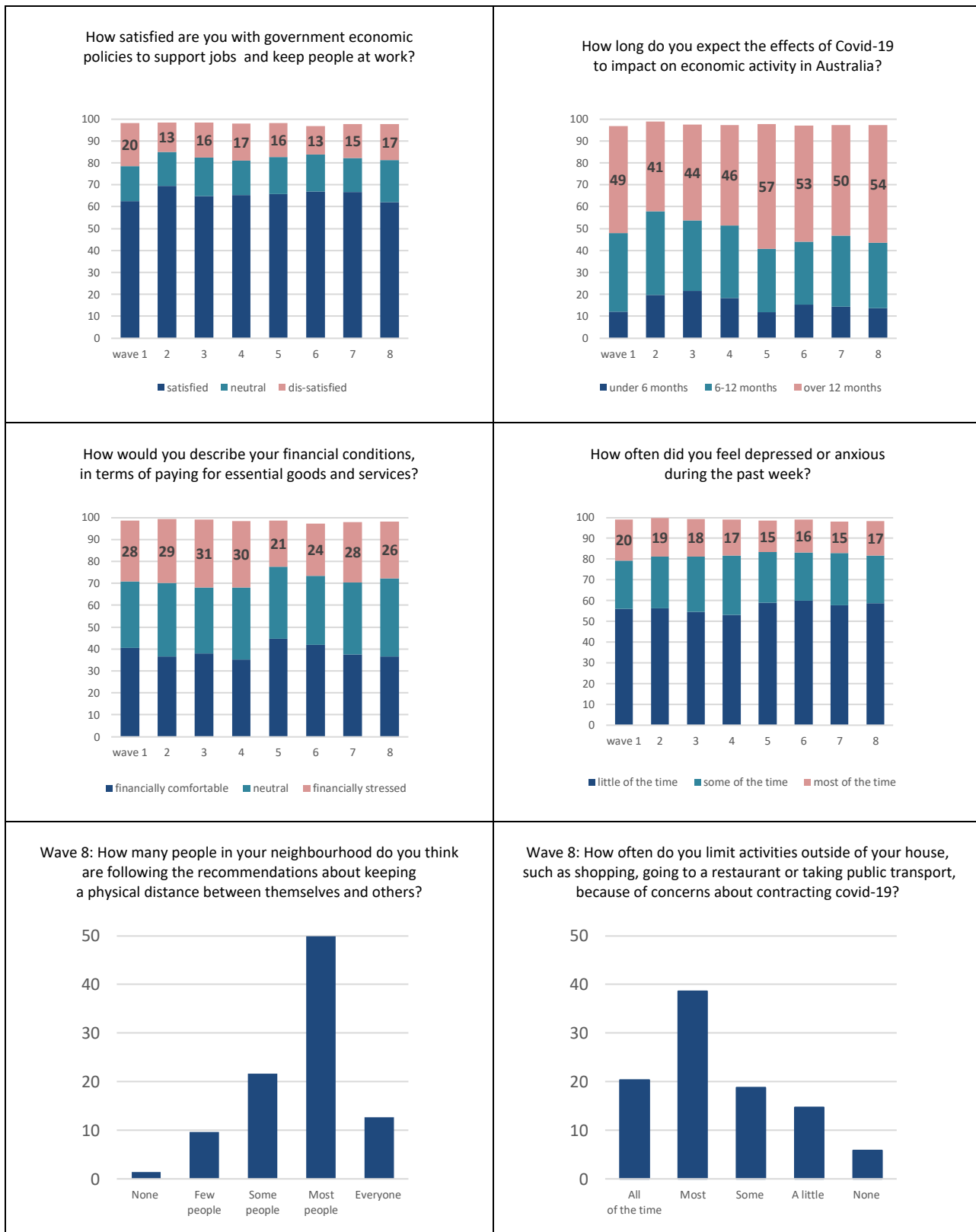
**Figure 1: Satisfaction with government economic policies to support jobs**

Survey Wave 8: 25-28 May, 2020



\* 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?**  
8 waves of surveys from April 6 to May 28



+ 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

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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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