

The Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has thrown the country and the world on its head. Just as historic pandemics have brought massive upheaval and disruption, COVID-19 has changed everything we expected to happen this year, and maybe for years to come. It's easy to imagine that everything about the situation we find ourselves in is dark and negative, but while most of us *do* feel negatively impacted, the story is not completely downbeat.

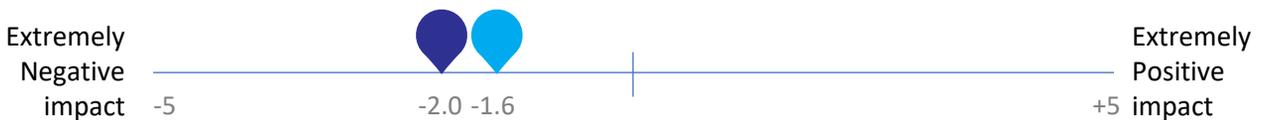
## Impact of COVID-19

The first datapoints in the long-term COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT) project immediately show us that the way Australians are experiencing the acute impact of the pandemic and our enforced responses to it is not uniform.

- Most Australians feel the impact of COVID-19 right now has indeed been a negative one, and for some, it is very negative.
- We generally think **Australia is doing better than the rest of the world** (the world has been more negatively impacted than us);
- We also feel that **we are personally doing better than the rest of Australia**; and
- For ourselves personally, our country, and the world, most of us expect the long-term impact is also going to be negative. Over time, we do expect **things to improve, although not by a huge amount**.

*What do you feel is the impact of the COVID-19 situation?*

### On you (personal impact)



### On Australia



### On the world



#### CHART KEY



Current impact



Long term impact

Overall community averages are from our nationally representative online surveys conducted between 1 April 2020 and 9 April 2020 (n=501).

Importantly though, most Australians **are not over-catastrophising the current situation.**

On the scale we offered people, they placed the current negative impact on themselves at about 40% of what the scale offered, for Australia at about 60%, and for the world at about 70%. It is evident that they considered their current experiences and tried to put them in some sort of realistic context.

This is in some contrast to the unhelpful tendency for the social narrative to have veered so quickly from normality to a sense of panic, without stopping at the sensible precautions we preached to each other during the bushfires of just a few months ago. For most people, “panic” doesn’t seem to accurately reflect their mood.

Further, **not everyone feels** that the **impact** of this pandemic is or will be **entirely negative.**

- Around 1-in-10 people (11%) feel the impact on them personally and on the country has actually been at least somewhat positive
- 13% feel the long-term impact will turn out to be positive.

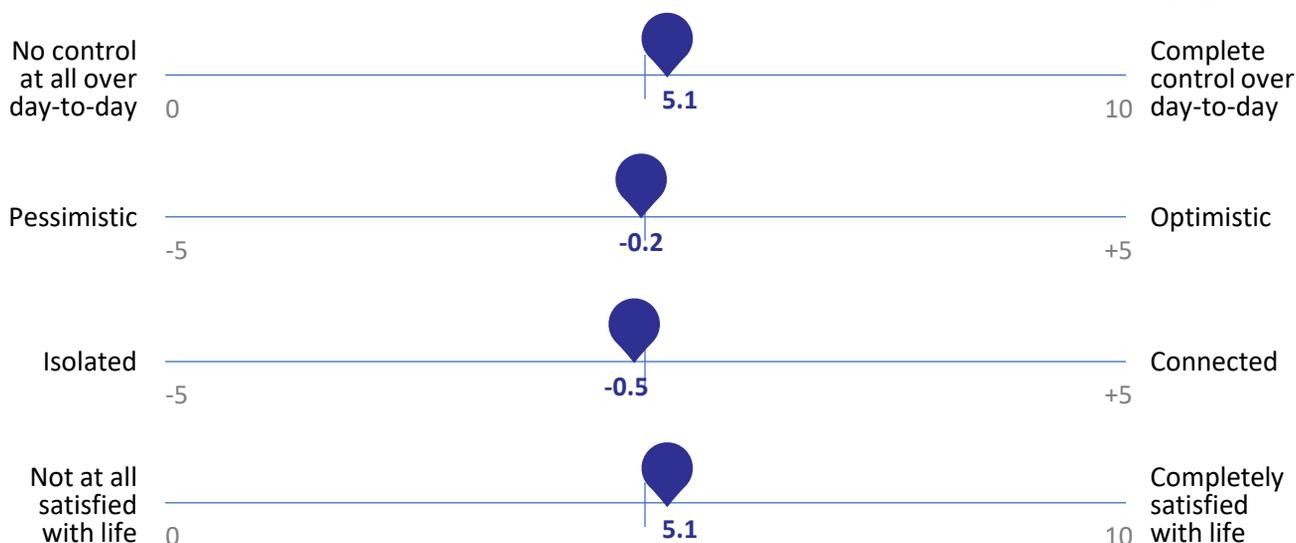
## How are Australians feeling?

**Overall, Australians are (not unreasonably) feeling quite unsure – but most of us are not feeling too bad at the moment.**

On a range of key metrics, we landed pretty much in the middle of them. The mid-point of scales is a safe place to respond when we don’t quite know how we feel, when we can’t easily put ourselves clearly at either end. The fact that the average response is at the mid-point on sense of control, optimism, connection *and* life satisfaction all at the same time is highly suggestive of a community that isn’t sure yet which way it will fall – but it does indicate that we haven’t fallen to the bad end of any of these scales like we could easily have done.

In all likelihood we are currently still in an ‘acute’ phase of this pandemic. We have all so suddenly gone from making plans for our year, to being locked down in our homes, cut off from the rest of the world and experiencing a shock to our lives that only those of us who lived through major conflicts could probably imagine. We feel uncertainty, we feel disruption, and can only hope for and imagine how it might be OK in the future.

### How do you feel at the moment?



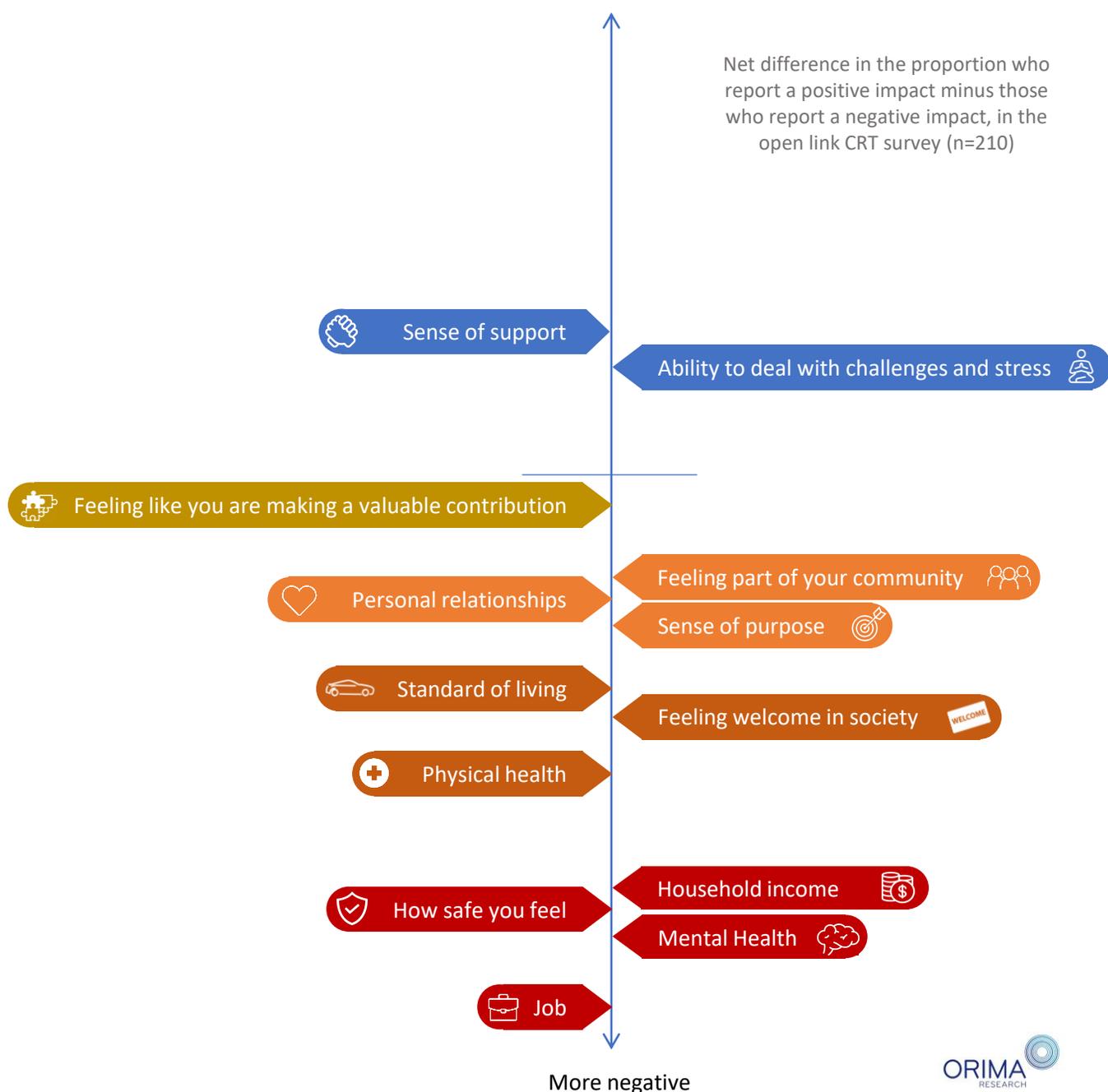
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# Personal experience of the impact

Our uncertainty will naturally be fuelled by our personal experience. Governments around the world have struggled with an evident real-time challenge to balance their own circumstances, the urgent need to create safety, and the pragmatic need to ensure that functional economies and societies can emerge on the other side. Not surprisingly, even the very early data from the open link CRT community survey shows different people are experiencing the immediate impact of these measures in different ways. This data will no doubt evolve over time and as more people do this part of the survey, but there is an intuitiveness about the patterns of impact evident in the first respondents' experiences.

- The most widespread negative impact reported is on jobs, income, mental health and the feeling of personal safety.
- The least negative impact reported so far is on the sense of support and ability to deal with challenge and stress.

What has been the personal impact on you? More positive



Where there has been impact on jobs and household income, it has been almost (but not entirely) universally negative. This isn't surprising, with the impact on jobs being one of the most immediate, seemingly random and shockingly obvious. Much of the Government's economic response to the pandemic has been to try to mitigate the direct and indirect impact on employment consequences.

At the top of the personal impact chart are potentially even more serious dimensions – mental health and personal safety. We will dive in more depth into these issues as aggregate data starts to be collated across surveys and sample sizes are larger, but already these are clear warning signs for us to all check in with family, friends, colleagues and contacts as much as we can.

At the other end of the chart, the end we might usually tend to focus on in a survey, are the areas where the impacts are not so negative. In fact, of the first people to do the survey, more of them said their sense of support and sense of their own ability to deal with challenges and stress have been positively impacted than negatively impacted. In an emergency like this, it is reassuring to find at least some of us are likely feeling a sense of resilience, support and coping. In the middle are dimensions like personal relationships and feeling part of our community – where quite a few of us feel positively impacted, but not as many as who are negatively impacted.

**These are complicated times. As a community it is clear that right at the moment we feel uncertain, and on balance we are negatively affected. However, there are signs that not everyone is down, and that our community is standing up to the challenge.**

**COVID-19  
RECOVERY  
TRACKER**



The CRT will continue to gather data across different surveys and sources, to track the impact of the pandemic on Australians, and to look for signs that we may be entering the recovery phase.

The next update will happen as soon as the next structured survey data becomes available. At that time we will look at how things are changing, and dive deeper into how different parts of our community are experiencing the impact of COVID-19.

Core CRT survey results are based on a nationally representative online survey of n=501 people conducted between 1 April 2020 and 9 April 2020. Extended CRT survey results are from the first n=210 responses to our open-access CRT online survey which can be completed online by anyone ([do the survey here](#)). Results will be updated as both samples grow over coming weeks and months.

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