

6 July 2020

Re: Update on the importance of prioritising Market and Social Research and Insights as we recover from COVID-19

It has been three months [since we wrote to you](#) about the importance of Market and Social Research and Insights during COVID-19. As Australia continues our recovery from the health and economic impact of the crisis, we write to provide an update from the perspective of our industry.

As the national peak industry body for companies conducting consumer research, insights and data analytics the [Association of Market and Social Research Organisations](#) (AMSRO) represents a billion dollar industry with close to 100 of the leading research and insights companies in Australia, with members employing over 5,000 permanent and 3,000 casual employees. [AMSRO members](#) are committed to data and privacy risk management practices operating under Australia's first and only legislated industry privacy code and independently audited International ISO standards.

COVID-19 IMPACT ON AMSRO MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

From the onset of this crisis, AMSRO's focus has been on supporting our members to strengthen the resilience of their business. Throughout the pandemic, our members have prioritised the health and welfare of employees, research participants and clients - all the while, maintaining a focus on delivering reliable, trustworthy, quality insights for their clients.

Member surveys we have undertaken align with findings from the ABSⁱ in that the majority of the industry reports a decrease in revenue compared to last year, while continuing to trade with modifications to the business.

While our industry responded quickly to the crisis, with 84% of members reporting all or most staff working from home and over 62% changing methodological approachesⁱⁱ (in line with pandemic procedures and social distancing measures), a follow-up member survey (conducted May 9-17), shows that the economic impact of COVID-19 is gaining significance. Our latest findings show that 80% of members have applied for the JobKeeper Payment, and over half are seeking rent relief. An additional 68% of companies report cutting operational costs. Furthermore, the negative impact of COVID-19 on employees' mental health continues to climbⁱⁱⁱ.

RECOVERY POST-CRISIS

AMSRO and our members acknowledge the efforts of Australian Governments to protect employment and support businesses in this time of crisis. As an industry employing significant numbers of knowledge workers as well as many casual staff, **we continue to implore all levels of Government, particularly Federal, to consider the continued procurement of market and social research services as a priority.**

Now more than ever, investing in research is critical. Our future is uncertain, and as Australia faces an economic recession, high unemployment and insecurity across multiple business sectors, it is clear that the road to recovery relies on sound and evidence-based expert advice - advice that will help inform government policy and critical business decisions.

Australians need to be heard and our industry is relying on Government to commission research to deliver insights that will help overcome the crisis as quickly as possible and reinvigorate the economy.

High quality, trusted, market and social research, data and insights therefore have an essential role to play, and together we must ensure that the road out is supported with the right evidence, collected in the right way. To achieve this, Australia requires a robust research industry.

As the biggest consumer of social and market research, the Commonwealth government is in a unique position to positively influence the procurement of research produced in Australia. It also has a clear interest in ensuring the research it commissions is of the highest quality and ethical standard, and by doing so influences the research required by State and Territory governments and the market more broadly.

NEXT STEPS

AMSRO urges all government decision-makers, to continue to invest in research and ensure that social policy is based on sound, unbiased and fact-based evidence. The research, data and insights sector, led by AMSRO member organisations, is a critical source of such expertise and guidance and we encourage you to lean on our members' professional expertise.

Already, our members are working tirelessly to provide critical insights and knowledge to the government and commercial clients [about COVID-19 and the road to recovery](#).

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with all levels of government on this issue when appropriate. Please do not hesitate to contact me on 0412 370 393 or AMSRO's Executive Director, Sarah Campbell on 0417 665 144.

Wishing you all the very best and thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,



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ⁱ [ABS Business Indicators, Business Impacts of COVID-19, June 2020](#)

ⁱⁱ [AMSRO Member Survey \(April 2020\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [AMSRO Member Survey 2 \(May 2020\)](#)

ABOUT AMSRO

The Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO) is the national peak industry body for companies involved in consumer research, insights and data analytics in Australia. The Association represents close to 100 of the leading research and insights companies in Australia, with members employing over 5,000 permanent and 3,000 casual employees. Our member companies conduct market and social research for the majority of Federal and State Government Departments, Local Governments and most of the ASX top 200 companies. The Australian research and insights industry generate over \$1 billion of economic activity annually, with all levels of Government representing a significant portion of this.

Our member organisations operate under Australia's first and only legislated industry privacy code (adjudicated by the Australian Information Commissioner), an independently audited International ISO Standard, and an industry Code of Ethics.