



**mainstreet**

# Relational wellbeing

Exploring the impacts of  
lockdown on Australians'  
social health

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# About Mainstreet Insights

Mainstreet Insights, initiative of Reventure and McCrindle, exists to provide insights to build flourishing communities. It seeks to understand Australians as people not just consumers or employees. It explores the big issues of life that are impacting main street

Australia. From family and relationships to education, faith, wellbeing and work, it is a collection of timely insights that speaks into important community conversations to enable leaders to make informed decisions.

## Research objectives

This research conducted for Mainstreet Insights seeks to explore relational wellbeing among Australians. The key objectives for this study are to:

- Explore how Australians interact with friends and peers
- Measure the social fitness of Australians today
- Understand how the ways Australians interact with one another has changed as a result of COVID-19 related lockdowns

## Research methodology

The report *Relational wellbeing: Exploring the impacts of lockdown on Australians' social health* is the collation of quantitative data collected via an online panel. The nationally representative survey of Australians aged 18 and over was in field from November 22<sup>nd</sup> to November 24<sup>th</sup>, yielding 1,001 completed responses.

### Graphs and rounding

Data labels on the graphs in this report have been rounded for simplicity. Some graphs,

may, therefore sum to 99% or 101%. Any calculations where two data points have been added are based on raw data (not the rounded data labels on the graph) which have been rounded once combined.

### Terminology

Throughout this report the total sample of respondents are referred to as Australians. In addition to this several segmentation filters are applied to understand the results.

# Australia is an outgoing nation

## Australians enjoy being around others.

The relaxed and laid-back nature of Australians is a well loved aspect of the Australian psyche, with those that live for the now and express a happy go lucky attitude, often revered in society. Australians today continue to identify with aspects of this spirit, being more likely to consider themselves as outgoing and social rather than reserved and quiet. In fact Australians (56%) are twice as likely to consider themselves very or somewhat sociable and outgoing as they are to describe themselves as very or somewhat

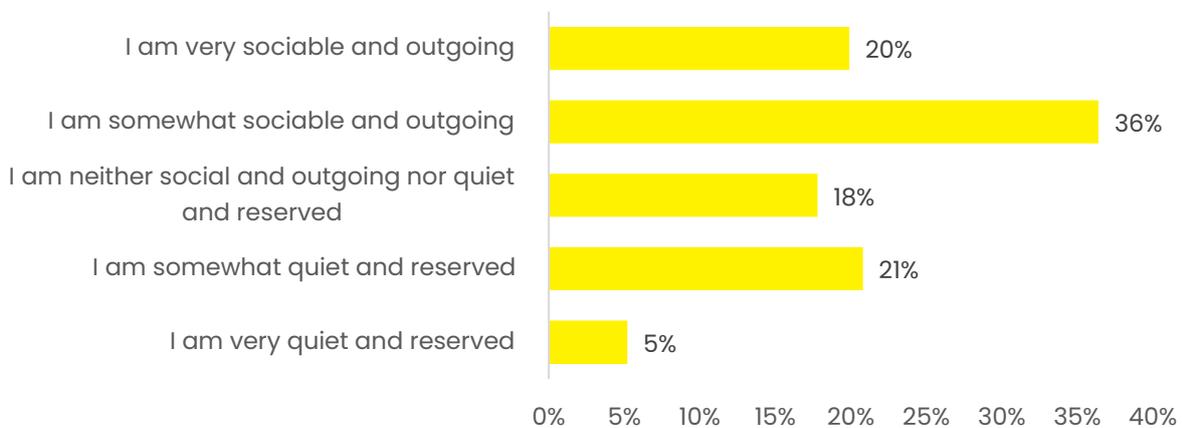
quiet or reserved (26%). Almost one in five (18%) would say they are neither social and outgoing nor quiet and reserved.

### Gen Y are the most extroverted generation

Interestingly Gen Z (63%) and Gen Y (65%) Australians are likely to be the most extroverted, being more likely than other generations to describe themselves as social and outgoing (cf. 51% Gen X, 50% Baby Boomers, 46% Builders).

Which of the following best describes you?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Builders
Very/somewhat sociable and outgoing	63%	65%	51%	50%	46%

### Which of the following best describes you?



# Prioritising self-care

## Australians are taking the time to be their best selves.

For three in four Australians (76%), COVID provided an opportunity to reprioritise their life, to spend time on what is important to them.<sup>1</sup> In fact, 83% of Australians made an effort to prioritise their health and wellbeing.<sup>2</sup> Looking after their physical health and wellbeing is a priority for Australians with more than half, strongly/somewhat agreeing they have enough time to do so (53%). Another priority is being their best self (51%), with many Australians taking the time to stop and regularly reflect on their life. Considering one in two Australians prioritise being their best self, it is encouraging, that 48% of Australians find that they have at least one day each week which is a complete day of rest and recreation.

One in three Australians (34%) often or always feel rushed or pressed for time while 27% believe they rarely get enough time to stop, reflect and think about life.

While rest may look different between introverts and extroverts, overall, extroverts are more likely to strongly/somewhat agree they have at least one day a week of complete rest and recreation (52% cf. 45% introvert).

### Younger generations feel more pressed for time

In an era, where being busy is celebrated in younger generations, Gen Z are at least four times more likely than Baby Boomers to strongly/somewhat agree they often or always feel rushed or pressed for time (53% Gen Z, 49% Gen Y cf. 34% Gen X, 12% Baby Boomers, 6% Builders). Similarly, younger generations are also more likely to agree that they rarely get enough time to stop, reflect and think about life (45% Gen Z, 34% Gen Y cf. 31% Gen X, 11% Baby Boomers, 3% Builders). This may also reflect that younger Australians feel the need to be constantly 'on the go' to mitigate their fear of a sedentary lifestyle<sup>2</sup>. That is, they are feeling the need to be busy and rest less.

**To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (strongly/somewhat agree)**

**Extrovert (I am very/somewhat sociable and outgoing)**

**Introvert (I am very/somewhat reserved and quiet)**

I find that I have at least one day each week which for me is a complete day of rest and recreation

52%

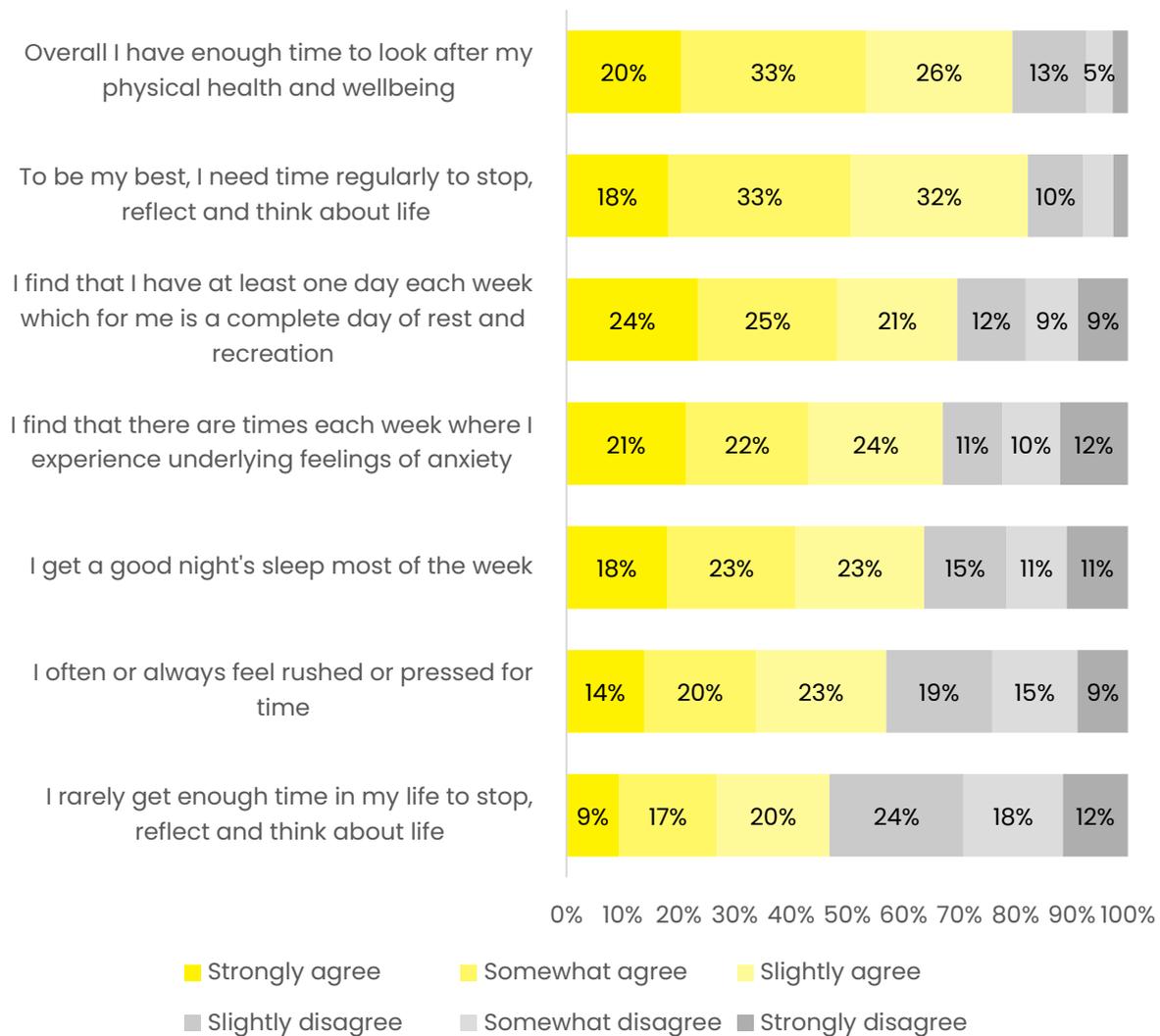
45%

<sup>1</sup> Australians post COVID-19, McCrindle, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Australia towards 2031 report, McCrindle, 2021

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (strongly/somewhat agree)	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Builders
I often or always feel rushed or pressed for time	53%	49%	34%	12%	6%
I rarely get enough time in my life to stop, reflect and think about life	45%	34%	31%	11%	3%

### To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



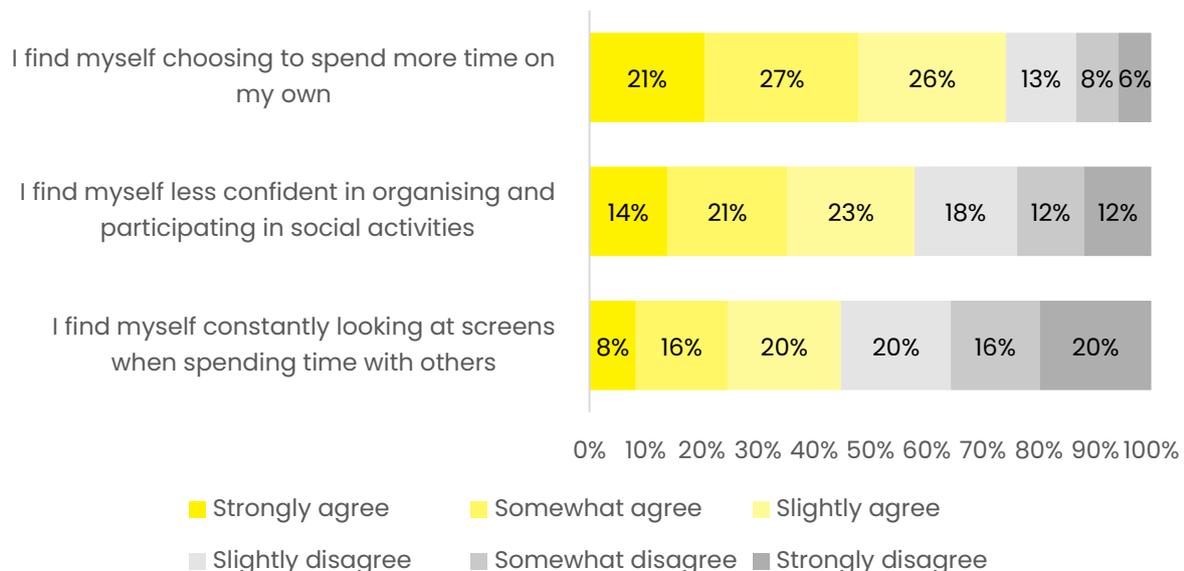
# Australia's social fitness

## Australian's social behaviour has changed as a result of COVID-19.

Has the social stamina of Australians undergone a level of atrophy, similar to muscles when underused? Have Australians lost some of our social fitness? Although Australians largely describe themselves as social and outgoing (56%), almost half of Australians (48%) strongly/somewhat agree they choose to spend more time on their own as a result of COVID restrictions.

Further signs of reduced social agility, Australians are feeling less confident in their ability to organise and participate in social activities (35%) where one in four (25%) constantly find themselves looking at a screen when around others. This further highlights a disconnect between how Australians perceive themselves, as sociable and outgoing, and their social fitness in the post-COVID environment.

Thinking about the impacts of COVID restrictions on your social interactions and social skills, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?



## Australians want to be in the workplace

In 2022, with many Australians out of lockdown and re-entering the workplace and social situations, it’s interesting to see where they find meaningful social connection. Despite extended periods of time working from home, there is still a need for the workplace with seven in ten Australians (70%)<sup>3</sup> saying the workplace is where they find connection and meaning.

Following the extended period of online interaction, and considering Australians find meaningful interaction in their workplace, it is unsurprising, that almost nine in ten Australians (86%) prefer to interact with colleagues face to face than on a screen. In fact of this proportion, 73% of Australians definitely prefer to interact with colleagues face to face rather than on a screen, highlighting how important in person interaction is to Australians.

Despite a desire to be physically around colleagues, Australians are however, feeling fatigued when interacting with colleagues with one in three (34%) strongly/somewhat agreeing they find themselves getting easily fatigued when spending time with friends and colleagues. One in four Australians (26%) also

strongly/somewhat agree they struggle to listen and pay close attention to friends and colleagues.

### Gen Z are most fatigued when spending time with friends

Half of Gen Z Australians (50%) strongly/somewhat agree that due the impact of COVID restrictions, they find themselves feeling easily fatigued when spending time with friends and colleagues (39% Gen Y cf. 42% Gen X, 20% Baby Boomers, 9% Builders). This is perhaps explained by the high proportion of Gen Z Australians who find themselves struggling to listen and pay close attention to friends and colleagues due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions (46% Gen Z, 28% Gen Y cf. 28% Gen X, 13% Baby Boomers, 8% Builders).

Males are more likely than females to prefer interacting face to face rather than on a screen (79% cf. 64% females) and unsurprisingly, it is older Australians who prefer to interact with their colleagues face to face (89% Builders, 82% Baby Boomers, 68% Gen X cf. 63% Gen Y, 66% Gen Z).

**Thinking about interacting with work colleagues and in professional settings, which of the following describes your preferred format? (definitely/somewhat prefer)**

**Males**

**Females**

<sup>3</sup> Workplace and the future, Mainstreet Insights, 2021

Face to face compared to on screen 79% 64%

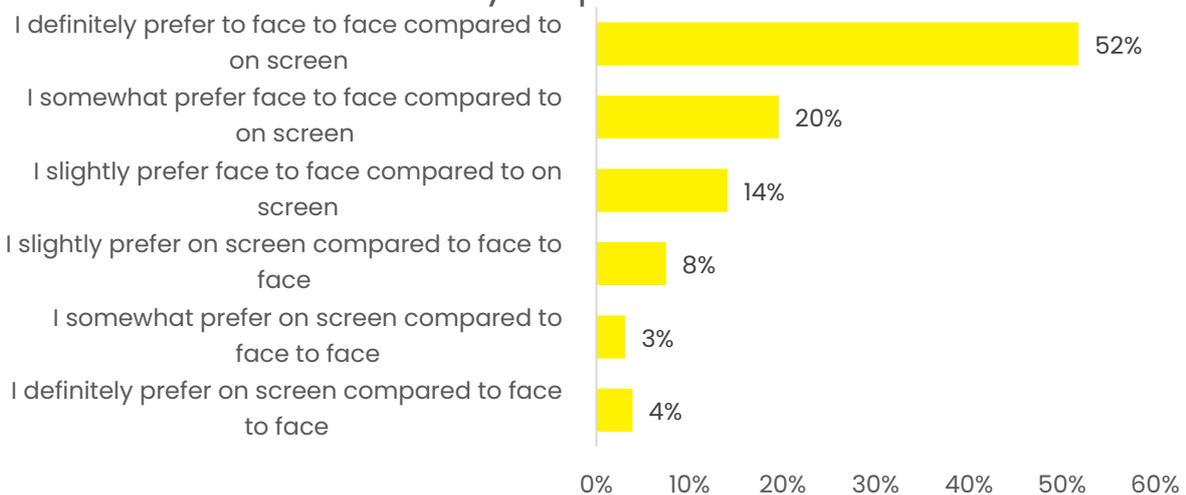
**Thinking about interacting with work colleagues and in professional settings, which of the following describes your preferred format? (definitely/somewhat)**

	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Builders
Face to face compared to on screen	66%	63%	68%	82%	89%

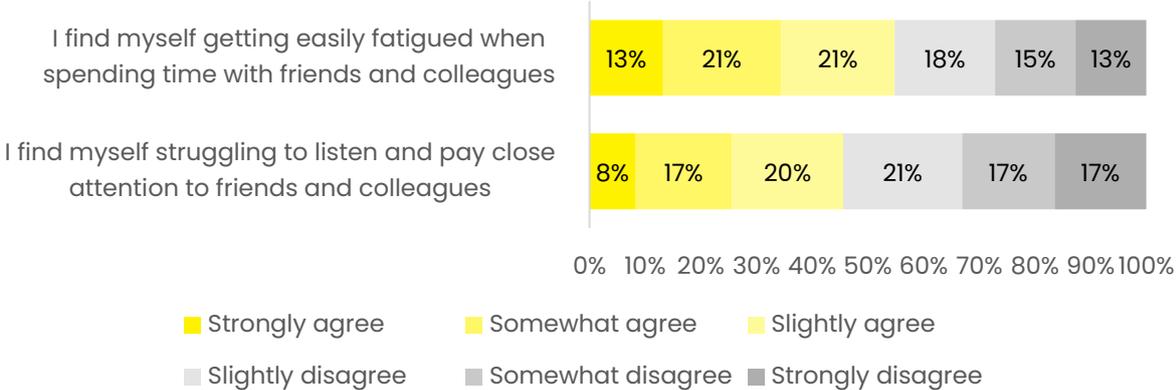
**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following? (strongly/somewhat agree)**

	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Builders
I find myself getting easily fatigued when spending time with friends and colleagues	50%	39%	42%	20%	9%

Thinking about interacting with work colleagues and in professional settings, which of the following describes your preferred format?



Thinking about the impacts of COVID restrictions on your social interactions and social skills, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?



## Australians are less likely to use physical touch than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite being social and outgoing, Australians are less likely to greet each other using physical touch. Three in five Australians (60%) are shaking hands with others and using physical greetings such as a hug (58%) less than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. A further one in two (48%) are using other physical contact such as a high five less than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the Aussie spirit of helping out remains strong, the way we express this has changed with three in ten (30%) being less likely to hold the door open for others than before the pandemic. However, for six in ten Australians (60%), the amount they hold the door for others has remained unchanged now than from before the pandemic.

While many Australians are opting to use physical touch less than before the pandemic, showing kindness in other ways is still

important to the fabric of Australian society. Despite a decline in hugging, shaking hands and high fiving, there are still other ways Australians believe people can show kindness to others, including asking are you ok? (67%), helping people when we see a need (64%) and simply saying hi to people when they see them (62%).

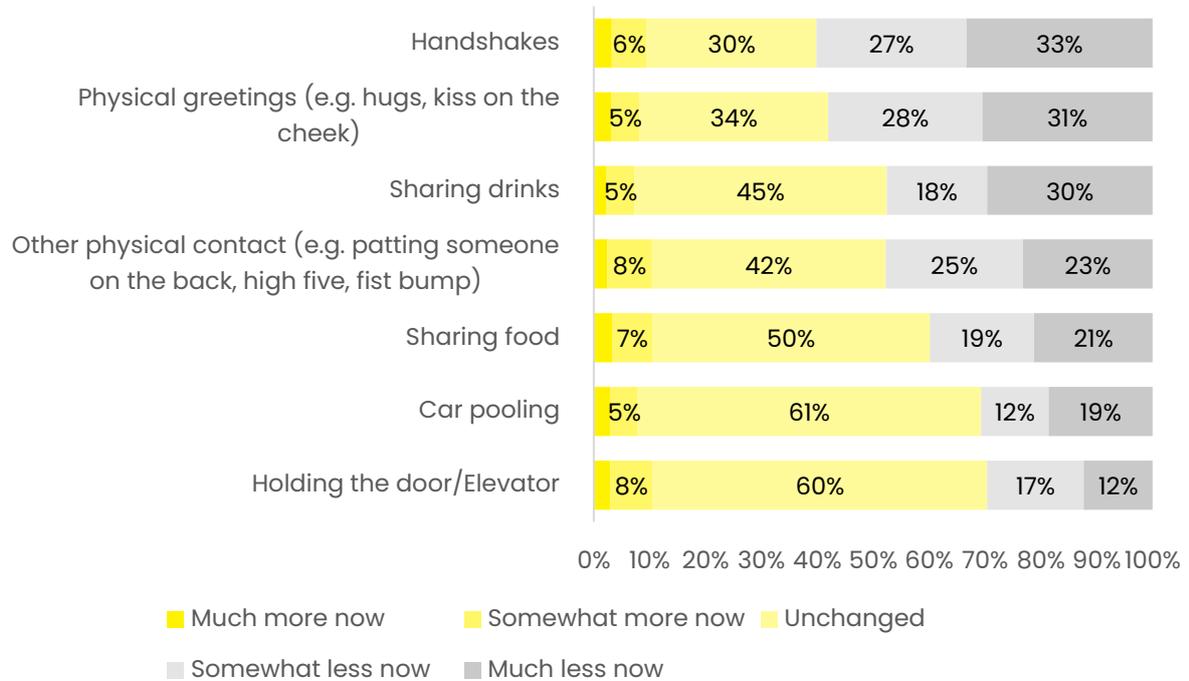
### Younger generations are changing their behaviour as a result of the pandemic

Younger generations, more so than older generations are holding the door less now than they did before the pandemic (38% Gen Z, 27% Gen Y cf. 32% Gen X, 28% Baby Boomers, 19% Builders). Younger Australians are also less likely now to use physical greetings such as a hug than before the COVID-19 pandemic (47% Gen Z, 52% Gen Y cf. 62% Gen X, 69% Baby Boomers, 58% Builders).

**To what extent are you doing the following more or less now, compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic? (much/somewhat less)**

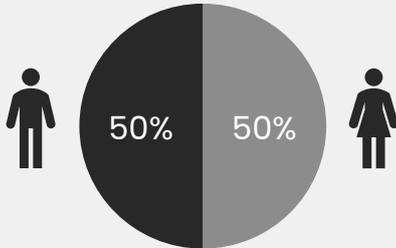
	<b>Gen Z</b>	<b>Gen Y</b>	<b>Gen X</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Builders</b>
Holding the door/Elevator	38%	27%	32%	28%	19%
Physical greetings (e.g. hugs, kiss on the cheek)	47%	52%	62%	69%	58%

### To what extent are you doing the following more or less now, compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic?

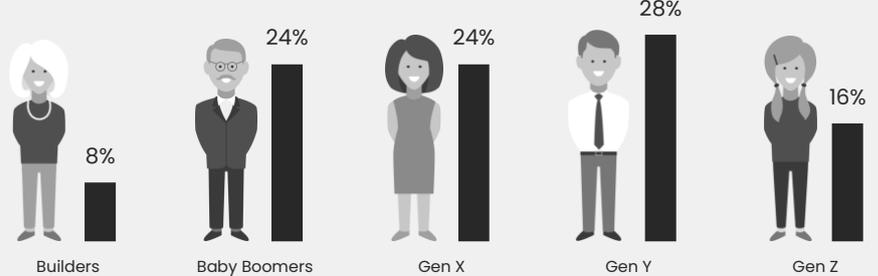


# Demographic summary

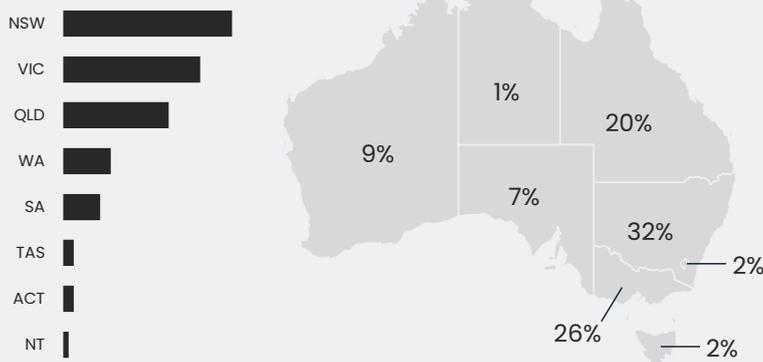
Are you male or female?



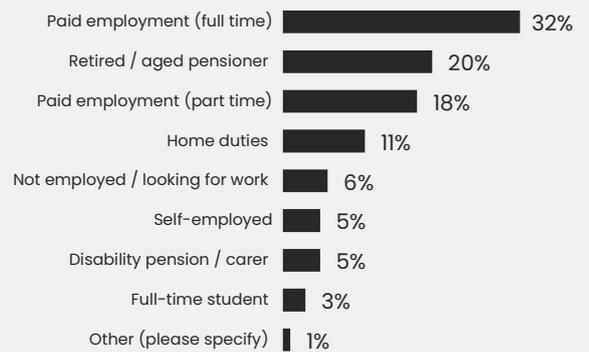
What age will you be in 2021?



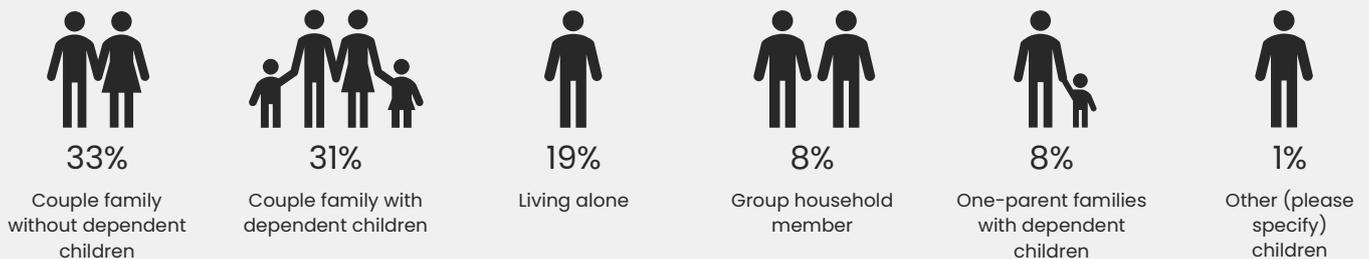
Where do you usually live?



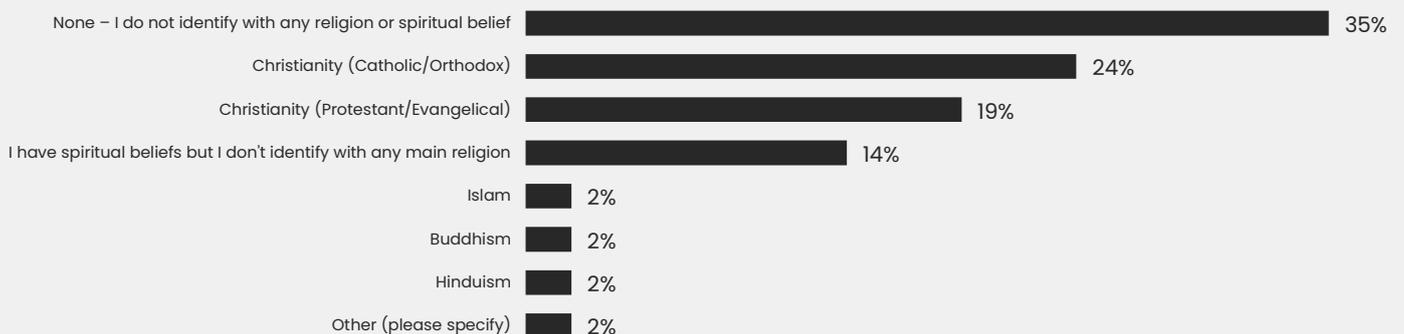
Which of the following best describes your employment status?



What type of household do you currently live in?



What religion do you currently practice or identify with?



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# Get in touch.

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**Phone:** 1800 873 637

**Email:** [info@mainstreetinsights.com.au](mailto:info@mainstreetinsights.com.au)

**Website:** [mainstreetinsights.com.au](http://mainstreetinsights.com.au)