

How Australians are responding to COVID-19



2020 not only began an iconic new year, but an iconic new decade. While each new year brings hope, renewed energy and optimism for many, the start to 2020 has been irrevocably marked with words like ‘disruption’, ‘uncertainty’ and ‘volatility’. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped social gatherings, halted the economy and significantly disrupted the normal rhythms of life.

To further equip leaders, individuals and communities with an understanding of how Australians are responding to the impact of COVID-19, McCrindle and [CINT](#) have conducted a survey of Australian sentiment, attitudes and behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Australians are changing their behaviour to stop the spread of COVID-19

More than four in five Australians (86%) have changed their behaviour in response to COVID-19. Positively, Australians are taking government advice in order to stop the spread in their community. The most common actions Australians are taking to stop the spread include washing or sanitising their hands more frequently throughout the day (67%), practicing social distancing (56%) and changing the way they greet people (52%).

Aussies expect self-isolation will mean less physical activity, but more opportunities to do what they enjoy

Aussies expect self-isolation and social distancing to impact their lives in a number of ways. Two in five (43%) expect their day will include less physical activity if they are staying at home more, and 38% expect they will experience increased boredom.

Some Australians (29%) believe they could experience increased feelings of loneliness if they are spending less time with other people. This is a more significant concern for Gen Z than it is for other generations (41% Gen Z cf. 29% Gen Y, 25% Gen X, 27% Baby Boomers, 28% Builders).

While self-isolation can be challenging, over a third of Australians (36%) see it as an opportunity to do more of what they enjoy. One in three Australians (32%) believe self-isolation could provide beneficial impacts from activities such as reading, creative pursuits and baking, while one in four (26%) believe it could increase the opportunity for online learning and developing new skills.

For most Australians, COVID-19 is experienced in the aisles of the grocery store

Over the last few weeks, there has been widespread coverage about Australians bulk buying goods. The proportion of Aussies who are actually buying much more than they need, however, is relatively small (6%). Most Australians have bought the same amount as usual (42%) or have bought a bit more than they needed (30%), while 23% have been unable to buy as much as they usually would in the last few weeks.

Unsurprisingly, given the challenges which have resulted from panic buying, most Australians (94%) do not think people should be able to buy as much as they want. Instead,

Aussies support shops in placing limits on purchases (38%) and believe people should show self-restraint when it comes to bulk buying (32%).

Three in four Australians (75%) are willing to refrain from panic buying to ensure everyone has access to necessities, including the vulnerable in their community.

COVID-19
How the global pandemic is shaping the sentiment, behaviour and outlook of Australians



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