

## When a pandemic starts feeling more like the new normal – but concerns emerge about social cohesion

The latest data from the ORIMA Research COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT) survey suggests Australians are starting to feel living with a pandemic is getting less novel and interesting.

The overall sense of negative impact hasn't substantially reduced since April, but in the same time people have moved from feeling more like this is *just a phase* to more like this is *pretty normal*.

ORIMA Research Managing Director Szymon Duniec commented that the overall feel of the data is quite different now compared to April, when the effects of the pandemic were hitting communities hardest.

"The sense of negative impact is still there, but the personal experiences people are having have become less strong – both the bad and the good aspects."

"The most widespread negative aspects are the same – jobs, mental health and safety – but they aren't as common now. At the same time though, the social positives people felt in April – a sense of support and purpose and making a contribution have also become less strong. Everything is converging on a moderately negative point that reflects the overall impact" Mr Duniec said.

While COVID-19 is a disease, for most Australians the impacts have been more economic and social – and two thirds (66%) have had no personal experience of it from a health perspective. Even for most people who know anyone affected, it is in their extended network and not someone close to them.

Very few people doing the survey had personally been diagnosed with COVID-19, and only 2% thought that they had probably had it themselves.

However, around half (51%) of all the people who completed the CRT survey in May said they were at least quite concerned about the future of Australia's ability to have a cohesive multicultural society, and around 1-in-4 (24%) thought it was definitely or probably true that Australia has become less tolerant of people from different ethnic backgrounds as a result of COVID-19. Both of these figures declined slightly from April, but it will be important to watch these indicators over the coming months and years.

ORIMA Research is one of the largest providers of research to the Australian public sector. The CRT project draws on linked data from across many surveys to build a multi-faceted view of the impact and the expected recovery. An open community CRT survey lets anyone participate, and people can see at the end how their own feelings compare to the wider community.

CRT results will be updated every 2-3 weeks to include the most current data.

**Contact for interview or more information:**

[Szymon Duniec](#) (Managing Director, ORIMA Research)

E: [Szymon.Duniec@orima.com](mailto:Szymon.Duniec@orima.com) M: 0407 006 887

**Additional detail:**

COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT) results update (27 May 2020).

Key graphics included below, 3-page report attached, online version available at:

<https://research.orima.com.au/CovidRecovery/pages/View.php?source=main/Results>

COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT) open community survey

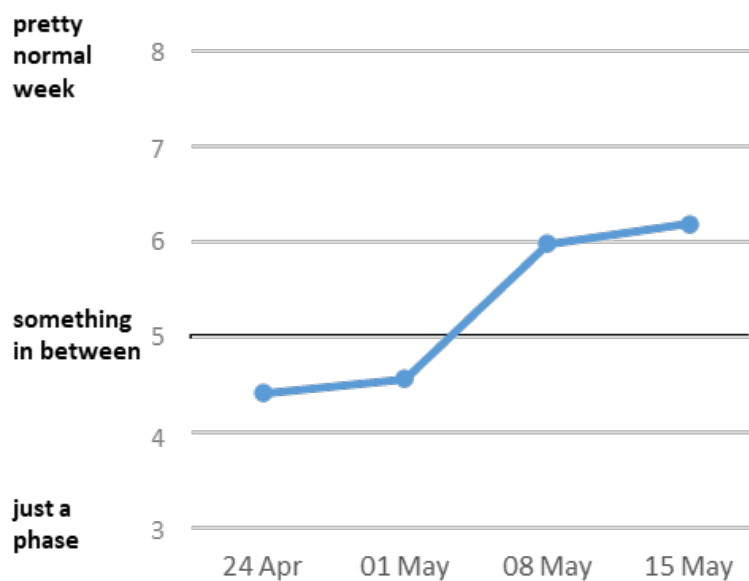
<https://research.orima.com.au/COVIDRecovery>

ORIMA Research website

[www.orima.com.au](http://www.orima.com.au)

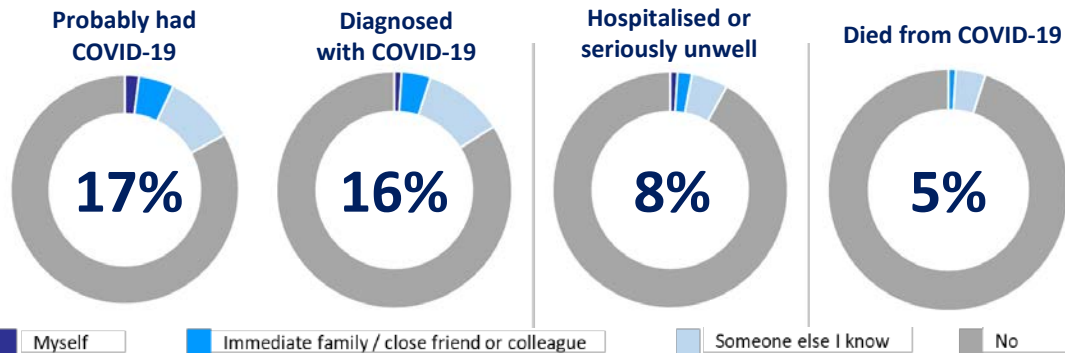
**Current CRT results graphics [For publication or broadcast]**

***This past week feels more like...***



Data source: open-link community survey. Weekly samples n=53-239.  
Source: ORIMA.com.au

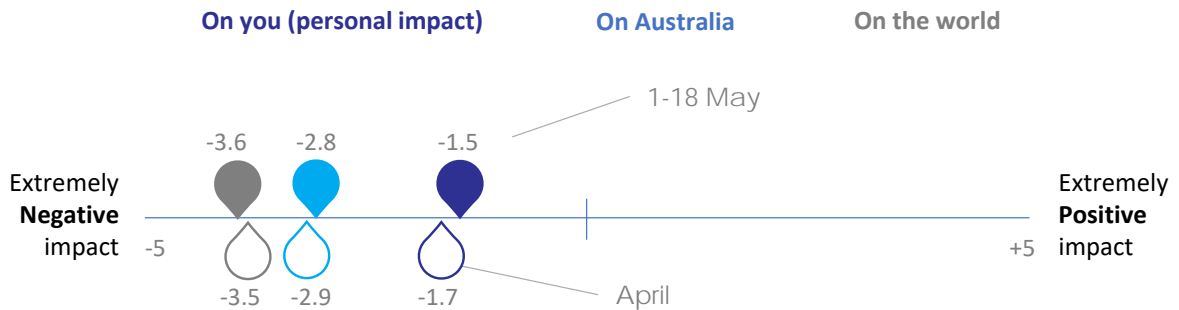
**% personally know someone who has:**



Data source: open-link community survey. n=995.

Source: ORIMA.com.au

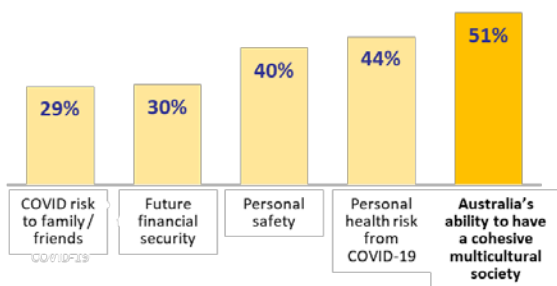
**What do you feel is the current impact of the COVID-19 situation?**



Data source: nationally representative surveys (n=1390 April, n=1131 May)

Source: ORIMA.com.au

**% Quite or Extremely concerned about...**



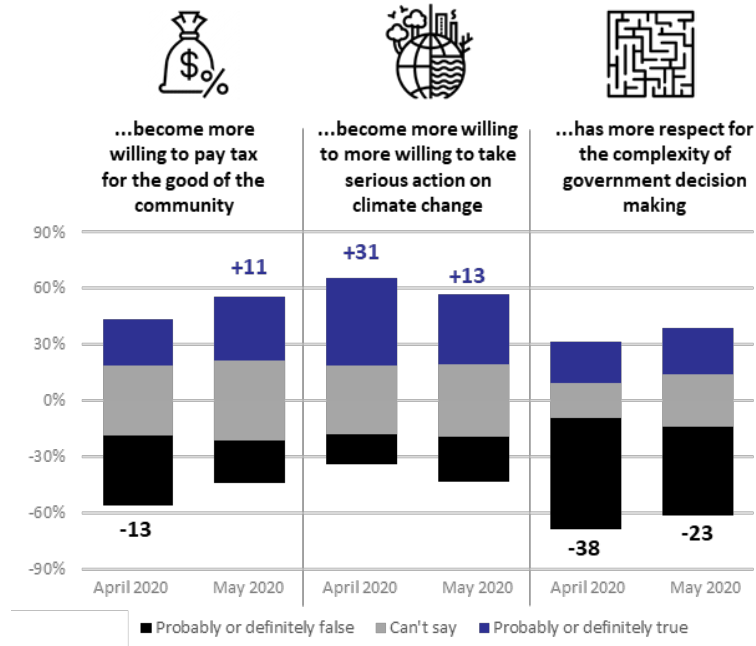
Data source: open-link community survey. All May surveys n=537. Source: ORIMA.com.au

**1 in 4** Australians feel our nation has become **less tolerant** of people from different ethnic backgrounds as a result of COVID-19 in May 2020

24%	Definitely + Probably True
30%	Can't say
46%	Definitely + Probably False

Data source: open-link community survey. All May surveys n=537. Source: ORIMA.com.au

## As a result of COVID-19 Australia has...



Data source: open-link community survey.  
April n=352, May n=535

Source: ORIMA.com.au

## Background on the COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT)

ORIMA Research is an Australian owned market and social research company founded in Canberra more than 20 years ago. It is now one of the largest providers of research and related services to the Australian and Victorian governments, with more than 50 professional staff in four offices.

ORIMA probably conducts more surveys of client, employees and the general community for the government sector than any other organisation. Since the impact of COVID-19 began, ORIMA has been working with many agencies and organisations to adapt existing research programs to the circumstances and needs, and to develop new programs to meet new needs.

Two integrated strands of work are drawing on being involved in such a large number of surveys across different topics and audiences. The COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT) is using common questions asked in many surveys to develop a picture of the impact of the pandemic on the Australian community. This will identify when the country moves into a recovery phase, and then the speed and consistency of the recovery.

For organisations, ORIMA has adapted existing workforce surveys to create a flexible Employee Pulse toolkit to help Senior Management teams to take stock of how well their people are coping and functioning. A specialised version for the human services sector has been developed by ORIMA's Disability Services Division.

Linked survey questions across the CRT and Employee Pulse surveys enable data from all contributing surveys to be collated into an integrated database, allowing a very broad and multi-faceted view of the impact of COVID-19. Benchmarks from the collated data are then used to assist interpreting individual survey results.