

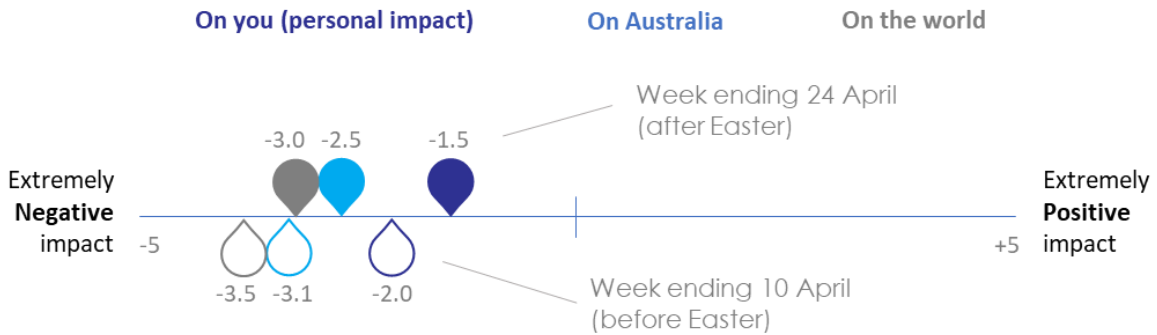


COVID-19 has thrown everyone’s 2020 plans out the door, delivering massive, and unprecedented peacetime disruption to millions across the globe. In the last few weeks though, Australia has turned a corner in the immediate battle against COVID-19, with discussions now turning to when and how restrictions might be relaxed. The most recent CRT data reflects the change in national mood many of us have seen and felt – things are still a long way from ‘normal’, and some of us are doing it tough, but most Australians feel things are improving.

We feel less negatively impacted by COVID-19

In the past two weeks, the national mood has lifted. Compared to before Easter, Australians are now seeing the impact of COVID-19 as less negative for themselves, for Australia, and for the world. The patterns seen before Easter remain – people still feel they are doing better than the average Australian, and that Australia is faring better than the rest of the world.

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



Data source: nationally representative surveys (n=500-501 / wave)

Source: ORIMA.com.au

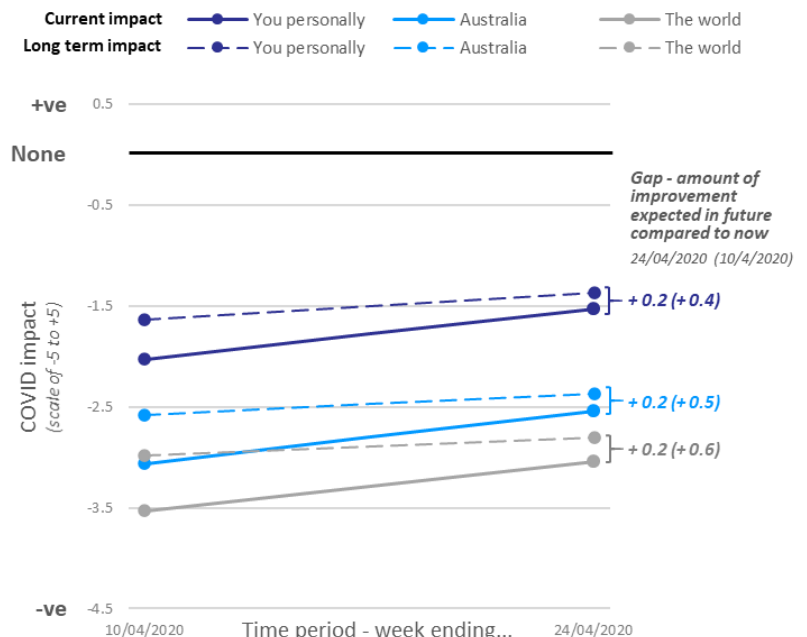
While perceptions of current impact improved after Easter, perceptions of the long-term impact of COVID-19 saw only marginal uplift.

The gap between the perceptions of the current and long-term impact has now become very small.

When we started the CRT project we thought that when these lines came together this may signal a turning point in the way people felt about the situation.

The situation in Australia **has** changed substantially in the past two weeks, and we will watch this trend with great interest in the coming months.

What do you feel impact of the COVID-19 situation is / will be on...



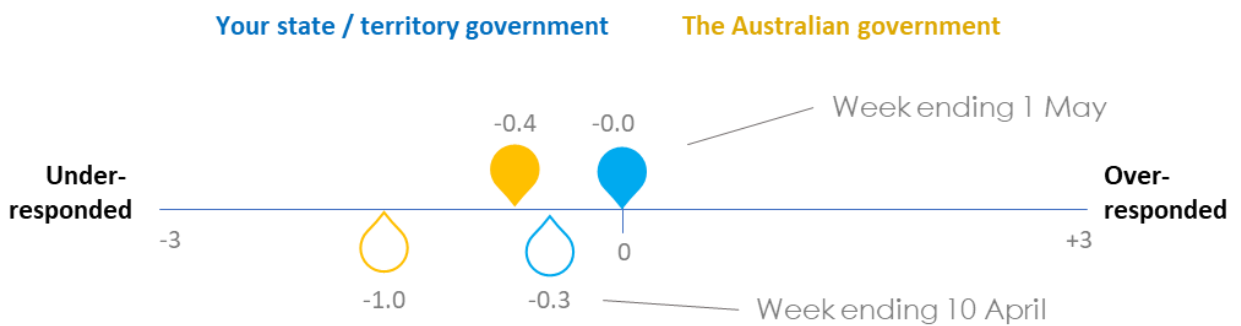
Data source: nationally representative surveys (n=500-501 / wave)
Source: ORIMA.com.au

Satisfaction with government responses is staying strong

As we head into May, over three-in-four of the respondents to our open-link community survey feel positively about the response of government, at both state/territory level and at federal level, and positive sentiment has been strong since the open-link community CRT tracking began at the beginning of April. It should be noted that the results of this survey, while indicative of community sentiment, are not necessarily representative of the general community due to the open nature of the survey.

One measure is whether people felt governments over or under-responded to the unfolding pandemic. Since implementing stricter restrictions in the lead up to Easter, the State government response improved and is now seen as 'about right'. Perceptions of the Australian government response also markedly improved since Easter, but still trailed the State government response.

Do you feel that each of the following over-responded, under-responded, or responded about right to the COVID-19 situation?



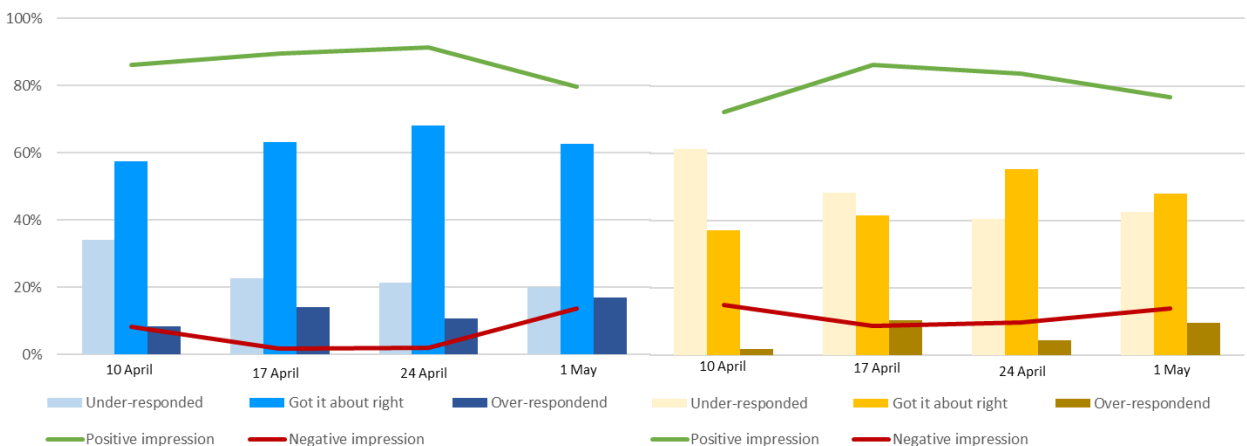
Data source: open-link community survey. Weekly samples n=94 to n=108.

Source: ORIMA.com.au

However, there is a bit more to perceptions of responses than just these two points. Digging deeper, weekly results show that perceptions of both levels of government actually peaked in the week before ANZAC day, before dropping slightly since. The past week saw much discussion about the prospect of easing restrictions across Australia, with certain jurisdictions starting to relax some measures. Opinions have been mixed about whether the time is right to begin unwinding restrictions. These results suggest some in the community are also hesitant about moving too soon, reflected in comments included on the following page.

Perceptions of State / Territory Government Responses

Perceptions of Australian Government Responses



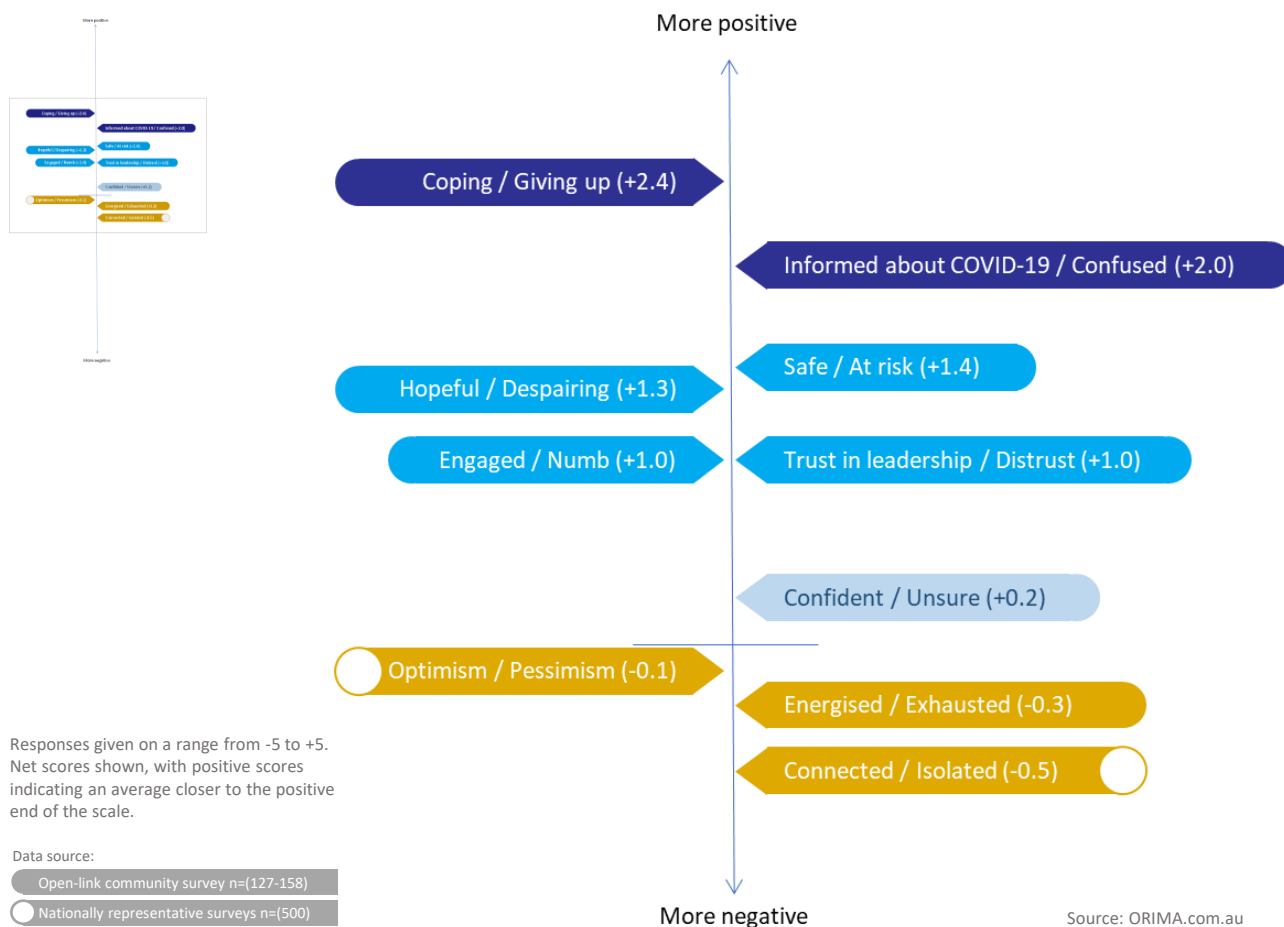
Data source: open-link community survey. Weekly samples n=58 to n=108.

Source: ORIMA.com.au

Most Australians feel they are coping

While people do feel negatively impacted, most feel they are coping, though there is a sense of tiredness in the community. On average, people are somewhat on the positive side of feeling safe, hopeful, engaged – and having trust in leadership. However, the situation is taking its toll, with people, on average, feeling somewhat fatigued, isolated, and a bit gloomy.

Comments suggest that the relative sense of positivity and trust in leadership may be fragile. Continuing to communicate clearly about how governments plan to navigate through the next phase of this crisis will be critical. While greater freedom to move around and meet would be welcomed, many stressed that easing restrictions should not come at the risk of public health and safety.



What can governments do in the next 3-6 months that will make the most positive difference to your life?

1 Make decisions that protect the health and safety of the public

“Keep listening to the experts on health advice and therefore maintaining social distancing and other measures until the pandemic is well under control (i.e. not listening to popular calls to loosen restrictions too early)”

2 Communicate clearly

“Be absolutely specific about length of lock down so we can plan appropriately.”

“Clearly communicate a positive plan out of this situation.”

3 Loosen restrictions

“Gradually ease restrictions if deemed possible by medical practitioners, allow small gatherings, businesses to re-open to provide jobs and economic benefit, gyms to re-open for physical and mental well-being & travel restrictions.”

Seeking a more equal, connected and self-reliant community

In the open link survey we have been asking people **how they might like Australia to be different after COVID-19**. Very few people said they didn't want much to change, that they wanted to go back to exactly how things were before (though only about two-thirds of people have chosen to answer this final open question). The **three biggest themes** that have emerged in the comments **so far** are:

- 1 Stronger focus on community and social connections**
*"I would like this sense of **connection and community** which I am currently experiencing **to endure beyond this crisis**. I hope going through this experience together will **make us kinder** and naturally **think of the needs of our community**, not make us more self-insular."*
- 2 A more egalitarian or equal society**
*"I would like to see Australia become a **more equitable nation** with a **smaller gap** between the rich and poor. I want us to **look after the most needy**, and to move away from casual work. I want Australians to be **more tolerant of each other's differences** and appreciate what we have in common..."*
- 3 Increased self-sufficiency and support for Australian business and industry**
*"I believe Australia needs to aim to be **more self sufficient** and **less reliant on imports** of goods."

*"...I want our government to ensure that our industry can **support Australian inventions** to keep the science and development here..."**

SUMMARY

Data from the last two weeks of the COVID-19 Recovery Tracker shows that the community overall, and some people in particular are **indeed doing it tough**. But it also shows that for the most part **people are hanging in there**. Perceptions of **negative impact** have **eased a little since before Easter**, and while there is some **uncertainty about winding back restrictions**, most feel they are coping. Perceptions of **government responses** may have fallen back a fraction in the last week, but are **still strong**, and overall have **improved across April**. Importantly, there is a **positive view** around **feeling informed** and having **trust in leadership**. Both are important indicators of a cohesive and functioning society in times of crisis, and likely reflect a sense that Australia really is doing very well in the face of an unprecedented event.



The CRT project 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 is expected in the second week of May.

CRT data is aggregated from a range of national and more targeted surveys, and from an open-link community survey which can be completed online by anyone (**do the survey here**). Participants who register for the survey can ask to be advised when results are updated, or to be reminded to do the survey every 1, 2 or 3 months. Volume 2 is based on n=1,001 responses to nationally representative online surveys, and n=455 responses to the open link survey. Data is classified into weeks defined from Friday midnight to Friday midnight.

General Enquiries	Client or Organisational Enquiries	Media Enquiries
CRT@orima.com	David Bruce Associate Partner David.Bruce@orima.com	Szymon Duniec Managing Director Szymon.Duniec@orima.com