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Preliminary report on survey and interview findings from The Tasmania Project

Report number: 1 | Date: 25 May 2020 | Author Libby Lester

From 27 April-10 May, The Tasmania Project invited survey responses from Tasmanian residents aged 18 and over and conducted 50 in-depth interviews.

Topics covered by the survey and interviews include: adjusting to COVID-19; sources of information; compliance with official responses; changes to food, housing and employment; and opinions re recovery and beyond.

The survey consists of a sample of 1159 respondents. Details of the sample are provided at the end of this report.

Here, we provide some initial findings on:

- Impact and concerns
- Restrictions: scope, communication and compliance
- Medium to long-term recovery
- Work and learning

Summaries on specific topics will be available in coming weeks.

Impact and concerns

25% of all respondents were more concerned about economic than health impacts of COVID 19, with more men (34%) concerned than women (21%).

When asked about specific concerns, respondents prioritised economic concerns about: Australia/the world going into an economic depression (80%); losing their savings (51%); losing their job/family income (42%); and not having enough money to provide for themselves or their families (37%), compared to health concerns such as: someone they know being infected (69%); being infected themselves (48%); and their mental (35%) and physical health (35%) being impacted by isolation.

For employed people, 54% were personally NOT more concerned about the economic impacts than the health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, while a quarter (26%) were.

Compared with prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, one in five (20%) employed people have done more paid work, 24% have been more creative, 27% have done more sports and exercise, 27% have done more caring for children, 20% are having more alcohol, tobacco and/or other drugs.
Compliance first, the top five responses were: When asked to specify what restrictions they would like to see lifted first, the top five responses were:

- National parks, reserves and beaches (70%; females 70%)
- Number of visitors per household (57%; males 59%)
- Dental care (44%; females 47%)
- School attendance (39%; females 30%)
- Attending funerals and weddings (32%; females 33%)

In interview: There was some ambivalence about social distancing measures, but a majority of participants discussed the self-isolation measures in terms of necessary measures, their own compliance, and/or discomfort with others’ hygiene habits. Very few participants indicated that the social distancing restrictions were unnecessary/overkill, although several participants admitted to breaking social distancing rules (for mental health reasons, out of habit/inattention, or because their job requires person-to-person contact).

Communication

36% of the people we surveyed believed the rules and regulations around COVID 19 were confusing, particularly younger Tasmanians (56% aged 18-29). Over half (57%) of those employed did not believe they are an essential worker while a third (32%) did, and 11% were not sure.

In interview: Around three-fifths of participants discussed the services and activities that they were missing. Nearly a third of these participants highlighted access to open spaces such as beaches and national parks. Otherwise, these activities varied greatly – from eating out, visiting the cinema, and participating in community sports and music groups, to Landcare meetings, visiting the library, and taking part in a lapidary club. A common thread amongst these responses was the social aspect – many of these activities involve socialising with others, and interviewees indicated that this was what was being missed (alongside the activity itself).

Medium to long-term recovery

To the following statements, we received these levels of agreement:

- I want a different Tasmania to emerge from this crisis (72%)
- I am NOT confident that the Tasmanian economy will fully recover from this crisis within five years (50%)
- I believe life will be better for most Tasmanians after this crisis (28%)
- I believe Tasmania will remain more isolated from now on (33%)
- I want to leave Tasmania (4%)

When asked what they wanted most for Tasmania’s future, the top responses were:

- Access to quality health care (67%)
- Affordable housing (61%)
- Access to nature (e.g. national parks, walking tracks, beach) (59%)
- Access to quality education (55%)
- To feel safe and secure (41%)
- Arts and creativity (36%)
- Regional community spirit (33%)
- Invention and innovation (32%)

People aged 18-29 (84%) were far more concerned about affordable housing than older Tasmanians (30-49, 59%; 50-69, 59%; 70+, 64%). Women (64.2%) were also more likely than men (51%) to select affordable housing as an issue for the future. Affordable housing was selected by more people living in Hobart (69%), Glenorchy (69%) or Kingborough (63%) than those in Launceston (56%) or Burnie (45%). Women were far more likely to select quality health care (71%) than men (54%).

A majority of Tasmanians surveyed were concerned about Australia / the world going into an economic depression (80%; higher among women (81%) than men (76%). Most were concerned about how long it will take for things to get back to normal (68%). A majority were also concerned about what is happening in other countries (83%), although women (87%) were much more concerned than men (72%).

In interview: Approximately one fifth of participants referred to China. Around half of these comments referred to Australia/Tasmania’s economic relationship with China, anticipating changes to this relationship; the other comments were split between concern about China and COVID, and concern about increased xenophobia aimed at China.

The quotes from participants regarding what they hope/think life will look like in the future (nominally around 12 months’ time) are fairly mixed. Some participants report feeling very anxious about the future, preferring not to think about it; others are more optimistic and hopeful for a return to ‘normal’.

Over three-fifths of interview participants discussed various aspects of how things could or should be done differently in light of COVID. Mostly these comments were oriented around how COVID has highlighted various aspects of social life that need to change. These were largely around cultivating positive and empathetic relationships and communities; re-evaluating the importance of hygiene, social supports, and sustainability (social and environmental); emphasising the importance of gratitude for what people do have; and taking the time to reassess and make changes to previous ways of living.

Participants also identified several changes that they hope to retain post-COVID, including working from home, online/phone health services, and changes to human impact on the environment.

Work and learning
Prior to COVID-19 (19 March 2020), one in five had more than one job. Since COVID-19, the majority of the employed people’s work situation had not changed (70%). One in ten (11%) were employed on job keeper payments and 7% were employed with fewer hours.

Most employed persons agreed they were being well supported by their employer (70%). Nearly half (47%) of employed people were concerned about losing their job or family income. Almost half (47%) of essential workers reported feeling tired often or most of the time in the past week. For non-essential workers, 36% felt tired often or most of the time and 45% of those were not sure if they are an essential worker or not.

Employed people working from home were more tired than those working at work (45% compared with 36%). 4% reduced or deferred their mortgage payments by negotiation with lender.

Working from home
Over half (52%) are now working from home due to COVID-19. 33% are still working at their workplace, and 15% are combining work from home and workplace.

For those working from home, nearly half (45%) find it more difficult to work from home, a third (34%) find it about the same, while the remainder (21%) find working from home easier than working from the workplace.

Over a third (36%) of employed people working from home want the work from home restriction lifted first. That is, a third of employed people want to return to working from the workplace.

Learning from home
A majority of employed people with dependent children reported that learning from home was difficult (73%).

28% of respondents who were parents agreed they did not have skills to support child learning, and 22% of parents indicated they were essential workers or were unable to work from home. 19% of parents indicated they had a lack of dedicated space to support their children’s learning.

Over a third (35%) of women were taking the lead in supporting their children learning from home, while 2% of employed women reported that their partner was taking the lead. 18% were sharing the responsibility and 18% were trying a combination of parent supported, teacher supported and self-guided learning.

8% of respondents reported not having reliable access to the internet at home, with a similar proportion identifying this as a reason learning from home has been difficult. Access to devices to connect to the internet was identified as an issue by 4% of respondents.

Sample
Of the 959 respondents who answered the demographic questions, 72.6% of the sample were female, 27.1% were male and 0.3% specified other.

Around half (45.8%) of the sample were aged 45 to 64 years, 29.5% were aged 25 to 44 years of age, 22.9% were aged 65 or older and 1.8% were aged between 18 and 24 years.

A majority of respondents (66.4%) lived in the Southern Tasmania followed by 18% from the North and 15.6% from the North-West. 4 in 5 were born in Australia.

33.7% were in a couple family with dependent children, over a third were in a couple family with no children (37.1%). 5.7% were in a single parent family with children and 23.5% either lived alone or in a group household. 73.1% were partnered (married, de-facto, or partnered but living apart) and 10.5% were single.

Almost three quarters (69.8%) had completed a Bachelor degree or higher.

Of the 1047 respondents who answered the employment questions, 65.1% were employed (682 persons), either permanently (54.4%), on a fixed term contract (14.4%), casually (11.7%) or self-employed (19.5%).

Almost three quarters of those employed were female (72.9%).

Over half (50.6%) of those employed were aged 45 to 64 years, 37.4% were aged 25 to 44 years of age, 10.0% were aged 65 or older and 2.0% were aged between 18 and 24 years.

Two thirds (66.9%) lived in the southern region.

Over half (51.8%) were in a couple family with dependent children, almost a third were in a couple family with no children (29.3%). 70.2% were partnered (married or de-facto), 11.3% were single.

Almost three quarters (71.1%) had completed a Bachelor degree or higher.

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Learn more visit utas.edu.au/taismania-project
What is concerning Tasmanians during the pandemic?

Report number: 2 | Date: 26 May 2020 | Dr Lisa Denny

The Tasmania Project has found that while Tasmanians are adapting well in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, they also hold considerable concerns relating to the health and well-being of themselves and their families and friends as well as the state of the global economy.

While respondents reported some concern for their own health and well-being, most concern was evident for the global economy and the health and well-being of their friends and family. Most were concerned with how long it will take for things to get back to ‘normal’. In particular, many are not confident the Tasmanian economy will recover within five years.

Considerable difference in the level of concern is also evident between men and women, select age groups and household type. Women were more likely to be concerned about most matters than men, while the level of concern varied by age group depending on the issue. Single parents of dependent children reported the highest level of concern for most issues.

Key findings

- Most people are more concerned about the state of the global economy and others health and well-being rather than their own.
- Older people were more concerned about COVID-19 infection, while working age people were more concerned about mental and physical health and well-being.
- The financial situation of respondents was less of a concern, however, more than half were concerned about losing their savings and a third were concerned about not having enough money to provide for themselves or their family.
- Single parents and people living alone have the highest level of concern for a range of issues.
- Most people were not concerned about their relationship with their partner ending or deteriorating (71.6%).
- Two thirds of people are concerned about not being able to visit family or friends living interstate or overseas for a very long time.
- Three in five people are concerned about the rise of political unrest or extremism in Australia, or elsewhere.
- More than two thirds (67.0%) are concerned with how long it will take for things to get back to normal, particularly men (68.5%) and those aged 65 or older (70.4%).
Respondents concerns during times of COVID-19, percentage concerned, The Tasmania Project

Global economy concerns
Respondents were most concerned about global issues, with more than four in five (83.0%) concerned about what was happening in other countries and the world going into an economic depression (79.9%). The level of concern was similar across age groups, however, women were more concerned than men.

Associated with this concern, is that more than half (50.2%) are not confident that the Tasmanian economy will recover within five years, men more so than women as those aged 25 to 44 years. While one in four (27.5%) are more optimistic.

Health and well-being concerns
While a considerable level of concern was reported for their own health; being infected (47.3%), the impact of isolation on their mental health (34.3%) or physical health (35.0%), with women, those aged 25 to 44 years and single parents more concerned relatively, most respondents were more concerned about the health and well-being of others.

More than two in three (68.0%) were concerned about others being infected with COVID-19, particularly those aged 65 or older (70.6%). Women were more concerned than men (71.6% compared with 57.6%), while more than three quarters of single parents were concerned. While concern decreased with age, it remained concern for more than two thirds all age groups.

Over half were concerned that people would not be able to access essential food, medicines and services (58.3%), with women more concerned than men (63.7% compared with 43.5%). Age groups were similarly concerned, while single parents and persons living alone were the most concerned (74.5% and 61.6% respectively).

There was considerable concern with how family (67.3%) and friends (72.7%) were coping, particularly by women and those aged 25 to 44 years as well as women aged 65 or older (71.0%) and single parents (70.0).

Two thirds of people are concerned about not being able to visit family or friends living interstate or overseas for a very long time. This concern is the greatest for older age groups (71.5%), women (64.3%), people living alone (70.5%) and couples with no kids at home (69.0%).

Financial concerns
While half (51.0%) of the respondents are concerned about losing their savings, less are concerned about not having enough money to provide for themselves or their family (37.7%). Women are more concerned than men as well as those of working age and single parents.

Where next?
The Tasmania Project found that respondents are more concerned about the wellbeing of vulnerable Tasmanians, than their own needs. One interviewee summed it up "Made me realise that these restrictions drew an arbitrary line for our society, where if you're on one side of the line, you are fine. And if you're on the other side of the line...". During the interviews concern for others was a dominant theme, concerns about homeless people, affordable housing, those living with mental illness, those from non-English speaking backgrounds, the elderly and the younger generation and their future. Many felt guilty that they had not been affected by the pandemic, and, that in some ways, they had also benefited from the experience. This guilt made people feel as though they couldn’t complain, that they had no right to feel anxious, and that their focus needs to be on others that are less fortunate; either helping them or advocating for their needs, and that makes them feel a bit better within themselves. Many also expressed despair for the Tasmanian economy and the impact it will have on the vulnerable, many also held a glimmer of hope that the recovery will be swift.

As Tasmania moves into the recovery phase of the pandemic and the immediate threat on health and well-being subsides, it is likely that concern about the state of the economy and the global economy will increase. Pressure is also likely to mount on returning the Tasmanian way of life back to ‘normal’. However, the Tasmania Project also identified that three in four respondents also want a new Tasmania to emerge from this crisis.

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations
The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. See a more detailed explanation of the Project’s approach and method [here](#).
How Tasmanians are experiencing work during the pandemic.

Report number: 3 | Date: 26 May 2020 | Dr Lisa Denny

The Tasmania Project has found that Tasmanian workers are generally adapting well to the new way of living (68.6%). However, while most (51.5%) are finding the new way of life easier the longer the pandemic lasts, more than a quarter (27.6%) are finding it more difficult. Nearly two thirds (65.3%) report enjoying a slower pace of life.

While the workers reported they were generally well supported by their employers, how Tasmanians are experiencing work during the pandemic differs for men and women and also by whether or not they are working from home or remain at their workplace.

The experience of work during the pandemic has been both positive and negative for many Tasmanian workers. There are those who are tired and those who are enjoying the change, many are concerned about productivity and losing their jobs while many have also been more creative and done more sport and exercise. Most interesting is that of all the pandemic crisis response requirements, over third (35.8%) of people working from home want the work from home requirement lifted first.

Key findings

For those Tasmanian workers who responded to the Tasmania Project Survey

- Prior the pandemic, one in five had more than one job
- Since the pandemic, for most, their work situation has not changed (69.8%). One in ten (10.8%) are employed on JobKeeper payments and 7.1% are employed with fewer hours.
- Compared with prior to the pandemic, one in five (19.7%) have done more paid work.
- Over half (56.6%) do not believe they are an essential worker while a third (32.3%) do, and one in ten (11.1%) are not sure if they are an essential worker or not.
- Over half (52.0%) of those employed are now working from home due the pandemic, while a third (32.6%) continue to work at their respective workplaces. The remainder are combining working from home and at their workplace.
- For almost half of those working from home, it is more difficult to do their work (44.7%), while it is easier for one in five (20.7%).
- Compared with non-working people, employed respondents felt more overwhelmed, angry, tired and frustrated and less content, lonely, strong, rested, and trusting.
- One in five (20.1%) reported having more alcohol, tobacco and/or other drugs.
Working from home

That only around half of the Tasmanian workers who responded to the Tasmania Project survey reported they were working from home, reflects the nature of work and employment in Tasmania. Tasmania’s largest employing sectors; health care and social assistance, tourism (including retail and accommodation and food services), education and training and construction, are industries which are less likely to have jobs that can be undertaken at home.

The work experience differs for men and women and whether they were working from home. Women were more likely to work from home than men (54.3% compared with 46.2%). More women found it difficult to work from home compared to men (46.5% compared with 40.2%), whereas more men indicated doing work from home was about the same (42.6% compared with 31.6% of women).

Three quarters of people working from home reported a high level of support from their employer (76.4%) whereas only 57.9% of those who continued to work from their workplace reported being well supported by their employer.

Those who were working from home reported a high level of concern about their productivity levels compared with those at the workplace (45.7% and 31.5% respectively). However, two in five workers from home also reported no concerns regarding their productivity.

These findings are likely to be partly explained by the presence of dependent children and the learning from home requirement. Two in five workers had dependent children and nearly three quarters (73.0%) of those reported that learning from home was difficult. In addition, over a third (34.5%) of women reported they were taking the lead in supporting their children learning from home, while 1.7% of employed women reported that their partner was taking the lead.

Employed people working from home were more tired than those working at their workplace (45.3% compared with 36.0%).

Of the existing regulations and restrictions put in place during the pandemic, over a third (35.8%) of employed people working from home want the work from home requirement lifted first.

Concerns

Almost half (47.0%) of employed people are concerned about losing their job or family income, particularly those couples with children (47.0%) and single parents (62.2%).

Almost half (46.7%) of essential workers report feeling tired often or most of the time in the past week, compared with around a third (36.3%) of non-essential workers.

Many workers reported in interviews that working from home hasn’t changed much ‘as predominately computer based’, there is a good level of trust, support and flexibility and is quite enjoyable, noting that they were ‘enjoying isolation because of not having to commute’ and the extra hours in the day ‘gives me more time to take the dog for walks… starting the day more relaxed; more time to do [other] things…’ Others reported feeling ‘pressured and unsupported’, ‘ostracised by the workplace’ or that they need to ‘self-monitor to be productive’. Many miss the social aspect of the workplace, the incidental conversations and collaborative input; ‘[I] miss all these like kind of incidental conversations that you would just have in passing even at work and everything now has to be like pre planned’. Others report increasing their contact with colleagues in different ways which has created more collaborative new types of networks and ‘although digital, there is more a sense of community; people are more willing to share information and help out… [it’s] changed the workplace positively…people become more reciprocal; a lot of background noise at work is gone’.

Where next?

As Tasmania moves into the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions start to be eased how and where Tasmanians work will need much consideration. For many, there are benefits of working from home, including greater flexibility and reducing commute times, for others the workplace provides the means for collaboration and greater productivity as well as social networks.

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations
The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See a more detailed explanation of the Project’s approach and method here.
How Tasmanians are using communication technologies to stay in touch during the pandemic.

Report number: 4 | Date: 26 May 2020 | Author: Professor Matthew Allen

Many study participants are adapting well to the pandemic contact limitations by using communications technologies. Traditional forms of communication such as phone calls and texts are essential, but newer forms – particularly video-conferencing – are prominent. This use of technologies is underpinned by high levels of reliable Internet access and digital adaptability for many people.

But technologies do not fully compensate. They bring people together virtually but, in doing so, increase feelings of separation and distance for some Tasmanians.

Key findings

- All forms of technologies are playing an important role in enabling maintenance of social connectedness despite social distancing, self-isolation, and staying home.
- Internet access is, for 88% of survey respondents, reliable and effective at a time when communication technologies are even more essential for social connectedness.
- A majority have adapted well to technologies that they have not used before, although traditional communications through phone and text are the most likely ways to maintain connection with others.
- Video-conferencing technologies are now playing an increased role in social connectedness.
- Despite the positive and increased use of communications technologies, Tasmanians often continue to feel the absence of close, in-person interaction, especially when unable to meet family members.
Interviews with a small group of survey respondents have highlighted that many Tasmanians have taken to using video-conferencing software, particularly Zoom, as a means of maintaining social connections during the pandemic. There is a wide array of uses of this technology, including, for example, its use to enable informal social interaction of church goers after a virtual religious service.

Yet, as several participants in the interviews noted, their use of video conferencing also left them feeling a stronger sense of separation and distance, especially with family members not living with them. As one of them concluded, “You can’t replace a hug”. While more than half of those interviewed discussed their new or increased uses of technologies for social connection, around one-quarter reflected on the fact it was not a complete substitute, did not work well, and made them miss face to face contact more.

Where next?

We need next to determine if and how communication technologies have allowed individuals to build a sustainable form of enriched social connectedness, or whether they have been a necessary but “thin” substitute for traditional forms of co-present activity, and how this might be experienced differently by Tasmanians in different stages of life.

We also need to find out whether digital literacy has increased, and in what ways, now that Tasmanians have had to rely more on communications technologies for social and family connectedness. If there are improvements in skills and knowledge as a result of this adaptation, can they be applied in new contexts such as future employment and education?

Survey and interview results

A large majority of respondents (85%) indicated that they are still able to maintain their connections with family and friends, without being able to meet them in person. While around 30% of respondents agreed that they are increasing their contact with friends and family, the majority reported that the pandemic has changed the amount of contact. Given the circumstances, much of this social connectedness has, since late March, relied heavily on technologies that substitute for, or enable different versions of, communication with friends and family other than in person.

Tasmanians reported significant use of Internet-enabled communications to maintain social connectedness during a time when physical distancing and staying at home has made it much harder to meet in person. 71% of all respondents reported they use social media (broadly defined), 66% use video conferencing, and 51% email. However, telephone and text messaging communications are the most widely reported communications technology used, including 87% using a mobile phone and 81% using text messaging. A significant minority continued to use physical interactions, with over 33% saying they have met others in person.

For a very large majority of survey respondents (88%), good Internet access at home has made it possible for them to rely on digital communications technologies during the pandemic. Even more respondents (94%) reported that they have the right digital devices needed to use the Internet at home effectively. In both cases, a majority of all respondents indicated strong agreement, rather than just agreement. Furthermore, most people have taken up new forms of connection, based on these technologies, without difficulty. Only a minority of survey respondents (16%) reported they do not enjoy having to try novel ways of connecting with family and friends.

Thus, while other research has shown Tasmania has localised, concerning levels of inadequate digital capacity our respondents have been generally well served by the Internet. The value of the extensive, effective and long-term adoption of communications technologies based on the Internet is clear. Many Tasmanians have shown themselves to be digitally adaptable. This finding suggests there is widespread, though not universal, digital literacy at a level sufficient to enable rapid uptake of new communications technologies, most likely the result of more than two decades of Internet use in Australia.
Where are Tasmanians buying their food during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Report number: 5 | Date: 26 May 2020 | Authors: Katherine Kent, Sandy Murray, Stuart Auckland, Beth Penrose

Respondents to The Tasmania Project’s first survey sourced food from a variety of outlets during the COVID-19 pandemic, but relied heavily on supermarkets for grocery shopping.

Supermarket shopping at both major and independent stores has dominated the Tasmanian experience. On the other hand, only a minority of 1159 respondents reported buying food directly from the Tasmanian producer or at smaller outlets, like butchers. Around half of the survey respondents reported sourcing food from their own gardens, and some reported receiving food grown by others. Take-aways, home deliveries and fast food were not the norm, but were favoured by younger respondents and families with children.

Key findings

- The vast majority of respondents bought their food at major supermarkets, like Coles or Woolworths, and also at Tasmanian independent supermarkets, such as IGA.

- Half of the Tasmanian respondents ate food grown in their own garden, and around 20% received food grown in someone else’s garden.

- Families with children bought the most takeaway food, and younger Tasmanians most often used fast food outlets.

- Tasmanian autumn produce was not on the menu, with only a small minority of respondents reporting buying food direct from Tasmanian producers.
Survey results

A large majority of respondents (73%) reported shopping for food at major supermarkets in the week before they completed The Tasmania Project survey. Fewer residents in the North West and Western regions (67%) shopped at major supermarkets in comparison to those in the South (74%) and North regions (75%). Individuals living alone (60%) and couples without children (72%) were less likely to shop at supermarkets in comparison to single parents (85%) or couples with children (79%), highlighting the convenience of these food outlets for families. A further 9.3% of respondents reported receiving a supermarket delivery.

Tasmanian independent supermarkets were also a major source of food shopping, with 61% of respondents buying food in these outlets in the week of the survey. Independent supermarkets were favoured by those living in the South, with 70% of residents reporting shopping in these outlets, which is higher than in the North (39%) and North West and West (53%) regions. Respondents aged over 65 years were the most likely to shop at Independent supermarkets (62%), especially in comparison to younger respondents aged under 24 years (47%).

Northern Tasmanian respondents were the most likely to be harvesting food from their gardens (57%), with fewer green thumbs in the South (50%) and North West and West regions (44%). Gardening increased steadily with age, with only 23% of 18-24 year old respondents reporting eating from their garden, in comparison to 59% aged over 65 years. Interestingly, 20% reported receiving food from other people’s gardens, highlighting that sharing surplus backyard produce may be an important way Tasmanians keep connected.

Despite COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, respondents also purchased take-away food (40%), and a smaller number got home delivery (17%) and food from fast food outlets (13%). Take-aways were favoured by families with children, with 51% of these respondents reporting buying a take-away in the week of the survey.

Around double the number of respondents aged under 44 years reported receiving a home delivery in comparison to those in older age brackets. Similarly, our youngest respondents bought the most fast food (35%), which was much higher than those aged over 45 years (11%) and 65 years (2%).

Only a small minority of Tasmanians reporting buying food direct from Tasmanian producers (22%). This highlights that social distancing restrictions may make it more difficult for Tasmanians to get access to these outlets. Further, only around a quarter (26%) of the Tasmanian respondents visited their butcher in the week of the survey.

Where next?

A more focused survey from The Tasmania Project is investigating how Tasmanians’ access to food and produce has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to gather opinions on how Tasmania’s food production and supply should be planned in the future.

While the Australian food supply is remarkably resilient, it is important for us to understand whether all Tasmanians have had access enough healthy food to meet their needs, and how the COVID-19 pandemic may have changed how Tasmanians from different walks of life have accessed their food.

The survey will explore perceptions of the Tasmanian food supply, including food imports and exports, to identify opportunities for Tasmanian producers, such as commercial fishers, who have been impacted by the loss of export markets. The survey will also identify the innovative ways that Tasmanian food businesses have responded to the restrictions enforced by COVID-19, so we may be able to understand opportunities to support Tasmanian food businesses in the future.
Key findings

- Eighty-nine per cent (89%) of respondents reported **no change to their current housing situation** since 19 March 2020.
- Of those who did experience a change to their housing situation, around a quarter were renting from a private landlord.
- Thirteen per cent of respondents **cut spending on other essentials** (e.g. food, electricity) to pay for housing.
- The North region had the greatest proportion of respondents overall (17.6%) cutting spending on other essentials to pay for housing, however the LGA with the greatest proportion was Hobart (20.5%).
- Single parents with children, younger people and temporary residents born overseas are demographic groups more likely to cut spending on other essentials to pay for housing.
- Occupations for which with the greatest proportion of respondents cut spending on other essentials were education professionals; hospitality, retail and service managers; and health professionals.
- Industries with the greatest proportion of respondents who cut spending on other essentials were education, building and construction, and food and beverage.
Survey results

Current housing situation

Survey respondents predominantly owned their houses outright (41.3%) or with a mortgage (36.6%), followed by renting from a private landlord (15.8%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned outright</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned, paying off mortgage</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented from private landlord</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented from public or community housing authority</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A I had no permanent address</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eighty-nine per cent of respondents reported no change to their current housing situation since 19 March 2020. Of those whose housing situation had changed, 26.5% of renters reported a change including 6.6% who reduced or deferred rent by mutual agreement with their landlord. For those that had a mortgage 7.5% had reduced or deferred their mortgage payment by negotiation with their lender. A few people had decreased housing costs by paying off a mortgage or being able to pay more off due to reduced savings elsewhere (e.g. child care). Others had purchased property during this time.

While most respondents had experienced no change to their employment situation, 40.6% of those renting from a private landlord did experience change, with 6.3% employed with job seeker payments, 8.8% unemployed with JobSeeker payments and 6.9% unemployed but not eligible for JobKeeper or JobSeeker payments. Of those who were paying off a mortgage 9.0% were now employed with JobKeeper payments.

Cut spending on other essentials to pay for housing

Thirteen per cent of respondents cut spending on other essentials (e.g. food, electricity) to pay for housing. Of these 44.6% were paying off a mortgage, 30.8% rented from a private landlord, 19.2% owned outright and 2.3% rented from a public or community housing provider.

In terms of the region in which people cut spending lived, 63.0% lived in the south, 23.6% lived in the North and 13.4% lived in the North-West and West. However, as a proportion of each region, the North had the greatest with 17.8% cutting spending. The LGAs which were impacted the most were Hobart (20.5%), Launceston (13.4%), Kingborough (10.2%), Clarence (8.7%) and Glenorchy (7.9%).

The household type most affected was single parents with children (24.5%). Younger respondents aged 18-24 years (29.4%) followed by respondents aged 25-44 years (17.3%) were also more likely to be impacted. Of the respondents who were temporary residents born overseas, 58.3% cut spending on other essentials.

Of those that had cut spending on other essentials:

- 17.5% had a diploma or TAFE qualification and 11.7% a University qualification
- 11.2% were education professionals, 9.2% hospitality, retail and service managers and 7.1% health professionals
- 18.5% worked in the education industry, 9.8% in building and construction and 8.7% in food and beverage.
- 12.6% were now employed with JobKeeper payments; 10.1% unemployed but not eligible for JobKeeper / JobSeeker payments; and 7.6% unemployed with JobSeeker payments.

Of people who had cut spending on other essentials to pay for housing, 62.3% selected affordable housing as to what they most wanted for Tasmania’s future.

Where next?

A closer look at how people’s housing circumstances may have changed since the pandemic has caused disruptions to life in Tasmania is planned. This may include an improvement in housing situation or accessing programs to assist in times of difficulty meeting housing costs.

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations
The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See a more detailed explanation of the Project’s approach and method here.
Life at home and grocery shopping: how Tasmanians are experiencing social distancing

Report number: 7 | Date: 27 May 2020 | Author Dr. Rebecca Banham

Across Tasmania, people are remaining in their homes as per official recommendations to slow the spread of COVID19 – that is, remaining at home unless it is essential to go out. The Tasmania Project has found that Tasmanians report high levels of compliance with these social distancing measures, and generally do not think these measures too restrictive.

Interview participants reported a number of activities and services they are engaging in during their time at home, such as participating in hobbies, and accessing health services via telephone. One common reason for people to leave their homes is grocery shopping, with many Tasmanians completing their grocery shopping in-store. Interviewees usually discussed the experience of grocery shopping in the context of being cautious or concerned about social distancing and leaving the isolation of the home.

Key findings

- Tasmanians generally report being compliant with social distancing restrictions, i.e. staying at home unless essential to go out.
- Interviewees who reported breaking social distancing rules cited reasons such as mental health, habit and inattention.
- Interviewees discussed a number of strategies they adopted to make their time at home more pleasant – such as engaging in hobbies or using telecommunication technologies – or to avoid leaving the home, such as accessing health services via telephone or online.
- Many Tasmanians are completing their grocery shopping in-store, but interviewees who discussed grocery shopping usually did so in the context of being cautious or concerned about social distancing and leaving home isolation.
Social distancing

Tasmanians are largely supportive of social distancing measures and restrictions. 82% of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that ‘official measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are too strict’. Similarly, 87% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, ‘I am staying at home and only going out for essential purposes like getting groceries or medicines, or to go to work’. Interviewees generally described themselves as complying with social distancing rules.

While very few participants suggested that social distancing restrictions are excessive, several participants admitted to breaking social distancing rules for reasons such as mental health, habit and inattention, or work requirements.

Life at home

In light of the need to remain at home whenever possible, interviewees discussed a number of ways that in which they had adapted to spending their time indoors. This included adopting new hobbies and devoting time to old interests. For example, one participant described board games as a form of escapism and replacement for travel. Another participant classified themselves as a ‘cliché’, relieving stress through baking sourdough bread. This reflects the experiences of survey participants.

Compared to 19th March (when Tasmania declared a state of emergency), 28% of respondents said they had spent more time being creative, 41% were doing more gardening, 39% said they spent more time on entertainment such as TV or streaming, and 38% were doing more reading.

Several participants also discussed ways of maintaining their health and wellbeing without leaving the house. This included accessing ‘telehealth’ services and helplines, using online exercise classes and home gyms, and attending appointments online. One participant reported being pleased that he was able to access an exercise physiologist online, for example, and noted that he would be interested in this arrangement continuing post-COVID.

Grocery shopping as an essential activity

One essential reason to leave the home is grocery shopping. Many Tasmanians are grocery shopping in-store. 73% of survey respondents reporting eating food sourced from Woolworths or Coles in store in the past week, with 61% sourcing food from Tasmanian independent supermarkets. The Tasmania Project Report 5 has further information about this topic.

Around one third of interviewees discussed grocery shopping, often in the context of being concerned about social distancing. Participants described precautions such as sanitising trolleys and limiting themselves to one trip per week. One participant explained that he prefers to shop at Coles as he found the milk to be accessible without having to touch the refrigerator door handle. Another participant said while they sometimes forget about social distancing, it was always in the back of their mind. Grocery shopping provides us with an example of how Tasmanians are experiencing leaving the home – even for an essential activity – as a potentially risky and uncomfortable experience.

Where next?

To ensure that Tasmanians continue to follow social distancing measures while accessing the support they need, it is important to understand the challenges that social distancing brings. What forms of support do Tasmanians need to be happy and safe in self-isolation? What barriers do Tasmanians face in being able to comfortably remain in their home? These barriers could include reliable access to telecommunication technologies and online health services.

It is also important for us to consider how Tasmanians are responding to official guidelines regarding when it is and is not appropriate to leave the house, particularly as restrictions begin to ease. Finally, we need to know how Tasmanians can best be supported while they carry out essential activities such as grocery shopping. Can more be done to ensure Tasmanians remain safe and comfortable both inside and outside their homes?

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations

The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. See a more detailed explanation of the Project’s approach and method here.
Social restrictions: community, recreation and travel

Report number: 8 | Date: 27 May 2020 | Author Dr. Rebecca Banham

The Tasmania Project has found that there a wide variety of activities and services that Tasmanians miss participating in. Often these activities have a social component, suggesting that loss of connection with community and loved ones is significant, alongside the loss of the activity itself.

Interviewees also reported that travel bans had significantly impacted their travel plans, including plans to spend time with distant friends and family. This suggests that travel bans are not only impacting upon tourism and related industries, but is also likely to be affecting how Tasmanians connected with the significant people in their lives.

Key findings

- Three-fifths of interviewees discussed the services and activities that they miss participating in.
- The activities and services that Tasmanians miss varies widely, often involving social connections with friends and the wider community.
- However, far fewer survey respondents chose such activities as the restrictions they would like to see lifted first, when compared with those who selected restrictions such as access to national parks or having more than two household visitors at a time.
- One third of participants discussed cancelled or postponed travel plans, including significant life circumstances such as a wedding, fly-in fly-out work arrangements, and moving to Melbourne for employment.
- Of the participants who discussed changed travel plans, around half had plans in place to spend time with family and friends which will now not happen.
Social restrictions, community, and recreation

Due to social distancing measures, there are many activities that Tasmanians have been unable to participate in. Many interviewees discussed the wide variety of activities and services that they are currently missing, such as eating out, visiting the cinema, community sports, participating in bands, choirs, and theatre, Landcare meetings, visiting libraries, and meeting with a lapidary club. Many of these activities involve socialising with others, and interviewees indicated that they missed the chance to connect with others through these activities. However, survey responses indicate that Tasmanians do not feel a sense of urgency regarding these activities. When asked to choose up to five restrictions they would like to see lifted first, 19% of respondents selected shopping, while 14% chose dining in restaurants and cafes. This is far below options such as lifting restrictions on national parks, reserves and beaches (69%), or capping household visitors to two people at a time (56%).

As reported by The Tasmania Project’s Report 4, many Tasmanians are using technology in new and different ways to maintain contact with others. However, many activities are not able to be replaced with telecommunication. A few participants also indicated that some groups have not adopted new forms or uses of technology during the pandemic. One interviewee described the impact on a community committee, saying that she could not imagine the group using technology like Zoom. Another participant voiced frustration at being unable to visit the library, suggesting that libraries could offer low-contact services similar to takeaway food stores.

Changing travel plans

Alongside these activities, the interstate and international travel plans of Tasmanians have also been affected. Around one-third of interview participants discussed cancelled and/or postponed travel plans. For a few participants, these changed plans impacted upon significant life events and circumstances. One participant reported that his son’s plan to move to Melbourne for work was currently postponed, while another participant was forced to cancel their wedding and honeymoon.

Travelling to connect

Of those participants who discussed their cancelled and postponed travel, around half described plans which would have seen them spend additional time with distant family and friends. This includes both plans to visit or holiday with others, and plans to have family visit Tasmania.

This suggests that alongside impacts upon tourism and related industries, travel bans are also likely to be affecting the way that Tasmanians connect with their family and friends.

For example, one participant expressed regret about not returning to Melbourne over the Easter break. She suggested that in the future, she would take more opportunities to visit others when it is possible. Another participant described plans to see older family members on mainland Australia, something which he now hopes to do in 2021.

Where next?

It is important for us to understand what it is that Tasmanians value about community life, and how community connections can be fostered in times of social distancing. Could some community groups benefit from assistance in moving activities online where possible? What factors help Tasmanians feel connected with others in their community, and has COVID19 changed the way that people value these connections?

The economic and cultural impacts of travel bans upon Tasmanian life are understandably at the forefront of concerns about heavily decreased interstate and international travel. It is also necessary for us to consider the social and emotional impacts closed borders might have upon Tasmanians’ lives. How are Tasmanians negotiating the postponement of life events such as weddings or employment, or the loss of time spent with distant loved ones? It is likely that these impacts of the pandemic will continue to be felt by many Tasmanians as restrictions in the state begin to ease.

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations

The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. See a more detailed explanation of the Project’s approach and method here.
Parents and caregivers of primary school students will be breathing sighs of relief as Tasmania transitions back to school-based learning, according to findings from The Tasmania Project.

**Key findings**

- Respondents with primary school children consistently found learning from home more impractical than those supporting either younger or older children.
- Essential work commitments were most influential in respondents’ perceptions of the practicality of supporting their children’s learning.
- Almost half the people with dependent children expressed concern about their children’s education, with almost 20% indicating they were very concerned.
- Respondents working from home found it difficult to find time to support their children’s learning in the home.
- A lack of a dedicated space hindered children’s learning in the home.

**Survey results**

Survey responses included 267 people who had children learning from home. The majority identified as female (72%), were born in Australia (82%), had completed University studies (75%), and were married or in de-facto relationships (84%). Respondents had children from a range of school ages with the majority in primary (35%) and high school (39%).

**Who took the lead in learning at home?**

26% of respondents stated they took the lead in supporting their children and were mostly female (91%) and 20% stated they shared the lead. Other respondents indicated that their children, grandparents, or adult children took the lead. 7% stated the teacher took the lead, and a few respondents indicated they took the lead using a mix of online learning portals and material from school.
How did people manage?

Approximately 40% of respondents indicated that learning from home was practical for them and were confident in supporting their children. However, this was not the experience for approximately 30%, who indicated that learning from home was not practical, with 20% indicating that they did not feel confident in supporting their children. A fifth of respondents indicated they experienced no difficulties with learning from home, though 40% suggested they did. The major difficulty related to balancing work commitments with home learning. Many respondents used the term ‘teach’ or ‘educate’ suggesting that support for learning went beyond supervising children. Managing this balance was exacerbated for respondents with multiple children at different levels of learning or with mixed pre-school and school-aged children. Support for children with special needs (e.g., autism, dyslexia) was also a concern.

Respondents indicated that, at times, communication from schools and curriculum delivery experiences were challenging and, in some cases, respondents felt that the expectations from schools were unrealistic or that guidance was insufficient. Other challenges related to the lack of social connection between peers and teachers. More practical challenges in the home included children who were unmotivated or who lacked engagement, or the self-discipline needed to attend to their work. Respondents also commented on what their children were encouraged to engage with and noted less focus on practical subjects such as music, physical education, technology and art.

Where next?

Further research exploring how parents and caregivers were able to navigate difficulties while children were learning from home is needed, particularly those with primary school aged children. Exploring the challenges and opportunities of home learning from the perspectives of parents and caregivers may inform home-school partnerships of the future.
How Tasmanians are spending their time while they ‘stay home, save lives’ during the pandemic.

Report number: 10 | Date: 28 May 2020 | Author Dr Lisa Denny

Many Tasmanians are taking the opportunity of having more time at home during the pandemic to do more household chores, particularly women. Others are spending more time on social media or other forms of entertainment, while others report enjoying spending time walking (often with their dog) and cooking for pleasure as well as caring for others.

The Tasmania Project found that nearly two thirds of people were enjoying a slower pace of life and that they were adapting well to this new way of living. This is reflected in how people are spending their time during the pandemic. Almost half had already tried new activities and were appreciating the extra time they have to spend with their family.

Many respondents reported that they feel content often or most of the time (52%) and happy (55%) with very few reporting they felt sad (15%), lonely (15%) or angry (8%).

Key findings

- The top three activities all ages are doing more of during the pandemic are household jobs, engaging in social media and enjoying digital entertainment such as TV, digital networks or live streaming.
- Many also report that life has not changed all that much.
- Men and women are spending their time differently during the pandemic, as are different age groups.
- While men report they are spending more time doing household chores and engaging in social media, more women report they are too.
- Compared with men, more women are spending more time gardening, reading, being creative and spending time outdoors.
- Compared with women, more men are spending more time enjoying digital entertainment, DIY activities and video games.
- Many older people are spending more time doing household chores, gardening and reading, particularly older women. Older men are also spending more time undertaking DIY projects at home.
**Around the home**

Staying home and saving lives during the pandemic has provided both men and women across all age groups to spend more in and around their homes and in their immediate area. This has provided the opportunity for people to spend more time on household chores and gardening, particularly for women, and DIY projects, particularly for men.

 Older men and women report spending more time reading and gardening than younger age groups.

 People report spending time painting their house, doing jigsaw puzzles and playing board games, cooking for pleasure, knitting and crochet, catching up on the to-do list, studying and catching up on personal affairs as well as much needed rest.

**Digital entertainment**

Younger age groups have been spending more time engaging with social media, particularly women aged 25 to 44, and enjoying digital entertainment such as TV and live streaming, particularly men aged 45 to 64. Men have also been spending more time playing video games, more so for those aged 25 to 44. These digital entertainment activities also included listening to pod casts, using the computer, doing research, watching the news including COVID-19 updates and other online activities.

**Activity**

While people are spending more time in and around the home, many are also being active; either spending time outdoors and doing sports and activities, women more so than men, for all age groups. Many people report walking for no reason and to no particular destination, but just for enjoyment, and often with their dog.

**Creativity**

Women, especially those 65 or older, have been enjoying spending more time being creative, including doing more arts, crafts, music and writing. Men’s creativity is being expressed through more time doing DIY projects.

**Caring**

Men and women across all age groups report spending more time caring for others, whether they are caring for children, elderly or their partner or those living with disability as well as looking out for their neighbours.

Those aged 25 to 44 in particular report spending more time caring for children, women more so than men. Those aged 45 to 64, the sandwich generation, were spending more time caring for both children and elderly people, again, women more so than men.

**Where next?**

The opportunity to spend more time at home during the pandemic has enabled people to readjust their lives and spend more time in and around their homes doing not just chores that previously haven’t been done, but also being active and creative. People have more time to themselves and are enjoying a slower pace of life, they are generally happy and content.

As Tasmania moves into the recovery phase of the pandemic, and restrictions are eased, people may start to consider how they return to ‘normal’ and pre-COVID ways of life, or whether they maintain the changes in their lives, and what their ‘new normal’ may be.
Tasmanians’ health and wellbeing concerns in the time of the pandemic

Report number: 11 | Date: 28 May 2020 | Author: Dr Rebecca Banham

The Tasmania Project has found that while many Tasmanians are concerned about the prospect of themselves or someone they know being infected by COVID-19, the vast majority of survey respondents reported confidence in knowing how to respond to such a situation.

When it comes to accessing health services and supporting good mental health, responses were mixed. Some interviewees voiced concerns about delayed access to health services, or about the mental wellbeing of friends and family. Conversely, some participants reported that they have been satisfied with their access to health services during the pandemic. Throughout both survey and interview responses, it is clear that Tasmanians’ concerns about health are not only for themselves, but also for family, friends, and vulnerable members of the community.

Key findings

- Survey respondents reported being concerned but knowledgeable about COVID-19 infection.
- Interview participants discussed their concerns about COVID-19 infection, for both themselves and others.
- Around one-third of interviewees discussed accessing health services – mostly non-related to COVID-19 – during the pandemic, reporting positive and negative experiences.
- Approximately one-third of interviewees spoke of mental health issues. This was often in relation to managing their own mental health, but some Tasmanians are also helping to support the mental health of friends and family.
Health and wellbeing

Survey respondents reported being concerned but knowledgeable about COVID-19 infection. 48% stated that they are concerned (38%) or very concerned (10%) about being infected themselves, while 69% of respondents reported being concerned (48%) or very concerned (21%) about someone they know being infected. Further, 86% agreed or strongly agreed that ‘the wellbeing of vulnerable people in Tasmania is more important than my way of life’.

Around one-third of interviewees expressed concerns about COVID-19 infection for both themselves and others. One participant explained that social and economic consequences were acceptable to ensure that his vulnerable parents had the best chance of remaining healthy. Another participant voiced his concerns about friends who live with physical disabilities, questioning how such conditions might affect the level of care they would be able to receive in the case of hospitalisation.

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly confident about what to do in the case of infection. 96% agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of the symptoms of COVID-19, and 92% agreed or strongly agreed that they know what to do if they or someone in their household displays symptoms. Further, 74% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I believe I will be able to access adequate testing and medical care in relation to COVID-19’.

Around one-third of participants discussed accessing health services during the pandemic, mostly in reference to non-COVID-19 health issues. Responses included one participant’s concern about their daughter being unable to access IVF, while other participants described a postponed surgery and cancer trial, and missing prenatal classes. Other described their satisfaction with the availability of telephone and online appointments. A few participants noted concerns about the adequacy of healthcare and COVID-19 testing in regional areas, while a small number of survey respondents (14%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I have not been able to access the health and support services I need’. This suggests that access to healthcare is of major concern to only a small proportion of Tasmanians.

Mental health

Approximately one-third of interviewees discussed mental health issues, usually in relation to managing their own mental health. Participants described various coping mechanisms, including journaling, drinking alcohol, smoking, exercise, and accessing professional support. 35% of survey respondents reported that they were concerned or very concerned about the impact of isolation on their mental health. One interviewee reported that she had recently contacted a mental health hotline, but unfortunately found the service to be unhelpful. She was also hesitant to contact friends for fear of being a burden upon them.

Continuing the theme of concern for others’ health, several participants described ‘checking in’ to help support the mental health of friends, and reported worrying about isolated relatives. Similarly, most survey respondents stated that they were concerned or very concerned about how their family (67%) and friends (72%) were coping during the pandemic.

Where next?

The responses from survey participants suggest that many Tasmanians feel confident about accessing healthcare during the pandemic, for both issues related and unrelated to COVID-19. It is important for us to continue to investigate how some Tasmanians’ access to health services might differ from this experience. Are some Tasmanians experiencing barriers in accessing adequate healthcare, and are there regions where these barriers are more pronounced? Conversely, what is working well for those Tasmanians who feel that they are able to access satisfactory healthcare?

Responses from both the survey and interviews suggest that the pandemic is impacting the mental health of some Tasmanians. We need to understand not only what support Tasmanians need in managing their own mental health, but also in supporting the mental health of others. This might include understanding both the capacities and limits of people’s abilities to address others’ mental health needs.

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations

The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See a more detailed explanation of the Project’s approach and method here.
How are older Tasmanians experiencing the pandemic?

Report number: 12 | Date: 4 June 2020 | Authors: Duncan Sinclair and James Brady

Older Tasmanians are faring well in isolation during the pandemic, according to findings from the Tasmania Project. Despite knowing they are at highest risk of COVID-19, older Tasmanians report feeling more resilient and less anxious than their younger counterparts.

Eighty percent of study participants aged 65 years and over said they maintained connection with family and friends while in isolation. During this time, half of the respondents said they had done more gardening, one third reported engaging in more creative activities, and a quarter had logged more exercise. Older participants generally did not say they felt confined at home, and expressed greater feelings of safety, strength and support. However, most relayed concerns that they, or someone they knew, may contract COVID-19.

Social isolation and the pandemic have had different impacts on Tasmanians of different ages. Compared to participants aged 25-64 years old, older Tasmanians had greater concern about COVID-19 but less concern that isolation would impact their physical and mental health. They reported feeling more resilient and hopeful, and less overwhelmed, fearful and anxious.

Key findings

• Most Tasmania Project participants aged 65 years and over said they have adapted to a new way of living during the pandemic, and almost half reported that it was getting easier with time.
• Older participants reported understanding how to protect their health and respond to a COVID-19 health emergency, as much as younger participants.
• Older participants described feeling positive emotions more often, and negative emotions less often, during isolation than those aged 25-64 years old.
• A greater proportion of those aged 65 years and over said they were maintaining connection with friends and family, compared to those aged 25-64 years old. Older respondents also proactively increased contact with friends online or by phone.
• Generally, concerns of older respondents centred on health effects of COVID-19, while concerns of those aged 25-64 years old focused on health effects of isolation and financial effects of the pandemic.
• Almost half of respondents aged 65 and over said they had downloaded the COVID-SAFE app. Of those that didn’t intend to download the app, a greater proportion than other age groups reported that this was due to issues with their phones.
Experiences of older Tasmanians

The majority of Tasmania Project participants aged 65 years and over (70%) said they adapted to a new way of living during the pandemic. This included increased engagement in some activities while strictly observing social distancing guidelines.

To stay connected with friends and family in isolation, older participants said they preferred mobile phone (calls, messages) and emails. Eighty-nine per cent reported having reliable internet at home, enabling a majority to also employ social media and group video apps to proactively maintain interpersonal relationships. Seventy-three percent of study participants aged over 65 years old reported that only occasionally, or rarely, did they feel lonely.

Older participants reported feeling informed and aware of COVID-19; 96% knew what the symptoms were, 94% knew what to do if they or a loved one displayed symptoms, and 84% knew how to protect themselves from infection.

To stay informed, 92% of older participants said they relied on ABC radio/TV, 38% reported using national online media, 33% said they read Tasmanian newspapers, and 26% said they connected online to international news providers. Only five percent of older participants reported using social media for updates.

Forty-six percent of participants aged 65 and over reported having downloaded the COVID-SAFE app, a slightly higher proportion than other age groups.

Outright home ownership was highest (80%) among older participants when compared to those aged 45-64 years old (40%) and those aged 25-44 years old (9%). However, some older people were still in vulnerable housing situations. Seven percent of older participants said they had to reduce spending on essentials to cover housing expenses during the pandemic.

How experiences of older Tasmanians differ from those of other age groups

Just as the lifestyles of older Tasmanians differ from those of younger age groups (with fewer work commitments and younger dependents), their experiences during the pandemic have also differed. Key differences between participants older than 65 years and those aged between 25-64 years old included:

- Fifty-five percent of participants aged 65 years and over reported concerns about contracting COVID-19, compared to 47% of those aged 46-64 years old, and 42% of those aged 25-44 years old. All participants said they were equally concerned about people they knew.
- Isolation was viewed differently by older participants compared to younger participants. Fewer people aged 65 years and over reported concerns about impacts of isolation on their mental/physical health (18% / 28%), compared to those aged 45-64 years (30% / 32%) and those aged 25-44 years old (51% / 65%). Fewer felt confined in their homes. Most participants said they were more concerned about health impacts than the economy.
- Older participants reported feeling strong, safe, secure, supported, content, rested, happy, resilient, proud, trusting and hopeful more often than younger participants during isolation. They also reported feeling overwhelmed, fearful, confused, sad, lonely, tired, angry, anxious, frustrated, resentful and powerless less often.

Where next?

- Older Tasmanians have changed their lifestyles during the pandemic- 80% said the crisis had revealed new ways of living well. So, as recovery continues, older people may consider how to incorporate these changes into everyday life on a permanent basis.
- On the whole, despite being at greatest health risk, study participants aged 65 years and over reported the greatest emotional resilience during the pandemic. We need to explore ways for older people to share their collective wisdom- their insight and perspectives- so that Tasmanians of all ages can respond effectively to crises in the future.
'A different Tasmania’: Hopes and concerns about the post-pandemic future

Report number: 13 | Date: 4 June 2020 | Authors: Nyree Pisanu and Rebecca Banham

Findings from The Tasmania Project show that while Tasmanians are adjusting to life during COVID-19, there are hopes for how a ‘new Tasmania’ might emerge from the pandemic.

Key findings
• Most respondents from the survey agreed they were adjusting to life during the pandemic and enjoying the slower pace of life.
• A majority also agreed that the wellbeing of people and the community was more important than their way of life.
• For survey respondents, top future priorities related to strong and affordable health, education and housing sectors.
• For the future, respondents wanted a different Tasmania to emerge.
• Interviewees’ hopes for this ‘different Tasmania’ included taking better care of the environment, being more empathetic to others, and more flexible work arrangements.

Adjusting to life during COVID-19
While COVID-19 is undoubtedly presenting challenges for Tasmanians, the pandemic also offers opportunities for considering what we value about living in the state. Most survey respondents indicated they were adjusting to the new way of living in the pandemic (68%; agreement was higher for females aged 45 and above, but lower for single parents).

Most also agreed they were enjoying the slower pace of life due to pandemic restrictions (60%; females were more likely to agree, alongside the 25-44-year age group). While less than half agreed this new way of life was becoming easier the longer the pandemic lasted (48%), a higher proportion of females aged 18-24 years agreed (77%).
Healthcare, housing and education

Survey respondents were asked what they wanted most for Tasmania’s future. Continuing this theme of concern for others, most top responses related to the wellbeing of people and the community. Access to health care was the most common response, with 67% of all respondents selecting this, and females (71% compared with 54% of males), and older age groups (73% of 65 years and above compared with 61.3% of 25-44 years) most likely to choose this.

Younger respondents were more concerned about affordable housing (82% of 18-24-year olds compared with 61% of all respondents). Affordable housing was also a higher priority for respondents from the South (64%), compared with North (56%) and North-West and West (52%). Respondents living in other households (including group households) also prioritised affordable housing (71%), compared with couples with children (53%).

Quality education was also a top priority (55%), particularly for couples with kids (62%) and single parents (65%). Access to job opportunities in the future (53%) was significant for younger people (82% of aged 18-24 years) and respondents from the North (59%).

Interviewees expressed concerns about Tasmania and Australia’s economic future, including for those working in precarious areas such as tourism and small businesses.

Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

A majority of respondents agreed they wanted a different Tasmania to emerge from this crisis (72%), with females aged 25-44 years most likely to agree, as well as respondents from the South (75%). The idea that the pandemic offers potential for new ways of living was very common in interviews. Several participants noted that the pandemic has had positive effects on the environment (such as less pollution) and highlighted their hopes that society will adopt more sustainable practices post-COVID-19. Some interviewees questioned neoliberalism and consumerist practices, describing the pandemic as an ‘opportunity’ for people to relate to one another with empathy, and to cultivate gratitude for what is positive about life. One participant noted that he is anxious about the future, due to his concern that this opportunity might be wasted.

The wellbeing of people and the community

Respondents agreed that the wellbeing of vulnerable people in Tasmania is more important than their way of life (86%; females aged 18-44 years had the highest level of agreement at 92%, while 75% males in the same age range agreed). This was echoed in many of the concerns voiced by interviewees. Several participants spoke of their worries about those in precarious or dangerous living situations, while other interviewees described their concerns about elderly or isolated family members (you can read more about this in Report Number 11).

Interestingly, one elderly participant noted that he was more concerned for younger Tasmanians, as he felt he had already lived a full life. Other participants noted that the pandemic offers an opportunity for greater community connection, with one interviewee describing it as a “revolution in local community”.

In general, participants disagreed that they were angry their way of life has been disrupted (71%), with females and older age groups less likely to be angry than males and younger age groups.

Further, a majority of survey respondents agreed that the crisis has shown us new ways of living well (83%), particularly females aged 25-44 years (89%) and those who live alone (89%).

This sentiment was also common amongst interviewees. Participants spoke of the “the breather that perhaps we needed” and society being able to ‘take a break’. Another participant described the pandemic as a ‘push’ toward where Australian society was already headed, with growing disillusionment surrounding the dominance of large corporations such as supermarkets. Other interviewees noted that the pandemic and social distancing rules have highlighted what ‘really matters’, such as face-to-face communication, and kindness and empathy for others.
While a clear majority of respondents indicated they wanted to remain in Tasmania (only 4% of respondents agreed that wanted to leave Tasmania; 3% from the South, 6% from North, and 4% from North West and West), around half were not confident that the Tasmanian economy would fully recover from this crisis within five years. This concern was similar between males (51%) and females (49%) but more significant for younger people (81% of 18-24 years compared with only 46% of aged 45-64 years), and single parents (61%). While most agreed that what they valued about living in Tasmania would continue to exist (87%; 93% of females aged 25-44 years agreed), however only some agreed that life will be better for most Tasmanians after this crisis (28%). Younger people were less likely to agree with this statement (12% of 18-24-year olds) compared with older respondents (31% of 45-64-year olds).

Other participants noted that the pandemic had provided ‘proof’ that more flexible work arrangements (such as working from home) are possible, while some noted services – such as online health appointments and delivery services – that they hope will remain in place post-COVID-19. Overall, there was a strong sense amongst interviewees that the pandemic offers potential not only for Tasmanians to be grateful for what they have, but for a ‘different Tasmania’ to emerge.

Where next?
As participants have noted, the pandemic provides a unique opportunity to reflect upon what Tasmanians value about life in the state, and what they hope for the future. We will be exploring these ideas in future TTP surveys, as we aim to better understand what life might look like as COVID-19 restrictions lift. As we move into the recovery phase, it is important for us to consider what changes Tasmanians would most like to see for post-pandemic life, and how we can build strong health, education and housing sectors to support our population.

We will also be exploring how the pandemic might shape the state’s future through upcoming TTP interviews. How has COVID-19 shaped how Tasmanians assess or approach what is important in their own life, and how has it highlighted what we value about the Tasmanian community? The pandemic might also affect how people organise their working and social lives in the future. How might some Tasmanians negotiate working from home in the future? Are there services that have changed as a result of COVID-19 that Tasmanian would like to see continued after the pandemic? As the findings of the Tasmania Project highlight, the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians is crucial to this post-pandemic vision.

Interviewees also noted a number of practical changes they hope to see in the future. This included greater awareness of hygiene during flu season, and vigilance regarding future pandemics.
Where we source our information about COVID-19

Report number: 14 | Date: 11 June 2020 | Authors: Matt Killingsworth and Libby Lester

The COVID-19 pandemic is a local, national and global crisis. However, respondents to The Tasmania Project, when asked which sources they rely on most for COVID-19 information, have strongly favoured Tasmanian government sources of information over information from the Federal Government, with news remaining the preferred source overall.

Key findings
- Tasmanian government sources, including information from Premier Peter Gutwein and local health authorities, were relied on much more than information from Prime Minister Scott Morrison.
- Government sources of information about COVID-19 were relied on more than information from doctors and healthcare officials.
- A large majority of Tasmanians rely on local, national and global news as an information source for COVID19-information.
- More respondents said they relied on information more from the World Health Organisation (WHO) than from Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Sourcing information during COVID-19

Study participants were asked ‘which of the following sources do you most rely on for COVID-19 information?’ and were asked to select up to 3 sources. With respect to government sources in Australia, 46% of respondents selected local health authorities and government, 61% selected the Tasmanian Premier, and 22% chose the Prime Minister.

The results also show the continuing importance of news during times of crisis. Unsurprisingly given both the demographic makeup of the cohort who responded to our first survey and the ABC’s role as the emergency broadcaster, the ABC dominated when we asked ‘Which media sources do you most trust on COVID-19? Please select up to 3’.

Most trusted media sources on COVID-19

- ABC TV or Radio
- Tasmanian newspapers (print or online)
- National newspapers (print or online)
- National online media (eg the Guardian)
- Independent news websites (eg The Guardian)
- National online media (eg the Guardian)
- Social media
- Commercial radio
- Commercial TV
- International news (eg BBC, Al Jazeera)

Other

0.0%  20.00%  40.00%  60.00%  80.00%  100.00%

The Tasmania Project – See a more detailed explanation of the Project’s approach and method here.
What respondents want for the future in Tasmania, percentage. The Tasmania Project

Interestingly, 24% of respondents identified the World Health Organisation as a source they most relied on for COVID-19 information. Given the degree with which the efficacy and legitimacy of international institutions is regularly being questioned by the federal government, and the US President’s consistent attacks on WHO itself during the crisis, the reliance on a global entity over the federal government is revealing.

Where next?

Our next general survey inquires more deeply into how to effectively communicate health and emergency messages in Tasmania. We seek to understand the factors that impact communications, including issues of trust, digital access, urban and rural lifestyles, and differences across age and gender. These factors need to be investigated in such a way that the specifics of our place and communities are made evident so that Tasmanians can be well informed during future crises.

State vs federal vs international

In terms of government sources, our results can be interpreted as reflecting a positive response from Tasmanians to the policies adopted by the Premier, and the information disseminated by local health authorities and government. There are a number of factors that are likely to have informed this: clarity of communication; empathy with, and support of, state government policies; or historically informed parochialism, whereby decisions about Tasmania’s well-being are seen to be best made by Tasmanian authorities in times of crisis.

The results show less reliance on the federal government. There are multiple factors that inform this: different roles and responsibilities over key factors during COVID-19 (eg hospitals, borders); less clarity and cohesion from the Prime Minister and the federal team; and the lack of Tasmania-specific information in early briefings, with the misinformation about the North West Coast cluster from federal sources including the chief medical officer illustrating the distance. It is possible that there were also some residual issues that diminished reliance and trust emanating from the Prime Minister’s handling of the summer bushfire national crisis.

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One in four Tasmanians experienced food shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report number: 15 | Date: 15 June 2020 | Authors Katherine Kent, Sandra Murray, Stuart Auckland, Beth Penrose

One in four respondents to The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey reported running out of food because they could not afford to buy more during the COVID-19 pandemic. This large survey of 1,170 Tasmanians showed that food insecurity* has increased relative to pre-COVID levels. Tasmanians whose jobs have been impacted, and vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities, single people with dependents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and young people, were more affected.

Key findings

- The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have significantly worsened food security in Tasmania, with more than 25% of the 1,170 Tasmanian respondents experiencing food insecurity to some extent and 14% of respondents experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity.

- While a significant proportion of respondents are experiencing food insecurity to some extent during the pandemic, young Tasmanians, single parent households, those with a disability, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders and temporary residents have been the most affected.

- Tasmanian respondents who have experienced changes to employment or a reduction in income as a result of COVID-19 are experiencing the highest levels of food insecurity.

- One in two of Tasmanian respondents who are currently receiving JobSeeker payments reported running out of food and being unable to buy more, which is double the level of food insecurity experienced by those receiving JobKeeper Payments (25%).

*Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. For comparison, the prevalence of food insecurity amongst the general Australian population (pre COVID-19) has been estimated to be approximately 5%. The Tasmanian Population Health Survey in 2019 reported that 6.2% of Tasmanians were experiencing food insecurity due to financial stress.
Survey results

The Tasmania Project surveyed more than 1,170 Tasmanians from across the State about food access and supply during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results show that the burden of food insecurity far exceeds pre COVID-19 levels, with more than 25% of respondents reporting that they have experienced some degree of food insecurity within the last month. Concerningly, 14% of Tasmanian respondents reported experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity, meaning they are regularly going without food and do not have access to enough healthy food to meet their needs.

Some Tasmanians reported experiencing higher levels of food insecurity than others. Nearly half (43%) of 18-24 year old respondents and 31% of 26-35 year old respondents reported being food insecure, which is higher compared with Tasmanians in older age groups (around 25%). 56% of Tasmanians identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reported being food insecure compared with 24.7% of respondents who did not identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Tasmanians living with a disability or health condition which impacts their lives were more likely to be food insecure (39%) when compared with Tasmanians without a disability (22%).

Where and how you live matters, with 33% of rural respondents reporting being food insecure compared with 23% of their urban dwelling counterparts. Nearly half of single people with dependents experienced food insecurity (46%), which is much higher than couples living with and without dependents (approximately 25%). Temporary residents were highly food insecure (59%) compared with Australian citizens and permanent residents (less than 25%).

The labour market has changed quickly due to COVID-19, and 35% of Tasmanians whose job has been impacted by COVID-19 have reported experiencing food insecurity compared with 22% of Tasmanians whose employment was unchanged. Tasmanians without work reported being worse off, with nearly half (48%) of unemployed respondents reporting food insecurity compared with 23% of those with jobs.

Two in five Tasmanians in the lowest quartile of income reported being food insecure compared with one in five from higher income quartiles. The increase in financial stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic including a sudden reduction in income had a major impact on food security. The majority of Tasmanian respondents (65%) who have lost most of their income (up to 99%) have reported being food insecure. Nearly half (42%) of respondents who lost up to 49% of income and one quarter of respondents who have lost up to 24% of their income have reported experiencing food insecurity.

Those receiving the Australian Government’s JobKeeper Coronavirus Payments have reported a similar level of food insecurity (25%) to those whose jobs were not impacted by the pandemic. However, half of the respondents receiving the JobSeeker Payments (52%) reported experiencing food insecurity.

Where next?

The data captured as part of The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey provide a sobering snapshot of the level of food insecurity experienced in Tasmania during the COVID-19 pandemic. Food insecurity is a serious public health problem and Tasmania must adopt a rights-based approach to food security. This approach requires States to fulfil their obligation to ensure that safe, nutritionally adequate and culturally acceptable food is available under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Ensuring that food supplies are affordable and accessible to all people in the community is a priority, regardless of their financial means or geographical location.

Research to gain a deeper understanding of the skills and strategies Tasmanians have used to cope and manage when experiencing food shortages is an important next step.

The Food Survey sample

Of the 1170 respondents who completed the survey, 71.9% were female, 22.7% were male and 0.5% specified other. 26.6% were aged 56-65 years, 22% were aged 46-55 years of age, 19% were aged 65 or older. 18.8% were aged 36-45, 11% were aged 26-35 and 2.6% were aged between 18-25 years. 59.5% lived in Southern Tasmania, followed by 23.1% from the North and 17.4% from the North–West and West. The majority of respondents (72.1%) lived in urban areas and 28.7% lived in rural regions. 2.3% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and 4 in 5 were born in Australia. 43.1% were in a couple family with dependents, nearly a third were in a couple family with no children (23.2%), 5.9% were in a single parent family with dependents and 22.9% either lived alone or in a group household. 71.9% were partnered (married, de-facto, or partnered but living apart) and 12.9% were single. The majority of respondents (67.3%) had completed a University degree. 62% were currently employed, 5.1% were unemployed and 32.9% were retired, studying, or a homemaker.
The Tasmania Project has found that during the pandemic, respondents strongly supported lifting restrictions that limited their access to natural environments.

**Key findings**

- Respondents indicated strong support for lifting restrictions related to outdoor activities.
- While most people understood why the restrictions were there, 28% of respondents did not.
- 58% of respondents indicated that access to ‘nature’ was a top priority for what they want for the future.
- Environmental issues, including environmental leadership, preservation of landscape and biodiversity, and climate action were frequently mentioned in relation to desires for the State’s future.

**Restrictions on national parks and reserves**

From late March 2020, access to national parks and reserves in Tasmania was restricted completely, with restrictions remaining in place over the Easter long weekend in April. From 11 May 2020, these restrictions were lifted to allow Tasmanians to access national parks and reserves within 30km of their homes.

Restrictions on accessing ‘green spaces’ were lifted from 5 June, allowing Tasmanians to visit national parks across the state with the exception of some major sites such as the Overland Track and Ben Lomond National Park which opened on 15 June. Restrictions have also been lifted on recreational boating and camping. The responses summarised in this report were received during this first stage of restrictions when access to national parks and reserves was prohibited.

**Lifting restrictions**

Respondents voiced strong support for the reopening of national parks and beaches. When asked about what restrictions they wanted lifted first, the most common response was the restriction on visiting national parks, reserves and beaches (69%), with males aged 25-44 years more likely to choose this response (75%) alongside respondents from the South (72%), compared with those from the North (67%) and the North-West and West (62%).
Visiting shacks was also a common response, selected by just under one third of the sample (29%). Younger age groups (41% of 18-44 years compared with 26% of 44 years and above), couples with children (33%) and other household types (32%) were the most likely to select this response. Similarly, boat ramps and recreational fishing (28%) was a popular response amongst younger age groups (33% of 24-44 years compared with 24% of 65 years and above) and parents with children (36%). For respondents from the North-West and West, this figure sat at 31% compared with those from the North (26%) and the South (28%).

Participants were asked if they agreed with the statement, ‘I understand why national parks were closed’. Most respondents agreed that they understood (59%), although females aged 25-44 years (67%) were more understanding than males overall (48%). 28% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and 13% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Confusion about the closure of national parks was also expressed by several interviewees. One participant explained that part of the appeal of moving to Tasmania was the opportunity to explore national parks, and that he wanted restrictions on national parks to be amongst the first lifted. Another participant expressed concern about the impact of the pandemic on Tasmania’s tourism sector and suggested closing national parks was a mistake (“what’s wrong with having a walk in a forest?”).

It is interesting to note that although the largest proportion of survey respondents identified as having no party affiliation (25%), nearly a quarter identified as voting for the Greens (23%), followed by the Labor Party (17%), the Liberal Party (13%) and other (4%).

The future

Respondents were asked what they wanted most for Tasmania’s future. Access to nature rated highly (58%) and was the 3rd most popular choice (of 16 options), with only ‘affordable housing’ and ‘access to quality healthcare’ chosen by more people. Access to nature was more likely to be selected by males (59%), younger age groups (65% of 18-44 years compared to 56% of 44 years and above) and parents with children (63%). Respondents from the South (63%) also prioritised this higher than those from the North (50%) and North-West and West (49%).

When asked what they most wanted for Tasmania’s future, 78 respondents (7%) chose to provide a ‘free text’ response. Of these, nearly half (33 respondents) referred to environmental issues such as environmental leadership, protection of biodiversity and preservation of Tasmanian landscapes, including national parks (18 respondents) and climate change leadership and action (15 respondents). Several respondents also referred to ‘sustainability’ (relating to industry, economy, and/or living practices).

Examples of responses regarding environmental issues such as biodiversity and preservation of national parks are below.

“What do you want most for Tasmania’s future?”

- “[To] transition away from obsolete [sic] industries like forestry and mining”
- “[To] look after our national parks and open spaces and threatened species”
- “To keep our natural areas unspoiled by inappropriate commercial development”
- “Ending environmental destruction, preserving biodiversity”
- “Greater concern to protect its unique environment”
- “Stop native forest logging … Concentrate on our breathtaking beauty and our uniqueness”

Where next?

This data provides insight into Tasmanian responses to restrictions limiting access to natural environments at the height of social distancing measures. It also reveals the complex ways that Tasmanians’ connection with the State’s ‘green spaces’ has been contextualised by the pandemic. It is clear that Tasmanians value their ‘island lifestyle’ and the data helps to highlight what should be prioritised to maintain the uniqueness of the State into the future.

Previous research suggests that Tasmanians have a strong sense of place, and deeply value their unique geography and access to natural environments. The social distancing restrictions that have been in place provide a unique opportunity to examine what Tasmanians value about spaces such as national parks and beaches, and how community life is shaped by access to these places.
Food access and supply: Preliminary report on findings from The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey

Report number: 17 | Date: 17 June 2020 | Author: Katherine Kent

From 25th May through 7th June, The Tasmania Project invited survey responses from Tasmanian residents aged 18 and over about food access and supply in Tasmania during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Topics covered by the survey included:

- Changes to the food supply and access to foods
- How Tasmanians have bought and consumed food
- Perceptions of Tasmanian grown produce and food exports
- Access to Tasmanian seafood
- Opinions about how the Tasmanian food supply could be better prepared in future

Summaries on specific topics will be released in separate reports in coming weeks.

The survey data is derived from a sample of 1170 respondents. Details of the sample are provided at the end of this report.

Survey findings

How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the Tasmanian food supply?

Overall, 40% of respondents thought that the Australian food supply has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The most frequently cited impacts included the lowered availability of foods and panic buying of food. As a result, half of respondents (50%) reported changing the way they buy and consume food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Availability of food in Tasmania

Nearly half of survey responses (47%) indicated that food has been more expensive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the price, most respondents agreed that there was similar variety available (50%) and it was of good quality (57%). Positively, 84% of the respondents were consuming the same amount or more fresh food than usual.

Compared with prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 44% of respondents reported that they were growing more of their own food, and 35% had caught more of their own food (i.e. fish). Furthermore, 32% reported that the pandemic has made them become more interested in how to grow and catch their own food.

The majority of people (60%) reported wanting to buy an item of food that was not available in the shops. Nearly half of the
people we surveyed (46%) reported being unable to buy grain-based foods such as rice and pasta. 20% missed out on protein foods such as meat seafood and eggs, 16% reported being unable to buy vegetables and 12% couldn’t buy the fruit they wanted. 10% missed out on dairy foods like milk and yoghurt. The vast majority of people had access to all the junk foods they wanted, with only 1% reporting that they were missing out on these foods.

Accessing food in Tasmania

35% of respondents reported buying more food than usual during the COVID-19 pandemic and 45% of people had bought different types of food. A quarter of respondents (25%) bought food more often than usual and nearly half (49%) were buying it from different shops. Only a quarter of respondents (24%) had bought more of their food online. A minority of respondents (13%) had found it more difficult to get to the shops. Only 3% had bought more of their food imported from overseas. Perceptions of food safety were high, with only 9% indicating that some foods were not as safe.

Cooking and storing food

40% of people reported cooking more food during the COVID-19 pandemic and 32% reported storing food differently. Despite government recommendations to purchase and keep 14 days of food in the household in case of restrictions, only 23% reported keeping this amount of food in the house. Most respondents kept 4-7 days in their house (34%) and 22% kept 8-10 days’ worth. Only 6% kept 1-3 days’ worth. Food wastage was down, with only 89% of the people we surveyed reporting they were wasting less food than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food Insecurity

One in four (26%) of Tasmanians reported running out of food and they couldn’t afford to buy more. The full report on food insecurity can be found here.

While a significant proportion of respondents are experiencing food insecurity to some extent during the pandemic, young Tasmanians, single parent households, those with a disability, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders and temporary residents have been the most affected.

Where are Tasmanians getting their food?

The vast majority (80%) of respondents reported buying their food from major supermarkets and 70% reporting buying food from independent supermarkets. In addition, a small proportion (12%) reported receiving a supermarket delivery service.

Home gardening provided Tasmanians with an important source of fresh food, with 57% of respondents harvesting food from their own gardens. A further 35% reported receiving food from other people’s gardens. Smaller shops were also important places to purchase food, with nearly half of respondents reporting that they had bought food from a butcher (46%) and fruit and vegetable shops (43%) the week of the survey.

The proportion of respondents visiting smaller outlets are higher than the first Tasmania Project survey which reported that only 26% had visited a butcher in late April – early May. This change potentially highlights that easing social distancing restrictions may have made it easier for Tasmanians to access these outlets.

A quarter of respondents (25%) reported buying food directly from a producer and 17% reported buying food directly from the farm gate or at the wharf.

More than half of respondents (57%) reported buying take-away, up from 40% the month prior. In addition, 22% got home delivery and 20% bought food from a fast food chain. This may be a result of the reported innovative ways food businesses maintained food supply despite the restrictions, which involved the implementation of online ordering, offering delivery and providing take-away options.

Perceptions of Tasmanian produce

88% of the people we surveyed thought Tasmanian produce was extremely important or very important. Interestingly, 55% of the respondents thought that Tasmanian produce is more important as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This resulted in changes to behaviour, with 43% of respondents reportedly consuming more Tasmanian grown food as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents to our survey bought most of their Tasmanian produce from major (65%) and independent supermarkets (75%). Fruits and vegetables were the most commonly bought Tasmanian produce, with smaller amounts of Tasmanian eggs, dairy, meat and seafood.

Fewer than 10% of respondents think Tasmanian produce is cheaper than imported produce, and 1 in 5 (21%) believe that Tasmania’s produce is only available in expensive restaurants and specialty shops.

The vast majority of survey responses agreed that it is important to know where your food is produced (96%) and that it is important to know who produces your food (95%). 4 out of 5 respondents agreed it is important to reduce the distance food travels (i.e., ‘food miles’).
Food exports
The survey asked respondents about their perceptions of food exports and revealed that most respondents (61%) thought that Tasmania exports too much of its best quality food. Only 8% agreed that Tasmania should attract more foreign investment in food production.

A small majority (60%) agreed that food production in Tasmania is ‘clean and green’ and a smaller minority of respondents (36%) agreed that it is important to buy produce that is certified organic or biodynamic.

Seafood
Regardless of age, gender or income, access to seafood by Tasmanians did not appear to be greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with 84% of respondents able to access the same seafood they normally eat.

What Tasmanian seafood are Tasmanians eating?
The survey explored consumption of Tasmanian-produced seafood prior to the pandemic. Interestingly, 26% of respondents indicated that they did not eat Tasmanian seafood.

Of those who did eat what they viewed as Tasmanian seafood, 53% reported eating farmed salmon, 29% ate scallops and flathead, 22% ate Blue Eye, and smaller proportions ate squid (13%), pacific oysters (13%), tuna (12%), octopus (5%), lobster (3%) and abalone (1%).

The importance of seafood to Tasmanian diets
Over half (61%) of respondents agreed that seafood is an important source of nutrition in their diet, and 55% agreed that it is important to have a reliable supply of seafood during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seafood and its contribution to diet was perceived as more important by older Tasmanians aged 65 years and older (73%) versus younger Tasmanians aged 18-25 years (41%). Similarly, the perceived importance of having a reliable supply of seafood during the COVID-19 pandemic was more important to older adults (67%) than the youngest respondents (47%).

Tasmanian Lobsters
Commercial fishers were impacted by the loss of their export markets in late January and in response they started selling lobsters locally at reduced prices. Of the 22% of respondents who had reported purchasing lobsters directly from the fishers during this time (e.g. at a jetty or wharf), half of these (11% of the total sample) indicated they would not purchase lobsters in this way again, fewer (8% of the total sample) indicated they would purchase them in the future but only at the reduced prices, and a minority (less than 3% of the total sample) indicated they would like to continue purchasing lobsters in this way in the future.

The Food Survey Sample
Of the 1170 respondents who completed the survey:

- 71.9% were female, 22.7% were male and 0.5% specified other.
- 26.6% were aged 56-65 years, 22% were aged 46-55 years, 19% were aged 65 years or older, 18.8% were aged 36-45 years, 11% were aged 26-35 years and 2.6% were aged between 18-25 years.
- 59.5% lived in Southern Tasmania, followed by 23.1% from the North and 17.4% from the North-West and West.
- The majority of respondents (72.1%) lived in urban areas and 29.7% lived in rural regions.
- 2.3% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 4 in 5 were born in Australia.
- 43.1% were in a couple with no children, nearly a third were in a couple family with dependent children, (23.2%), 5.9% were in a single parent family with dependents and 22.9% either lived alone or in a group household.
- 71.9% were partnered (married, de-facto, or partnered but living apart) and 12.9% were single.
- The majority of respondents (67.3%) had completed a University degree.
- 62% were currently employed, 5.1% were unemployed and 32.9% were retired, studying, or a homemaker.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
The importance of Tasmanian grown produce during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report number: 18 | Date: 18 June 2020 | Authors: Katherine Kent, Sandra Murray, Stuart Auckland, Beth Penrose.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Tasmania has experienced disruptions to the food supply chain, including imports and exports, and social distancing restrictions have impacted the experience of shopping for food. The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey asked 1,170 Tasmanians about their perceptions of Tasmanian produce during the COVID-19 pandemic, including how important they think Tasmanian produce is, how their perceptions have changed, where they’ve bought produce and what Tasmanian produce they are eating.

Tasmania has a thriving local food economy, producing some of the best fresh food in the world. Previous research prior to the COVID-19 pandemic reported that the majority of Tasmanians highly valued regionally grown fresh produce – but how has the pandemic impacted Tasmanians perceptions of regionally grown food?

Key findings

• The vast majority of survey respondents (89%) valued Tasmanian produce, reporting that Tasmanian produce was extremely or very important.

• Most respondents (54%) thought Tasmanian produce was more important as a result of the pandemic.

• 43% of respondents reported buying either ‘a lot more’ or ‘somewhat more’ Tasmanian produce, and 49% had bought about the same

• Fresh Tasmanian produce, including fruits and vegetables were the most commonly purchased produce.

• Older respondents reported buying more Tasmanian produce, including meat, dairy and seafood, in comparison to younger respondents.

• Independent supermarkets were important sources of Tasmanian produce with 75% of respondents reporting purchasing Tasmanian produce at these stores.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
Survey results

Similar to previous Tasmanian research findings, the respondents to The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey placed a high value on purchasing Tasmanian produce. The overwhelming majority (89%) of the respondents reported that Tasmanian produce is ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’. A further 10% reported it was ‘somewhat important’ and only 1% of respondents reported that it was not very important to them. Respondents who reported that it was only ‘somewhat important’ were more likely to be younger, identify as male, and from an urban area rather than a rural area.

Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened perceptions of Tasmanian produce, with 54% of survey participants reporting that they believe Tasmanian produce is more important than before the pandemic. 45% had not changed their opinion of Tasmanian produce and less than 1% thought it was less important or did not have an opinion. Respondents who thought it was less important or did not have an opinion were more likely to be younger, less important or did not have an opinion younger (less than 45 years).

The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey also asked whether respondents had bought more or less Tasmanian produce as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. 43% of respondents reported buying either ‘a lot more’ or ‘somewhat more’. Most participants (49%) had bought about the same, and 4% had bought ‘somewhat less’ or ‘a lot less’. Those who reported buying ‘a lot more’ or ‘somewhat more’ were more likely to be female and aged in the 55-65 year old age bracket. Those who bought ‘somewhat less’ or ‘a lot less’ were more likely to be younger or be food insecure.

Information on the types of Tasmanian produced purchased in the month prior to the survey was collected, with 80% of respondents reporting buying Tasmanian grown fruit, and 92% buying Tasmanian grown vegetables. 70% of respondents reported buying Tasmanian produced meat, 58% bought Tasmanian chicken, 77% bought Tasmanian eggs, 74% bought Tasmanian dairy and a lower proportion (41%) had bought Tasmanian seafood. A further 12% reported buying ‘other’ Tasmanian produce which included bread and other grains-based foods, wine and alcohol, preserves and honey, and specialty products like chocolate.

A greater proportion of female respondents and those living in urban areas reported buying Tasmanian grown fruit, and more respondents from age brackets over 35 years were likely to buy Tasmanian grown vegetables.

Tasmanian produced meat was more frequently purchased by Tasmanians aged 35 years or over in comparison to younger age groups, where 77% of those aged 35-45 bought Tasmanian meat in comparison to 37% of those aged 18-25 years. In addition, more Australian citizens bought Tasmanian meat (71%) in comparison to 50% of those born overseas. 60% of single person households bought Tasmanian meat, which is lower than couple families (75%).

Fewer Tasmanians from the Northern regions bought Tasmanian seafood (34%) in comparison to the North West and West region (42%) and South (44%). Older Tasmanians bought more Tasmanian seafood, with 53% of those 65 years or older reporting buying it in comparison to 34% of those aged 26-35 and 11% of those aged 18-25.

Fewer unemployed respondents (31%) bought Tasmanian seafood in comparison to employed Tasmanians (40%). Tasmanian chicken was bought more frequently by older respondents aged 65+ years (65%) in comparison to the youngest respondents aged 18-25 years (30%), and by those currently employed (56%) in comparison to those currently unemployed (40%). Tasmanian dairy was bought by more older Tasmanians aged 56-64 years (80%) and aged 65+ years (79%), in comparison to 44% of respondents aged 18-25 years, and those on lower incomes (68%) versus higher incomes (82%).

Most survey respondents reported purchasing Tasmanian produce at independent supermarkets (75%) and major supermarkets (65%), highlighting the convenience of these shopping outlets. Fewer respondents reporting shopping for Tasmanian produce at butcher shops (44%) and fruit and vegetable shops (39%), however these numbers are higher than the Tasmania Project findings from a month earlier, which showed only 26% of Tasmanians shopped at their local butcher. The difference may be related to relaxing restrictions around the State. Smaller numbers of respondents reported purchasing Tasmanian produce through specialty shops (18%), farmer’s markets (16%), home delivery box schemes (17%) and direct from farm gates or at wharf sales (16%).

Where next?

Positively, Tasmanian respondents to this survey have demonstrated a clear preference for Tasmanian produce. Their continued support for Tasmanian producers by buying Tasmanian produce will assist with strengthening the local Tasmanian market if food exports and international markets continue to be disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As intrastate restrictions around Tasmania continue to ease, it will be important to continue to monitor food security and how Tasmanians are shopping for food, including the role of Tasmanian produce.
Initial findings from the second general survey.

Report number: 19 | Date: 22 June 2020 | Author: Libby Lester

The Tasmania Project’s second general survey closed on 17 June. More than 1500 Tasmanian residents aged 18 or over entered the survey, with 1258 completing all questions. Their responses form the sample for this report.

All local government areas of Tasmania are represented, with residents of Hobart, Kingborough, Launceston and Clarence forming 51 per cent of the total sample. Of our respondents, 61 per cent live in the south, 21 per cent in the north, and 18 per cent in the north-west and west. Respondents name 167 towns, suburbs or areas in which they live.

Of the 1258 respondents, 69 per cent are women and 30 per cent men, with 25 per cent in the 25-44 years age bracket, 49 per cent aged 45-64 and 24 per cent over 65 years. 2 per cent are aged 18-24. One quarter have a bachelor degree level education, 9 per cent have no post-school qualification, and 7 per cent have a doctorate. More than half are employed. Full details of the sample will be made available at the link below.

Key findings

- 11 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that ‘The Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions’, with 71 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- Between this and the first general survey, which closed on 10 May, there has been a slight decrease in the number of respondents who believe border restrictions should stay in place until COVID-19 is eradicated from Australia, down from 51 per cent to 45 per cent.
- 71 per cent strongly disagreed or disagreed with the assertion that ‘Tasmania should reopen to tourism now’. Only 13 per cent agreed or strongly agreed.
- 25 per cent admit they do not always follow the physical distancing rules, up from 13 per cent in the first survey.
- 81 per cent of respondents believe future outbreaks of COVID-19 will be well managed.
- 85 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion that the economy has been unnecessarily damaged.
- 5 per cent of all respondents said they had gambled less or much less during the close down, 5 per cent had gambled at about the same level, and 0.7 per cent had gambled more or much more.
- 37 per cent of respondents said that the experience of the pandemic had changed them as a person, and 33 per cent said it had changed their life priorities.
- 7 per cent have made early withdrawals of their superannuation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
Official COVID-19 measures
In the first part of the survey, respondents were asked about how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. 89 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that business and shops are generally complying with COVID-19 regulations, and 66 per cent said they were willing to provide personal information for contact tracing. 62 per cent said they felt comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices, with 16 per cent disagreeing.

Strong support continues for measures imposed by the Tasmanian Government, with 71 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement that ‘The Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions’, and only 11 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing. 45 per cent want the State’s border restrictions to stay in place until COVID-19 is eradicated from Australia, down from 51 per cent in the first survey. However, 71 per cent strongly disagree or disagreed with the assertion that ‘Tasmania should reopen to tourism now’. Only 13 per cent agreed or strongly agreed.

There has been a decrease in the number of people finding the rules and regulations in relation to COVID-19 confusing, down from 36 per cent in the first general survey to 24 per cent in the latest. Most people (70 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the language used to explain COVID 19 has been too complex.

In terms of sources of information Tasmanians rely on for COVID-19 information, respondents mostly identified Premier Gutwein’s media briefings (65 per cent), television news (57 per cent), the Tasmanian Government’s coronavirus website (57 per cent), ABC radio (42 per cent) and the national Chief Medical Officer (29 per cent).

Source of information that were less relied on included mainstream newspapers (26 per cent), the workplace (25 per cent), social media/internet groups (25 per cent), the World Health Organization (22 per cent), the Prime Minister (20 per cent), local government (19 per cent), family, friends and colleagues (18 per cent), doctors or healthcare professionals (18 per cent), scientific literature (16 per cent), State Government advertising (15 per cent), commercial radio (8 per cent), information hotlines (7 per cent), printed leaflets (4 per cent), and community newspapers and radio (4 per cent).

The future in Tasmania
Respondents were more confident that the Tasmanian economy would fully recover in five years than they were in the first general survey, with 36 per cent, down from 50 per cent, not confident. 81 per cent believe that any future COVID-19 outbreaks will be managed well, and 11 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that Tasmania’s economic future has been unnecessarily damaged.

In the first survey, 25 per cent agreed they were more concerned about the economic impacts than the health impacts. This dropped to 19 per cent in this survey.

In terms of supporting Tasmania’s recovery, respondents identified the following industries/sectors for support by the State Government (when asked to select up to five): education and training (66 per cent), health care (65 per cent), tourism and hospitality (64 per cent), creative and cultural industries (45 per cent), agriculture, forestry and fishing (38 per cent), manufacturing (38 per cent), science research (35 per cent), construction (33 per cent), retail (26 per cent), energy (22 per cent), and police and emergency services (20 per cent).

To improve life in Tasmania, respondents selected: affordable housing (61 per cent), quality healthcare (60 per cent), quality education (56 per cent), environmental sustainability (47 per cent), and job security (38 per cent). See figure 1 for a full list.

Wellbeing and concerns
Using a standard question, we found Tasmanians had generally been satisfied over the last week with their homes (89 per cent satisfied or very satisfied), life opportunities (76 per cent), financial situation (72 per cent), how safe they feel (89 per cent), feeling part of their local community (64 per cent), their health (75 per cent), the area where they live (81 per cent), their amount of free time (70 per cent) and their life, all things considered (84 per cent).

One-third considered themselves a ‘vulnerable person’ in terms of COVID-19, and 83 per cent would continue using telehealth and other online or telephone support services if still available if the future.
We asked Tasmanians to tell us if they had participated in a range of activities prior to the pandemic, how their participation levels had changed over the past three months. With poker machines closed, 5 per cent said they had gambled less or much less, 5 per cent said they had gambled at the same level, and less than 1 per cent said they had gambled more or much more. Results are above in figure 2 as a total percentage and by gender of those who said they participated in activities prior to the pandemic.

To a series of statements, some of which were repeat questions from the first survey, we had the following responses: 62 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that they were enjoying a slower pace of life, compared to 60 per cent in the first general survey; 25 per cent admitted to not always following social distancing rules, up from 13 per cent; and 82 per cent said they trusted government and health officials to provide reliable information about COVID-19, up from 75 per cent. 72 per cent of respondents said they were not going out as much as they used to despite restrictions easing; 21 per cent said they felt uncomfortable asking people to keep their physical distance; and 56 per cent said they felt safe in public or shared spaces.

In terms of testing, 3 per cent said they had not been tested because they did not want to be quarantined and 7 per cent they had not been tested because the ‘test sounds unpleasant’. Interestingly, 37 per cent of respondents said that the experience of the pandemic had changed them as a person, and 33 per cent said it had changed their life priorities.

**Work and employment**

Respondents again reported a decrease in the number of hours they were working since the declaration in Tasmania of a state of emergency on 19 March, with 26 per cent said they were working less paid hours. 62 per cent reported no change. 27 per cent said their job situation had changed because of the pandemic. 10 per cent were receiving JobKeeper payments, and 5 per cent JobSeeker.

A large number of respondents said that as a result of the pandemic, they wanted or needed their job situation to change to: work more flexible hours (27 per cent of total sample), spend less time at their workplace (36 per cent), change their job within the same occupation (8 per cent), change occupation (8 per cent), study or retrain for a different occupation (7 per cent), find an additional job (6 per cent), move to more secure employment (7 per cent), relocate to a different part of Tasmania (2 per cent), move away from Tasmania (3 per cent), work remotely for an employer outside Tasmania (3 per cent), set up their own business (5 per cent), or change how their business operates (6 per cent).

To the question, ‘If your job allowed you to work from home during the pandemic, how would you like to do your work into the future?’, 15 per cent responded they would prefer to work from home, 10 per cent said they did not want to work from home, and 49 per cent said they would prefer a combination.

**Financial wellbeing**

Due to COVID-19, respondents said they have been unable to pay: electricity, phone, water and gas bills (4 per cent), mortgage or rent (3 per cent), car registration or insurance (4 per cent), insurance (3 per cent), or minimum payment on credit cards (2 per cent).

In terms of financial responses to COVID-19, 6 per cent have reduced home loan or rent payments, 10 per cent have drawn on accumulated savings or term deposits, 2 per cent have increased the balance owing on credit cards by $1000 or more, 2 per cent have entered into a loan agreement with family or friends, less than 1 per cent have taken out a personal loan, 3 per cent have sold household goods or jewellery, 1 per cent have sold shares, stocks or bonds, 2 per cent have sold other assets, and 7 per cent have made early withdrawals of their superannuation.

More detailed focused reports of the findings from this and other surveys, and of interviews, will continue to appear on The Tasmania Project website in coming days.
More Tasmanians started growing their own food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report number: 20 | Date: 23 June 2020 | Authors: Katherine Kent, Sandra Murray, Stuart Auckland, Beth Penrose

The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic sparked Australian’s interest in home gardening, with people stocking up on items to produce their own food at home, including vegetable and herb seeds and seedlings. Given the many benefits of gardening, this interest in increased self-sufficiency could be seen as a positive response to the pandemic.

The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey of 1170 Tasmanians investigated if respondents were growing and catching more of their own food, and whether the pandemic had increased their interest in learning how to grow, catch and hunt food.

Understanding who our new home gardeners are in Tasmania could reveal where there are new opportunities for people to continue developing and sharing food production and catching skills, to assist with maintaining gardening for both self-provisioning and health into the future.

Key findings

- 35% of respondents reported that they were growing more of their own food as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 33% of respondents reported that they are interested in how to grow, catch or hunt food.
- A minority of respondents (15%) agreed that they were catching less of their own food during COVID-19.

Survey results

Growing food at home

Across Tasmania, 35% of respondents reported that they were growing more of their own food as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A greater proportion of respondents living in rural areas reported growing more of their own food (44%) in comparison to those living in urban areas (31%).

More people aged 46-55 years (40%) and people aged 65 years or older (34%) reported growing more of their own food during the pandemic in comparison to younger respondents aged 18-24 years (18%).

Interestingly, people living with a health condition or disability were more likely to be growing more of their own food (40%) in comparison to those without a disability (33%). Respondents who were food insecure were also growing more of their own food during COVID-19 (40%) versus those who were food secure (33%).
Change to household income was a driving factor for growing food at home. Those who had no loss in income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (32%) were less likely to report growing more of their own food in comparison to those who had lost income. For example, 39% of respondents who had lost a quarter of their income and 43% who had lost up to half of their income reported growing more food. This number grew to 77% of respondents who had lost the majority (up to 99%) of their income.

**Catching and hunting food**

As part of the COVID-19 restrictions at the time of the survey, recreational boating and fishing were considered non-essential activities and were not allowed. This may have impacted on Tasmanians' ability for self-sufficiency through catching their own food.

The majority (50%) of respondents were neutral on whether they had caught less of their own food during the COVID-19 pandemic, 35% disagreed that COVID-19 restrictions mean they were catching less of their own food, and a minority (15%) agreed that they were catching less of their own food during COVID-19. A greater proportion of those who reported catching less of their own food were from the Northern regions (18%) and North-West and West regions (17%), with fewer respondents from the South (13%) reporting being impacted.

Males (19%) reported that restrictions meant they were catching less of their own food in comparison to a smaller proportion of females (13%). Those who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (20%) reported catching less food than those who did not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (15%).

Respondents who were food insecure reported being unable to catch as much of their own food during COVID-19 (22%) versus those who were food secure (13%).

**Interest in learning how to grow, catch or hunt food**

Across Tasmania, 33% of respondents reported that they were interested in how to grow, catch or hunt food, compared to 40% of those living in rural areas.

More younger respondents (36% of 18-25 year old and 40% of 26-35 year old respondents) reported being interested in how to grow, catch or hunt food compared to older respondents (20% of those aged 65 years or more). This may be due to a higher level of relevant skills and/or knowledge among older respondents.

A greater number of people with higher levels of education were more likely to report being interested in learning to grow, catch or hunt food, with 33% of respondents with a University education and 35% of respondents with a diploma or TAFE certificate reporting interest, in comparison to 26% of people whose highest level of education is high school (year 12).

38% of respondents with dependents in the household indicated they were interested in learning to grow, catch or hunt food, which is higher than single person households (23%).

A drop in household income related to the COVID-19 pandemic was a major factor contributing to interest in learning to grow, catch or hunt food, with interest increasing relative to the drop to income. While 30% of respondents who had no loss in income indicated they were interested in learning more, this increased to 35% of those who had lost a quarter of income, 42% of those who had lost half of their income, and 65% of those who had lost the majority of their income. Respondents who were food insecure were also more interested in how to grow, catch or hunt food during COVID-19 (40%) versus those who were food secure (29%).

**Where next?**

Given the many benefits of gardening, which include access to green space and an increase in consumption of healthy, home-grown foods, this interest in increased self-sufficiency can be seen as a positive response to the pandemic situation.

However, empty shelves at nurseries seen earlier this year tell us that Australia was insufficiently prepared to rapidly scale up productive home gardening. Better preparation may be needed for there to be an equitable and effective response to a pandemic situation in the future.

By examining the specific groups across Tasmania who have responded to the pandemic by growing more of their own food, and who report an interest in learning how to catch or hunt for food, or grow their own produce at home, we can identify the specific groups that may need further help to develop their knowledge and skills to maintain higher levels of gardening and self-sufficiency in the future.
Support for and compliance with restrictions in Tasmania during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report number: 21 | Date: 29 June 2020 | Author: Nyree Pisanu

Findings from The Tasmania Project show that, in general, Tasmanians are supportive of the restrictions that have been put in place in response to the pandemic and are continuing to comply with these measures.

**Key findings**

- Respondents trusted the government to provide reliable information about COVID-19 and supported most measures.
- Support for keeping the Tasmanian borders closed was mixed across both surveys.
- Most respondents reported they had been complying with restrictions.
- A majority of respondents supported the rate at which the State Government is easing restrictions.
- Compliance with social/physical distancing measures decreased between the two surveys.
- In some cases, younger people were less likely to comply with restrictions than older people. They also had less trust in the government.
- Since restrictions have eased, only half of respondents have felt safe in public or shared spaces.

**Timing of the surveys – what restrictions were in place?**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tasmania declared a state of emergency on 19 March 2020. Following this, restrictions on cafes, restaurants, retail, entertainment and recreation were enforced, national parks and reserves were shut, non-essential travel around the state was restricted and the Tasmanian borders were closed to non-residents. Working from home and learning from home for school children was encouraged where possible.

By 30 March, Tasmanians were only allowed to leave the house for food, essential supplies or services, to go to work or school, or for caring/family reasons, and a two-person rule was established for outdoor exercises. The first Tasmania Project survey (TTP1) was conducted between 20 April and 10 May 2020 and coincided with the full COVID-19 restrictions.

On 11 May, Tasmania began to ease restrictions in three stages. Stage 1 included an increase in the number of people allowed in households, funerals and gatherings, restaurants and cafes reopened to a limited number of patrons, and students returned to school. On 5 June, Tasmanians were permitted to travel around the state. On 15 June, stage 2 included another increase in the number of people allowed in spaces, alongside the opening of establishments such as cinemas, museums, beauty services and gyms. Stage 3 was scheduled to begin on 13 July, however was brought forward to 12pm on 26 June. The second Tasmania Project survey (TTP2) was open from 9 June until 17 June 2020 and coincided with stage 2 easing of restrictions.
## Attitudes towards COVID-19 measures

In TTP1, respondents were asked a series of questions about their opinions towards COVID-19 measures. Most respondents agreed that official measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 were not too strict (83%). Females were more likely to agree (87%) than males (71%).

Half of TTP1 respondents (51%) disagreed that it felt like their freedom had been taken away, while 31% agreed and 18% were neutral. Males were more likely to agree with this statement (39%) compared with females (29%), as were younger respondents, with 59% of those aged 18-24 years in agreement compared with 33% aged 25-44 years, 31% aged 45-64 years and 27% aged 65 years and above.

Most TTP1 participants (59%) disagreed they were fearful they would accidentally break the law with COVID-19 measures in place, with minor differences between demographic groups. However, most indicated they felt neutral (57%) that, compared with others, they were doing more to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Tasmania. Only 28% agreed and 15% disagreed with this statement. Males (31%) were more likely to agree than females (27%).

In both surveys, respondents were asked if the Tasmanian Government should keep the state borders closed until COVID-19 was eradicated from Australia. In TTP1, 51% agreed, 20% were neutral and 29% disagreed. Respondents from the North-West and West, and the North were more likely to agree (55%) compared with those from the South (49%). Females were more likely to agree (54%) compared with males (43%), as were younger respondents aged under 44 years (58%) compared with those aged 45 years or older (49%). There was less agreement that borders should remain closed in TTP2 (45% agreed, 20% were neutral and 35% disagreed), than in TTP1, however the age patterns were similar in both surveys with younger people more likely to agree than older people.

In both surveys, respondents were asked if they trusted government and health officials to provide reliable information about COVID-19, with 75% of TTP1 respondents and 82% of TTP2 respondents agreeing. Older age groups had more trust than younger age groups in both TTP1 (18-44 years; 62%, 45-65+ years; 75%) and TTP2 (18-44 years; 71%, 45-65+ years; 85%). In TTP2, respondents from the North (84%) and South (83%) were more likely to trust the government to provide reliable information compared with the North-West and West (77%).

In both surveys, participants were asked if the rules and regulations in response to COVID-19 were confusing. There was a slight decrease between TTP1 (38% agreed) and TTP2 (34% agreed). For TTP1, more people in the South agreed rules were confusing (38%), compared with the North-West and West (33%) and North (31%).

In both surveys, respondents agreed they would know what to do if they or someone in their household had symptoms of COVID-19 (TTP1; 92% agreed, TTP2; 97% agreed) with minor differences between demographic groups.

In TTP2, respondents were asked about the easing of restrictions and the introduction of new regulations. Respondents largely supported the statement that businesses and shops were complying with COVID-19 regulations (89%). Most respondents disagreed the government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions (79% disagreed; 83% of females and 71% of males).

**“79% of TTP2 respondents disagreed the Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions”**

Most respondents of TTP2 (62%) felt comfortable telling other people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices, however older age groups were more likely to feel comfortable than younger groups (44 years and below; 53%, over 45 years; 66%). Findings also showed that participants disagreed that the language used to explain COVID-19 has been too complex (71%). Those from the North and North West were less likely to disagree (66%) compared to the South (74%) and North (71%).

## Compliance with restrictions

Respondents were also asked questions about their own compliance with restrictions.

In TTP1, most respondents indicated they were staying home and only going out for essential purposes such as getting groceries or medicines or going to work (87%). This figure was higher in the North (91%) than in the North-West and West (88%) and South (86%). More females reported staying home (89%) compared with males (82%). Only 65% of respondents aged 18-24 years indicated they were staying home, compared with 88% of respondents of all other ages.
A majority of TTP1 respondents (80%) indicated they did not break the rules on social distancing to connect with family and friends, as well as not breaking the rules to do things they enjoyed before the pandemic (88%). Respondents from the South were more likely to agree that they broke the rules to connect with family and friends (13%), compared with respondents from the North (10%) and North-West and West (7%).

In both surveys, respondents were asked if they always followed social/physical distancing rules¹. In TTP1, 81% agreed, while in TTP2 only 64% agreed. This observed decrease is likely to reflect the easing of restrictions that occurred before and during TTP2. In TTP1, more people in the North were following distancing rules (87%), compared with the North-West and West (82%) and South (79%). Less young people (18-24 years) indicated they were following the rules (47%), compared with those aged 25-44 years (75%), 45-64 years (84%), and 65 years and above (86%). In TTP2, a similar age pattern was found, with only 44% of those aged 18-24 years following the rules, compared with 53% of those aged 25-44 years, 67% aged 45-64 years and 70% aged 65 years and above. More females (66%) were following distancing rules compared with males (58%) in TTP2.

“81% of TTP1 respondents reported they were following social/physical distancing rules, compared with only 64% of TTP2 respondents”

In TTP2, most respondents (73%) agreed they were not going out as much as they used to, despite restrictions easing. More females agreed with this statement (77%) compared with males (65%).

Just over half of TTP2 respondents indicated they felt safe in public or shared spaces (56%). Males were more likely to feel safe (62%) compared with females (54%). Respondents from the South also felt safer (57%), compared with those from the North (56%) and North-West and West (54%).

TTP2 participants were also asked if they were willing to provide personal information for contact tracing. Most agreed (66%), with those from the South and North-West and West more likely to agree (both 68%) than those from the North (59%). Older respondents (45 years and above) were more likely to agree (71%), compared with those under 44 years (60%).

TTP2 respondents were asked two questions regarding COVID-19 testing: 1) if they would avoid being tested because they did not want to be quarantined (68% answered the question, 32% selected N/A), and 2) if they would not get tested for COVID-19 because the test sounds unpleasant (76% answered the question, 24% selected N/A). Of those who answered the first question, 85% disagreed that they would avoid being tested because they would not want to quarantine. A high proportion of females disagreed (89%) while less males disagreed (80%). For those who answered the second question, 80% disagreed they would not get tested for COVID-19 because the test sounds unpleasant. Again, a higher proportion of females disagreed (83%) compared with males (75%).

Where next?

The findings show that during TTP1 when full restrictions were enforced, a clear majority of the sample supported and complied with the measures put in place by the Tasmanian Government. Further to this, trust in the government and health officials to provide reliable information about COVID-19 has remained high across both surveys. As restrictions eased both before and during TTP2, less respondents indicated they were complying with measures such as physical distancing. However, TTP2 respondents were not going out as much as they used to, and many did not feel safe in public or shared spaces.

The findings provide an insight into Tasmanian attitudes and behaviours regarding restrictions during the pandemic, and how they have changed through the different phases of the response. These results will be useful to prepare for the possibility of a second wave of COVID-19 in the State. In particular, the findings demonstrate the importance of engaging with younger people to encourage compliance with official measures to ensure the safety of all Tasmanians.

The Tasmanian Project is conducting a third general survey (TTP3) in the coming months. This survey will provide further insights into Tasmanians’ attitudes towards official measures and how they are faring during the pandemic, as well as new insights into Tasmania’s broader connections to a post-COVID-19 world.

¹ Question wording was changed from social distancing in TTP1 to physical distancing in TTP2 to reflect the change in language used by the state and federal governments.
Financial wellbeing of homeowners and renters during the pandemic.

Report number: 22 | Date: 1 July 2020 | Author: Jacqueline De Vries

The Tasmania Project has found that while overall, Tasmanians’ financial wellbeing is reasonable, homeowners with a mortgage and private renters are the most impacted.

While homeowners are more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their financial situation than renters, those with a mortgage recorded a higher increase in household spending than those who owned their homes outright and private renters. Mortgagees were also the most likely to be unable to pay bills however were more likely to undertake financial actions to support basic living expenses. Private renters show the most fluctuation in household income and are the most at risk group for any further reduction in income or increase in rent.

Ten per cent of this sample reported being on JobKeeper and 5% on JobSeeker. With the currently time limited JobKeeper and temporary increase of JobSeeker payments it will be important to monitor Tasmanians’ financial wellbeing and the impact on meeting housing costs.

The findings in this report come from The Tasmania Project’s second general survey which collected responses from 1258 Tasmanian residents between 9–17 June 2020.

Key findings

- A majority of the survey’s 1258 respondents said that Homeowners are more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their financial situation than renters.
- 58% of respondents who were receiving government benefits and paying off a mortgage were on a JobKeeper payment.
- Private renters showed the most change in household income, with over half experiencing an increase or decrease in household income since COVID-19.
- Household spending decreased for 61% of private renters and 63% of homeowners (either outright or with a mortgage).
- Household spending increased for 15.3% of homeowners with a mortgage.
- While most Tasmanian households were able to pay bills over the past three months, those that were unable to pay bills were more likely to be paying off a mortgage.
- Financial actions to support basic living expenses included drawing on accumulated savings or term deposits (10%) and early withdrawal of superannuation (6%).
- 39% of respondents who reported making an early withdrawal from their superannuation were paying off a mortgage.
- Around a tenth of mortgagees or private renters reduced their home loan or rent payments.
Survey results

Financial situation by tenure

Homeowners who own their home outright as more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their financial situation (81%) followed by home purchasers (72%). While 52% of respondents who rent from a private landlord were satisfied or very satisfied with their financial situation, 31% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied. For respondents who were renting from a public housing authority, 40% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied, a third were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and 27% were satisfied or very satisfied with their financial situation.

Government benefits by tenure

While the majority (68%) of respondents did not receive any government benefits, of those who did receive government benefits, 33% received the aged pension, 30% received the JobKeeper payment and 15% received the JobSeeker payment.

Of respondents who were receiving government benefits and paying off a mortgage, 58% were on a JobKeeper payment and a further 13% were on JobSeeker. For respondents who were who were receiving government benefits and renting from a private landlord, 26% were receiving the JobKeeper payment and 24% were receiving JobSeeker.

Financial wellbeing by tenure

Household income

Over half of respondents’ household income had remained the same since COVID-19 for all tenures except for private rental. For those renting privately, household income remained the same for 38%, decreased a little for 21%, decreased a lot for 17%, and increased a little or a lot for 21%. For 67% of public renters, income remained the same.

For those paying off a mortgage, 56% of household incomes remained the same, 20% decreased a little and 13% decreased a lot. For those who owned a home outright, 63% of household incomes remained the same, 18% decreased a little and 10% decreased a lot.

Household spending

For over half (53%) of those renting from the public housing authority their household spending remained the same. For private renters, household spending both decreased, a little for 38% and a lot for 23%, and increased, a little for 12% and a lot for 3%.

For 49% of homeowners who owned their home outright and 46% with a mortgage their household spending had decreased a little. The household spending of a further 15% and 18% respectively had decreased a lot. For 14% of mortgagees their spending increased a little and for 1% a lot.

Households unable to pay bills

Most Tasmanian households were able to pay bills over the past three months. Households that were unable to pay bills were more likely to be those paying off a mortgage.

Of all respondents, 3% said that they were unable to pay mortgage or rent payments. Those who were paying off a mortgage were by far the largest group (57%) of these respondents. Private renters and those who owned their home outright comprised an equal share of 19% each. It should be noted that while homeowners may own their home outright, they may also be paying mortgage (or rent) on other property.

People who were unable to pay electricity, gas, or telephone bills comprised 4% of all respondents. Of these, 35% were paying off a mortgage and 31% owned their home outright. A further 19% were private renters and 8% public renters.

Those who were unable to pay home and/or contents insurance comprised 4% of respondents overall. Of these 33% were paying off a mortgage and 44% owned their home outright, while 18% were private renters.
Households undertaking financial actions to support basic living expenses

Overall, slightly higher proportions of households than reported that they were unable to pay bills, reported that they had taken some financial actions to support basic living expenses over the past three months (during the pandemic).

Six per cent of all respondents reduced their home loan or rent payments, and of these respondents more than half (61%) were paying off a mortgage. The proportion of all respondents paying off a mortgage or renting from a private landlord who took this action to support living expenses was 10% respectively.

Ten per cent of all respondents reported that they had drawn on accumulated savings or term deposits. Of these, 39% owned their home and 38% were paying off a mortgage. A further 17% were renting from a private landlord and 2% from public housing.

Of all respondents, 6% reported early withdrawal of superannuation. Of these 39% were paying off a mortgage, 31% owned their home, 21% were renting from a private landlord and 3% from public housing.

Smaller proportions of respondents reported increasing the balance owing on credit cards by $1,000 or more (2%) and/or entering into a loan agreement with family or friends (2%). Of those respondents who increased the balance owing on credit cards, 42% were paying off a mortgage and 31% owned their home outright. A further 23% were renting from a private landlord. Of those respondents who entered into a loan agreement with family or friends, 39% were paying off a mortgage and 33% were renting from a private landlord.

Where next?

A specific housing survey open from Monday 22 June and Thursday 2 July 2020 is exploring how housing circumstances and living arrangements may have changed for Tasmanian residents during the pandemic.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here
Creativity, culture and the arts during COVID-19

Report number: 23 | Date: 1 July 2020 | Authors: Libby Lester and Rebecca Banham

The Tasmania Project's second general survey asked a series of questions devoted to creative and cultural practices, engagement and activities. We wanted to know how Tasmanian residents value and engage with the arts, culture and creativity, both in terms of joining events and being creative themselves.

How important have the arts and cultural events and activities been to Tasmanians, before and during the pandemic? Has this contributed to maintaining wellbeing during the crisis?

The arts, entertainment and cultural industries have been among the hardest hit since the state of emergency was declared in Tasmania on 19 March, with all venues for live performance of theatre and music closed, film and television production stopped, school-based programs paused, and doors shut on museums, cinemas and galleries. Recovery is predicted to be one of the slowest.

On the other hand, new forms of online creativity have been emerging daily – from choirs to orchestras, exhibitions to film festivals.

Key findings

- A majority of the survey's 1258 respondents said that cultural and arts activities and events had been important to some extent in maintaining their overall wellbeing during the pandemic.
- Almost half described being creative as important or very important to maintaining their wellbeing during the pandemic.
- Creative and cultural industries were among the top four industries/sectors in Tasmania that respondents believed should be prioritised for government support during recovery.
- Arts and cultural activities featured above tourism, access to nature and advanced manufacturing when respondents were asked what should be prioritised to improve life in Tasmania in the future.
- A large proportion of our sample reported having participated in a range of cultural events and activities in the 12 months prior to the pandemic’s onset.
- One third had continued this engagement via online or broadcast media during the pandemic.
- However, very few respondents to the survey had spent any money on creative and cultural activities – including to participate in online events – in the 3 months since the crisis began, in stark contrast to the amounts they estimated they had spent in the 12 months prior to the declaration of a state of emergency.
Before the pandemic

We asked respondents to estimate how frequently they attended cultural and arts events in the 12 months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic: art exhibitions/galleries, museums, music festivals, cultural festivals (including arts/food and wine), performing arts (e.g. theatre, music, dance), live music (e.g. bands, singers DJs), cinemas, literature and poetry readings, public lectures, and launches/openings. Findings for the total sample are presented in Figure 1 above, showing 84% had attended art exhibitions and galleries, the same number (84%) had visited museums, 86% had participated in a cultural festival, and 70% had seen live music.

Attendance at least once a year by gender, age bracket and region are shown in figures 2-4.

During the pandemic

To the question – Have you engaged with cultural and arts activities/events during the pandemic (including online or through broadcast media)? – we received the following affirmative responses: by region, 38% in the South, 27% in the North and 28% in the North-West and West; by gender, 39% of female respondents and 22% of male respondents; and by age group, 21% of respondents aged 18-24 years, 36% aged 25-44 years, 34% aged 45-64 years, and 34% aged over 65 years.

380 respondents provided free-text answers about the cultural and arts activities and events that they had engaged with during the pandemic. These respondents covered a wide variety of activities and events: from music, film, and dance, to singing, reading, and visual art; from participating in classes and workshops, to practicing one’s own art and/or teaching others; and from radio, streaming, and podcasts, to engaging with comedy, religion, and social and community groups.

The format of the free-text responses – in which respondents may phrase answers in their own way – means that some activities do not feature as heavily as might be expected if chosen from a set of provided options. Nonetheless, the trends within these responses point to engagement with numerous forms of online creativity:

- Over a third of participants referred to ‘music’ in their response, including livestreams, concerts, and musicals. Almost 20% of all responses referred to ‘live’ events often involving music.
• Performances such as classical music, opera house events and musical theatre featured in around 15% of responses. This included 23 references to the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, including the current virtual program known as the ‘TSO Daily Dose’.
• There were over 70 references to engaging with learning online, such as participating in workshops, lectures, classes, and webinars. Around 5% of responses were from participants who mentioned practicing and performing their own art, including through teaching others online.
• Almost 10% of participants referred to film and film festivals, including 14 references to Tasmania’s Breath of Fresh Air film festival.
• Other cultural/arts activities included watching dance performances, particularly ballet, reading, such as book clubs, literary events, and own reading; choirs and singing; streaming services such as Netflix; online church services; and podcasts.

In terms of the platforms being used for these events and activities, there were almost 200 references simply to “online” activities and events, almost 50 references to YouTube, and over 30 references to Zoom. In reality, the level at which respondents are accessing these platforms is likely to be much higher, as this is simply the count of answers referring specifically to each platform.

Figure 5 provides a word cloud illustrating the frequency of responses in these free-text answers. Many responses indicated a desire not only for entertainment, but for connection with others and the ‘outside world’. One respondent wrote that they “have felt more included in the community during the pandemic”, while another described participating in a neighbourhood centre event in which scones and cakes were dropped off at their house “so we could enjoy [morning tea] while being safe”. Another respondent wrote about engaging with concerts put together by “Aboriginal artists, from across Australia … to provide entertainment and uplifting messages to the Community”. Other respondents described being able to virtually tour sites from across the world, including the Louvre, the Pyramids, and the Tate Modern.

Sixty-five per cent of respondents believed cultural and arts/events activities (including online) had been important for maintaining overall wellbeing during the pandemic: 12% described these as very important, 17% as important, 15% as fairly important, 21% as slightly important, and 29% as not important. More women than men described these as very important or important.

Being creative was described by 80% of respondents as important to some extent to maintaining wellbeing during the pandemic: 21% of respondents said it was very important, while 23% said it was important, 19% fairly important, 17% slightly important, and 17% not important. Again, women were more likely to describe it as very important than men (24% of female respondents compared to 13% male).

Interestingly, age was not a factor in determining how significant being creative was in maintaining respondents’ wellbeing during the pandemic.

We also asked Tasmanians to estimate the amount of money they had spent on arts and cultural activities and events in the 12 months prior to the pandemic. Of the 764 respondents who provided an estimate, 21% said they had spent more than $2000, 20% estimated between $1000-1999, 23% estimated between $500-$999 and 23% below $249. Figure 6 provides a word cloud illustrating the frequency of responses.

We then asked respondents to estimate the amount they had spent during the pandemic on their principally online engagement with the arts and cultural events during the pandemic. Of the 669 respondents who answered this question, 83% had spent $0 during the three months, 8% had spent under $100, 8% had spent $100-$499, and less than 2% had spent more than $500. Figure 7 provides a word cloud illustrating frequency of responses.

After the pandemic

In terms of supporting Tasmania’s recovery, respondents identified creative and cultural industries as a priority area for support by the State Government (when asked to select up to five). Industries/sectors were listed in this order: education and training (66%), health care (65%), tourism and hospitality (64%), creative and cultural industries (45%), agriculture, forestry and fishing (38%), manufacturing (38%), science research (35%), construction (33%), retail (26%), energy (22%), and police and emergency services (20%).

To improve life in Tasmania, 28% of respondents prioritised arts and cultural activities, behind affordable housing (61%), quality healthcare (60%), quality education (56%), environmental sustainability (47%), job security (38%), food production (38%) and economic growth (29%), and over tourism, advanced manufacturing, access to nature, population growth, new infrastructure, sport and recreation, safety and security, community spirit, food and wine culture, and public transport. See figure at the top of the next page.
Where next?

These findings indicate that Tasmanians placed a high value on the arts, creativity and culture prior to the pandemic, with high levels of participation in a range of cultural activities and practices and a willingness to pay to attend cultural and creative events.

Nevertheless, as we have seen with other areas of the creative industries moving to digital platforms over the last decade (e.g. media and news), a business model that will pay for content production and delivery may be slow in emerging.

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on many professionals working in the arts and cultural industries was immediate and severe, with the nature of the work meaning JobKeeper payments were less available than for other industries and sectors. While a $250 million Australia-wide recovery package has been announced by the Federal Government, it is vital we understand in more detail the impact of the pandemic on individuals, communities and the Tasmanian economy, given Tasmanian has one of the highest rates of work participation in associated areas nationally and artists and cultural events are key elements of the Tasmanian brand and visitor economy.

The sample

The Tasmania Project’s second general survey closed on 17 June 2020. More than 1500 Tasmanian residents aged 18 or over entered the survey, with 1258 forming the sample for this report after data cleaning removed incomplete answers.

All local government areas of Tasmania are represented, with residents of Hobart, Kingborough, Launceston and Clarence forming 51% of the total sample. Of our respondents, 61% live in the South, 21% in the North, and 18% in the North-West and West. Respondents name 167 towns, suburbs or areas in which they live.

Of the 1258 respondents, 69% are women and 30% men, with 25% aged 25-44 years, 49% aged 45-64 years and 24% aged over 65 years. 2% are aged 18-24 years. One quarter have a bachelor degree level education, 9% have no post-school qualification, and 7% have a doctorate. More than half are employed. More details of the sample and methods are available here.
Local and fresh food and community interactions more important during the pandemic.

Report number: 24 | Date: 3 July 2020 | Authors: Maria B. Yanotti and Laura Ripoll Gonzalez

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of our food systems and the potential consequences that a lack of access to fresh, quality, and organic food has on people’s health and wellbeing. Results from The Tasmania Project are combined with a recent survey on farmers’ markets to reflect on the increased importance Tasmanians’ attribute to local and fresh food, wellbeing, and sense of community to inform recovery post COVID-19 pandemic.

Farmers’ markets became a focus of debate as restrictions were initially imposed in Tasmania. By combining results of a recent study on farmers’ markets (Yanotti & Ripoll González, 2020) with survey results from The Tasmania Project, we can explore community perception of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits of farmers’ markets.

Beyond being a selling point for local food and highlighting the cultural and social value and aesthetics of food, farmers’ markets can also help build community connections through periods of crisis.

Key findings

- Most respondents to The Tasmania Project Food survey said that Tasmanian produce was extremely important or very important, and more than half said it was more important because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Almost half reported consuming more Tasmanian grown food during the pandemic. 98% reported having bought Tasmanian produce in the last 30 days.
- One in five believed that local produce was only available in expensive restaurants and specialty shops.
- A quarter reported experiencing a decline in the access to enough food for an active, healthy life since March 2020.
- Only 16% had bought local produce at a farmers’ market and 17% had eaten food from a farm gate in the last 30 days.
- Several respondents aspired to regional community, sustainable agriculture, local food security and environmental practices.
- In The Tasmania Project’s second general survey, 25% admitted they did not always follow the physical distancing rules, up from 13% in the first general survey, mainly to connect with family and friends, and do things they enjoyed before the pandemic.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
For details on the farmers’ market study contact Maria.Yanotti@utas.edu.au.
Comparative results

The Tasmania Project Food survey found that a quarter of respondents reported experiencing a decline in access to enough food for an active, healthy life since March 2020; particularly low-income households, young people, single parents, and those with a disability. Moreover, 46% of respondents believed food was more expensive because of the pandemic.

Farmers’ markets support sustainable production of food by educating consumers on seasonal, optimal nutrition, regenerative agricultural practices, healthy diets, and waste management, and by encouraging human connection through food. From an economic perspective, farmers’ markets support small to medium local producers and increase food diversity (Yanotti & Ripoll González, 2020).

Data from The Tasmania Project reveals that 89% of respondents think that Tasmanian produce is extremely or very important, and over half think that it is more important due to the current pandemic. Almost all agreed that it is important to know where your food is produced (92%), how it is produced (91%), and who produces it (87%). 43% of respondents reported consuming more Tasmanian grown food during the pandemic. Most of them buy Tasmanian produce from major (65%) and independent (74%) supermarkets. 98% reported having bought Tasmanian produce in the last 30 days. The survey found that 1 in 5 Tasmanians believe that local produce is only available in expensive restaurants and specialty shops. Only 25% of respondents reported buying food directly from a producer and 16% from a farmers’ market. 17% of respondents reported eating food from a farm gate in the last 30 days.

In addition, the recent report on farmers’ markets argues that food is a driver of community building and has an undeniable cultural significance. Farmers’ markets bring communities together. The report finds that most participants attend farmers’ markets as a social (or even touristic) weekend activity and not a mere shopping outing. Participants primarily bought food and drinks to be consumed at the market. Participants’ main motivations included: access to fresh and local produce, experience local food, and socialise. The social distancing regulations imposed by governments due to the COVID-19 health crisis are restricting social interactions within the community, highlighting the importance of community interaction and support.

The first general survey of The Tasmania Project (TTP1), open from 20 April – 10 May 2020 when full COVID-19 restrictions were in place in Tasmania, found that although 82% of Tasmanians stayed home and only went out for essential purposes, 11% reported to have broken the rules on social distancing to connect with family and friends, and 5% to do things they enjoyed before the pandemic. Most of them mentioned that some restrictions should be lifted to allow socialising (outdoors) with the community.

TTP1 found that farmers’ markets were visited most often by females (75%), and individuals aged between 46-50 years, living in urban areas (76%), with a bachelors’ degree or higher (55%) and with an annual income higher than $80,000 (48%). The recent report finds that the typical survey respondent at a farmers’ market is a female between 25-34 years of age, with a university degree and a relatively high household income.

Interestingly, The Tasmania Project’s second general survey (TTP2) that closed on 20 June found respondents had generally been satisfied over the last week with their homes (89% satisfied or very satisfied), life opportunities (76%), financial situation (72%), how safe they feel (89%), their health (75%), the area where they live (81%), their amount of free time (70%) and their life, all things considered (84%), however only 64% reported being satisfied with feeling part of their local community.

Where next?

Local farmers and producers are an important sector that can help reactivate the local economy during COVID-19 as long as Tasmanians are willing and able to purchase local food. Farmers’ markets are important enablers to access local and fresh produce and more importantly are sustainable community builders. However, many Tasmanians do not interact in these markets or find them unaffordable. The social, economic, and wellbeing benefits of farmers’ markets need to be inclusive and extend to the entire community. Arguably, those members of the community with lower education and poorer health (often associated with lower income levels) would benefit the most. With the appropriate government policies and support, farmers’ markets could assist in the provision of fresh and highly nutritional food and food education to lower socio-economic sections of urban and regional societies.
Tasmanians seeking more circular and sustainable food systems.

Report number: 25 | Date: 6 July 2020 | Authors: Fred Gale, Fiona Kerslake, Gemma Lewis and Sandy Murray (Sustainable Food Systems Community of Practice)

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many emerging trends like online shopping, working from home, and distance education. The Tasmania Project Food Survey asked 1,170 Tasmanians about the food that they consume. Data suggests people are wasting less food and are sourcing more locally, to reduce ‘food miles’.

These findings imply greater awareness of the need to transition to a more circular and sustainable food system, one where food is produced and consumed locally with minimal waste and with attention to soil health.

Key findings

• Nine out of every ten participants agreed they were wasting less food during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
• Eight out of every ten participants agreed it was important to buy food grown locally to reduce food miles.
• Three out of every ten participants agreed it was important to buy food that was organically or biodynamically certified.
• Almost half (48%) of younger Tasmanian participants (18-24 years) agreed it was important to buy organically or biodynamically certified produce.

Sustainable Food Systems are ones that are…

“more decentralized and invite the democratic participation of community residents in their food systems; they encourage more direct and authentic connections between all parties in the food system, particularly between farmers and those who enjoy the fruits of their labour—consumers or eaters; they attempt to recognise, respect and more adequately compensate the laborers we often take for granted—farmworkers, food services workers, and laborers in food processing facilities for example; and they tend to be place-based, drawing on the unique attributes of a particular bio-region and its population to define and support themselves” (Feenstra 2002, p. 100).
Perceptions of food waste

Tackling food waste is important economically, socially, and environmentally and reducing waste is a key objective of the circular economy. As the Fight Food Waste CRC notes, avoiding food loss and waste would save Australians $20 billion a year, improve local food security and mitigate climate change by reducing methane emissions from food diverted to landfill.

The Tasmania Project Food Survey participants were asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and to respond to the statement ‘More food is wasted in my household’. Four-fifths (89%) of respondents disagreed with this statement, with little variation across gender (89% female, 88% male), political affiliation (89% Liberal, 87% ALP, 92% Greens) or employment status (89% employed, 84% unemployed).

Perceptions of local food

When done well, reducing the physical distance food travels can be an effective sustainability strategy because it trades-off declines in economic efficiency against gains in worker and community equity and environmental resilience.

The trade-off is captured in ideas like ‘local food’ and ‘food miles’. Many surveys on ‘local food’ highlight two features: a large majority of consumers prefer their food to be sourced locally; however, what ‘local’ means has a variety of connotations.

Some consider ‘local’ to be an administrative region like a council region or a state; others have a specific distance in mind—50km, perhaps; still others believe it to involve some kind of direct purchaser-farmer transaction at the farm gate or a farmers’ market.

We asked Tasmanians whether ‘it is important to reduce the distance your food travels (i.e. food miles).’ Overall, four-fifths of participants agreed it was important to reduce the distance food travelled and there were some interesting demographic differences.

For example, while 81% of females agreed it was important, only 72% of males did. Education was also a factor with 85% of university educated participants stating it was important compared to 61% of those whose highest level of education was high school.

Political identity was also important. While a sizeable majority (65%) of those affiliated with the Liberal Party thought it important to reduce the distance food travels, almost all those affiliated with the Greens did (91%), with ALP voters in between (79%).

Perceptions of organic and biodynamic certified food

Our third question focused on organic and biodynamic production methods. While there are differences between the two systems, both aim to build healthy soils without the use of artificial chemicals—that is, modern pesticides and herbicides designed to ensure success of monoculture production systems.

We asked Tasmanians to rate the importance of buying ‘produce that is certified organic or biodynamic’ with over one-third (35%) agreeing this was ‘important’ compared to 23% who did not.

There were some interesting group differences. For example, women considered it more important (38%) than men (28%); and Green voters considered it more important (48%) than liberal voters (20%), with ALP voters again in the middle (33%).

Another interesting finding was that almost half of our respondents, 46% of those aged 18-24 years, considered it important compared to 32% of those aged 25-44 years.

Where next?

Taken in conjunction with the other reports from The Tasmania Project on Tasmanian perceptions about food security (#15), food access and supply (#17), Tasmanian grown food (#18), growing food (#20) and buying local food from farmers’ markets (#24), it is clear Tasmanians are developing a deep appreciation of food’s inseparable economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Given the urgent and widely accepted need to transition to a more circular, just and sustainable economy, government should explore setting up appropriately constituted local food councils in each region. These could support local food hubs to enhance food security and promote local and sustainable food procurement for better dietary, health, and environmental outcomes.

Also, given that food production and consumption spans across the natural, health and social sciences and the humanities, there is an urgent need for a more transdisciplinary and integrated approach to teaching and researching Tasmania’s food system.

References

Internet activity and wellbeing during COVID-19.

Report number: 26 | Date: 13 July 2020 | Author: Matthew Allen

Key findings

- Private communication and easy access to written information for news or entertainment are the most important uses of the Internet to maintain wellbeing.
- Video applications, both streaming and conferencing, rated highly for their importance to wellbeing, and the degree to which they were used. This finding suggests that high-quality connectivity is increasingly going to be an essential requirement for long-term management of life during a pandemic.
- Public social media use and content publishing, while commonly used, were less important for respondents in maintaining their wellbeing.
- Few respondents use games, dating and shared fitness apps – if they do, they are more likely to be younger and male. The importance ascribed to these activities is lower than average.
- Women, people under 45 years of age, and people with a post-school education were more likely to rate the Internet as important for their wellbeing than men, older respondents and those with a lower level of educational attainment.
- Younger Internet users were much more likely to use the Internet in many different ways. Those aged under 25 years had very high levels of use, particularly streaming and social media. Notably, they were less likely to use the Internet to read for information and entertainment.
Assessing the importance of Internet activities to wellbeing

We assessed the importance of the Internet in supporting Tasmanians’ wellbeing during the pandemic by asking survey respondents to rate the importance of various activities online, with a score of 5 representing very important and 1 representing not important. If a respondent did not engage in the specified activity, their response was excluded.

This scoring allows us to report a comparative assessment of Internet activities reported as supporting wellbeing. The mean score for the importance of Internet activity across all possible activities was 3.08. Activities scoring higher than this number are, therefore, more important than those below it.

We also found wide differences in the number of respondents using certain Internet activities, with almost everyone reporting that private one-to-one communication by email or messaging was of some importance. While some activities were highly used, not all were as important for wellbeing.

### Activity
- **Score**: Mean scores of Internet activities.
- **Usage**: Percentage of respondents who used the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Usage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>individual online communication</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video conferencing</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specialised work / study apps</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online news / entertainment reading</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>streaming video</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private social media</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>streaming audio</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online retail and banking</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public social media</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online content publishing</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online games</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>shared fitness apps</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online dating</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We interpret these results as follows.

- The main way the Internet has supported wellbeing is by offering a rich array of communication opportunities for people who have been restricted in the way they can meet face-to-face and for whom the pandemic has increased the need to support each other through maintaining social contacts. Communications with friends and family, rather than public discussion, has been more important for wellbeing.

- While not as widely used, the Internet has been crucial for people’s work and study, allowing them to continue in these two critical activities despite the need for social distancing. Wellbeing clearly includes the capacity to continue with normal life as much as possible, even when restricted largely to staying at home rather than attending places of work and learning.

- While the use of the Internet to make public comments and produce content are widely used, these activities are not as important to maintaining wellbeing as more private and personal activities.

### The relationship between usage and importance

Further evidence of the different ways that respondents used the Internet, and the different levels of importance they assign to Internet activities can be found by looking at what activity was used or not used. The following table lists activities which were used but most likely not to be rated as important for wellbeing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Importance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>public social media</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>online content publishing</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>online games</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>private social media</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
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<td>online retail and banking</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>streaming audio</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>shared fitness apps</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>streaming video</td>
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<td>video conferencing</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>online dating</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>individual online communication</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online news / entertainment reading</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>specialised work / study apps</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We can see that, again, public activity online such as publishing content and participating in public social media were widely used (by more than 64% and 75% of respondents respectively), but did not, in the views of respondents, greatly support their wellbeing.

In other cases, it is harder to judge the potential for various Internet activities to support wellbeing since so few respondents used them. Shared fitness apps, where people form social connections with others (either known or unknown) by sharing their fitness goals and results, might for example have benefit. Only 10% said they had no effect on wellbeing, with 17% ascribing them some importance. However, they are used by less than one-quarter of survey respondents, despite the fact they might be anticipated as more valuable in the absence of shared fitness activities.

Most surprisingly, video conferencing scored very highly, both in terms of use and importance. We would hypothesize that this activity has seen the greatest increase in use since the pandemic started and has such a high level of importance because it has become the easiest way to replace or compensate for the absence of face-to-face interactions. It is highly likely that the high value assigned to video conferencing also reflects the way it has become the new norm for remote working, quite different to the way people would study and work at home prior to the pandemic.

We conclude that people are continuing to use the Internet in a wide variety of ways, and that in most cases, they are the traditionally dominant forms of Internet activity, with private communication, retail and banking services, and reading information being used by almost all respondents (>94%). While there is often much attention given to online gaming and dating in research on the Internet, these activities are far from common. Streaming services, while much more widely used than a decade ago, are used by around three-quarters of respondents. The Internet remains principally a key source of information in written form, and an essential form of communication.
Private more than public

Based on the percentages of respondents indicating the importance of various activities, we can gain further insight into the way the Internet supports wellbeing through being a ‘private’ space for communication and consumption, as opposed to public performance and debate.

People rated the private use of social media among friends and family as more important than public discussions and posting.

Comparing private and public social media

People were also more likely to use and rate as important the consumption of information, rather than publishing it themselves.

Comparing publishing and reading online

High levels of connectivity essential

The two activities involving video applications (conferencing and streaming) rated higher than most other activities. The mean score for the two combined was **3.63** compared to the overall mean of 3.08.

Video applications rate highly

This finding suggests that, while the Internet can be used for many activities without a high-quality Internet connection (fast and reliable, with large data allowances) and without some of the more modern devices with good audio and video peripherals, in the time of COVID-19, maintaining wellbeing (including through at-home work and study) makes high levels of connectivity more essential than before.

Demographic differences

We found some distinct demographic differences in the way respondents indicated the importance of Internet activities.

Selected respondent groups compared to mean score

These differences are also found in the degree to which activities were used to support wellbeing, regardless of the degree of importance assigned to them.

Women were more likely than men to indicate they used social connection activities such as social media, video conferencing, and online communications; in contrast, men were more likely to use games and dating and online reading to support their wellbeing. These findings conform to long-standing norms of behaviour by which women take greater responsibility for social connectedness than men.

Much more stark differences emerge around age. While allowing for the lower level of responses from the youngest category (those aged 18-24 years), nevertheless, there are clear differences in the way people aged under 45 years and those over 45 years use the Internet to maintain wellbeing. There are no significant differences in the use of the Internet for reading, retail, and individual communication, but younger Tasmanians are much more likely to ascribe some importance to both public and private social media, streaming, video conferencing and gaming. In some cases, this result reflects the fact that younger users are more likely to be studying and working; but, on the whole, it reflects that the Internet is used quite differently by those who have grown up with it in the past twenty years.

While some differences in use are also evident for those with lower educational attainment (most notably, those with a university education are far more likely to use video conferencing and work and study applications), the differences appear to be a consequence of the lower level of educational attainment of older respondents.

Where next?

Future research is urgently needed into the specific ways that we can pro-actively support people’s wellbeing via Internet activity. Plans and policies also need to be informed by the differences in use across different demographics.

The sample

The Tasmania Project’s second general survey closed on 17 June 2020. More than 1500 Tasmanian residents aged 18 or over entered the survey, with 1258 forming the sample for this report after data cleaning removed incomplete answers.

All local government areas of Tasmania are represented, with residents of Hobart, Kingborough, Launceston and Clarence forming 51% of the total sample. Of our respondents, 61% live in the South, 21% in the North, and 18% in the North-West and West. Respondents name 167 towns, suburbs or areas in which they live.

Of the 1258 respondents, 69% are women and 30% men, with 25% in the 25-44 years age bracket, 49% aged 45-64 years and 24% over 65 years. 2% are aged 18-24 years. One quarter have a bachelor degree level education, 9% have no post-school qualification, and 7% have a doctorate. More than half are employed. More details of the sample and methods are available at the link below.
Internet connectivity during COVID-19.

Report number: 27 | Date: 13 July 2020 | Author: Matthew Allen

The Tasmania Project’s second general survey asked respondents to indicate agreement with 8 statements designed to assess their level of access, skill, and confidence in using the Internet. They also responded to 4 statements which focused on assessing the effects of the pandemic and social restrictions requiring much more time at home.

We want to know whether Tasmanians are sufficiently included in the digital world which, now more than ever, is an essential part of successful life, work and study.

The headline outcome is worrying evidence of digital exclusion: while many Tasmanians report good connectivity, skills and ability to use the Internet, there are several indicators of disadvantage for a significant minority of respondents.

This report should be read in conjunction with the report Internet activity and wellbeing during COVID-19 (The Tasmania Project – Report 26) which sheds light on what Tasmanians have found more and less important in using the Internet in recent months.

Key findings

• The most obvious effect of the pandemic on Internet connectivity has been increased use of home connections and consequent reductions in speed and reliability for many respondents. More than 95% of respondents who were unaffected agreed that their Internet connection is fast and reliable. But over 40% of all respondents reported they have been affected by overloaded conditions at home

• Respondents indicated that they are more likely to be concerned about privacy and security online than seeing offensive and/or upsetting content.

• Few respondents report being negatively affected in their capacity to use the Internet by the presence of more people at home, or an increase in household duties.

• Mobile dependency is not a major concern for respondents (only 23% report being dependent) but a strong correlation exists between dependency and concerns over costs that limit Internet use.

• Unemployed respondents report more concerns about their connectivity than any other single sub-group and the link between the risk of digital exclusion and unemployment is a concern.

• The youngest respondents (aged 18-24 years), unsurprisingly, demonstrate greater confidence and ability to use the Internet but, perhaps surprisingly are more concerned about offensive content than older respondents (aged 25+ years).
Initial findings

Digital inclusion is a complex mix of factors, involving not just Internet access but also the type of access, the skills necessary to use the Internet, and the confidence to do so safely. While the survey did not go into the detail which specialised digital inclusion surveys can, nevertheless it sought responses in two broad categories: access (5 factors in purple in the above figure); and skills and confidence (3 factors in light blue). We also looked at COVID-19 specific factors (4 factors in grey blue). A discussion of these factors is below.

Respondents reported positive agreement (more agreeing than disagreeing) on all but one factor. The most widely reported concern that might limit digital inclusion was a concern for security and privacy online, which 38% of respondents agreed limited their use of the Internet at times. Concern over seeing offensive material was, by contrast, rarely a factor for the respondents (7% agreeing). This finding suggests that technical confidence (necessary to maintain security) is lower than personal confidence (necessary to resist the negative effects of upsetting content). Digital skills are heavily dependent on age, and we explore this later in the report.

In broad terms, around three-quarters of respondents reported that their Internet was reliable and fast, producing a score of 0.54. However, this level of agreement does not reflect the underlying picture in Tasmania. As explored in the next section, the increased use of home internet connections during the pandemic has very significantly influenced people’s perceptions of connectivity.

We also note that, while a high proportion of respondents did not see cost as something which limited their Internet use, this factor is almost always relevant only for mobile connectivity. Thus, as explored on the next page, we need to consider how mobile access might not provide the kind of digital inclusion of being able to choose between fixed-line and mobile access.

Of course, the survey producing these results was administered over the Internet (a phone option was offered but not taken up by any participants). Care needs to be taken in assessing Tasmania’s overall state of connectivity. See the Digital Inclusion Index for data showing Tasmania has the lowest level of inclusion for Australian states, although it has been improving. We explore one element of this potential risk in the next section.

The impacts of life at home

One of the most significant changes imposed by the pandemic, especially in its earliest weeks, was the requirement to stay at home unless essential to leave, and to work and study from home if possible. This change has, across Australia, seen an enormous increase in Internet usage (evident, for example, in emergency measures by NBN Co to provide greater connectivity). We were interested to see if there were other consequences.

Respondents were, broadly, much less affected by the stay-at-home restrictions than might have been anticipated. Only around 7% of respondents indicated their Internet use was affected by having more household responsibilities, or that they lacked the opportunity to use the Internet when and how they liked. Indeed, as evident in the main figure above, these factors scored the highest – indicating they were not affecting digital inclusion for most respondents. Not being able to get help with Internet problems (when people were restricted from visiting for some time) was also not much of a problem (11% agreeing).

However, the real impact can be seen in the one negative score above. When asked if, as a result of the pandemic, Internet connectivity had been made worse, more than 40% of respondents agreed that it had.

The full impact of overloaded home connections can be seen by looking at the relationship between fast and reliable Internet and overload. Although the average score for fast connectivity was 0.54, for those unaffected by overload the average score for fast connectivity rose to 0.93. For those affected by overload it fell to 0.12. Very similar scores were also reported for reliability. This is shown in the graph below, where a lower score indicates a worse outcome.

The digital inclusion score reported in the above graph represents the difference between positive and negative responses, excluding neutrals; the lower the score the greater the impact (negative) on respondents and the higher the risk of digital exclusion. See last page for data table.
Mobile access and cost

Many Tasmanians can use both mobile and fixed-line (or sometimes semi-equivalent satellite) access to the Internet, almost always preferring the latter while at home. However, for some Tasmanians, their only choice is a mobile device, either because Internet access through the NBN or equivalent has not been arranged (itself often because of cost), or their housing arrangements make mobile access preferable.

Being dependent on mobile access is one indicator of lower digital inclusion and, in this survey, we found that a higher-than-expected number of respondents reported mobile dependency (noting that Tasmania has extensive NBN infrastructure). 23% of survey respondents indicated they were dependent in this way.

The impact of dependency is most often felt in terms of cost (because of the lower data allowances and higher fees for exceeding them common in mobile access plans). We compared the responses to the question about whether cost did or did not limit Internet use and found that the majority of those concerned about cost were, as expected, dependent on mobile access. It is also notable, given the finding above about overloaded access, that mobile dependency also correlates with higher concerns about the effect of overload. This is shown in the graph below, where a lower score indicates a worse outcome.

Who then might be more affected by the potential of mobile access dependency to limit Internet connectivity? We found that, when compared to the mean score of 0.41, several sub-groups of respondents appeared more affected:

It would appear likely that the crucial determinant in mobile dependency (correlating closely with the concern about cost) is unemployment, which may reflect living situations where fixed-line Internet access is impossible or too expensive to have in addition to the essential mobile phone. Unemployed respondents were also more likely to respond negatively to most of the factors presented in the survey.

Given that training for employability, the process of seeking work, and most other elements of managing in this situation require the Internet, this finding helps identify one of the critical aspects of digital exclusion and that those most in need of connectivity may struggle the most with its availability.

Age and Internet skill and confidence

It is not surprising that, on the whole, younger respondents reported higher levels of digital skill and confidence compared to older respondents.

The more surprising findings are that, relative to other age groups, respondents aged 18-24 years reported having more concern about offensive and upsetting content than older respondents, although the overall level of concern about content was not high. And, given the risks involved in contemporary Internet use in terms of security, it may be that younger users have more confidence than knowledge about privacy and security.

It is unclear why respondents aged 25-44 years were the most affected by not being able to get help. Reviewing other data, it would appear likely that households with children were more likely to need help (and the majority of such respondents fall into that age group). Our hypothesis is that this situation reflects a significant increase in children learning at home, with new software and technologies required.

We suggest that there is more work to be done to understand how crisis situations, such as the pandemic, disrupt the existing ‘known’ ways of accessing and using the Internet. They place increased stress on people whose literacy and confidence may be adequate in normal times, but which then, when most needed, start to raise the risks of digital exclusion.

Where in Tasmania matters

We aggregated relevant items for access, skill and confidence, and the effects of COVID-19 and compared three broad regions in Tasmania.

The responses show that the least important limits on inclusion by region can be found in skill and confidence. Even allowing for the unusual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents in the West and North-West report lower satisfaction with their Internet connectivity, suggesting an inequality of access to infrastructure in that region as a primary risk of digital exclusion.
Where next?

In coming years, we can expect to see the Internet play an even more of a role in the social and economic life of Tasmania. While it is helpful to see that younger respondents are more likely to report skills and confidence in Internet use, they are by no means universally competent, nor are the skills necessarily those needed for the kinds of applications which might develop in future.

Equally, as the world continues to cope with the pandemic which will, for the foreseeable future, mean less close proximity and more use of networked interactions, the Internet continues to be a vital part of our recovery and response.

Further research needs to be conducted to identify in more detail the specific problems with connectivity, skills, and confidence which are inhibiting more comprehensive digital inclusion. Then, resources can be targeted to solving those problems. In particular, we recommend determining the intersectional cause of digital exclusion where a number of determinants (for example, economic condition, educational level, and place of residence) might combine to create extreme risks of exclusion from the essential digital world.

Such research can then underpin action programs and support mechanisms which can lead to the development of digital agency among Tasmanians as part of the solution to current and future disadvantage.

This table presents the reported percentages of agreement and disagreement for all respondents to the original statements. This data was recoded and organised to create the inclusion scores used within this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have an Internet connection that is fast enough for my needs</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an Internet connection that is reliable enough for my needs</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Internet connection has been made worse … more people are using it at the same time</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have access to the most up-to-date digital devices I need</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am dependent on a mobile device for my Internet use</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes limit my use of the Internet because I worry about its cost</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know how to use some online technologies and services I need</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been harder for people to help me with Internet problems</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and security concerns sometimes limit the way I use the Internet</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fear of seeing offensive and/or upsetting content online reduces my use of the Internet</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people at home make it hard for me to use the Internet when and how I want</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have had less time to use the Internet because of more household responsibilities</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample

The Tasmania Project’s second general survey closed on 17 June 2020. More than 1500 Tasmanian residents aged 18 or over entered the survey, with 1258 forming the sample for this report after data cleaning removed incomplete answers.

All local government areas of Tasmania are represented, with residents of Hobart, Kingborough, Launceston and Clarence forming 51% of the total sample. Of our respondents, 61% live in the South, 21% in the North, and 18% in the North-West and west. Respondents name 167 towns, suburbs or areas in which they live.

Of the 1258 respondents, 69% are women and 30% men, with 25% in the 25-44 years age bracket, 49% aged 45-64 years and 24% over 65 years. 2% are aged 18-24 years. One quarter have a bachelor degree level education, 9% have no post-school qualification, and 7% have a doctorate. More than half are employed. More details of the sample and methods are available at the link below.
Tourism and the Tasmanian community during COVID-19.

Report number: 28 | Date: 15 July 2020 | Authors: Can-Seng Ooi and Becky Shelley

The Tasmania Project's second general survey asked a series of questions about tourism, COVID-19 policy responses, and their impacts. We wanted to know how Tasmanian residents regard the industry and its contribution to life in Tasmania. When should Tasmania reopen, and what changes in behaviour are expected?

Tourism workers, particularly casual workers, have been hit hard by the impacts of the Federal and State Government policy responses to COVID-19. In Tasmania’s North-West and West, residents had more stringent measures imposed upon them with a whole region 'locked down' for three weeks.

**Key findings**

- Tourism is a priority industry for respondents. 64% feel that tourism and hospitality is important and should be prioritised in the post COVID-19 recovery effort.
- Although tourism is seen as a priority industry for recovery, a majority of respondents do not see the industry improving their quality of life after the pandemic.
- Public health is valued above the economy for all age groups but more so for respondents aged 65 years and over.
- Even though people feel safe, they are not moving about as before the pandemic.
- The COVID-19 restrictions and policies in Tasmania are in line with the general sentiment of the community, regardless of political affiliation and demographic characteristics.
- Tasmanians will advocate for behaviour change in line with health advice.
Community sentiments aligned with State Government policy

We asked respondents to indicate whether Tasmania should reopen to tourism (survey closed on 17 June 2020). A clear majority of respondents (71%) disagreed with the proposition that Tasmania should reopen to tourism, while 16% were neutral and 13% agreed. While we might anticipate regional differences between respondents’ answer to this question, that was not the case.

“A majority of respondents disagreed with the proposition that Tasmania should reopen to tourism”

Clearly, respondents take the risks of the pandemic seriously, despite its social and economic costs. We asked respondents if the Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions. 70% of respondents disagreed with the statement, 10% agreed and 11% were neutral. Based on the survey findings, Tasmanian respondents are largely supportive of state policies with regards to border opening and keeping restrictions on tourists re-entering Tasmania.

Interestingly, party affiliation does not influence respondent views. Analysing the data by political affiliation, a majority in each group do not think that the Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions. 70% of respondents disagreed with the statement, 10% agreed and 11% were neutral. Based on the survey findings, Tasmanian respondents are largely supportive of state policies with regards to border opening and keeping restrictions on tourists re-entering Tasmania.

We then asked whether Tasmania’s border restrictions should stay in place until COVID-19 is eradicated in Australia. Of the 1254 respondents who answered the question, the answers were divided and provided no clear majority or consensus. While 45% support Tasmania’s border restrictions continuing until COVID-19 is eradicated in Australia, the rest of the respondents disagree (35%) or are neutral (20%) on the question.

Interestingly, more than half of those aged 44 years or younger want COVID-19 eradicated first before borders are opened. For those aged 45 years or above, less than half feel that way.

Economic concerns, tourism and public health

We asked respondents if they were more concerned about the economic impacts than the health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey shows that the majority of respondents (66%) prioritise public health over economic impacts.

Irrespective of whether the respondent was employed or unemployed, health impacts were the key concern. 63% of employed respondents and 60% of unemployed respondents feel that way. In contrast, 20% of employed respondents and 26% of respondents are more concerned about the economic impacts than the health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We asked which industries should be prioritised for Tasmania’s recovery. Tourism is considered a priority by 64% of respondents, reflecting the importance many Tasmanians place on the industry. It is ranked in the top three, together with education and training (66%) and health care (65%). This is also discussed in Creativity, culture and the arts during COVID-19 (The Tasmania Project – Report 23).

We asked whether Tasmania should re-open to tourism. The majority response was no. Nearly 70% of employed persons do not think Tasmania should re-open for tourism, compared to 62% of unemployed respondents. The result is interesting as there is agreement for Tasmania not to re-open to tourism yet amongst respondents both working and seeking work.
Respondent concerns about COVID-19 are evident in their own habits and practices. We asked whether, despite restrictions easing, they are going out as much as they used to. More than 70% of respondents are largely staying at home and have not gone out as frequently as they did pre-pandemic level despite the easing of restrictions. This cautionary approach contrasts with results that 56% of respondents feel safe in public or shared areas, with only 22% indicating they do not feel safe and 23% neutral.

Tourism as a community priority

While tourism is considered an important industry in Tasmania by respondents, many do not see the industry as essential to contributing to improving their life on the island. Tourism is predominantly compartmentalised as an economic activity, rather than a potential resource that they can enjoy, such as attractions and enhancement of amenities.

We asked what should be prioritised to improve life in Tasmania. Only, 26% of respondents prioritised tourism, behind affordable housing (61%), quality healthcare (60%), quality education (56%), environmental sustainability (47%), job security (38%), food production (38%), economic growth (29%), and art and cultural activities (28%) and over advanced manufacturing, access to nature, population growth, new infrastructure, sport and recreation, safety and security, community spirit, food and wine culture, and public transport. See Report 23 for further detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To improve life in Tasmania, which of the following do you think should be prioritised?</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. affordable housing</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. quality healthcare</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. quality education</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. environmental sustainability</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. job security</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. food production</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. economic growth</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. art and cultural activities</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. tourism</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was however a small regional variation. North-West and West respondents see tourism as important to improving their life (39%), as compared with respondents in the North (26%) and South (23%).

Tourism contributes to the Tasmanian economy and also to its social and cultural development. A Post-COVID-19 tourism development strategy can work towards integrating resources for community development. It is also important to communicate the social and cultural benefits of tourism to Tasmanians.

Social pressure and driving behaviour change

Whether Tasmanians should open their borders or not depends also on the community’s confidence in managing their public social spaces, tourism assets and resources. We asked whether people feel comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices. 62% of respondents feel comfortable asking others to comply, however, more respondents aged 65 years or older feel that way (69%), as compared to those in the 25-44 years age group (53%). This is perhaps unsurprising as the older age group is more vulnerable to COVID-19.

When the borders do re-open, the experience of being a tourist in Tasmania may change if community members are advocating and monitoring COVID-19 safe practices.

As an indication of how much privacy sacrifice respondents are willing to make to manage the pandemic, about two-thirds of respondents are willing to provide their personal information for contact tracing. The pandemic is seen largely as a public health challenge facing Tasmania, and that is reflected by respondents prioritising health concerns over other aspects of their life, including privacy, freedom of movement, economic considerations and tourism.

“Two-thirds of respondents are willing to provide their personal information for contact tracing”

Where next?

Respondents to The Tasmania Project’s second general survey are still concerned with COVID-19 and are not yet ready to leave the house as they did pre-pandemic, despite the easing of restrictions. Respondents generally feel that that the authorities are doing the right thing, and most are following their advice. The authorities also appear to have the goodwill of the people when it comes to their approach to public health.

Most respondents are willing to apply social pressures to support COVID-19 safe practices. It is an indication that the community is coming together to promote positive health outcomes for the State.

Findings from this survey support other research showing the Tasmanian community considers tourism to be economically important but that it does not provide social and cultural benefits to the community. Prior to the pandemic the question of social license was an emerging issue for the tourism industry. Developing and building a social license for tourism and recognising community sentiment is critical.

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The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
How are those with a disability faring during the COVID-19 pandemic in Tasmania?

Report number: 29 | Date: 15 July 2020 | Author: Nyree Pisanu

Respondents from The Tasmania Project who identified as having a disability were more likely to be more concerned about being infected with COVID-19, the health impacts of the pandemic and were less satisfied than the general population with most aspects of their lives, particularly their health and financial situation.

Key findings

- Respondents who identified as having a disability were more likely to support official COVID-19 measures such as border restrictions and physical distancing rules.
- Most were more concerned about the health impacts than the economic impacts of the pandemic. This is likely because most who identified as a person with a disability also considered themselves a vulnerable person in terms of the health impacts of COVID-19.
- Respondents with a disability indicated they were less satisfied with their health and wellbeing compared with the full sample.
- Although respondents with a disability were more likely to support COVID-19 safety measures and were more concerned about their health in relation to COVID-19, they were less comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices or asking people to keep their physical distance.

Demographics

In The Tasmania Project’s second general survey (TTP2), respondents were asked if they identified as a person with a disability. 8.3% of the sample selected yes (n=104) and 2.8% indicated they were on a Disability Support Pension (DSP) (n=35).

74% of those who identified as having a disability also considered themselves to be a vulnerable person in terms of the health impacts of COVID-19. 33.7% were employed, 7.7% were unemployed, and 58.7% indicated other (including retired and student).

47% of those with a disability were in the 45-64 years age bracket, 27% were over 65 years, 24% were 25-44 years and 2% were 18-24 years. Most lived in a household as a couple with no children (38.8%), followed by a one-person household (25.2%), family with dependent (7.8%) and non-dependent children (7.8%), and other (14.6%, including shared/group households and one parent family). 74.0% owned their dwelling, 11.5% rented from a private landlord, 7.7% rented from public housing and 6.7% selected other (including living at home).

Official COVID-19 measures

Most of those who identified as having a disability agreed they would feel comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices (55%), however this figure was lower than the full sample (63%).

A majority disagreed that the Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions (85%) which was higher than the full sample (80%). A high proportion of respondents with a disability disagreed that Tasmania should re-open to tourism now (77%), and just under half agreed the rules and regulations in response to COVID-19 are confusing (41%).
Over half (57%) supported Tasmania’s border restrictions remaining in place until COVID-19 is eradicated in Australia, while less than half of the full sample (45%) supported the restrictions. Respondents with a disability agreed they were willing to provide personal information for contact tracing (63%) and were more concerned about health impacts than the economic impacts (70%).

Sources of information

Respondents were asked to select the top five sources that they rely on for COVID-19 information. For those who identified as having a disability, the top five answers were:

1. TV News (56%)
2. Premier Gutwein’s media briefings (58%)
3. State government COVID-19 website (53%)
4. Social media/internet groups (35%)
5. ABC radio (33%) / Mainstream newspapers (33%)

The future in Tasmania

Participants were asked to specify what industries should be prioritised by the State Government for Tasmania’s recovery. The top five answers for respondents who identified as having a disability were:

1. Health care and social assistance (75%)
2. Education and training (67%)
3. Tourism and hospitality (58%)
4. Science research development (49%)
5. Cultural and creative industries (42%)

Participants were also asked to specify what they thought should be prioritised to improve life in Tasmania. For those who identified as having a disability, the top five answers were:

1. Quality health care (73%)
2. Affordable housing (69%)
3. Quality education (63%)
4. Environmental sustainability (53%)
5. Job security (40%)

Wellbeing and concerns

Survey participants were asked a series of questions relating to their level of satisfaction in different areas of their lives. Across all areas (except for amount of free time), those who identified as having a disability were less satisfied than the overall sample, particularly in terms of their health and financial situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>% satisfied full sample</th>
<th>% satisfied full sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The home in which you live</strong></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your life opportunities</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your financial situation</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How safe you feel</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feeling part of local community</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your health</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The area in which you live</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The amount of free time you have</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your life, all things considered</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were asked, if it were an option, whether they would use a health or support service (GP, psychologist, etc.) via the internet or telephone in the future. 89% of respondents with a disability selected yes.

Just over half of respondents with a disability were concerned about being infected with COVID-19 (57% compared with 40% of the full sample). A majority agreed that the wellbeing of vulnerable people is more important than their way of life (90%). Respondents with a disability were more likely to follow physical distancing rules (76% compared with 64% of the full sample) and were not going out as much as they used to (76% compared with 73% of the full sample).

One third of participants with a disability were concerned about the pandemic impacting on their mental health, compared with only around one quarter of the full sample. Participants with a disability felt as though they had less control over their life choices (62% compared with 78% of the full sample).

Even though respondents with a disability were more likely to support COVID-19 safety measures and were more concerned about their health in relation to COVID-19, they were less comfortable asking people to practice physical distancing (54% compared with 58% of the full sample).

Digital access

Respondents with a disability also experienced some barriers to digital access. Only 55% agreed that they had a fast enough Internet connection and 63% agreed that their Internet connection was reliable enough (compared with 73% and 75% of the full sample, respectively). Only 52% agreed they had access to the most up-to-date digital devices they needed (compared with 68% in the full sample).

Where next?

The findings highlight that vulnerable groups, such as those who identify as having a disability, are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of the pandemic.

In particular, those who identified as having a disability in TTP2 were more concerned about the health impacts of COVID-19, were more likely to follow and support COVID-19 safety measures, and less satisfied with their health and wellbeing overall, when compared to the full sample. This is likely because a large majority of those who identified as having a disability also indicated they were a vulnerable person in terms of the health impacts of COVID-19.

Despite being more concerned about their health during this time, respondents with a disability were less comfortable asking other people to follow COVID safe rules. Findings point to the need for extra support for vulnerable Tasmanians during the pandemic and into recovery.
Sources of Information about COVID-19.

Report number: 30 | Date: 17 July 2020 | Author: Libby Lester

The Tasmania Project’s second general survey asked respondents to identify the sources on which they most relied for COVID-19 information. They were provided with a list of 20 potential sources, plus the option of ‘other, please specify’. Respondents were asked to select up to five options.

Key findings

• Media briefings by the Premier, Peter Gutwein, were identified by almost two-thirds of the survey’s 1258 respondents as a source of COVID-19 information on which they most relied.

• The State Government Coronavirus website (coronavirus.tas.gov.au) was the third most popular source, just behind television news, indicating the trust in State Government sources that was identified in our first general survey continues.

• Respondents from the North-West and West region more commonly relied on Premier Gutwein and Prime Minister Morrison for information than respondents from the South or North of the State.

• Almost half of respondents in the 18-25 years age group selected social media/internet groups, compared to more than one third in the 25-44 years range and one-fifth in the 45-64 years range.

Preferred sources

Overall, respondents’ top five sources were Premier Gutwein’s media briefings (65%), television news (57%), the Tasmanian Government’s Coronavirus website (57%), ABC radio (42%) and the National Chief Medical Officer (29%).

Sources of information that were less relied on included mainstream newspapers (26%), the workplace (25%), social media/internet groups (25%), the World Health Organization (22%), the Prime Minister (20%), local government (19%), family, friends and colleagues (18%), doctors or healthcare professionals (18%), scientific literature (16%), State Government advertising (15%), commercial radio (8%), information hotlines (7%), printed leaflets (4%), and community newspapers and radio (4%).
While only 2% (n=24) of our total sample fell into the 18-24 years age bracket, it is worth noting the different responses we received between age groups on this question. This youngest group relied most heavily on the State Government Coronavirus website (71%), family, friends and colleagues (58%), television news (54%), and social media/internet groups and the workplace (both 46%). The next age bracket – 25-44 years – made up one quarter of our sample (n=268). This group’s top five sources were the Premier’s media briefings (65%), the State Government website (58%), television news (42%), social media/internet groups (36%) and the workplace (35%).

For respondents aged 45-64 years – almost half our sample at n=536 – the Premier’s briefings (66%) were followed by the State Government website (65%), television news (58%), ABC radio (42%) and the National Chief Medical Officer (33%). For over 65’s – almost one quarter of our sample (n=258) – the top five were television news (76%), the Premier’s media briefings (67%), ABC radio (61%), the State Government’s website (41%) and mainstream newspapers (46%).

Slightly more older respondents relied on their doctors or other healthcare professionals for COVID-19 information than younger people.

“There was little difference between age groups in terms of reliance on Prime Minister Morrison (20% in total)”

Education levels were not a significant factor in respondents’ selections, except in relation to ABC radio (47% of respondents with university degrees selected this source compared to 29% of those who had finished formal education at high school), State Government media advertising (15% compared to 6%), the World Health Organization (27% compared to 13%) and scientific literature (21% compared to 8%).

The word cloud below is generated from the free-text responses from those who selected ‘other, please specify’ (8.4% or n=95), showing reliance on ABC health commentator Norman Swan, podcasts and the Guardian online news site among other sources.

Notable regional differences included the following: Printed leaflets were relied on most commonly in the North (6%, compared to 3.5% overall), commercial radio was more popular in the North-West and West (11% compared to 8% overall), community media were more important outside the South (2% compared to 6% in the North and 7% in the North-West and West), and local government was more relied on as a source of COVID-19 information in the North-West and West (22%) compared to 18% in the South and 17% in the North.

Considering oneself a ‘vulnerable person’ in relation to COVID-19 or living in a household with children were not significant factors in determining which sources of COVID-19 information respondents were most likely to turn to.

Overall, there was a decrease in the number of people finding the rules and regulations in relation to COVID-19 confusing, down from 36% in the first general survey to 24% in the latest. Most people (70%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the language used to explain COVID 19 has been too complex.

**Where next?**

The survey suggests age is more of a factor than education level, region of residence or vulnerability to the virus in determining which sources of COVID-19 information Tasmanians rely on overall. Nevertheless, differences are evident at these other levels, for example, regional differences on reliance on community media and printed leaflets. These can be critical sources of information for some local communities and individuals across the State during a crisis, and we will undertake further analysis of these findings in coming weeks.

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The sample

The Tasmania Project’s second general survey closed on 17 June 2020. More than 1500 Tasmanian residents aged 18 or over entered the survey, with 1258 forming the sample for this report after data cleaning removed incomplete answers.

All local government areas of Tasmania are represented, with residents of Hobart, Kingborough, Launceston and Clarence forming 51% of the total sample. Of our respondents, 61% live in the South, 21% in the North, and 18% in the North-West and West. Respondents name 167 towns, suburbs or areas in which they live.

Of the 1258 respondents, 69% are women and 30% men, with 25% in the 25-44 years age bracket, 49% aged 45-64 years and 24% aged over 65 years. 2% are aged 18-24 years. One quarter have a bachelor degree level education, 9% have no post-school qualification, and 7% have a doctorate. More than half are employed. More details of the sample and methods are available at the link below.

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The Tasmania Project

For details of the study’s approach and methods, see [here](#).
The Tasmania Project Housing Survey has found that most Tasmanians have not experienced a change in their living arrangements and housing circumstances.

While the majority of respondents had not experienced changes in living arrangements, those that had were more likely to have had someone move in with them or move in with family or friends. Most respondents had not experienced a change in housing costs. For some, housing costs had actually decreased. For others who were having trouble paying rent or mortgage, most were managing by cutting spending in other areas to cover housing costs.

Some respondents held concerns for the future that their income will decrease, they will not have a job and/or their savings will run out. Others were more positive and were confident that they could pay down debt, save money and increase mortgage payments over the next 12 months.

The findings in this report come from The Tasmania Project’s housing survey which collected responses from over 820 Tasmanian residents aged over 18 years between 23 June to 2 July 2020.

Key findings

- By June 2020, 93% of respondents had experienced no changes in their living arrangements.
- Most respondents (89%) had experienced no changes in housing costs (for example to rent or mortgage).
- While 79% of respondents had no trouble paying mortgage or rent, 14% did need to adjust their spending to meet housing costs.
- Of those respondents that had trouble paying rent or mortgage, the main change made to adapt was to cut spending on other essentials (63%).
- Over the next 12 months, respondents were most concerned about their income decreasing (48% were very concerned or concerned).
- Individual financial confidence was low for finding affordable rental housing or paying higher rent, buying a first home or buying investment property.
- Respondents’ perceived confidence in the market was that it was a better time to buy than to sell residential property.
- A quarter of respondents would consider moving into a different type of housing, such as a bigger or more adaptable home.
Survey results

Housing circumstances

In June, 93% of survey respondents indicated that they had experienced no changes in living arrangements post 19 March 2020, while 7% had experienced change. Of those that had experienced change in living arrangements: 25% had family or friends come to live with them, 20% moved to live with family or friends, 20% broke their lease or it was broken or not renewed by their landlord and 9% had moved to another rental property.

Around 89% of respondents had experienced no changes to their housing costs (such as rent or mortgage), while 5% saw an increase and 6% had a decrease.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in housing costs</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs have increased</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs have decreased</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For respondents whose costs had increased, 48% were paying rent, 22% owned their home outright and 13% were paying a mortgage. For those whose costs had decreased, 71% were paying a mortgage and 21% were paying rent.

The majority of respondents (79%) did not have trouble paying mortgage or rent, however while 14% indicated that they did not have trouble paying, they did need to re-adjust other spending to do so. Only 3% indicated that they did have trouble paying mortgage or rent. Of those that had trouble paying mortgage or rent:

- 19% of those paying a mortgage needed to re-adjust other spending and 4% were unable to meet minimum payments.
- 26% of those paying rent needed to re-adjust other spending and 6% were unable to pay all or part of rent or board.

Of those respondents that had trouble paying rent or mortgage, the main changes they had made to adapt were: cut spending on other essentials (63%), accessed personal savings (42%), reduced or deferred mortgage payment (21%), accessed superannuation (17%) and accessed financial assistance from family or friends (15%).

The future

The three things some respondents were most concerned about over the next 12 months were: income decreasing (33%), not having a job (27%) and savings running out (27%). Overall, however, these respondents were most concerned about their income decreasing (48% were very concerned or concerned).

The things respondents were least confident about regarding their own financial situation relating to the next 12 months were: buying a first house (59%) or investment property (49%), finding an affordable rental property (41%) or paying higher rent (40%), or accessing the HomeBuilder Grant (58%). Some respondents were more confident about paying down debt (28%), saving money (25%) and increasing mortgage payments (25%).

The things respondents were least confident about regarding the housing market were people being able to find affordable rental properties (49%), people finding long term housing (46%), first home buyers able to buy their first house (42%) and it being a good time to sell residential property (39%).

Respondents were more confident about it being a good time to buy residential property (33%) or residential land (33%); or build residential property (37%).

Most respondents found that their homes were adaptable to their needs, however in light of any changes they had made to the way they had used their home during the pandemic, 16% would consider moving location for better access to amenities, services or support and 25% would consider moving into a different type of home, for example to one that is bigger or more adaptable.

Where next?

The housing survey data will be analysed thematically and follow up questions may be included in the third General Survey conducted as part of The Tasmania Project.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
Life satisfaction and life and work choices during COVID-19.

Report number: 32 | Date: 4 August 2020 | Author: Nyree Pisanu

Respondents from The Tasmania Project were mostly satisfied in all areas of their lives and felt as though they had control over their life choices during the pandemic.

**Key findings**

- Respondents were satisfied in most areas of their lives.
- The highest proportion of respondents felt satisfied with the area in which they lived, while feeling part of their local community was the lowest.
- Older people were generally more satisfied, alongside employed people.
- Some respondents agreed that the pandemic had changed them as a person and that their life priorities had changed.
- Most respondents did not want to change their work situation.
- Females were more likely than males to indicate they would like to spend less time at their workplace and work more flexible hours.

**Life satisfaction during the pandemic**

Participants of the second general survey (TTP2) were asked a series of questions relating to their level of satisfaction in different areas of their lives. Overall, participants of the survey were satisfied with their lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% satisfied</th>
<th>n=1209</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The home in which you live</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your life opportunities</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your financial situation</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How safe you feel</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling part of local community</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your health</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The area in which you live</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of free time you have</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your life, all things considered</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Older aged groups (45 years and above) were more satisfied with their homes (92%) compared with younger age groups (18-44 years; 83%).

An age pattern was found for life opportunities, with 85% of respondents aged 65 years and above indicating they were satisfied, followed by 78% of those aged 45-64 years, 69% aged 25-44 years and 67% aged 18-24 years.
More participants from the South (80%) were satisfied with their life opportunities, compared with those residing in the North-West and West (70%) and North (72%).

More respondents from the South were satisfied with their financial situation (75%) compared with 71% of those from the North and 66% from the North-West and West. An age pattern was also observed, with 78% of respondents aged 65 years and above indicating they were satisfied with their financial situation, compared with 74% of those aged 45-64 years, 68% aged 25-44 years and 54% aged 18-24 years. A much higher proportion of employed respondents and those who selected other (including retired) were satisfied with their finances (75% and 72% respectively) compared with unemployed respondents (36%).

Respondents from the South (91%) also felt safer compared with the North (89%) and North-West and West (83%). An age pattern was also observed, with 93% of respondents aged 65 years and above indicating they were satisfied with their safety, compared with 89% of those aged 45-64 years, 86% aged 25-44 years and 75% aged 18-24 years. 90% of employed respondents felt safe, compared with 74% of unemployed respondents and 88% of those who selected other (including retired).

Compared with other aspects of their lives, respondents felt the least satisfied with feeling part of their local community. Respondents from the South and North (64%) were more satisfied with their local community than those from the North-West and West (59%). Older respondents were more likely to feel part of their local community (73% of those aged 65 years and above and 65% aged 45-64 years) compared with younger age groups (54% of those aged 25-44 years and 29% aged 18-24 years).

Respondents from the North and South were more satisfied with their health (78%) compared with those from the North-West and West (70%). Employed respondents were more satisfied with their health (78%) compared with 62% of unemployed respondents and 73% of those who selected other (including retired).

Respondents from the South and North (93%) were more satisfied with the area in which they lived, compared with those from the North-West and West (85%). Again, a lower proportion of unemployed respondents (69%) were satisfied with where they lived, compared with employed respondents (91%) and those who selected other (including retired) (94%).

Life choices
Study participants were asked a series of questions relating to how their lives had changed during the pandemic. When asked about the statement: ‘the experience of the pandemic has changed me as a person’, 37% agreed, 29% felt neutral and 34% disagreed. Females were more likely to indicate the pandemic had changed them as a person (40%) compared with males (29%). An age pattern was observed where younger respondents were more likely to agree (18-24 years: 54%, 25-44 years: 43%) than older respondents (45-64 years: 38%, 65 years and above: 26%).

Respondents were asked if their life priorities had changed as a result of the pandemic. Responses were split by about one third (37% disagree, 34% neutral, 34% agree). A higher proportion of females agreed (36%) compared with males (27%).

A majority of respondents felt as though they had control over their own life choices (78%), however this was higher for males (81%) compared with females (77%). 78% of employed respondents felt they had control over their life choices, compared with 59% of unemployed respondents and 80% of those who selected other (including retired).

Work choices
Respondents who indicated they were currently employed were asked a set of questions relating to whether they wanted to change their work situation due to the pandemic. The most common response was that they did not want or need to change their work situation (40%). This was higher for males (49%) compared to females (36%).

Females were more likely to indicate they would like to spend less time at their workplace (41%) compared with 24% of males and 36% of the employed sample overall.

Another common response was working more flexible hours, which 27% of the employed sample chose. Females were more likely to choose this (28%) compared with males (23%).

Where next?
These findings touch on some important aspects of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the life and work choices of Tasmanians. In collaboration with researchers from health and medicine, The Tasmania Project is currently designing a health and wellbeing survey. This targeted survey will provide more in-depth insights into how individuals are faring through the pandemic and how their wellbeing and life choices are being impacted.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see [here](#).
Financial wellbeing, employment, and small businesses during COVID-19.

Report number: 33 | Date: 21 August 2020 | Author: Rebecca Banham

While conducting interviews across the State, The Tasmania Project has heard stories of the diverse financial experiences of everyday Tasmanians during the pandemic.

Key findings

• Almost all interviewees who discussed Government payments such as JobKeeper did so in a positive light.

• Around one-fifth of participants discussed themselves or those close to them losing work because of the pandemic.

• Interviewees were ambivalent about working and studying from home, identifying challenges involved in having to do so.

• Small business owners have faced various stressors during the pandemic, and these stressors have not always been financial in nature.

Financial wellbeing and government payments

In June-July 2020, The Tasmania Project conducted 50 interviews with people from across Tasmania. The Tasmania Project asked interviewees about their financial wellbeing and employment experiences during the pandemic, unearthing a range of positives and challenges.

Around a third of participants made general comments about their current financial wellbeing, most of which were positive. This may reflect the interview sample – with an average age of 57 – which included multiple self-funded retirees who were living debt-free.

Some participants, however, were not in such fortunate positions.

One participant explained that they were currently unable to work due to their poor internet connection leaving them unable to teach online. Another participant had been expecting to find employment when the pandemic hit and had now been left jobless.

One participant described her feelings of “panic” in the initial stages of the pandemic after learning that her husband’s hours were to be cut. Another participant, whose wife’s employment is in the tourism sector, said that the uncertainty of the next 12 months had “probably been the biggest [worry] at a personal level for us”.

For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
Almost a third of participants referred to various Government payments (such as JobKeeper, JobSeeker, $750 stimulus cheques and hardship grants), doing so in almost unanimously positive terms.

Participants described the different ways that they were using these payments, such as supporting local businesses, retaining employees, paying residential and business rent, and obtaining financial management assistance for their small business.

Participants described such payments as tiding Tasmanian families and businesses over, allowing life to continue in a way that would not otherwise be possible.

Around one-fifth of participants also made comments about spending money locally to ‘do their bit’ to help the economy. Most often, these comments referred to making a conscious effort to spend money on takeaway food.

Work during COVID-19

Around one-fifth of participants discussed themselves or those close to them losing work because of the pandemic. Participants and their families had lost work across a range of sectors and for various reasons, including library closures, conference cancellations, restrictions on tourism, a workplace being unable to guarantee social distancing, and university campus closures.

One participant explained that their search for employment was not going well, citing that not only are they “not a doctor or a nurse or anything that they’re looking for”, but that their difficulties had been compounded by poor internet connectivity making remote interviews unreliable.

Around a third of participants discussed details about working and studying from home. These experiences were mixed. For those participants who were happy about working from home (around half), this was generally attributed to gaining a better work-life balance and/or having an appropriate environment at home with sufficient IT support.

One participant described working from home as “peaceful” and that being at home “felt a lot safer”. For those who had problems working from home, the major issues identified were difficulties in setting physical and mental boundaries between work and non-work life and missing the social aspects of working outside the home.

Other issues included balancing childcare and work tasks, IT issues, and difficulties conducting work remotely. One participant, a secondary school teacher, described the “phenomenal” workload that schools and educators have had in adapting their teaching for online delivery, saying “it’s actually pushed our pedagogy into a different era”.

Small businesses

The Tasmania Project interviewers spoke with several small business owners. One participant, a healthcare practitioner, has been able to maintain staff thanks to government payments; while another participant who opened a cafe last year was struggling greatly from lost business. The stressors facing these Tasmanian small business owners have been varied, and not always financial in nature.

For example, one participant who runs a grocery store and was trading throughout restrictions as an essential service described feeling strained by the responsibility of ensuring their business met public safety guidelines.

Similarly, another participant (employed in worker’s compensation and workplace safety) raised the issue of current health and safety regulations only running until December. Another participant – whose business was severely impacted by travel restrictions – referred to the emotional toll of the pandemic, saying:

“… it was incredibly stressful. I had to deal with industrial relations, complex issues and I had to make some decisions about what was going to happen to my business. I’ve been in business for 25 years. So just giving it up wasn’t necessarily an option … I’ve been on a full rollercoaster of emotions since coronavirus started”.

Where next?

Interview data suggest that Government payments and messages about supporting the local economy have been received well. It has been clear throughout the pandemic that many Tasmanians require financial and employment support, but this is a multi-faceted issue.

It is important for us to consider not only what is and is not working well at this time, but also what forms of support Tasmanians in different sectors require. Stories from Tasmanians generally – and perhaps especially stories from small business owners – can prompt us to evaluate the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of financial wellbeing.

Future steps could include exploring not only what Tasmanian workers and employers need in terms of financial support, but also in terms of emotional support, accessing information and understanding responsibilities, building a sense of community, and providing support in transitioning business models where necessary.
In June and July 2020, The Tasmania Project conducted interviews with 50 Tasmanians about their general wellbeing, time spent at home and in public places amidst restrictions, and internet and technology use.

The Tasmania Project has found that through the changes brought about by the pandemic, Tasmanians have embraced a sense of change. This has been largely positive in nature, with Tasmanians reflecting on ‘what matters’, enjoying a slower pace of life, observing changes at a societal level, and noticing a sense of community and opportunities for helping others.

**Key findings**

- Around one-third of interview participants commented on how the pandemic had prompted them to reflect on their lives.
- A further 14 participants noted that COVID-19 had brought about a change in the pace of their life.
- Participants discussed their observations about how society was changing as a result of the pandemic, including how COVID-19 had highlighted existing social inequalities.
- Around a third of interview participants discussed the way that the pandemic had prompted a growing sense of community during the pandemic and new opportunities for helping others.

For details of the study’s approach and methods, see [here](#).
Reflection and positive change

In June and July 2020, The Tasmania Project conducted 50 interviews with people from across Tasmania. Interviewers asked participants about their general wellbeing, time spent at home and in public places amidst restrictions, and internet and technology use.

Around one-third of participants commented on how the pandemic had prompted them to reflect on their lives and the lifestyle changes brought about by this time. These changes included keeping in more regular contact with family and friends, having more time and ‘brain space’ with which to navigate life, and cultivating gratitude for the pleasures of life and relative safety of Tasmania. For example, one participant said that:

“I think the good thing about coronavirus on a very personal level for me is that it’s allowed me to slow down … in terms of my mental wellbeing, even though coronavirus has decimated my business, it actually has freed me up to make some really important decisions and just have some clear thinking time. So, yeah, you know, there’s the positive and the negative to everything.”

In addition to these comments, 14 participants also discussed having more time during the pandemic or enjoying the slower pace of life that restrictions had brought them. These comments were quite individual in nature, referring to observations that participants had made about their own lives or the lives of those close to them.

Is society changing?

Many participants also commented on the changes they noticed occurring in society at a local, national, or global level. For example, over a third of participants made comments about a growing sense of ‘community’ (discussed in greater detail below).

Further, around half of all participants commented on general structural changes they had observed as a result of the pandemic. Only three of these responses were particularly negative; one participant doubted whether social distancing was resulting in long-term habit changes, another was concerned about rising domestic violence rates, while one participant expressed uncertainty about how anxiety about infection might be affecting how people related to one another in public.

Otherwise, most of these ‘structural’ observations were positive, or reflected areas where participants felt that aspects of society might change for the better.

The kinds of changes mentioned by participants included more people working from home, the benefits of technology and what future technology use might look like; how the pandemic has provided a ‘wake-up call’ in highlighting social inequalities, sustainability issues, and economic self-sufficiency; the renewed importance of gratitude and caring for family and community; and changes to health systems, such as authorities learning to handle flus and pandemics and the wider availability of telehealth services.

Community and helping others

As noted above, over a third of participants discussed a growing sense of community and examples of people helping others during COVID-19. All but two of these responses were positive (with a particular outlier being one participant’s concern that there is not currently the same sense of community as was experienced during wartimes).

Participants told very positive stories about Tasmania’s community spirit, such as kindness shown to neighbours and strangers, people supporting local businesses, and examples of participants helping those who need extra support during the pandemic. As one participant said, in their community:

“… [there is a] family who have a restaurant … they were open for takeaway meals and they were providing - if somebody had lost their job, they were providing those meals at half price or even nothing if people couldn’t afford it … so we made a point of supporting them, getting a take away meal from them once a fortnight”

Where next?

As these interview responses highlight, the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19 offer a unique opportunity for us to consider changing social norms and relationships, and what changes Tasmanians would like to retain in the post-pandemic future. On an individual level, the pandemic offers opportunities for reflection, growth, and re-evaluation – opportunities that sometimes present alongside difficulties and hardship. A question for future research is: How has COVID-19 shaped how Tasmanians assess or approach what is important in their own life, and how has it highlighted what we value about the Tasmanian community?

It is also important for us to consider how feelings of ‘community’ and changing social norms in Tasmania relate to border closures and openings. When the movement of people to and from the State eventually increases, will this shape how Tasmanians relate to public spaces and to one another? Or will experiences of community differ as the State ‘opens up’ to higher visitor numbers?

Report number: 35 | Date: 21 August 2020 | Author: Rebecca Banham

The Tasmania Project has found that while many are doing it tough during the pandemic, many Tasmanians have also been adopting or maintaining strategies, routines and conditions which have worked to support and protect feelings of coping and wellbeing at this time.

Key findings

- Individual experiences of wellbeing vary greatly. Some Tasmanians are finding that they are coping very well during the pandemic, while others are struggling with less healthy habits and feelings of isolation.
- For a significant portion of interviewees, COVID-19 has not hugely affected their lifestyle. This includes retired Tasmanians who are financially stable.
- The ability to utilise space – such as having a large home, acreage, or a driver’s license – shape experiences of the pandemic, enhancing some people’s ability to ‘weather the storm’ of restrictions.

Individual wellbeing

In June-July 2020, The Tasmania Project conducted 50 interviews with people from across Tasmania. Interviewers asked participants about their general wellbeing, time spent at home and in public places amidst restrictions, and internet and technology use.

All participants were asked about their general sense of wellbeing at the time of the interview, including topics such as diet, exercise, and coping strategies they had employed during the pandemic.

Unsurprisingly, these responses were highly diverse, with some participants reporting a much higher and more stable sense of wellbeing and physical and mental health than others.

Several habits and activities emerged regularly as important for participants’ wellbeing. These included being able to maintain one’s favoured forms of exercise; growing food, gardening, and/or cooking more regularly at home; and practicing mindfulness techniques, exercising consistently, and keeping in contact with others.

Business as usual

For a significant portion of interviewees, it seems that life has not changed drastically due to COVID-19. This group of people included those who were already retired, already working or studying from home, and/or did not have dependent children at home. People in this position tended not to live alone, had some measure of financial security, and enjoyed hobbies and interests that were able to be pursued in the home.
As the average age of interviewees was 57, it is likely that we spoke with a relatively high proportion of retired Tasmanians, helping to explain the prevalence of these experiences. This trend perhaps also speaks to a common, but less widely-reported experience of the pandemic – a sense of ‘business as usual’, where many individuals’ lives are not severely affected by COVID-19. For those interviewees in this position, the major issue presented by the pandemic seems to be separation from loved ones outside the home, such as children and grandchildren.

While unnecessary travel was heavily discouraged during the height of restrictions, it is also worth noting that having access to transport – such as owning a car and holding a driver’s licence – is a further mark of the ability to utilise space. Having this ability revoked during restrictions was perhaps disorientating to many. As one participant described:

“There was a point where I was too scared to drive … you hear rumours of, you know, police checks or something like that. So, yeah, that was actually very isolating.”

Where next?

It is useful for us to consider what is working well for individual Tasmanians as they negotiate their wellbeing during the pandemic. This poses the question - what can individuals do to support their own wellbeing during uncertain circumstances?

However, in exploring the experiences of a wide group of Tasmanians, it is also apparent that potentially protective factors for wellbeing – such as exercise, mobility, and access to adequate information – are not evenly distributed. Issues such as inadequate mental health support, financial insecurity, restricted mobility, and living alone may potentially act as barriers to wellbeing during a pandemic.

As such, these stories about wellbeing have implications for how Tasmanians in different socioeconomic and living conditions are equipped to ‘weather the storm’ of extended restrictions. In this way, it is important for us to consider how various habits and living conditions not only impact individual wellbeing, but act as a form of ‘capital’ that could have ramifications for Tasmania’s post-pandemic future.

Having space

One further factor that seemed to support the wellbeing of some participants is the ability to utilise space.

Around a quarter of participants explained that they were comfortable dealing with government restrictions because they had access to space, such as living in a larger house, living on a larger property, and/or living near accessible open spaces. For example, as one participant noted:

“It hasn’t really worried me. As I said, I think if I lived in a two-bedroom unit, 40 stories up, it’d be different. But I don’t. I’ve got a big house and a big block, and I can sit out in the sun. It’s quiet where we are. And you know, there’s worse places to be locked down.... it hasn’t worried me at all”.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
Retired Tasmanians’ experience of housing and financial security during the pandemic.

Report number: 36 | Date: 21 September 2020 | Author: Jacqueline De Vries

The Tasmania Project has found that retired Tasmanians are more likely to be home owners and be more financially secure than other Tasmanians.

This survey has captured a robust subset of older Tasmanians who are retirees. High levels of home ownership is typical to this older demographic which provides security of tenure and a financial asset on which to draw on if necessary. However, survey results indicate that a fifth of retirees are concerned about their financial situation and 28% have reported a decrease in income since March 2020.

Previous survey results relating to housing found that a small proportion of home owners who owned their homes outright were still paying housing costs. This led to further exploration of Tasmanians who owned residential property other than their primary residence.

The main findings in this report come from The Tasmania Project’s third general survey which collected responses from 1133 Tasmanian residents between 26 August and 6 September 2020. Other findings in this report come from The Tasmania Project’s housing survey which ran from 23 June to 2 July 2020.

Key findings

- The majority (83%) of retirees owned their home outright with a further 6% paying off a mortgage.
- Fewer retirees were concerned or very concerned with their financial situation (22%) when compared with a third of all respondents.
- Household income decreased a little or a lot for 28% of retirees, while household spending increased for 13% of retirees.
- In relation to housing, just 4% of retirees reported that they needed to adjust spending to cover housing costs.
- A quarter of all retirees owned other residential property which is not their usual residence and 15% of retirees owed money on this residential property.
- Compared to non-primary residence property owners overall, retirees were less likely to use it for a long-term rental (43% compared with 57%) and more likely to use it as a shack/holiday house for their personal use only (37% compared with 21%).
- A fifth of retirees indicated that their non-primary residence property use had changed during the pandemic.

For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
Survey results

The third general survey attracted a large response from older Tasmanians, with over a quarter of respondents (28%) indicating they were retired and 14% indicating they were receiving the age pension.

More than half of all respondents (51%) who own their own homes were retirees. A large majority of retired respondents (83%) owned their home outright and 6% were paying off a mortgage. A further 6% rented from a private landlord and 3% rented from a social housing landlord.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure of retired respondents</th>
<th>Own outright</th>
<th>Own, mortgage</th>
<th>Rent, private landlord</th>
<th>Rent, social housing</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% tenure</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% retired</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* boarding, living at home with family etc.

Financial wellbeing and tenure

A third (33%) of all respondents indicated that they were concerned or very concerned with their financial situation, including 22% of retirees. Financial wellbeing differed by tenure, with the highest rates of concern regarding finances expressed by respondents in private (51%) or social (53%) rentals. This was followed by respondents paying off a mortgage (35%) and those who owned their home outright (25%).

Around one in ten respondents (12%) indicated they needed to adjust spending to meet housing costs such as rent or mortgage, compared with only 4% of retirees. A small proportion (3%) of respondents who owned their home outright reported the need to adjust spending to cover housing costs. While this is a relatively small group, it indicates that respondents who own their homes outright may have additional housing costs relating to owning a residential property that is not their primary residence.

Household income decreased a little or a lot during the COVID-19 pandemic for 30% of respondents. This included 31% of respondents who owned their home outright, 29% of home owners paying off a mortgage and a third (33%) of private renters. Household income decreased a little or a lot for a similar proportion of retirees (28%).

Changes to household spending during the COVID-19 pandemic were common amongst the sample, with 18% of respondents reporting an increase in household spending and 45% reporting a decrease. Similar results were obtained for retirees, with household spending increasing for 13% and decreasing for 48%. Compared to the full sample, retirees were less likely to need to take financial actions to support basic living expenses. For example, drawing on accumulated savings or term deposits was the action taken by the greatest proportion of respondents (11%) but for only 9% of retirees.

Other residential property

A quarter of all respondents and equally, a quarter of all retirees, owned residential property which is not their usual residence. Half of the respondents with such property(s) (and who completed the question) owed money such as a mortgage on the property(s). The majority of these respondents had also indicated that they were also paying a mortgage on their primary residence. In comparison, 15% of retirees owed money on their non-primary residential property.

Residential property which was not the respondents’ usual residence was predominantly used for long-term rental (57%). A further 21% had a shack/holiday house for personal use only. The profile of retirees’ property differed, with 43% used for long-term rental and 37% as a shack/holiday house for personal use.

Due to the pandemic, 18% of respondents indicated that the use of their non-primary residence had changed. Of these, 28% were unable to visit the property due to the restrictions, 20% had received no bookings for their holiday rental and 13% did not have tenants for their long-term rental. A slightly higher proportion of retirees (20%) indicated that the use of their property(s) had changed, potentially driven by the higher proportion of holiday houses which were unable to be accessed.

The housing survey sample conducted earlier in the year examined non-primary residence ownership more closely. It also drew a high proportion of retirees, with a subset earning income through investment property. The survey found that of the respondents who owned residential property which was not their usual residence, 29% were retired and 52% were aged 55 years and over. Of the non-primary residence property owners, 67% earned an income from the property, and a quarter of these were retirees. Of those that owed money such as a mortgage on the property, 23% were aged 55 years and over.

Where next?

Housing impacts and household related financial data, including relating to income security, will continue be analysed to track changes throughout the pandemic, related restrictions and recovery.
Running out of food an ongoing issue for Tasmanians during COVID-19.

Report number: 37 | Date: 22 September 2020 | Authors: Ella Horton, Katherine Kent

Even as the supermarket shelves return to normal and panic buying becomes a thing of the past, rates of food insecurity* reported by Tasmanians have not greatly improved since earlier in the pandemic.

In our latest survey of 1,133 Tasmanians, we found an alarming number (close to 1 in 5) have run out of food because they could not afford to buy more during the COVID-19 pandemic. This represents an increase relative to pre-COVID levels and shows there has been little improvement compared to results from the Food Survey we conducted in June.

The same groups of people within the Tasmanian community continue to experience the highest rates of food insecurity - those whose jobs have been impacted, and vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities, single people with dependents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, temporary residents, and young people.

Key findings

- The COVID-19 pandemic appears to be having long-term impacts on the food security of Tasmanians, with 18% of the 1,133 respondents experiencing food insecurity to some extent.

- While there has been some reduction in the rate of Tasmanians experiencing food insecurity since June (which was found to be more than 25%), there continues to be an alarming number of Tasmanians (1 in 5) struggling to buy enough food.

- Young Tasmanians, single parent households, those with a disability, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and temporary residents continue to be the most affected, with high levels of food insecurity reported in both surveys.

- Higher rates of very low food security were reported by respondents in the North-West and West (7%) compared with those in the North (3%) and South (3%).

- Similar patterns of food insecurity to those found in June were found amongst groups receiving government benefits, with around half of respondents on JobSeeker (48%), youth allowance (50%) and the disability pension (56%) experiencing food insecurity.
Survey results

The Tasmania Project surveyed 1,133 Tasmanians from across the state about food access and supply during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the third general survey (TTP3) conducted from 26 August to 6 September.

The results show that the burden of food insecurity continues to exceed pre COVID-19 levels, with 18% of respondents reporting that they had experienced some degree of food insecurity within the last month. This is less than the rate found in the Food Survey we conducted in June, which found 26% of Tasmanian respondents were experiencing food insecurity. Concerningly, the proportion of Tasmanian respondents reporting low or very low food security has not changed much over time (14% in June compared to almost 12% in August), meaning there are a large number of people in the community who are regularly going without food and do not have access to enough food to meet their needs.

The groups within the Tasmanian community experiencing the most food insecurity have remained largely unchanged since June. Young people aged 18-24 years still have the lowest levels of food security of all age groups (63%), though there has been some improvement since June when the rate of food security in this group was even lower (57%). Food security rose with age, with respondents aged 65 years and above reporting the highest levels of food security in both surveys (75% in June and 89% in August).

Less than half (44%) of respondents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander were food secure, compared with 84% of respondents who did not identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Tasmanians living with a disability or health condition which impacts their lives were also more likely to be food insecure (32%) when compared with Tasmanians without a disability (85%). These groups showed similarly high rates of food insecurity in June.

While results were not significantly different by region, 7% of respondents in the North-West and West reported very low food security compared with only 3% in both the North and South. This suggests the pattern of food insecurity has not changed since June, as the previous survey found higher levels of food insecurity were experienced by rural respondents compared with those living in urban areas (33% vs. 23%).

Compared with Australian citizens and permanent residents, temporary residents have experienced far lower levels of food security during the pandemic, with more than half experiencing low or very low food security in both June (59%) and August (58%). The majority of respondents not receiving government benefits were food secure (85%) in comparison to respondents receiving JobSeeker (48%), the disability pension (56%) and youth allowance (50%). Those receiving JobKeeper and the age pension shared a similar level of food security to those not receiving benefits (85% and 89% respectively), however any level of food insecurity is concerning.

Respondents who did not have to make any financial actions due to COVID were largely food secure (88%). Of those who had made financial changes, only 56% of those who reduced their home-loan and rent were food secure, compared with 50% of people who increased their credit, 26% who borrowed money from family/friends and 31% who sold household goods. Financial stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic is clearly having a major impact on food security, with similar results obtained in the June survey.

The majority of respondents experiencing food insecurity reported doing nothing to cope with their situation (57%), however a large proportion employed several strategies. The most common strategies were eating less food (31%) and eating food of a lower quality (26%). Other strategies included borrowing money for food or buying food on credit (10%), seeking food from social networks (8%), selling possessions to buy food (8%), emergency food relief (7%) and foraging for food (7%).

Where next?

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the lives of Tasmanians, especially through challenges to the Tasmanian economy and ongoing border restrictions, it is critical to continue to monitor food insecurity in our state. With the impending reduction to the Australian government support payment “the Coronavirus supplement”, it is anticipated that financial challenges in many households will result in increased food insecurity. Given the majority of our respondents reported not accessing help through emergency food relief, it is important that Tasmanian residents are supported to access enough healthy food to meet their needs in order to avoid the long-term health implications of going without food.

*Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. For comparison, the prevalence of food insecurity amongst the general Australian population (pre COVID-19) has been estimated to be approximately 5%. The Tasmanian Population Health Survey in 2019 reported that 6.2% of Tasmanians were experiencing food insecurity due to financial stress.
Compliance with restrictions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in Tasmania.

Report number: 38 | Date: 28 September 2020 | Author: Nyree Pisanu

Findings from The Tasmania Project show that, in general, Tasmanians are supportive of the restrictions that have been put in place in response to the pandemic and are continuing to comply with these measures.

Key findings
- Respondents trusted the government to provide reliable information about COVID-19 and supported most measures.
- Most respondents reported they had been complying with restrictions and have supported the rate at which the State Government is easing restrictions.
- Support for keeping the Tasmanian borders closed and compliance with social/physical distancing measures has decreased over the course of the three surveys (carried out between April and September).
- There was also a decrease in the belief that future outbreaks in Tasmania will be managed well between the second and third surveys.
- In some cases, younger people were less likely to comply with restrictions than older people. They also had less trust in the government.
- Since restrictions have eased, only half of respondents have felt safe in public or shared spaces and some have avoided attending events due to COVID-19 fears.
- More respondents believe that individuals are responsible for ensuring compliance with COVID-safe practices, compared with those who believe businesses are responsible.

Timing of the surveys – what restrictions were in place?

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tasmania declared a state of emergency on 19 March 2020. Following this, restrictions on cafés, restaurants, retail, entertainment and recreation were enforced, national parks and reserves were shut, non-essential travel around the state was restricted and the Tasmanian borders were closed to non-residents. Working from home and learning from home for school children was encouraged where possible.

By 30 March, Tasmanians were only allowed to leave the house for food, essential supplies or services, to go to work or school, or for caring/family reasons, and a two-person rule was established for outdoor exercise. The first Tasmania Project survey (TTP1) was conducted between 20 April and 10 May and coincided with the full COVID-19 restrictions.

On 11 May, Tasmania began to ease restrictions in three stages. Stage 1 included an increase in the number of people allowed in households, funerals and gatherings, restaurants and cafes reopened to a limited number of patrons, and students returned to school. On 5 June, Tasmanians were permitted to travel around the state. On 15 June, stage 2 included another increase in the number of people allowed in spaces, alongside the opening of establishments such as cinemas, museums, beauty services and gyms. Stage 3 was scheduled to begin on 13 July, however, was brought forward to 12pm on 26 June. The second Tasmania Project survey (TTP2) was open from 9 to 17 June and coincided with stage 2 easing of restrictions.

The third Tasmania Project survey (TTP3) was open from 26 August to 7 September. Stage 3 easing of restrictions occurred prior to the survey, however some restrictions remained including limitations on the number of people allowed in households and businesses.
Attitudes towards COVID-19 measures

In TTP1, respondents were asked a series of questions about their opinions towards COVID-19 measures. Most respondents agreed that official measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 were not too strict (83%). Females were more likely to agree (87%) than males (71%).

Half of TTP1 respondents (51%) did not feel like their freedom had been taken away, while 31% did and 18% were neutral. Males were more likely to agree with this statement (39%) compared with females (29%), as were younger respondents, with 59% of those aged 18-24 years in agreement compared with 33% aged 25-44 years, 31% aged 45-64 years and 27% aged 65 years and above.

Most TTP1 participants (59%) indicated they were not fearful they would accidentally break the law with COVID-19 measures in place, with minor differences between demographic groups. However, most indicated they felt neutral (57%) that, compared with others, they were doing more to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Tasmania. Only 28% agreed and 15% disagreed with this statement. Males (31%) were more likely to agree than females (27%). Findings also showed that TTP1 participants did not find the language used to explain COVID-19 to be too complex (71%). Those from the North and North West were less likely to disagree (66%) compared to those from the South (74%) and North (71%).

In TTP2, respondents were asked about the easing of restrictions and the introduction of new regulations. Respondents largely supported the statement that businesses and shops were complying with COVID-19 regulations (89%). In TTP1 and TTP2, respondents indicated they would know what to do if they or someone in their household had symptoms of COVID-19 (TTP1: 92% agreed, TTP2: 97% agreed) with minor differences between demographic groups.

In all three surveys, respondents were asked if the Tasmanian Government should keep the state borders closed until COVID-19 was eradicated from Australia. In TTP1, 51% agreed, 20% were neutral and 29% disagreed. Respondents from the North-West and West, and North were more likely to agree (55%) compared with those from the South (49%). Females were more likely to agree (54%) compared with males (43%).

There was less agreement that borders should remain closed in TTP2 (45% agreed, 20% were neutral and 35% disagreed), than in TTP1. In TTP3, more respondents did not support border closures (45% disagreed, 36% agreed, 19% were neutral). More respondents from the North (40%) agreed, compared to 38% from the North-West and West, and 33% from the South. An age pattern was observed across all three surveys where younger age groups were more likely to support keeping state borders closed, compared with older age groups.

In TTP3, 89% of respondents agreed with the statement ‘I believe Tasmanian border restrictions are keeping us safe’. However, just under half of TTP3 participants (45%) believed that Tasmanian officials were making fair and equitable decisions about who can enter the State, while 28% disagreed and 27% felt neutral. More respondents from the North agreed (51%), compared with the North-West and West (45%) and South (42%).

Across all three waves, respondents were asked if they trusted government and health officials to provide reliable information about COVID-19. Trust was the highest in TTP2 (82%), followed by TTP3 (79%) and then TTP1 (75%). Older age groups had more trust than younger age groups in both TTP1 (18-44 years: 62%, 45-65+ years: 75%) and TTP2 (18-44 years: 71%, 45-65+ years: 85%), with no age difference observed in TTP3.

In TTP2, respondents from the North (84%) and South (83%) were more likely to trust the government to provide reliable information compared with the North-West and West (77%). This was also found in TTP3, with respondents from the North (79%) and South (81%) reporting more trust than the North-West (73%). In all three surveys, females were more likely to agree compared with males.

“In both TTP2 and TTP3, most respondents (79%) did not believe the government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions”

In all surveys, participants were asked if the rules and regulations in response to COVID-19 were confusing. There was a slight decrease between TTP1 (38% agreed), compared with TTP2 (35%) and TTP3 (34% agreed). For TTP1, more people in the South agreed rules were confusing (38%), compared with those in the North-West and West (33%) and North (31%). In TTP3, respondents aged 25-44 years found COVID-19 regulations the most confusing (41%), compared with those aged 18-24 years (33%), 45-64 years (33%) and 65 years and above (27%). In both TTP2 and TTP3, most respondents (79%) did not believe the government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions.
In TTP3, a majority of respondents agreed that COVID-19 is as dangerous (87%) and contagious (91%) as health authorities claim. Males were less likely to agree with these statements (81% of males compared with 90% of females agreed COVID-19 is as dangerous, and 85% of males compared with 94% of females agreed COVID-19 is as contagious).

To the statement ‘future COVID-19 outbreaks in Tasmania will be managed well’, 81% of TTP2 respondents agreed, while only 63% of TTP3 respondents agreed. In TTP2, no key differences between demographic groups were observed, however in TTP3, females were more likely to agree (67%), compared with males (54%). A higher proportion of TTP3 respondents in the North (68%) also agreed, compared with those in the North-West and West (66%) and South (61%).

**Compliance with restrictions**

Respondents were also asked questions about their own compliance with restrictions.

In TTP1, most respondents indicated they were staying home and only going out for essential purposes such as getting groceries or medicines or going to work (87%). This figure was higher in the North (91%) than in the North-West and West (88%) and South (86%). More females reported staying home (89%) compared with males (82%). Only 65% of respondents aged 18-24 years indicated they were staying home, compared with 88% of respondents of all other ages.

A majority of TTP1 respondents (80%) indicated they did not break the rules on social distancing to connect with family and friends, as well as not breaking the rules to do things they enjoyed before the pandemic (88%). Respondents from the South were more likely to agree that they broke the rules to connect with family and friends (13%), compared with respondents from the North (10%) and North-West and West (7%).

Most respondents of TTP2 (62%) felt comfortable telling other people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices, however older respondents were more likely to feel comfortable than younger groups (44 years and below; 53%, over 45 years; 66%). Respondents of TTP3 felt less comfortable (57%) than TTP2. Again, older respondents were more likely to feel more comfortable than younger respondents (44 years and below; 42%; over 45 years; 61%).

In all three surveys, respondents were asked if they always followed social/physical distancing rules¹. In TTP1, 81% agreed, however this proportion decreased substantially in TTP2 (64%) and again in TTP3 (47%). This observed decrease is likely to reflect the easing of restrictions that occurred between TTP1 and TTP2, and then again prior to TTP3.

In TTP1, more people in the North were following physical distancing rules (87%), compared with those in the North-West and West (82%) and South (79%). Less young people (18-24 years) indicated they were following the rules (47%), compared with those aged 25-44 years (75%), 45-64 years (84%), and 65 years and above (86%). In TTP2, a similar age pattern was found, with only 44% of those aged 18-24 years following the rules, compared with 53% of those aged 25-44 years, 87% aged 45-64 years and 70% aged 65 years and above. More females (66%) were following distancing rules compared with males (58%) in TTP2.

In TTP3, 59% of respondents in the North-West and West, 49% of those in the North, and 43% of those in the South agreed they were following physical distancing rules. An age pattern was observed, with older aged groups more likely to comply (54% of 65 years and above and 47% of 45-64 years) than younger groups (36% of 25-44 years, 30% of 18-24 years).

“81% of TTP1 respondents reported they were following social/physical distancing rules, compared with only 64% of TTP2 respondents and 47% of TTP3 respondents”

In TTP2, most respondents (73%) agreed they were not going out as much as they used to, despite restrictions easing. More females agreed with this statement (77%) compared with males (65%). In TTP3, a similar proportion of respondents agreed (71%).

Just over half of TTP2 respondents indicated they felt safe in public or shared spaces (56%). Males were more likely to feel safe (62%) compared with females (54%). Respondents from the South also felt safer (57%), compared with those from the North (56%) and North-West and West (54%).

¹ Question wording was changed from social distancing in TTP1 to physical distancing in TTP2 to reflect the change in language used by the state and federal governments.
How are community behaviours and attitudes changing?

The findings show that when full restrictions were enforced, a clear majority of our sample (TTP1) supported and complied with measures put in place by the Tasmanian Government. As restrictions started to ease, less respondents (TTP2) indicated they were complying with measures such as physical distancing.

As restrictions continued to be lifted, less respondents (TTP3) reported compliance with remaining measures. It is likely that an easing of restrictions and decline of COVID-19 cases in Tasmania has resulted in the emergence of a certain level of complacency around COVID-safe behaviours that is evident across the three surveys.

Support for keeping the Tasmanian borders closed until COVID-19 is eradicated in Australia has also declined over the three surveys. This is possibly due to fear of COVID-19 decreasing within the community and an increased understanding that management of the virus, rather than eradication, is a more plausible future.

Despite changes in community behaviours and attitudes at different stages of the pandemic, TTP2 respondents were not going out as much as they used to, and many did not feel safe in public or shared spaces. Some TTP3 respondents reported avoided attending events due to COVID-19 fears, despite there being minimal restrictions in place and no evidence of community transmission of COVID-19.

Between TTP2 and TTP3, less respondents believed that future outbreaks in Tasmania will be managed well. However, trust in the government and health officials to provide reliable information about COVID-19 has remained high across all three surveys.

Where next?

The findings provide an insight into Tasmanian attitudes and behaviours regarding restrictions during the pandemic, and how they have changed through the different phases of the response.

These results will be useful to prepare for the opening of borders in the coming months and to inform the response to possible future outbreaks of COVID-19 in the State.

In particular, the findings demonstrate the importance of engaging with the Tasmanian community to ensure that, once borders open, COVID-safe behaviours are widely and consistently practiced to reduce the risk and severity of future outbreaks and the reintroduction of restrictions and/or another state-wide lockdown.

TTP2 participants were also asked if they were willing to provide personal information for contact tracing. Most agreed (66%), with those from the South and North-West and West more likely to agree (both 68%) than those from the North (59%). Older respondents (45 years and above) were more likely to agree (71%), compared with those under 44 years (60%).

TTP2 respondents were asked two questions regarding COVID-19 testing: 1) if they would avoid being tested because they did not want to be quarantined (88% answered the question), and 2) if they would not get tested for COVID-19 because the test sounds unpleasant (76% answered the question). Of those who answered the first question, 85% disagreed that they would avoid being tested because they did not want to quarantine. A high proportion of females disagreed (89%) while less males disagreed (80%). For those who answered the second question, 80% disagreed they would not get tested for COVID-19 because the test sounds unpleasant. Again, a higher proportion of females disagreed (83%) compared with males (75%).

TTP3 respondents were asked a similar question regarding COVID-19 testing: whether they agreed with the statement ‘If I showed mild symptoms of COVID-19, I would be tested’. 89% agreed, with those aged 18-24 years and 65 years and above more likely to agree (96% and 94% respectively), compared with those aged 45-64 years (89%) and 25-44 years (82%).

In TTP3, respondents were asked if they would wear a face mask in public to limit the spread of COVID-19. A majority (84%) indicated they would wear a mask, however 86% of females agreed, while only 78% of males agreed. Those in the South were more likely to agree (87%), compared with those in the North (82%) and North-West and West (77%).

“86% of females agreed they would wear a face mask in public, while only 78% of males agreed”

TTP3 respondents were also asked if they avoid attending events or venues due to COVID-19 fears. Responses were split, with 45% agreeing, 19% feeling neutral, and 36% disagreeing. An age pattern was observed, with around half of respondents aged 65 years and above (49%) avoiding events, followed closely by those aged 45-64 years (45%) and 25-44 years (43%). Only 22% of respondents aged 18-24 years were avoiding events, with the majority of this age group reporting they were not avoiding events (63%).

In TTP3, respondents were asked a series of questions about who was responsible for ensuring compliance with COVID-19 rules and safeguards. An overwhelming majority (94%) indicated that individuals are responsible for ensuring compliance.

Respondents were also asked if they thought that businesses are responsible for ensuring compliance among patrons in their venues. 80% agreed, with a higher proportion of respondents from the South agreeing (82%), compared with 79% of those from the North-West and West and 76% from the North. Less respondents believed that businesses are responsible for ensuring compliance among patrons outside of the venue, with only around half (49%) agreeing.
Third General Survey – Summary of Findings.

Report number: 39 | Date: 5 October 2020 | Author: Libby Lester and Nyree Pisanu

In our third general survey (TTP3), The Tasmania Project continued to explore Tasmanians’ experiences with and attitudes to COVID-19 restrictions and measures, activities and behaviours, wellbeing and concerns, food access and supply, housing, work and employment, and financial wellbeing. With border restrictions firmly in place, we also took the opportunity to hear the thoughts of Tasmanian residents on international and interstate relationships, risk and threats, and what they wanted for the future in terms of Tasmania’s place in the world.

The survey was open from 27 August to 7 September. Many restrictions had been eased, although some continued on the numbers of people allowed in businesses and households. While pressure continued in Tasmania to ease all internal restrictions and to open borders to some states, the situation in Victoria, which had imposed some of the toughest rules on movement ever seen in Australia to combat a second wave of infections, tempered criticism of the Tasmanian controls.

Who won’t do what? Why not?

Given signs in some countries of increasing politicisation of COVID-19 control measures, we were interested to know if this was influencing the thinking of Tasmanians.

While most of the 1133 respondents to TTP3 indicated high levels of compliance with and support for measures to limit the spread of the virus, evidence is emerging that some Tasmanian residents carry deep concerns about what is being asked or may be asked of them.

For example, 6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, ‘I would wear a facemask in public to limit the spread of COVID-19’, with 84% agreement. Likewise, 4% said they would not be tested if they showed mild symptoms of COVID, and 5% said they would not be vaccinated if a COVID-19 vaccination became available. While 76% said they would be vaccinated, 18% said they did not know. In terms of trusting authorities’ claims about COVID-19, 3% of respondents felt that the virus was not as contagious as health authorities claim and 6% thought it was not as dangerous.

We asked respondents to explain their answers in relation to vaccinations. Negative responses included that the decision would be based on ‘evidence of safety and efficacy’, ‘I’m anti-vaccination’, ‘potential side effects’, ‘I don’t trust government’ and ‘I am not anti vax but will not be forced to have a vaccine either’.

Positive responses included ‘So I could travel overseas to see my family’, ‘to be personally safe and to ensure safety among my colleagues and friends’, ‘prevent further deaths’, ‘help eradicate COVID-19’, ‘peace of mind’, ‘human body needs help some times’ and ‘keep others safe’.
Who is doing more or less of what?

We asked respondents to indicate if their level of participation had changed in a range of activities over the last month compared to before the pandemic began in March. In terms of exercise, 28% were doing more, compared to 23% doing less. A lot less had been fishing (35%) compared to 11% fishing more, although this result is likely to have been impacted by the pandemic coinciding with the colder seasons. Perhaps unsurprising given Tasmanians have one of the highest rates of boat ownership in the world, 18% of our 1133 respondents fished before the pandemic.

Respondents were generally cooking more (33%, compared to 8% cooking less) and eating more fruit and vegetables, but seafood consumption did not vary greatly. Respondents were also gambling more online than before the pandemic (34% more, compared to 16% less), but were less likely to gamble in venues (8% more, 49% less). This suggests fewer people were losing higher amounts in venues, given Tasmania’s poker machine data has shown a significant rise in spending since venues reopened compared to the same time last year. Overall, 6% of the sample gambled online and 6% gambled in venues.

A higher number of respondents are smoking, drinking and using illegal drugs more than they were before the pandemic (compared to less), although the sample size for these three categories varied greatly with 91% of our 1133 respondents identifying as non-smokers and 94% not using illegal drugs, compared to 24% who said they did not drink.

Our findings reflect national data on the impact of COVID-19 on work, with 26% of respondents who had been in paid work prior to the pandemic saying they were doing less work, including 16% who said they were doing much less. In contrast, 6% said they were doing somewhat more and 3% were doing much more.

A potentially important finding relates to volunteering. While 13% said they were doing more volunteering, 17% said they had done somewhat less and another 17% said they had done much less.

Are we still complying?

In TTP3, more respondents did not support the statement that the Tasmanian Government should keep state borders closed until COVID-19 was eradicated from Australia (45% disagreed, 36% agreed, 19% were neutral). More respondents from the North (40%) agreed, compared to 38% from the North-West and West, and 33% from the South. An age pattern was observed across all three surveys where younger age groups were more likely to support keeping state borders closed, compared with older age groups.

In TTP1, 51% agreed, 20% were neutral and 29% disagreed that state borders should remain closed. Respondents from the North-West and West, and North were more likely to agree (55%) compared with those from the South (49%). Females were more likely to agree (54%) compared with males (43%). There was less agreement that borders should remain closed in TTP2 (45% agreed, 20% were neutral and 35% disagreed), than in TTP1.

In TTP3, 89% of respondents agreed with the statement ‘I believe Tasmanian border restrictions are keeping us safe’. However, just under half of TTP3 participants (45%) believed that Tasmanian officials were making fair and equitable decisions about who can enter the State, while 28% disagreed and 27% were neutral. More respondents from the North agreed (51%), compared with the North-West and West (45%) and South (42%). In both TTP2 and TTP3, most respondents (79%) did not believe the government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions.

In all three surveys, respondents were asked if they always followed social/physical distancing rules¹. In TTP1, 81% agreed, however this proportion decreased substantially in TTP2 (64%) and again in TTP3 (47%). This observed decrease is likely to reflect the easing of restrictions that occurred between TTP1 and TTP2, and then again prior to TTP3.

In TTP3, 59% of respondents in the North-West and West, 45% of those in the North, and 43% of those in the South agreed they were following distancing rules. An age pattern was observed, with older aged groups more likely to comply (54% of 65 years and above and 47% of 45-64 years) than younger groups (36% of 25-44 years, 30% of 18-24 years).

As restrictions continued to be lifted, less respondents (TTP3) reported compliance with remaining measures. It is likely that an easing of restrictions and decline of COVID-19 cases in Tasmania has resulted in the emergence of a certain level of complacency around COVID-safe behaviours that is evident across the three surveys. A comparison of attitudes to border closures and compliance with restrictions across surveys is available in Report 38.

Food insecurity

TTP3 found that rates of food insecurity reported by Tasmanians have not greatly improved since earlier in the pandemic. A more detailed analysis is available in Report 37.

Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. For comparison, the prevalence of food insecurity amongst the general Australian population (pre COVID-19) has been estimated to be approximately 5%. The Tasmanian
Population Health Survey in 2019 reported that 6.2% of Tasmanians were experiencing food insecurity due to financial stress.

Our Food Survey in June found that one-quarter of respondents had experienced food insecurity. In this latest survey, we found a still alarming number (close to 1 in 5) have run out of food because they could not afford to buy more during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The same groups of people within the Tasmanian community continue to experience the highest rates of food insecurity – those whose jobs have been impacted, and vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities, single people with dependents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, temporary residents, and young people.

Higher rates of very low food security were reported by respondents in the North-West and West (7%) compared with those in the North (3%) and South (3%).

Re/connecting to the world

The biggest threats to Tasmania’s future, according to respondents, are pandemics, environmental disasters and degradation, global economic downturns and Tasmania’s lower levels of education. The threats considered least critical are international protest movements, slow population growth, and terrorism, both domestic and international.

The Tasmanian industries, products and expertise most selected as central to the state’s brand and reputation internationally are Agriculture, Tourism, and Environment and national parks. Those considered central by the least number of respondents were Defence, Clothing and footwear, Business events and ICT.

The countries and regions with which respondents said we should have strongest economic connections were New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Japan, China, Indonesia, India and the United States.

A higher percentage of respondents considered interstate tourists and interstate trade as very important to Tasmania’s future. International exports, tourists and skilled workers followed. International property investments and unskilled migrants were considered very important by the least number of respondents.

Generally, respondents feel very safe in Tasmania, although slightly less so in the North-West and West.

“A 45% said they felt very safe in Tasmania when thinking about world events. This compares with a recent Lowy Institute finding from an Australian wide survey that found only 4% said they felt very safe.”

The younger the age group, the more likely they were to consider international movement of people, money or goods into Tasmania as very important, although this reversed for international exports from Tasmania.

National results on feelings of safety: Lowy Institute – Thinking about world events, how safe do you feel?
Getting out and about in Tasmania

How many Tasmanian residents have been exploring their island during the pandemic once internal travel restrictions lifted? In the month prior to completing the survey, of 1127 respondents, 38% had travelled overnight in Tasmania for leisure, 22% had travelled overnight in Tasmania to visit family and/or friends, 12% had travelled overnight in Tasmania for another reason such as work or medical, and 50% had visited a national park or reserve.

More than 90% of respondents to the survey had bought a Tasmanian product to support local producers during COVID-19.

Who do we care for?

Given the impact of COVID-19 on how we are able to care for others, we asked respondents to tell us if they have people who rely on them for care, at home or elsewhere, and who they are. Almost half the sample said they had caring responsibilities. Nearly a quarter of all respondents cared for children, 13% for relatives, 19% for their spouse or partner, 2% for a neighbour, and 4% for a friend. Another 5% selected ‘other’, with many listing grandchildren (while their adult children worked) and adult children with disabilities. Labradors also showed up in the list surprisingly often.

We feel safe but are we satisfied?

In a question repeated across TTP2 and TTP3, levels of satisfaction remain relatively high, with little change in the two months between the surveys.

Work, home and finances

We were interested in how many of our working respondents had been given the option of working from home during the pandemic. TTP3 found that 63% had the option, leaving 37% without the option.

We also found that for 31% of working respondents, their employment situation had changed since the pandemic began. Living arrangements had changed for 9%, and 5% had experienced difficulties in paying their mortgage or rent.

As a result of the pandemic, 12% of working respondents said they wanted or needed to continue attending work meetings online rather than in person and 17% wanted or needed to continue working from home. Only 3% wanted to cut interstate travel for work in the future, and 2% wanted to cut international travel.

Financially, 13% of respondents described their household income as decreasing a lot since the pandemic began, 17% decreasing a little, 56% remaining about the same, with 14% saying it had increased.

Meanwhile, household spending had increased a lot for 3% of respondents, a little for 15%, remained about the same for 37%, and decreased a little for 11%.

“Eat less, drive less, spend less.”

One-third of respondents said they were concerned about their financial situation, while 40% said they were not concerned. Due to COVID-19, 11% have drawn on savings, 2% have increased the balance owing on their credit cards by $1000 or more, 5% have sold household goods or jewellery, 4% have sold other assets, and 7% have made early withdrawals on their superannuation.

Comments from respondents under ‘other’ included ‘Eat less, drive less, spend less,’ ‘Request to pay off Aurora bill over a number of pays’, ‘Stopped private health insurance’ and ‘There was an awful gap where I had no income at all and did not qualify to draw on superannuation. NO MONEY FOR FOOD’.

Who has seen discrimination?

We asked respondents if they had experienced or witnessed discrimination in Tasmania in the last month, and found the following: 13% said they had experienced discrimination on the basis of age, 3% on the basis of skin colour/ethnic origin, 2% on the basis of religion, 11% on the basis of gender and 6% on the basis of disability.

In terms of what they had seen, 15% said they had witnessed discrimination in Tasmania in the last month, and found the following: 11% on the basis of gender and 6% on the basis of disability.

What next?

The findings continue to present a complex picture of life in Tasmania - one where people feel far safer than on average, but where discrimination is commonly witnessed and experienced, where too many are suffering food insecurity; where people carry high caring responsibilities but feel generally satisfied with their lives; where half have spent time in national parks and reserves in the last month, and consciously bought Tasmanian products to support local producers.

Findings help us understand how we want to reconnect to the world, both in the short-term with the reopening of borders, and in the longer-term where trade, migration, population growth and tourism will again become issues for public debate.

We have also found a small number of respondents who are firm in their convictions against some measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, and many respondents now relaxed about physical distancing, suggesting reconnecting with the mainland and the world will carry its challenges.

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
Tasmanian attitudes towards border restrictions and the effectiveness of COVID-safe measures

Report number: 40 | Date: 22 October 2020 | Author: Nyree Pisanu

In September/October, The Tasmania Project conducted a targeted survey exploring Tasmanian attitudes towards border restrictions and COVID-safe measures.

A total of 1377 responses were collected. The sample is mostly females (71.6%), with 27.8% of the sample indicating they are male and 0.6% selecting prefer to self-describe. The age breakdown includes 18-24 years (2%), 25-44 years (23%), 45-64 years (47%) and 65+ (27.9%). 60.3% of respondent live in the South of Tasmania, while 20.1% are from the North and 19.6% are from the North-West and West (See Appendix I for more demographic information and Appendix II for information about employment status).

This report consists of 9 sections:

1. Border restrictions
2. Effectiveness of COVID-safe measures to control the spread of the virus
3. Concerns about border restrictions easing
4. Concerns about further lockdowns
5. Compliance and responsibility
6. COVID-safe behaviours: the start of the pandemic, currently, and once borders reopen
7. Staying informed
8. Seasonal agricultural employment opportunities
9. Wellbeing

Key findings

- Just under half of the respondents do not believe that Tasmania’s border restrictions should stay in place until COVID-19 is eradicated in Australia
- Most respondents indicated that when borders open, they will be more vigilant with COVID safe practices.
- The most effective measure to control the spread of COVID-19 was limiting travel to Tasmania from identified hot spots/affected regions/affected premises followed by increased testing of people with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Regarding borders reopening, participants expressed the most concern about the healthcare system overloading, family and/or friends being infected with COVID-19, and restrictions on business.
- Many respondents did not believe the Tasmanian health system will cope with a second wave of COVID-19.
- If another lockdown occurred, respondents were most concerned about an impact on the economy and the mental/physical health of family/friends.
- Over half of respondents said they are more complacent about COVID-19 safe practices compared to the start of the pandemic.
- Many were concerned about other Tasmanians NOT complying with COVID safe practices.
- Around half of the sample trusted that the Tasmanian Government has adequate resources to manage another outbreak.
1. Border restrictions

Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements about border restrictions.

*Tasmania’s border restrictions should stay in place until COVID-19 is eradicated in Australia*

![Figure 1. n=1373](image)

Under half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (48%) that Tasmania’s border restrictions should stay in place until COVID-19 is eradicated in Australia. The mean= 3.16 indicating that, on average, respondents were likely to neither agree nor disagree. Over 25 years were more likely to disagree (49%) compared with 18-24 years (35%), alongside those from the North and North-West and West (51%) compared with the South (47%). More males disagreed (51%) compared with females (48%).

Free text responses indicate mixed feelings regarding borders reopening. Those who support the borders reopening cited reasons such as visiting family interstate or for the sake of Tasmania’s economy. Some respondents are concerned borders would open too early “please do not open too soon”.

*I believe Tasmania’s border restrictions are keeping us safe*

![Figure 2. n=1374](image)

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1 This question was also asked in three previous surveys. In survey 1, 51% agreed, 20% were neutral and 29% disagreed. There was less agreement that borders should remain closed in survey 2 (45% agreed, 20% were neutral and 35% disagreed). In survey 3, more respondents did not support border closures (45% disagreed, 36% agreed, 19% were neutral).
A clear majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (90%) that Tasmania's border restrictions are keeping us safe. The mean=1.62 indicating that, on average, respondents were likely to agree. Females were more likely to agree (92%) compared with males (86%).

When the borders open, I will be more vigilant with COVID safe practices

![Figure 3. n=1373](image)

Most respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that when borders open, they will be more vigilant with COVID safe practices (86%). The mean= 1.71 indicating that, on average, respondents were likely to agree. Older age groups reported they would be more vigilant (over 45 years; 88%) compared with younger (under 44 years; 83%), as well as Southern respondents (88%) compared with respondents from the North (85%) and North-West and West (82%). Females were also more likely to agree (87%) compared with males (84%).

Tasmania's border restrictions should stay in place until other states lift their restrictions

![Figure 4. n=1372](image)

While over half (52%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Tasmania's border restrictions should stay in place until other states lift their restrictions, 24% felt neutral and 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean= 2.58 indicating that, on average, respondents were likely to neither agree nor disagree. 53% of respondents from the South agreed, while 52% from the North and 45% of the North-West and West agreed. A higher proportion of females agreed (53%) compared with males (48%).
2. Effectiveness of COVID-safe measures to control the spread of the virus

Limiting travel to Tasmania from identified hot spots/affected regions/affected premises was selected by the highest proportion of respondents as the most effective measure to control the spread of COVID-19 (88% selected effective or very effective), followed by increased testing of people with cold or flu-like symptoms (87%), hotel quarantine for travellers (86%) and regular handwashing and sanitising (84%). The COVIDsafe app was deemed as the least effective, selected by only 20% of respondents.

For the 18-24 years age group, the highest proportion of respondents selected regular handwashing (85%), COVID testing on arrival (85%), physical distancing (85%), COVID-safe cleaning practices (85%) as the most effective measures. For the 25-44 years, hotel quarantine (86%) and limiting travel from hotspots (85%) were the most popular. For 45-65 years, limiting travel from hotspots (90%), increased testing (89%), regular handwashing (88%), hotel quarantine (87%), contact tracing (84%), COVID-safe cleaning practices (86%) were selected as most effective. The oldest respondents (65+), selected increased testing (91%), limiting travel from hotspots (91%), COVID-safe cleaning practices (89%), hotel quarantine (88%) as the most effective measures.

For females, the most popular measures were limiting travel from hotspots (90%), increased testing (89%), hotel quarantine (88%), COVID-safe cleaning practices (85%). For males, the measures that were chosen as the most effective were limiting travel from hotspots (87%), regular handwashing (86%), increased testing (86%) and COVID-safe cleaning practices (84%).

Respondents from the South chose limiting travel from hotspots (91%), hotel quarantine (87%), physical distancing (83%), COVID-safe cleaning practices (84%). Northern respondents selected hotel quarantine (91%), regular handwashing (90%), limiting travel from hotspots (86%) and COVID-safe cleaning practices (84%) as the most effective. Those from the North-West and West selected limiting travel from hotspots (85%), COVID-safe cleaning practices (84%), hand washing (83%) and hand sanitising before entering venues (81%).

Free text answers mostly centred around people arriving in the state, followed by clear communication and education (about practices, protocols, and government plans) and good hygiene practices for those in the state. There is a clear sense of the desire for consistency in how measures such as quarantining and hygiene are practiced, and a desire for more widespread testing. There are concerns that Tasmanians are getting complacent with health and safety measures.

Arrivals and quarantining
Some respondents were concerned about people arriving the state, with many references to mandatory and consistent testing (and/or temperature testing) of all arrivals, and some references to testing on departure as well. Some respondents suggested recording visitors’ movements in the state, having visitors agree to practicing COVID safety, keeping mandatory quarantine for arrivals or limiting travel from states with active cases “Keep out states who still have..."
multiple coved active cases until they have zero like us.” Another person suggested “covid testing before travel and having the traveller give an itinerary and contact details’, while another stated “All visitors should be tested for COVID-19 within 2-3 days prior to departure and have evidence of a positive test result, they should have their temperature taken upon arrival and then have to quarantine for at least 3 days.” Another theme focused on limiting the number of tourists allowed into Tasmania, including references specifically to cruise ships.

For quarantining specifically, respondents argued for the need for consistency and the need for monitoring. Sometimes this is stricter (e.g. suggesting use of location monitoring), and occasionally this is more about incentivising (e.g. good conditions to discourage breaches). A few people mentioned the importance of everyone in a household quarantining, not just the individual.

Clear communication and education/awareness
Another common theme highlighted the importance of clear communication and advertising about health guidelines, protocols, and government measures/plans; the importance of reminders and communication about good practice; and the importance of education about good practice. This includes some references to making sure information is accessible for those with literacy difficulties, and countering false information. Many of these comments convey a sense of concern about other people’s complacency – references to ‘refreshing’, ‘reminding’, ‘continual awareness’, etc. “Clear protocols and procedures. We’ve got to learn to live with it and the ‘how’ needs to be crystal clear - and people need the motivation to do so.”

Hygiene and distancing
Other comments focused on the importance of measures such as good hygiene, maintaining social distancing, and staying home when unwell. Some of these are about reminding people about keeping up these habits, and some are about how good practice can be encouraged in public (e.g. improving ventilation). One respondent suggested: “constant reminders to hand wash, distance and wear masks through state government social media and traditional media channels.”

Respondents also highlighted the need for good hygiene protocols to be in place in public places/places of service. For public places, this is mostly about cleaning, sign-ins, and limiting numbers (rather than outright closures); for service industries specifically (e.g. aged care) this is mostly about cleaning, training of staff, and monitoring staff health. “I've noted business relaxing the COVID cleaning practices, most cafes do not have enough staff to maintain the cleaning of tables etc. I'd really like to see stronger cleaning requirements for businesses.”

Testing
Respondents encouraged wider and increased testing and also implementing random/asymptomatic testing, and in some cases sewerage testing. For example, “Faster testing and more access to testing. Anecdotally I've heard a few stories where people weren't able to be tested because they didn't have enough symptoms. Also faster testing results would encourage more testing, as the need to isolate after testing is a barrier for those needing to work, particularly casual employees.” Some respondents also mentioned the use of COVID sniffer dogs, particularly at airports.
3. Concerns about border restrictions easing

Participants expressed the most concern about the healthcare system overloading (66% were extremely or moderately concerned), family and/or friends being infected with COVID-19 (62%) and restrictions on business (52%). Respondents were least concerned with being tested if they were showing symptoms (15%).

The youngest aged group (18-24 years) was most concerned about further lockdowns (65%), healthcare system overload (62%) and restrictions on businesses (58%). For the 25-44 years, family and friends being infected (60%), further lockdowns (57%) and healthcare system overload (63%) were cited as the biggest concerns. As respondents were older, they had more health concerns; for 45-65 years, being infected (54%), family and friends being infected (64%) and healthcare system overload (69%) were selected. This was the same was the oldest respondents (65+) who selected being infected (56%), family and friends being infected (58%) and healthcare system overload (64%) as most concerning.

Females were most concerned about family and friends being infected (64%) and the healthcare system overloading (70%). Males were also concerned about family and friends being infected (55%) and a healthcare system overload (57%), however were less concerned than females.

Participants from the South and North were most concerned about family and friends being infected (S- 64%, N-58%), the healthcare system overloading (S-67%, N-66%), whereas the North-West and West was most concerned about healthcare system overloading (64%), family and friends being infected (57%) alongside restrictions on businesses (57%).
4. Concerns about further lockdowns

Respondents were most concerned about the impact on the economy (67%), followed by the mental/physical health of family/friends (51%) and having to separate from family and friends (48%).

Younger respondents (18-24 years) were concerned about the mental/physical health of their family/friends (77%) impact on the economy (66%), and their mental health (58%). The 25-44 years age group were concerned about the impact on the economy (66%), mental/physical health of family/friends (65%), having to separate from family and friends (51%). Those who were 45-64 years were concerned about the impact on the economy (69%), mental/physical health of family/friends (53%) and having to hotel quarantine (46%). Oldest respondents (65+ years) were most concerned about the impact on the economy (67%) and having to hotel quarantine (56%).

Females were concerned about the impact on the economy (67%), the mental/physical health of family/friends (52%) and having to separate from family and friends (49%). Males were also concerned about the impact on the economy (67%), the mental/physical health of family/friends (46%) and having to hotel quarantine (46%). Each region was most concerned about the impact on the economy and the mental/physical health of family/friends.
5. Compliance and responsibility

Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements about compliance.

I feel comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 practices

Figure 8. n=1355

The sample mostly indicated that they felt comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-safe practices (66% agreed or strongly agreed). The mean = 2.36 indicating that, on average, respondents were likely to agree. Older respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (65+; 75%, 45-64 years; 65%) compared with younger (18-24 years; 54%, 25-44 years; 55%). Males also felt more comfortable (69%) compared with females (64%). North-West and West felt the most comfortable (72%), followed by North (67%) and South (62%).

Individuals are responsible for complying with COVID-19 rules and guidelines

Figure 9. n=1355

Participants mostly agreed or strongly agreed (93%) that individuals are responsible for complying with COVID-19 rules and guidelines. The mean = 1.56 indicating that, on average, respondents agree. No demographic differences were observed.
I am more complacent about COVID-safe practices than I was at the start of the pandemic

Figure 10. n=1352

Over half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (52%) that they are more complacent about COVID-19 safe practices compared to the start of the pandemic. A mean of 2.74 indicates that, on average, respondents are likely to neither agree nor disagree. An age pattern was observed where 18-24 year olds indicated they were more complacent (73%), followed by 25-44 years (69%), 45-64 years (50%) and 65+ years (44%). Females felt more complacent (55%) compared with males (48%), alongside respondents from the South (595), compared with the North (49%) and North-West and West (39%).

I feel as though COVID-safe practices have become habitual in my life

Figure 11. n=1354

Most (70%) respondents felt COVID safe practices have become habitual in their lives. A mean of 2.3 indicates that, on average, respondents agree. Older respondents (45 years and over) felt practices were more habitual (74%) compared with younger (below 44 years; 65%), as well as females (71%) over males (68%). Respondents from the North had the most agreement (75%), then North-West and West (72%) and South (68%).
I believe Tasmanians are still at risk of catching COVID-19 in our community

Figure 12. n=1352

Most (58%) agree or strongly agree that Tasmanians are still at risk of catching COVID-19 in our community. A mean of 2.56 indicates that, on average, participants neither agree nor disagree. Minor demographic differences were observed.

Tasmanians should expect further COVID-19 infections

Figure 13. n=1353

84% of respondents agree or strongly agree that Tasmanians should expect further COVID-19 infections. A mean of 1.89 indicates that, on average, respondents agree. 25-44 years were most likely to agree (89%), followed by 45-64 years (85%), 65+ (80%), and 18-24 years (65%). More females (87%) agreed compared with males (77%). Respondents from the South (87%) were more likely to agree, followed by the North (84%) and North-West and West (75%).

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
I am more concerned about the economic impacts than the health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

![Survey Results](image1)

Figure 14. n=1354

Over half respondents are more concerned about the health impacts of the pandemic than the economic impacts (56% disagree or strongly disagree that they are more concerned about the economic impacts). A mean of 3.46 shows, on average, respondents neither agree nor disagree. The youngest (18-24 years; 69%) and oldest age cohorts (65+; 59%) were the most concerned about health over economic impacts, while just over half (55%) of 45-64 years and 25-44 years (51%) were more concerned about health. More females indicated they were concerned about health (58%) than males (49%). 58% of respondents from the South also indicated this compared to 53% of North and North-West and West respondents.

I avoid attending events or venues due to COVID-19 fears

![Survey Results](image2)

Figure 15. n=1351

While most respondents (42%) disagreed or strongly disagree they were avoiding attending events or venues due to COVID-19 fears, a large proportion agreed or strongly agreed (37%) and neither agreed nor disagreed (23%). A mean of 3.1 indicates that, on average, respondents neither agree nor disagree. An age pattern was observed, with younger respondents (18-24 years; 58%, 25-44 years; 56%) less likely to avoid events compared with older respondents (41% of 45-64 years, 36% of 65+).
Despite restrictions easing, I am not going out as much as I used to

Figure 16. n=1352

Over half of respondents indicated (56% agreed or strongly agreed) that they were not going out as much they used to. An average score of 2.69 shows respondents were most likely neither agree nor disagree. Older respondents were going out less than they used to (57% of 45 years and over) compared with less than half of younger respondents (under 44 years; 47%). Females were less likely to be going out as much (56% compared with 51% of males). A higher percentage of respondents from the South (56%) agreed, followed by North (55%) and North-West and West (50%).

The Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions

Figure 17. n=1355

Most participants (71%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Tasmanian Government has been too slow to ease COVID-19 restrictions. A mean of 3.86 shows, on average, respondents disagreed. The older respondents were more likely to support the pace of restrictions easing (76% of 65+, 72% of 45-64 years), compared to younger (69% of 18-24 years, 64% of 25-44 years), alongside females (74%) over males (65%). Southern respondents (73%) were more likely to disagree restrictions eased too slowly over North (72%) and North-West and West (66%).
Future COVID-19 outbreaks in Tasmania will be managed well

While over half of respondents (61%) agreed or strongly agreed that future COVID-19 outbreaks in Tasmania will be managed well, 31% selected neither agree nor disagree. A mean of 2.36 shows that, on average, participants agreed. 64% of 45-64 years agreed, followed by 62% of 65+, 56% of 25-44 years and 50% of 18-24 years. More respondents from the North and North-West and West (66%) believed that future COVID-19 outbreaks will be managed well compared with respondents from the South (57%).

I trust government and health officials to provide reliable information about COVID-19

The sample mostly agreed or strongly agreed (73%) with the statement: I trust government and health officials to provide reliable information about COVID-19. A mean of 2.21 shows that, on average, respondents agreed. Trust in the government to provide reliable information was high for older aged groups (45+; 74%, 25-44 years; 71%) compared with the youngest respondents (54%). Respondents from the North (75%) trusted the government more than the South (73%) and North-West and West (69%).
I am concerned about other Tasmanians NOT complying with COVID safe practices

![Bar chart showing responses to concern about other Tasmanians not complying with COVID safe practices.]

**Figure 20. n=1354**

Most of the sample were concerned about other Tasmanians NOT complying with COVID safe practices (75% agreed or strongly agreed). A mean of 2.07 shows that, on average, respondents agreed. The youngest (77% of 18-24 years) and oldest (76%) were most concerned about other Tasmanians not complying, compared with the middle age brackets (72% of 25-44 years and 75% of 45-64 years), alongside females (78%) over males (69%). Respondents from the North had the most concern (78%), followed by the South (75%) and North-West and West (71%).

The Tasmanian Government and the public have worked well together to minimise the risk of COVID-19

![Bar chart showing responses to government and public working well together to minimise the risk of COVID-19.]

**Figure 21. n= 1352**

Most (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that the government and public have worked well together to minimise the risk of COVID-19. A mean of 1.99 shows that, on average, respondents agreed. Older age groups felt the government and public worked well together (87% of 45-64 years and 82% of 65+) while less younger groups agreed (77% of 18-24 years, 79% of 25-44 years). More females agreed (85%) compared with males (79%).

Qualitative responses show that some respondents are prepared to follow whatever health advice/protocols are set out by authorities, with one participant stating “for the sake of all Tasmanians I will be most willing to continue to observe protocols. I am a responsible adult.” Similar comments go further in stating that they would be prepared to do ‘whatever it takes’ to limit COVID “there is nothing I wouldn’t do to help limit the spread.”
I trust the Tasmanian Government has adequate resources to manage another COVID-19 outbreak

![Bar chart](chart1.png)

Figure 22. n=1350

Under half (49% agreed or strongly agreed) trusted that the Tasmanian Government has adequate resources to manage another COVID-19 outbreak, while 29% neither agree nor disagreed. A mean of 2.68 shows, on average, respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. Older groups had more trust that the government has adequate resources (65+: 52%, 45-64 years: 50%) while younger groups had less trust (18-24 years: 42%, 25-44 years: 46%). Males had more trust (48%) than females (53%), as well as respondents from the North (56%) compared with North-West and West (53%) and South (46%).

I believe the Tasmanian health system will cope with a second wave of COVID-19

![Bar chart](chart2.png)

Figure 23. n=1347.

The highest proportion of respondents did not believe the Tasmanian health system will cope with a second wave of COVID-19 (39%), while 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed. An average of 3.16 shows that respondents were more likely to feel neutral. 65+ were more likely to agree that the Tasmanian health system will cope with a second wave (39%) while all other age groups disagreed (18-24 years: 36%, 25-44 years: 45%, 45-64 years: 42%). Females were more likely to disagree (42%) while males were more likely to agree (40%). More respondents from the South (44%) disagreed the health system will cope, whereas North (39%) and North-West and West (37%) respondents agreed.
I understand what the Tasmanian Government is doing to prepare for future cases or outbreaks

Responses to the statement: ‘I understand what the Tasmanian Government is doing to prepare for future cases or outbreaks’ were mixed. 38% agreed or disagreed, 32% felt neutral and 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A mean of 2.91 indicates that, on average, respondents felt neutral. The 18-24 year old age group did not understand what the Tasmanian Government is doing to prepare (48% disagreed), whereas the older groups indicated they did understand (25-44 years; 35%, 45-64 years; 40%, 65+; 38%). More respondents from the North and North-West and West (41%) indicated they understood while less respondents from the South (37%) understood.
6. COVID-safe behaviours: the start of the pandemic, currently, and once borders reopen

Wash hands/sanitise throughout the day

Over half of respondents (51%) indicated that, at the start of the pandemic, they always washed their hands/sanitised throughout the day. When asked about current behaviour, a decrease was observed (34% selected always, 46% selected very often). Once the border reopens, 68% of respondents indicated they would wash hands/sanitise regularly.

Sanitise every time enter new business/venue/establishment

The highest proportion of respondents (67%) indicated they always sanitised when they entered a new business, however currently, less respondents (47%) were sanitising. This proportion increased again when the sample was asked about once the borders reopen (68%).

However, some respondents indicated that once the borders re-open they will limit their movement to avoid exposure to COVID-19. “At the moment we are travelling, eating out, having coffees. We will stop as soon as the borders open. We presently do not go to the cinema, theatre, pubs or anywhere that aerosol spread puts us at risk.”
Practice physical distancing (i.e. 1.5 metres)

![Bar chart showing practice of physical distancing]

Figure 27. $^1n=1349$, $^2n=1354$, $^3n=1350$, $^4$Rarely/Never are collapsed due to small sample sizes.

60% of respondents always practiced physical distancing at the start of the pandemic, compared to only 33% currently (43% selected very often). Once the borders reopen, 56% of respondents indicated they would always practice physical distancing.

Avoid hugging/shaking hands with family and friends

![Bar chart showing avoidance of hugging/shaking hands]

Figure 28. $^1n=1354$, $^2n=1352$, $^3n=1352$, $^4$Rarely/Never are collapsed due to small sample sizes.

Most (60%) of participants always avoided hugging/shaking hands with family and friends at the start of the pandemic, compared to 24% currently (31% selected very often). Once the borders reopen, only 39% of respondents indicated they would always avoid hugging/shaking hands with family and friends.
A majority of respondents indicated they always adhered to restrictions on the number of people allowed in spaces at the start of the pandemic (76%) and currently (55%), and again once the borders reopen (67%).

Most respondents indicated they never wore a mask at the start of the pandemic (74%), and most also indicated they currently did not (Never; 80%). Once the borders reopen, the highest proportion of respondents indicated they would sometimes wear a mask (30%).

There was lots of support in the free-text comments for wearing a mask in public. Very often these comments involved qualifiers – respondents say they would wear a mask if it was advised/required/socially acceptable to do so “I would be happy to wear a mask in public if it were mandated if borders open.” A few people said that masks should be made mandatory (plus a few more who said it should be encouraged/normalised), while some state they would not wear a mask (several of which explain why, such as health issues in relation to wearing a mask).
7. Staying informed

How often do you consume information or news about COVID-19?

Figure 31. n=1341

A majority of the sample (70%) consumed news about COVID-19 daily. Older respondents were more likely to consume news daily (25-44 years; 53%, 45-64 years; 72%, 65; 81%), whereas most 18-24-year olds consumed news every few days (42%). Males (76%) were more likely than females (68%) to consume news daily, alongside respondents from the South (72%) compared with the North (66%) and North-West and West (65%).

Which of the following sources do you rely on for COVID-19 information?

Figure 32. Q2. n=1337

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC television news</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Gutwein</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC radio</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government Coronavirus website</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream newspapers</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media/internet groups</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial television news</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, friends and colleagues</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Chief Medical Officer</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Health Organization</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific literature</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Morrison</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My doctor or healthcare professional</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government media advertising</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial radio</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotline (e.g. public health, business, mental health)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community newspapers</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community radio</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A community/religious/cultural leader</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed leaflets</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABC TV news was the most popular information source (60% of respondents selected this), followed by Peter Gutwein (51%), ABC radio (43%), State Government Coronavirus website (39%) and mainstream newspapers (36%).

For the youngest aged group (18-24 years) the top source for information was the State Government Coronavirus website (65%) followed by Peter Gutwein (54%), and friends, family and colleagues (46%) and social media/internet groups (46%). For 25-44-year olds, Peter Gutwein (48%) was the top source, followed by social media/internet groups (43%) and the State Government Coronavirus website (38%). For the 45-64 age group, the top source was ABC TV news (59%), followed by Peter Gutwein (51%) and the State Government Coronavirus website (46%). For the oldest participants (65+), ABC TV news (82%) was the most popular source, then ABC radio (59%) and Peter Gutwein (57%).

There were no differences between gender and regions (all relied on ABC TV news as their top source of information about COVID-19).

In the last week, which media have you engaged with most?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC TV</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC radio</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian newspapers (print or online)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National online media (e.g. the Guardian, the Conversation)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial TV</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National newspapers (print or online)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International news (e.g. BBC, Al Jazeera)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial radio</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent news websites (e.g. Tasmanian Times, Crikey, Tasmanian Inquirer)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 33. Q3. n=1338

ABC TV was the media engaged with most (selected by 54% of respondents), followed by social media (42%) and ABC radio (38%).

For the younger aged groups, the media they engaged with most was social media (18-24 years; 68%, 25-44-year olds; 64%). For the older participants, the media they engaged with most was ABC TV (45-64 years; 51%, 65+; 75%).

There were no differences between gender and regions (all engaged with ABC TV the most).
8. Seasonal agricultural employment opportunities

A majority of the sample had not previously undertaken farm work in Tasmania (90%). A majority also indicated they were unlikely or very unlikely to undertake farm work in the future (68%). Some (16%) indicated someone in their family may do seasonal farm work in the future. The most frequent source of information on farm work opportunities was online employment websites (44%), followed by government websites (21%), newspaper advertisements (19%), other (13%) and Centrelink (6%). 41% of the sample selected N/A.

9. Wellbeing

In the last week, how satisfied have you been with:

![Satisfaction levels for various aspects of life](chart.png)

Respondents were the most satisfied with their homes (89%), the areas where they lived (89%), and how safe they felt (87%), and least satisfied with feeling part of their local community (69%) and their health (70%).

Older age groups (45-64 years; 90%, 65+; 94%) were more satisfied with their homes compared to younger age groups (18-24 years; 77%, 25-44 years; 85%). Older age groups (45-64 years; 74%, 65+; 85%) were more satisfied with their life opportunities compared to younger age groups (18-24 years; 62%, 25-44 years; 71%). 83% of 65+ felt satisfied with their financial situation, compared to 69% of 45-64 years, 68% of 25-44 years and 58% of 18-24 years. Older age groups felt safe (90% of 65+, 88% of 25-44 years, 86% of 45-64 years) more than younger people (18-24 years) felt less safe (77%).

An age pattern was observed for feeling part of local community (73% of 65+, 70% of 25-44 years, 66% of 45-64 years, 46% of 18-24 years), the amount of free time they had (89% of 65+, 62% of 25-44 years, 51% of 45-64 years, 39% of 18-24 years) and their overall lives (90% of 65+, 82% of 25-44 years, 80% of 45-64 years, 69% of 18-24 years).

Older respondents were generally more satisfied with the area in which they lived (92% of 65+, 89% of 25-44 years, 87% of 45-64 years, 85% of 18-24 years) and their health (74% of 65+, 69% of 25-44 years, 68% of 45-64 years), compared with younger (18-24 years; 54%).

Males were more satisfied than females with their home (91% compared to 88% of females), finances (76% compared to 71%), safety, (89% compared with 86%), health (73% compared with 68%), amount of free time they had (68% compared to 65%) and their lives overall (84% compared to 83%). Females felt more satisfied with the area in which they lived (90% compared to 88% of males).

North-West and West felt more satisfied with life opportunities compared with South and North (75%), and also felt slightly more a part of their local community (72%) than South (69%) and North (68%). Respondents from the North felt more satisfied with their overall lives (86%) compared with South (82%) and North (83%).
# Appendix I: Demographics

The total sample size is 1377.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>1309</td>
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<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>20.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>North-West and West</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to self-describe</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Aboriginal</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Torres Strait Islander</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91.3</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vulnerable person</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>51.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and above</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate I- Advanced Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>University</td>
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<th>Annual income</th>
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<td>$0 - $18,200</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$18,201 – $37,000</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$37,001 – $65,000</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$65,001 – $90,000</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,001 – $130,000</td>
<td>16.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>$130,001 - $180,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over $180,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t know/prefer not to say</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political party</th>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labor Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
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<td>No party affiliation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own outright</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own, paying off mortgage</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, private</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, public</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No permanent address</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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### Appendix II: Employment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment situation</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed (full time)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed (part time)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed (casual)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A homemaker / family carer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A volunteer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government benefits or payments</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JobKeeper</td>
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<td>JobSeeker</td>
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<td>Disability Support Pension</td>
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<td>Age Pension</td>
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<td>Austudy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Seasonal farm work in Tasmania.

Report number: 41 | Date: 4 December 2020 | Author: Nyree Pisanu

In September/October, The Tasmania Project conducted a targeted survey, exploring Tasmanian attitudes towards border restrictions and COVID-safe measures, and attitudes to and experiences of seasonal farm work in Tasmania.

A total of 1377 responses were collected. The sample is mostly females (71.6%), with 27.8% of the sample indicating they are male and 0.6% selecting prefer to self-describe. The age breakdown includes 18-24 years (2%), 25-44 years (23%), 45-64 years (47%) and 65+ (27.9%). 60.3% of respondent live in the South of Tasmania, while 20.1% are from the North and 19.6% are from the North-West and West (See Appendix I for more demographic information and Appendix II for information about employment status).

Previously undertaken farm work
A majority of the sample had not previously undertaken farm work in Tasmania (90%). 10%, or 137 respondents, indicated they had previously undertaken farm work. Of those who had undertaken farm work, the highest proportion lived in the Regional South (18%) (See table 1).

A higher proportion of males had undertaken farm work (13%), compared to females (9%). Of those who had undertaken farm work, the highest proportion were between 18-44 years (12%).

Likelihood of undertaking farm work in the future
A majority also indicated they were unlikely or very unlikely to undertake farm work in the future (69%). Of those who indicated they would likely or very likely undertake farm work in the future, most resided in the Regional South (8%). For those who indicated they are likely or very likely to undertake farm work in the future, 18-24 years were the most likely (8%). Males (6%) were more likely than females (4%) to indicate they would undertake farm work in the future.

Likelihood of a family member undertaking farm work in the future
Some respondents (17%) indicated someone in their family may do seasonal farm work in the future. Residents in the Regional South (23%) were most likely to have a family member who would undertake farm work. 25-44-year olds (21%) were most likely to have a family member that would undertake farm work, alongside females (17%).

Source of information about farm work opportunities
The most frequent source of information on farm work opportunities was online employment websites (45%), followed by government websites (21%), newspaper advertisements (19%), other (13%) and Centrelink (5%). 41% of the sample selected N/A.
Table 1. Have you previously undertaken seasonal farm work in Tasmania? by regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greater Hobart</th>
<th>Regional South</th>
<th>Launceston</th>
<th>Regional North</th>
<th>North-West and West</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>593</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>650</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                | 9%             | 18%            | 12%        | 7%             | 12%                 | 10%   |
| **Yes**        | 9%             | 13%            | 2%         | 1%             | 2%                  | 2%    |
| **No**         | 91%            | 82%            | 88%        | 93%            | 88%                 | 90%   |
| **Total**      | 100%           | 100%           | 100%       | 100%           | 100%                | 100%  |

Table 2. Have you previously undertaken seasonal farm work in Tasmania? by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>88</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>850</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>1168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>938</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>1303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9%</th>
<th>13%</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Have you previously undertaken seasonal farm work in Tasmania? by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>18-24 years</th>
<th>25-44 years</th>
<th>45-64 years</th>
<th>65+ years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>1154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>1286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>12%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>9%</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Likelihood of undertaking farm work in the future by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greater Hobart</th>
<th>Regional South</th>
<th>Launceston</th>
<th>Regional North</th>
<th>North-West and West</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very likely</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Likely</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsure</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unlikely</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very unlikely</strong></td>
<td>459</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>648</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>71%</th>
<th>56%</th>
<th>72%</th>
<th>68%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>69%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very likely</strong></td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Likely</strong></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see here.
### Table 5. Likelihood of undertaking farm work in the future by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th></th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th></th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th></th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
<th></th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>886</td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>1283</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6. Likelihood of undertaking farm work in the future by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7. Likelihood of family member undertaking farm work in the future by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Hobart</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional South</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional North</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West and West</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>1294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8. Likelihood of family member undertaking farm work in the future by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>1276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9. Likelihood of family member undertaking farm work in the future by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>1294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tasmania Project
For details of the study’s approach and methods, see [here](#).
Table 10. Source of information about farm work opportunities by region, age and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>Newspaper advertisements</th>
<th>Online employment websites</th>
<th>Government websites</th>
<th>Centrelink</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total selected</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Hobart</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional South</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional North</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West and West</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Likelihood of undertaking farm work in the future (n=1323)
# Appendix I: Demographics

The total sample size is 1377.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>1309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West and West</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to self-describe</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Aboriginal</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Torres Strait Islander</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerable person</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and above</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate I- Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual income</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 - $18,200</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$18,201 – $37,000</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$37,001 – $65,000</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$65,001 – $90,000</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,001 – $130,000</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$130,001 - $180,000</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $180,000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/prefer not to say</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>1301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political party</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No party affiliation</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own outright</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>1310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own, paying off mortgage</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, private</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, public</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No permanent address</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix II: Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment situation</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed (full time)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed (part time)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed (casual)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A homemaker / family carer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A volunteer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government benefits or payments</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JobKeeper</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JobSeeker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Support Pension</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Pension</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Allowance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austudy</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Life after lockdown for older Tasmanians

Report number: 42 | Date: 5 January 2021 | Author: Ariel Remund, Ella Horton, Duncan Sinclair

In line with the findings from earlier surveys, the third general survey from The Tasmania Project (TTP3) has found that older Tasmanians (aged 65 years and above) are generally faring well during the COVID-19 pandemic. A high proportion of older Tasmanians who responded to the survey report feeling satisfied with their lives, including their mental health, financial situation and community belonging.

Key findings

• 90% of respondents aged 65 years and above report feeling very satisfied with their lives, suggesting older Tasmanians are generally faring well during the COVID-19 pandemic.

• The pandemic has had a greater impact on the mental health of younger Tasmanians compared to those aged 65 years and above, with 13% of respondents aged 65 years and above reporting the pandemic had impacted their mental health compared to 35% of those aged 64 years and below.

• Older Tasmanians are largely open to being vaccinated to COVID-19, with 85% of respondents aged 65 and above willing to be vaccinated if one is made available.

• Age discrimination was experienced by 15% of respondents aged 65 years and above.

How are older Tasmanians faring?

While the majority of people across all age groups reported being satisfied with their lives, this figured decreased as respondents were younger 90% of older Tasmanians (aged 65 years and above) reported feeling satisfied with their life “all things considered”, compared to 81% of respondents aged 45 to 64 years, 72% of respondents aged 25 to 44 and 63% of 18- to 24-year-olds.

![Satisfaction with life “all things considered” (%) by age, TTP3.](image)

Older Tasmanians were also more likely to report feeling a part of their local community, with 77% of respondents aged over 65 years reporting they were satisfied with their level of belonging to their community compared to 63% of those aged under 65 years. Financially, respondents were more likely to be satisfied with their situation if they were 65 years or older. 85% of respondents in this age group reported financial satisfaction.
compared with just under 70% of those aged under 64 years. High levels of satisfaction were reported by older respondents even though over 30% also reported a reduction in their household income and spending since the start of the pandemic. High levels of satisfaction were reported by older respondents even though over 30% also reported a reduction in their household income and spending since the start of the pandemic. Younger respondents were also more likely to report that the pandemic had changed them as a person (48% aged 18 - 44 years compared to 27% aged over 65 years).

Experienced discrimination in the past month (%) by age, TTP3.

It is concerning that 15% of respondents aged 65 years and above reported experiencing discrimination because of their age. Older Tasmanians were most likely to experience discrimination because of their age when compared to other categories of discrimination including skin colour or ethnic origin, religion, gender or because of a disability.

How are older Tasmanians responding to COVID-19?

Most respondents aged 65 years and above were supportive of official responses to the pandemic, with 85% disagreeing that the Tasmanian Government had been too slow in easing COVID-19 restrictions and 90% agreeing that Tasmanian border restrictions were keeping them safe.

Regardless of age, respondents largely believe that individuals have a key responsibility for ensuring compliance with COVID-19 rules and safeguards, with 94% agreeing that individuals play a vital role. However, respondents similarly believe that businesses are likewise responsible, with 80% of respondents across ages agreeing that businesses are responsible for ensuring compliance among patrons in their venues.

Results suggest that older Tasmanians are adhering to physical distancing rules more than younger Tasmanians, with 53% of respondents aged 65 years and above reporting following the rules compared with 43% of those below 65 years. Similarly, a higher proportion of older respondents (94%) agreed they would get tested if they showed mild symptoms of COVID-19 compared with those younger than 65 years (87%).

Individual responsibility emerged as a key theme in the responses from older Tasmanians, with 85% of respondents aged 65 years and above reporting they would be vaccinated if a COVID-19 vaccine became available. By comparison, only 72% of respondents aged below 65 years would choose to be vaccinated.

In terms of Tasmania’s recovery from COVID-19, domestic trade, domestic tourists and international exports were identified by respondents of all ages as the most important industries. Respondents of all ages identified the UK, New Zealand and the European Union as the top three trading partners for Tasmania.

Where next?

These findings highlight the resilience and adaptability of older Tasmanians during the pandemic, and emphasise the importance of their input into community recovery.

While older Tasmanians appear to have fared well throughout different stages of the pandemic, it is unclear what long-term impact the reopening of the borders to other Australian states will have on their lives.

Their experiences of age discrimination hints at underlying social issues that should be considered and addressed as part of a holistic approach to social recovery from COVID-19.
Stay or leave: Long-term plans of young adults in Tasmania

Report number: 43 | Date: 9 April 2021 | Author: Alexander Luke Burton

In a series of in-depth interviews with The Tasmania Project team, Tasmanians aged 30 and under have cited employment as a reason to leave Tasmania, and security during the pandemic as a reason to stay. Many are unsure if they will remain in Tasmania in the long-term.

From October to December 2020, the Tasmania Project conducted 23 interviews with young adults (aged 18-30) across Tasmania. During these interviews, participants were asked if they intended on remaining in Tasmania for the long-term future.

This report highlights common concerns raised by participants such as job opportunities and the COVID-19 pandemic. Interesting findings are also highlighted for participants’ housing situation (homeowner or renter) and visa status.

Key findings

- Many young adults were unsure if they wanted to remain in Tasmania for the long-term future.
- Job opportunities were an incentive to leave Tasmania. This concern did not seem to correlate with participants’ home ownership or rental status.
- Participants who identified a lack of job opportunities as an incentive to leave Tasmania were less likely to already have decided they would leave.
- Some participants independently raised interest in leaving Tasmania and returning later in life or in retirement.
- The pandemic impacted participants’ thoughts about remaining in Tasmania, with many expressing a stronger desire to remain and greater uncertainty about leaving.
- Of the participants that were visa holders, most discussed the pandemic when asked if they would remain in Tasmania. Visa holders generally viewed Tasmania’s response to the pandemic favourably.

Further findings on the attitudes and experiences of younger Tasmanians are available in the “What wellbeing means for young Tasmanians” report available here.
Staying or going?

Of the 23 participants, slightly over half intended to remain in Tasmania. A quarter were uncertain or conflicted about remaining. A sixth stated they would not remain in Tasmania for the long-term future.

Many participants raised job opportunities as an incentive to leave Tasmania. As one participant said, “I know that there’s more job opportunities up there [on the mainland].” These participants were split fairly evenly across intending to stay, intending to leave, and being unsure, though slightly favouring the latter.

Over a third of participants mentioned the pandemic when asked if they would stay in Tasmania long-term. These participants mostly saw the pandemic as a reason to remain in Tasmania. One participant returned to Tasmania because of the pandemic, saying “I really wanted to be in a place where, I guess, there was still scope for adventures.” The pandemic also spread doubt for long-term plans. As another participant stated:

“Look, no one can plan… I don’t know what’s gonna happen.”

Housing

Of the participants 14 were renting, 4 lived with parents, 3 owned their own home, and 2 did not specify. A marginally higher proportion of participants who wanted to stay in Tasmania were living with their parents, and a marginally higher proportion who were unsure owned their own homes. Of the participants who did not want to remain in Tasmania, none owned their own homes. Concerns about job opportunities in Tasmania being an incentive to leave did not seem to correlate with participants’ home ownership or rental status.

Visa holders

Of the 23 interviews conducted, 6 were with visa holders. These were mostly international students. Visa holders’ responses were spread evenly amongst intending to remain, intending to leave, and being unsure about Tasmania in the long-term.

Most visa holders mentioned the pandemic when discussing whether they will remain in Tasmania. The pandemic was mostly a reason to remain in Tasmania. One visa holder stated, “I’m pretty happy with what they’re doing here. In fact, I think that kind of strengthened [my] resolve to stay here.” This said, another visa holder said she was rethinking if it was a “good thing if I stay here, because I’m the only child of the family. If something happened to my parents it’s hard for me to reach them in time”.

‘Small pond’ Tasmania

Some participants viewed Tasmania as a place to leave and return to later in life. As one participant said, “Tasmania is like a retiring town for me to go back [to] in the future.” Several participants explained that while they will likely move for work, they remained invested in the state. As one participant said:

“[Tasmania’s] future is still important to me.”

Several participants explained they had already moved and returned from Sydney after several years’ work. Moving to the mainland was akin to an unofficial rite of passage. In contrast, one participant said staying in Tasmania was like being a “big fish in a small pond”, as in her view stronger job opportunities on mainland Australia resulted in more stressful competition there.

Where next?

The responses of interview participants highlight how young adults are invested in Tasmania yet leave for jobs and personal growth. The pandemic provided a reason to remain in Tasmania. This is an opportunity to reflect on how young adults engage with the state and is not a long-term solution to the loss of the young adult cohort. A question for future research is: How does personal investment influence when and for how long young adults stay, leave, and return to Tasmania?

It is important to consider the impact of job opportunities for young adults. When interstate travel stabilises and international travel normalises, young adults will need jobs to remain in the state. In this moment of national and global job market recovery, it is important to understand how the development of job opportunities for young adults may slow or reverse the loss of this cohort from Tasmania. This includes appealing to young adults from overseas.

Further findings from our surveys and interviews on the views of young Tasmanians are available in the “What wellbeing means for young Tasmanians” report available here.
The Tasmania Project

What wellbeing means for LGBTIQ Tasmanians

Report number: 44
Authors: Ruby Grant and Nyree Pisanu
Date: 25 May 2021
Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which WHO declared on 11 March 2020, has interrupted social, economic and cultural life, with escalating rates of infection and death continuing in many parts of the world. Uncertainty continues about the virus’ path, vaccine availability and efficacy, and the full economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

Tasmania was the first Australian state to instigate border restrictions, and its island status and demographics (for example, lower than average SES, older average age, poorer health) suggested the state would experience COVID-19 in a way different from other states, manifesting in specific challenges, needs and concerns through the crisis and the recovery phase.

This required a unique research approach to ensure its meaningfulness to the Tasmanian community and its leaders.

The Tasmania Project

The Tasmania Project was established by the Institute for Social Change at the University of Tasmania in March 2020 on the basis that a specific style of data collection would be required to understand the pandemic’s immediate impact on Tasmania. The Institute was also aware that longer-term questions about future social, economic and cultural policy were going to be asked and directions determined given the extent of disruption.

The project’s aims are to: a) support immediate and longer-term social and economic decisions by providing useful, evidence-based and timely information; and b) share Tasmanian residents’ experiences and ideas through this critical period and beyond. Through 2020, The Tasmania Project has supplied and collected data and opinions on a range of areas, from food insecurity to the creative arts sector, to support decision making in the Department of State Growth, the State Control Centre and Communities Tasmania, among others.

This report includes data from The Tasmania Project Wellbeing Survey commissioned by the secretariat to the Premier’s Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) to support the Council formulate its final recommendations. These were released on 16 March 2021.

It highlights key findings which show important differences in health and wellbeing, income and work, and housing between lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) Tasmanians and the general population.
Key findings

• Regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, the most important factors for all respondents’ wellbeing are health, life satisfaction, and the environment.

• LGBTIQ respondents are highly represented in lower income brackets and are more likely to work casual jobs or be unemployed than the general sample.

• Despite being much younger on average than non-LGBTIQ respondents, LGBTIQ participants are more likely to experience life limitations due to their health.

• Compared with the broader sample, LGBTIQ respondents are less likely to own their own home and are more likely to experience housing stress.

• COVID-19 had steeper economic, social, and health impacts on LGBTIQ respondents, particularly in terms of income and mental health.

• Regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, the common concerns for all Tasmanians in the sample in the next three years are: health, income, and the environment.

The full report including findings, methods and recruitment is available here - The Tasmania Project Wellbeing Survey Report.
The indicators

The indicators used in this research draw on the OECD’s Better Life Index indicators, adapting the brief descriptors for the Tasmania context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Your housing conditions and costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Your household income and savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>Your job security and conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Your network of friends and neighbours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Your education and what you get out of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Quality of and access to the natural environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>Your involvement in activities to strengthen community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>How healthy you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>How happy you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>How safe you feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Life Balance</td>
<td>How much you work, how much you play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sample

159 respondents (from a total of 2354) identified as LGTBIQ. The following table provides an overview of some of the key demographic data collected from these respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td>158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Hobart + Launceston</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Tasmania</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to self-describe</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-44 years</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years or above</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma/Certificate</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma- Certificate I-IV</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is important to LGBTIQ Tasmanians?

In the following table, we compare the rankings of indicators for importance for wellbeing from LGBTQ respondents (n=159) to all other respondents (n=1910).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Important for wellbeing LGBTIQ</th>
<th>Important for wellbeing All other respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health (53%)</td>
<td>Health (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Life satisfaction (46%)</td>
<td>Life satisfaction (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Environment (42%)</td>
<td>Environment (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Community (35%)</td>
<td>Community (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Income (33%)</td>
<td>Income (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Housing (27%)</td>
<td>Work-life balance (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Safety (26%)</td>
<td>Safety (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Work-life balance (26%)</td>
<td>Housing (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jobs (17%)</td>
<td>Jobs (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Education (14%)</td>
<td>Civic engagement (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Civic engagement (11%)</td>
<td>Education (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of the full sample, including weightings against Tasmanian population demographics, is available in The Tasmania Project Wellbeing Survey Report.
What concerns LGBTIQ Tasmanians?

In this table, we compare the rankings of indicators for concerns for the future from LGBTIQ respondents (n=159) to all other respondents (n=1910).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Concerns for the future LGBTIQ</th>
<th>Concerns for the future All other respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health (48%)</td>
<td>Health (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Income (44%)</td>
<td>Income (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Environment (42%)</td>
<td>Environment (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jobs (42%)</td>
<td>Jobs (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Housing (34%)</td>
<td>Life satisfaction (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Life satisfaction (30%)</td>
<td>Safety (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Safety (20%)</td>
<td>Community (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Community (20%)</td>
<td>Housing (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Work-life balance (11%)</td>
<td>Work-life balance (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Civic Engagement (11%)</td>
<td>Civic engagement (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Education (8%)</td>
<td>Education (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of the full sample, including weightings against Tasmanian population demographics, is available in The Tasmania Project Wellbeing Survey Report.
Health and wellbeing

Among LGBTIQ respondents, health ranked 1st in importance for wellbeing and 1st in concern for the future. Satisfaction with health decreased by 6 percentage points during the pandemic. Life satisfaction ranked 2nd in importance for wellbeing but 5th in concern for the future. Life satisfaction decreased by 6 percentage points during the pandemic.

What is a good life?

Although we often focus on the differences between LGBTIQ people and the wider population, when it comes to what it means to live a good life, we have more in common than we might think.

Responses to the PESRAC survey show few differences in the most common things that shape Tasmanians’ wellbeing. These include health (how healthy we are), life satisfaction (how happy we are), and the environment (quality of and access to the natural environment).

Despite the similarities, some of the differences point to structural inequalities that impact LGBTIQ people’s wellbeing and ability to live a good life. For example, LGBTIQ respondents emphasise the importance of housing, while non-LGBTIQ respondents value work/life balance.

Figure 1. I cannot do the things I want because of my health LGBTIQ (n=151) vs. non-LGBTIQ (n=1831), %.
Differences in health and wellbeing

Results suggest that LGBTIQ Tasmanians may be worse off when it comes to their health. Prior to COVID-19, 64% of LGBTIQ Tasmanians reported being satisfied with their health compared with 78% of other respondents. Conversely, 26% of LGBTIQ respondents said they were unsatisfied with their health compared with just 16% of non-LGBTIQ respondents.

Results also indicate that the LGBTIQ Tasmanian sample is twice as likely as non-LGBTIQ respondents to report having a disability (21% compared to 10%).

Notably, 43% of LGBTIQ respondents report feeling that they cannot do the things they want to do because of their health (figure 1). In contrast only 29% of non-LGBTIQ respondents felt the same.

It is especially concerning that LGBTIQ participants reported lower levels of health and wellbeing given the high proportion of young respondents in this survey, with 30% of LGBTIQ respondents aged 18-24 compared with just 8% of the general sample. Conversely, 25% of non-LGBTIQ respondents were over 65 compared to just 12.5% of the LGBTIQ sample.

A smaller proportion of LGBTIQ respondents reported satisfaction with their lives than non-LGBTIQ respondents. Prior to COVID-19, just 65% of LGBTIQ respondents reported being satisfied with their life, compared with 83% of the general population. Similarly, 26% of LGBTIQ respondents said they had low life satisfaction compared with 10% of the general sample.

However, when thinking about the future, there were no substantial differences between LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ respondents. All respondents had similar feelings about whether the future would be better, worse or the same for them, with a large proportion (40%) feeling that there would be little change in their quality of life in the next three years.

In our full sample, satisfaction with health declined by 7 percentage points and satisfaction with life declined by 10 percentage points.

See The Tasmania Project Wellbeing Survey Report.
The impact of COVID-19

While COVID-19 had a significant impact on Tasmanian communities, survey results indicate that, as an already marginalised group, LGBTIQ Tasmanians were particularly affected.

For example, LGBTIQ health satisfaction dropped from 65% to 59% and overall life satisfaction dropped from 65% to 56%.

The impacts were similar for the full sample, yet these figures indicate that LGBTIQ respondents’ already lower levels of wellbeing were further decreased during the pandemic.

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate effect on LGBTIQ people’s mental health, with 31% of LGBTIQ respondents noting this impact, compared with just 13% of non-LGBTIQ.

While 64% of the general sample reported feeling safer in Tasmania given world events in 2020, LGBTIQ respondents were less optimistic, with 50% agreeing to feeling safer in Tasmania.

This likely corresponds with LGBTIQ respondents’ overall higher likelihood of feeling unsafe, as survey results found that they are three times more likely to report feeling unsafe at home compared with rest of the sample (9% > 3%).

![Figure 3. LGBTIQ pre-COVID (n=158) and current (n=158) satisfaction: life, %](Photo: Pexels.com)
Income and work

Among LGBTIQ respondents, income ranked 5th in importance for wellbeing and 2nd in concern for the future. Dissatisfaction with income increased by 5 percentage points during the pandemic.

How does income influence wellbeing?

Income is another significant factor influencing Tasmanians’ wellbeing where differences between LGBTIQ people and the broader population are apparent.

Results show that LGBTIQ participants are highly represented in low-income brackets. For example, 32% of LGBTIQ respondents earn between $0-$18,500 a year, compared with just 15% of non-LGBTIQ respondents.

Despite this income gap, LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ respondents report similar rates of working full time (24% < 28%), although LGBTIQ respondents are more likely work casual jobs (13% > 7%).

The LGBTIQ sample also report higher instances of unemployment (16%) than non-LGBTIQ (8%).
The impacts of COVID-19 on income and work

COVID-19 had a significant impact on Tasmanians’ jobs and income, however this was particularly the case for the sample of LGBTIQ. Results show that prior to COVID-19, 10% of LGBTIQ participants were unsatisfied with their income and this increased to 15% since COVID-19.

In contrast, in the general population prior to COVID-19 just 3% were unsatisfied with their income and this rose to 9% since COVID-19.

While 11% of non-LGBTIQ participants reported losing hours and 9% lost their jobs entirely due to COVID-19, these rates for much higher for LGBTIQ people. Results suggest that 20% of LGBTIQ respondents lost hours and 14% lost their jobs due to the pandemic.
Housing

Among LGBTIQ respondents, housing ranked 6th in importance for wellbeing and 5th in concern for the future; LGBTIQ face higher rates of housing stress and are less satisfied with their homes than the general population.

![Bar chart showing housing status of LGBTIQ vs. non-LGBTIQ respondents.](Photo: David Lade)

While 43% of non-LGBTIQ respondents owned their homes outright and 32% owned homes with a mortgage, 25% of LGBTIQ people owned their homes outright and 21% were paying off a mortgage.

Notably, 29% of LGBTIQ respondents rented their home compared to just 14% of non-LGBTIQ respondents.

It is possible that the differences in age group, income, and work between LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ respondents contributed to these differences in housing patterns.

*Figure 6. LGBTIQ (n=159) housing vs. non-LGBTIQ (n=1906) housing, %.*
In line with this, 21% of the general sample reported experiencing housing stress (spending more than 30% of one’s income on housing costs) compared with 30% of LGBTIQ respondents.

The LGBTIQ sample also reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with the affordability of their homes than the general sample (24% > 13%).

LGBTIQ Tasmanians in this sample were most highly concentrated in the Greater Hobart area. While 51% of the wider population live in Greater Hobart, 61% of LGBTIQ respondents live in Hobart, with much smaller concentrations in the Launceston, the North, and North-West. LGBTIQ Tasmanians in this sample report less satisfaction with the location of their homes than non-LGBTIQ (54% < 68%).

Most non-LGBTIQ respondents (75%) felt that if they were in trouble, they had relatives or friends they could count on. In comparison, only 66% of LGBTIQ felt the same. LGBTIQ respondents were also more likely to report not having relatives or friends that they could turn to for help.

Concerningly, LGBTIQ respondents were also substantially less safe at home than non-LGBTIQ. Nine percent of LGBTIQ reported that they did not feel safe at home compared with just 4% of non-LGBTIQ participants.

These lower rates of safety were also reflected in LGBTIQ respondents’ broader feelings about living in Tasmania. While 64% of non-LGBTIQ respondents strongly agreed to feeling safe in Tasmania given the world events of 2020, just 50% of LGBTIQ respondents felt the same.

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In our full sample, satisfaction with housing declined by 4 percentage points during the pandemic.

See The Tasmania Project Wellbeing Survey Report.
What next?

Findings suggest that while all Tasmanians want to live a life where they are healthy and happy in a good environment, barriers to wellbeing persist for those who are LGBTIQ. Overall, LGBTIQ respondents consistently report lower levels of life satisfaction, health, income, safety, and housing and job security. These experiences shape their concerns for the future in Tasmania and should also inform economic and social recovery support post-COVID-19.

Our findings suggest that LGBTIQ respondents have not only been particularly impacted by COVID-19, but face pre-existing social, economic, and health inequalities that require addressing. For the next three years, all respondents are concerned about their health, income, and environment – with LGBTIQ respondents being particularly concerned about their income, jobs, and housing compared with the rest of the sample.

These findings tell us that LGBTIQ people are particularly impacted by broader social issues of poverty, ill-health, and housing stress, and may require specific support in these areas. Future policy, planning, and service provision addressing healthcare and housing in Tasmania must take the experiences of LGBTIQ people into account for these to be effective.

While the systemic inequalities LGBTIQ people face are well-known, this is the first major social survey in Tasmania to gather comparable statistics on LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ populations. Though the findings are likely influenced by the specific age profile of LGBTIQ respondents to this survey, the results nevertheless indicate important trends in income, health, and housing disparities. This data importantly enables us to see the inequalities that LGBTIQ people may experience in Tasmania compared with non-LGBTIQ Tasmanians.

Further studies are required to gain more insights into these experiences, particularly around income and housing, and to help explain underlying conditions if future policy and service provisions are to effectively address inequalities.
Is high food insecurity the new normal in Tasmania?

Report number: 45
Authors: Dr Katherine Kent, Sandra Murray, Dr Denis Visentini
Date: 4 June 2021
Nearly 1 in 5 Tasmanian respondents are still running out of food. Is this the new normal?

It has been nearly 12 months since our supermarket shelves have returned to normal and panic buying has become a thing of the past. Unfortunately, The Tasmania Project’s latest survey in May 2021 indicates that food insecurity continues to affect close to 1 in 5 Tasmanian respondents to the survey. Is this the new normal for food insecurity in Tasmania?

The Tasmania Project’s fourth general survey of 1,110 Tasmanians (open from 29 April to 12 May 2021) has measured food insecurity for the third time in 12 months. The results show that 18% (or close to 1 in 5) of Tasmanian respondents have run out of food because they could not afford to buy more. In May 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, 26% of Tasmanians were food insecure.*

In September 2020, food insecurity had reduced to 18%. Our current results are still concerningly higher than the 6% of Tasmanians who were experiencing food insecurity in 2019. Given more than a year has passed since the introduction of the public health restrictions that reduced access to food, this suggests that other issues are causing food insecurity.

Our latest survey shows the groups of Tasmanians at the highest risk of food insecurity hasn’t changed. Vulnerable Tasmanians continue to experience the highest rates of food insecurity including those whose jobs have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, those with disabilities, families with dependents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, temporary residents, and young people.

**Key findings**

- The COVID-19 pandemic appears to be having long-term impacts on the food security of Tasmanians, with 18% of the 1,110 respondents to the May 2021 Tasmania Project Survey experiencing food insecurity.
- 11% of households are experiencing severe food insecurity, meaning they are regularly going without food.
- There has been no reduction in the rate of Tasmanians experiencing food insecurity since September 2020 and only a minor reduction since May 2020.
- Young people, households with dependents, those with disabilities, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, temporary residents and those whose jobs have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be the most affected.
- Financial stress appears to be the biggest factor. Respondents who were concerned about their income were 5 times more likely to be food insecure. Additionally, households that experienced a reduction in income resulting from the pandemic were twice as likely to be food insecure.
- Food insecure households coped by eating less food (32%) and eating lower quality food (25%). Only 5% of food insecure respondents accessed emergency food relief through charities, indicating community food solutions to food insecurity remain a priority.

*Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. For comparison, the prevalence of food insecurity amongst the general Australian population (pre COVID-19) has been estimated to be approximately 5%. The Tasmanian Population Health Survey in 2019 reported that 6.2% of Tasmanians were experiencing food insecurity due to financial stress. The Tasmania Project uses a 6-item screening tool to measure food insecurity, developed and validated by the USDA.*
Survey results*

The burden of food insecurity continues to exceed pre COVID-19 levels (6% in 2019), with 18% of respondents to our survey reporting that they had experienced some degree of food insecurity within the last month (April - May 2021).

This figure is the same as in September 2020, and slightly less than in May 2020, which found 26% of Tasmanian respondents were experiencing food insecurity. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of people experiencing marginal food security has nearly halved from 12% to 7%.

Marginal food security refers to households who at times had some problems or anxiety about accessing adequate food, but the quality, variety, and quantity of their food intake were not substantially reduced. This indicates that some strategies put in place during the pandemic have helped these Tasmanians recover.

However, it is concerning that the proportion of Tasmanian respondents reporting low or very low food security has not changed much over time (14% in May compared 11% in September 2020 and May 2021), meaning there are still many people in the community who are regularly going without food and whose food intake and nutrition may have been compromised.

The groups within the Tasmanian community experiencing the most food insecurity have remained largely unchanged:

- Young people aged 18-24 years still have the lowest levels of food security of all age groups (54%).
- Food insecurity decreased with age, with respondents aged 65 years and above reporting the lowest levels of food insecurity in all surveys (75% in May 2020 and 89% in both September 2020 and May 2021).
- A third of respondents (35%) who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander were food insecure, compared with 17% of respondents who did not identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- Tasmanians living with a disability or health condition which impacts their lives were also more likely to be food insecure (27%) when compared with Tasmanians without a disability (13%).

*Survey data for this report was analysed using descriptive statistics (prevalence data) and at-risk groups were identified using univariate and multivariate binary logistic regression.
• Compared with Australian citizens and permanent residents, temporary residents have experienced far higher levels of food insecurity during the pandemic, with 50% experiencing food insecurity.

• Most respondents (58%) who earned less than $20,000 per year were food insecure, compared with 28% of those earning up to $60,000, 21% of those earning $60-80,000, and 5.6% of people earning up to $100,000 per year.

• Regardless of income level, those who were concerned about their finances were 5 times more likely to be food insecure.

• A quarter of families with dependents (25%) reported experiencing food insecurity, compared with 10% of couple families without dependents.

• 30% of households who had lost income because of the pandemic were food insecure, compared with 12% for those whose income stayed the same.

Our findings give rise to several new questions:

• Is a prevalence of 18% the “new normal” for food insecurity in Tasmania?

• Why are government investments for addressing food insecurity focused primarily on emergency food relief when only 5% of food insecure people access these services?

• What can be done to support those experiencing food insecurity beyond emergency food relief?

• What will it take to transition away from reliance on emergency food relief to authentic, scalable community and school food solutions?

• What investments beyond emergency food relief will be used to support communities to build food resilience?

Where next?

Food insecurity has been recognised on Tasmania’s political agenda. Our latest findings reinforce the need for continued investment into community food solutions that reduce food insecurity in Tasmania.

The next steps should include:

• Appropriate funding by the Tasmanian Government of community programs that tackle food insecurity. This would involve a transition to ongoing, long-term, financial support for scalable community and school food solutions.

• Support for scalable food social enterprises to provide convenient and affordable healthy food and build resilient local communities.

• Support for place-based networks that bring together food systems stakeholders (i.e., growers, retailers, hospitality, local government, community organisations including schools) to create customised community solutions.
Key Findings

Findings from the Fourth General Survey of The Tasmania Project (TTP4) show that almost 9% of respondents are choosing not to be vaccinated, with another 10% saying they do not yet know if they will be vaccinated or not.

More than 4 out of 5 respondents (n=1176) either have been vaccinated or intend to be vaccinated, and men and the most educated are more likely to choose to be vaccinated.

Respondents seem to be more likely to accept a vaccine than Australians in general, however the difference is small.

- Respondents aged 65 years and above and those with a university degree are more likely to accept a vaccine, and more women than men are unsure.
- We observed a strong association between willingness to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and an influenza vaccine.
- Respondents are more likely to accept the Pfizer-BioTech vaccine than AstraZeneca or other vaccines, however approximately one third of all respondents would accept any vaccine.
- The most common motivation for choosing to receive the vaccine are to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community, to be protected from COVID-19 and to support vaccination programs in general.
- Most respondents who are unsure or would not accept the COVID-19 vaccine are concerned about its safety, possible side-effects and the lack of information available, and believe more research, development and testing is required.
Methodology

Data for the Fourth General Survey of The Tasmania Project (TTP4) were collected between 29 April and 12 May 2021 using an online survey questionnaire. An email invitation with a link to the survey was sent to about 3500 Tasmanians who had registered to be involved in The Tasmania Project. An invitation to the survey was also shared via social media and through a range of community, government and business contacts. A total of 1176 full responses were collected.

Findings in this report have not been weighted to represent Tasmania’s population, however we have been able to make some estimates at a state-wide level based on our data. The quality of these estimates is not expected to change if data are adjusted to population benchmarks.

Table 1: TTP4 respondents by sociodemographic variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say/self describe</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Adv) Diploma, Certificate</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree+</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Hobart</td>
<td>533</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
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<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Tasmania</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Willingness to receive the COVID-19 vaccine

One of the aims of TTP4 was to study the attitude of Tasmanians towards COVID-19 vaccination. During the survey period, vaccination roll-out in Tasmania extended from the 1B category (individuals aged 70 years and over) to the 2A category (individuals aged between 50 and 69 years) from 3 May.

Respondents were asked two questions on their willingness to receive COVID-19 vaccine:

- **Have you been partially or fully vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- **When a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available for you, will you be vaccinated?**

Responses to these two questions were combined to estimate the proportion of Tasmanians willing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The data show that about 1 in 3 respondents had been offered a vaccine prior to survey completion (that is, they had been partially or fully vaccinated or had chosen not to be vaccinated). For respondents aged between 50-69 years, this was 39%, and 76% for those aged 70 years and over.

The data shows that approximately 4 out of 5 Tasmanians intend to be vaccinated or have already been vaccinated. The proportion of respondents who chose or will choose not to be vaccinated is close to 9%, and about 1 out of 10 respondents were still unsure about receiving a vaccine.
Comparison of the results from Australian surveys on attitudes towards COVID-19 vaccination

As this is a topic of national importance, a number of surveys have been conducted in Australia to study attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccination, with a focus on the willingness of Australians to receive the vaccine.

Generally speaking, there is a negative trend, with Australians becoming more hesitant to receive a COVID-19 vaccine over time.

While the data were collected from different samples, probability and nonprobability, and questions on willingness to receive vaccine were worded differently, the results for Australian’s adult population are fairly consistent.

Moreover, respondents in the Fourth General Survey showed greater willingness towards COVID-19 vaccination in Tasmania in comparison to the whole Australian adult population – after November 2020, all other studies reported that less than 80% of respondents (and as low as 61%) are willing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The difference could be attributed to particular structural differences of survey samples, as explained in the next section.

Socio-demographic characteristics affecting the decision to be vaccinated

Previous studies reported different levels of willingness to receive the COVID-19 vaccine among different socio-demographic groups (e.g., Biddle et al. 2021).

In this summary, we look at gender, age, education, and regions in Tasmania as predictors of attitudes towards vaccination.

In TTP4, we can observe some notable differences between particular socio-demographic groups. After confirming the differences with logistic regression, we can report higher levels of willingness to receive the vaccine among the oldest, the most educated, and those living in Greater Hobart.

Figure 1: Willingness to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Tasmania (April/May 2021)
In TTP4, we can observe some notable differences between particular socio-demographic groups. After confirming the differences with logistic regression, we can report higher levels of willingness to receive the vaccine among the oldest respondents, the most educated respondents, and those living in Greater Hobart.

There are more undecided respondents among women than men, those younger than 65 years, and those with high school level of education. These results are fairly consistent with those reported by Biddle and colleagues (2021) for the whole Australian population. They also reported that women tend to be more hesitant, and that those living in capital cities are more willing to be vaccinated.

The data we present here are unweighted and skewed towards older individuals with a higher level of education (more willing to receive vaccine) and towards women (more likely to be unsure). As a result, the willingness to receive vaccine in TTP4 might be slightly overreported.

The gap in willingness to receive COVID-19 and flu vaccines

We examined the relationship between respondents’ willingness to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and their intention to receive the influenza (flu) vaccine.
The results show that about 2 out of 3 respondents from TTP4 plan to receive, or have already received, both the COVID-19 and flu vaccines. Slightly less respondents have received or plan to receive the flu vaccine (73%) than a COVID-19 vaccine (81%). This is consistent with the findings from Dodd and colleagues (2021).

The fact that more people are in favour of being vaccinated against COVID-19 than the flu is illustrated by the following: of the whole sample, 12% plan to receive COVID-19 but not the flu vaccine, while 3% plan to receive the flu vaccine but not COVID-19.

The respondents are also more likely to be unsure about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine than the flu vaccine.

**Main reasons for choosing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine**

We also examined why TTP4 respondents would choose to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and determine if any differences in motivation between socio-demographic groups exist.

The most common reasons for choosing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine are to:

- help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community (76.1%)
- be protected from COVID-19 (67.3%)
- support vaccination/immunisation programs in general (62.8%)

The oldest respondents (65+ years) are more likely to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to protect themselves, while those aged between 25-64 years are more likely to be vaccinated to protect their family. Respondents younger than 45 years tend to be more motivated by protecting their friends and close contacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2: Association between willingness to receive the COVID-19 and influenza vaccines*
Which COVID-19 vaccine would Tasmanians accept?

Given concerns amongst the Australian population about the safety of certain vaccines, which has been influenced by news about blood clotting (Biddle et al. 2021), we asked TTP4 respondents about which COVID-19 vaccine/s they would accept.

The results show that 85% of respondents would accept Pfizer-BioNTech, 72% would accept AstraZeneca, 44% would accept another available vaccine, and 37% would accept any vaccine. Almost 1 in 10 respondents are unsure what vaccine they would accept.

There are notable differences in the willingness to accept the AstraZeneca vaccine – it substantially increases with age, is higher in Launceston, and lower amongst females. Respondents with an (Advanced) Diploma or Certificate as their highest level of education are less willing to accept the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The reasons for choosing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine are shown in Figure 3.

![Figure 3: Main reasons for choosing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine]

**Which COVID-19 vaccines would you accept?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pfizer-BioNTech</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>AstraZeneca</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other not already listed</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any of the above</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 4: Which of the following COVID-19 vaccines would you accept?]

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What would increase likelihood of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

Those who were unsure, chose not to, or will choose not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine were also asked why they weren’t willing to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and what would increase the likelihood of receiving the vaccine in the future.

The most common reasons were:

- I have concerns about the side-effects (66%)
- The vaccines need more testing (63%).
- I do not have enough information (35%)
- I am concerned I will have an allergic reaction (25%)
- I do not trust the manufacturing companies (24%).

While there are mostly negligible differences between socio-demographic groups, respondents aged 65 years and above are more likely to be concerned they would have an allergic reaction.
The majority of respondents who are unsure, chose not to, or will choose not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine could potentially be persuaded to receive it if/when:

- there is evidence the vaccine is save over time (70%);
- they know more about the long-term side effects (67%); or
- more time was invested for research and development (60%).

Respondents would also like to have a choice about which vaccine they would receive (48%), and evidence of its effectiveness (4%).

There are little differences between respondents from different socio-demographic groups. Respondents aged between 25 and 44 years could potentially be persuaded if more time was invested for research and development.

Having a choice of the brand of vaccine would increase the likelihood of women receiving it compared to men and for respondents from Greater Hobart compared to those from other parts of Tasmania.

Figure 6: Would any of the following increase the likelihood of you receiving a COVID-19 vaccine? (n=174)

There are little differences between respondents from different socio-demographic groups. Respondents aged between 25 and 44 years could potentially be persuaded if more time was invested for research and development.

Attitudes towards compliance and restrictions

Summary of findings from the fourth general survey (29 Apr – 12 May 2021)

Report number: 47
Authors: Libby Lester, Nyree Pisanu, Ella Horton
Date: 23 June 2021

UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA
Institute for Social Change
Key Findings

Findings from the Fourth General Survey of The Tasmania Project (TTP4) show almost one half of all respondents do not always follow the physical distancing rules, which is the lowest level since the start of The Tasmania Project. This suggests people are far less likely (more than twice) to always follow the physical distancing rules than they were about a year ago.

There has also been a decline in compliance with COVID-19 safe practices over time, and a slight decline in feelings of safety.

At the same time, almost one half of respondents disagree that Tasmania should open to more countries where COVID-19 is under control, and only about 1 in 3 agree that Tasmania has adequate resources to manage a COVID-19 outbreak.

Methodology

The data for the TTP4 were collected between 29 April and 12 May 2021 using an online survey questionnaire.

An email invitation with a link to the survey was sent to about 3500 Tasmanians who had registered to be involved in The Tasmania Project. The survey was also shared via social media and through a range of community, government and business contacts.

A total of 1176 responses were collected. The sample is mostly females (66.7%), with 32.1% of the sample indicating they are male and 0.5% preferring to self-describe. The age breakdown of respondents is: 18-24 years (2.3%), 25-44 years (17.9%), 45-64 years (45.1%), and 65 years and over (34.7%).

The majority of the sample is highly educated, with 68.5% holding a Bachelor’s degree or more. 21.4% of respondents live in Greater Hobart, 9.0% are from Launceston, and the remaining 69.6% are from elsewhere in Tasmania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Rest of Tasmania</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to accept COVID-19 vaccines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I have been vaccinated or will be</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I have chosen not to be vaccinated or will choose not to be</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know yet</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: TTP4 respondents by socio-demographic variable and willingness to accept the COVID-19 vaccine
Attitudes towards COVID-19 prevention

TTP4 explored attitudes of Tasmanians towards COVID-19 prevention, including their compliance with current restrictions. As a number of these questions were included in the First, Second, and Third General Surveys of The Tasmania Project (TTP1-3), we have been able to create a time-series to show attitudinal changes over time (figure 2).

TTP4 investigated attitudes towards COVID-19 prevention about 14 months after Australia declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national pandemic. As such, we have included items in the TTP4 questionnaire on Tasmania’s ability to manage the outbreak, and on respondents’ attitudes towards opening Tasmania’s borders.

The results show that 49% of respondents do not always follow the physical distancing rules, but about 4 in 5 respondents would be tested if they showed mild symptoms of COVID-19.

However, almost 1 in 10 respondents (or 9%) would most probably ignore mild COVID-19 symptoms, as they (strongly) disagree that they would get tested in case of showing mild symptoms.

Majority (61%) of TTP4 survey participants feel comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices, while only 16% are more concerned about the economic than the health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Only one quarter of respondents agree that Tasmania should open to more countries where COVID-19 is under control, and 1 in 3 respondents believe that Tasmania has adequate resources to manage an outbreak of COVID-19.

As these two variables are associated, we can conclude that some of the hesitancy to open Tasmania to other countries can be explained by concerns that the state does not have adequate resources to manage an outbreak.

There are some notable differences in attitudes between the following socio-demographic groups (based on ordinal regression results):

**Figure 1:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do NOT always follow the physical distancing rules</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I showed mild symptoms of COVID-19, I would be tested</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more concerned about the economic impacts than the health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania should open to more countries where COVID-19 is under control</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania has adequate resources to manage a COVID-19 outbreak</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Females are more likely to follow physical distancing rules. Respondents younger than 45 years and those not willing to be vaccinated are less likely to get tested when experiencing mild symptoms. Respondents who are not willing to be vaccinated are also less comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices. Males and those with a university degree are more supportive of Tasmania opening to more countries where COVID-19 is under control. Males, respondents younger than 65 years and respondents who had not or will not accept the COVID-19 vaccine are more concerned with the economic impacts of the pandemic than the health impacts compared with females, respondents older than 65 years and those who had been, will or might get vaccinated against COVID-19. Respondents from Greater Hobart, those with a university degree and females have less confidence in Tasmania having adequate resources to manage a COVID-19 outbreak.

Changes in attitudes towards COVID-19 prevention over time

Questions about attitudes towards COVID-19 prevention have been asked in all four general surveys. By comparing these results we can observe changes in attitudes over time.

Figure 2 shows a complete time-series for two out of four statements on COVID-19 prevention. These series show a gradual decline in the proportion of Tasmanian respondents always following the physical distancing rules (from 81% in April/May 2020 to 38% twelve months later), and a very slight decline in the proportion of those who are more concerned about the economic impacts than the health impacts of COVID-19 (from 25% in April/May 2020 to 16% twelve months later).

The partial time-series generated for the other two statements show the proportion of people comfortable telling people to comply with COVID-19 safe practices has remained fairly stable between June 2020 (64%) and April/May 2021 (61%), but the proportion of Tasmanian respondents who would be tested if showing mild symptoms of COVID-19 has decreased from 89% to 81% between August/September 2020 and April/May 2021.

Overall, these results suggest there has been a decline in compliance with COVID-19 safe practices over time.
Feeling of safety in Tasmania

TTP4 also examined respondents’ feeling of safety in Tasmania. This question was also included in the Third General Survey (TTP3).

The distribution of answers on an 11-point scale in TTP4, where 0 represents not safe and 10 represents very safe, is presented in Figure 3.

The results show that, on average, respondents to the TTP4 survey feel quite safe. More than 1 in 3 respondents indicated 10 (very safe) and about one half of the whole sample indicated either 8 or 9 (out of a maximum 10). The proportion of respondents whose feeling of safety is less than 7 out of 10 is low (about 6%).

In Figure 4, we compare how safe different socio-demographic subpopulations feel in Tasmania in mid-2021. For that reason, we calculated averages for gender, age, education, region, and willingness to be vaccinated groups.

While the means seem to vary slightly between the groups, we cannot report any statistically significant differences between the studied socio-demographic subpopulation (based on the results of multiple linear regression modelling).

On the other hand, we observe a slight decline in feeling of safety over time. In TTP3 (August/September 2020), the mean reported feeling of safety was 8.92 on an 11-point scale. This declined to 8.71 in TTP4 (April/May 2021).

The difference might be small, but it is nevertheless statistically significant. This decline could potentially be explained with concerns that the state does not have adequate resources to manage an outbreak, as this is a variable associated with feeling of safety. This variable, however, was only included in TTP4.
Figure 4: Feeling of safety by socio-demographic groups (means)
Impressions of how the pandemic has been managed in Tasmania

To examine respondents’ impressions of how the COVID-19 pandemic has been managed, we asked the following open-ended question:

What is your overall impression of how the COVID-19 pandemic has been managed in Tasmania over the past 12 months?

To present the results, we created a word cloud from respondents’ verbatim answers (figure 5).

The most common words were: “well”, “managed”, “Tasmania”, “health”, “good”, “think”, “outbreak”, and “government”.

Reviewing their answers more closely, we see that respondents generally believe that the pandemic has been managed well, but they also expressed concerns such as the challenges of managing a future outbreak.

Some respondents expressed appreciation that the government had followed public health advice, but also felt that good outcomes were often the result of good luck.

Views on how restrictive the government has been and should be in the future are somewhat mixed.

“It has been handled well but I don’t feel confident that we have the staff or resources in Tas to cope if we become a hot-spot…”

“It has been managed well by keeping our border closed when there are cases interstate.”

“We have been lucky. We have had good health advice”

“Adequately, but our good results have been more the result of luck than government policy”

“… the government knows how stretched the hospitals would be if we had a big outbreak.”

“Generally, it was handled very well at the start … for at least the last 6 months the Government has been too restrictive and paranoid about travel and opening events.”

Figure 5: Word cloud of answers to a question on Tasmanians’ overall impression of how the pandemic had been managed in the state.
The Tasmania Project

Experiences and opinions about living and travelling in Tasmania during and after the pandemic

Report number: 48
Authors: Sebastian Kocar, Libby Lester, Ella Horton
Date: 19 August 2021
The Fourth General Survey of The Tasmania Project (TTP4) asked a series of questions about residents’ connections to their home state. Why do they stay here or why did they move here? Which areas do they want to visit and why? And what impact has COVID-19 had on their travel behaviours and attitudes?

**Key Findings**

- The majority of respondents (approximately 9 in 10) travelled within Tasmania in the last 12 months, most often for leisure, to visit a national park or reserve, or to visit family and friends.
- In the future, the Tasmanian destinations that respondents most likely plan to visit are the East Coast, the West Coast, Hobart and Cradle Mountain.
- Approximately 3 in 5 respondents want to travel more within Tasmania, but due to the pandemic only 1 in 3 feel comfortable doing so.
- The main reasons for respondents moving to and/or staying in Tasmania are family, environment and lifestyle.
- Approximately half of all respondents (n=1176) are not booking tickets in advance due to fears of cancellations.

**Methodology**

The data for the Fourth General Survey of The Tasmania Project were collected between 29 April and 12 May 2021 using an online survey questionnaire.

An email invitation with a link to the survey was sent to about 3500 Tasmanians who had registered to be involved in The Tasmania Project. The survey was also shared via social media and through a range of community, government and business contacts.

A total of 1176 responses were collected. The sample is mostly females (66.7%), with 32.1% male and 0.5% selecting prefer to self-describe. The age breakdown includes 18-24 years (2.3%), 25-44 years (17.9%), 45-64 years (45.1%), and 65+ (34.7%).

The majority of the sample (68.5%) is educated, while 19.8% hold advanced diploma/associate degree/diploma or certificate I-IV, and 11.6% finished high school. 21.4% of respondent live in Greater Hobart, 9.0% are from Launceston, while the remaining 69.6% are from the Rest of Tasmania. The data can be weighted on request.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say/self-describe</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Adv) Diploma, Certificate</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree+</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Hobart</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Tasmania</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: TTP4 respondents by socio-demographic characteristics


**Reasons for moving to and/or staying in Tasmania**

To identify the main reasons for moving to Tasmania and/or staying in Tasmania, the following question was asked:

*Provide up to five words to describe why you moved to Tasmania and/or stayed? Tasmania is...*

The most common reasons were captured in the following keywords:

- family (33%)
- environment (22%)
- lifestyle (21%)
- employment/work/job (18%)
- climate/weather (18%)
- safe/safety (18%).

Some respondents provided multi-word answers. These additional words are shown in brackets in figure 1.

After reviewing these multi-word answers, we can understand the reasoning better. For example, respondents answering family also included the words ‘friends’, ‘close’, or ‘lives’.

Those answering environment also used the words ‘natural’, ‘beautiful’, and ‘clean’. If they answered lifestyle, they described it as great, relaxed, or quieter.

Respondents living in Tasmania for 15 years or less were more likely to use words such as climate/weather and friendly, and less likely to use words like family, home, and safe/safety compared with those living in Tasmania for more than 15 years.

Respondents living in Tasmania for 5 years or less were more likely to use the words natural/nature than respondents living in Tasmania for 6 years or more.
Experiences of the pandemic

To understand the respondents' experience of the pandemic, we asked two open-ended questions:

1. *Thinking about the last 12 months and the experience of the pandemic, what has been most challenging?*

2. *Thinking about the last 12 months and the experience of the pandemic, what has been most positive?*

To present the results, we created a word cloud from respondents' verbatim answers.

The most commonly used words for the first question (the most challenging) were “able”, “family”, “travel”, “work(ing)”, “people”, and “see(ing)”. The most commonly used words for the second question (the most positive) were “time”, “people”, “home”, “family”, “community”, and “work(ing)”. Reviewing their answers more closely, we can notice that the most challenging aspects of the pandemic were not being able to see their families, travel, or normally interact with other people, as well as changes in working arrangements (working from home, lack of work and an increased workload).

On the other hand, respondents had more time to spend with their family, at home (due to working from home), or having more spare time, and seeing positive effects on other people (such as helping each other) and on their community (such as a greater sense of community).
Attitudes towards travelling and attending events and venues

Attitudes towards travelling and attending events and venues were examined by asking respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with six statements (see figure 3). The results indicate that about half of all respondents do not avoid attending events or venues due to COVID-19 fears (13% strongly disagree and 37% disagree). Interestingly, a the same proportion of respondents (50%) indicated they are not booking tickets in advance due to fears of cancellations.

About 4 in 5 respondents always check in at venues for contact tracing and around half of all respondents strongly agree that it is safe to be in a crowd in Tasmania.

While about 3 in 5 respondents want to travel more within Tasmania due to the pandemic (58%), only 1 in 3 feel comfortable travelling interstate (7% strongly agree and 26% agree the statement).

Males and younger respondents (aged below 65 years) feel safer in a crowd in Tasmania, and females are more likely to check in at venues for contract tracing than males (83% vs 74%).

On the other hand, respondents had more time to spend with their family, at home (due to working from home), or having more spare time, and seeing positive effects on other people (such as helping each other) and on their community (such as a greater sense of community).

**Figure 3:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (n=1112)
Having a holiday or day trip in Tasmania

The majority of respondents (91%) indicated they had been on a holiday or day trip in Tasmania in the previous 12 months.

The most common reason for having a holiday or day trip in Tasmania is for leisure (76%), to visit a national park or reserve (55%), to visit family and/or friends (42%) and because they could not travel outside of Tasmania (34%).

Respondents from Greater Hobart, those aged below 65 years and respondents whose income had not decreased after COVID-19 were more likely to have taken a holiday or been on a day trip in Tasmania for leisure.

Older respondents (aged 65 years and above) and those who had lived in Tasmania for 15 years or less were less likely to visit family and/or friends, and respondents with higher levels of education and those aged below 45 years were more likely to visit a national park or reserve.

Respondents from Greater Hobart and Launceston were more likely to travel because they could not travel outside Tasmania than those living in other parts of the state.

When asked where they most wanted to visit and why (about 4 in 5 responded), the most popular destinations were the East Coast, the West Coast, Hobart, Cradle Mountain, the North, the West and various islands (King Island, Flinders Island, or Maria Island). The most popular reason provided was to visit either family or friends.
Tasmanians want a more resilient and sustainable food system

Learning from food supply challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic

Report: 49
Authors: Katherine Kent, Sandra Murray, Fred Gale, Stuart Auckland, Beth Penrose, Denis Visentin
Date: 12 October 2021
The COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health restrictions temporarily disrupted food supply chains in Australia and changed the way people shopped for food, highlighting issues with the resilience of Tasmania’s food system.

The Tasmania Project’s Food Survey was conducted in May 2020, shortly after Tasmania’s initial lockdown. Respondents were asked if they thought that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted Australia’s food supply. A free-text question allowed respondents to elaborate on how it had been changed. Another free-text question asked: “How could Tasmania’s food system be better prepared for a disaster in the future?”.

Our results indicate multiple opportunities to increase resilience and sustainability in the food system to avoid future food system disruptions. In particular, considerable popular support for more resilient, local and sustainable food systems appears to be emerging post COVID-19 pandemic.

Of the 1,125 survey respondents (average age 52.7±14.5 years; 77% female), 40% indicated the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted the Australian food supply and 28% were unsure. Younger respondents and those classified as experiencing food insecurity* were most likely to report that the food supply was impacted.

How was the food system impacted?

The key themes that were identified regarding impacts on the food supply include challenges at both an individual and system level.** For individuals, challenges mostly related reductions in the availability, variety and quality of food, and increases in price.

- “[food was] harder to get if available and limited supplies”
- “There has been much more poorer quality food available which went off very quickly”.
- “most of the produce available has had a price increase”

There was also recognition that most challenges resulted from panic buying of food and reduced access to food through social distancing restriction and closure of key food outlets.

- “The food supply was impacted by the sudden rush to buy staple/basic foods that have high shelf lives at the start of the pandemic.”
- “Shops stripped bare, closed cafes and restaurants, closed farmers markets”

*At risk groups identified using univariate logistic regression. **Thematic analysis was employed to generate themes. Direct quotes are provided in italics.
Respondents acknowledged that some supply chain issues were a result of increased consumer demand for food and altered shopping behaviours, which meant it was harder for retailers to keep up.

• “It is being affected by the demand side. Consumer purchasing has altered, there is an increased concentration on particular long-life foods and things like baking goods, there is more bulk purchasing, there is less impulse and more planned purchasing, people are having less frequent larger shops”.

• “I know we had heaps of food, but lacked ability and capacity to get it onto shelves”

The impact of the pandemic on import and export restrictions and transport disruptions resulting from reduced interstate travel and social distancing restrictions was also recognised.

• “[there has been] less imported goods into Tasmania (from both international and interstate markets].”

Some respondents thought producers were slow to adapt their business model to meet changes in shopping behaviours:

• “retailers who weren’t well positioned to adapt to the different shopping habits that developed because of restrictions”

Respondents also acknowledged producers were struggling to recruit seasonal workers, which was perceived as impacting the local food system and increasing food waste.

• “seasonal workers/pickers unable to pick for the farmers or farmers reluctant to use pickers due to fear of the virus”

• “[the challenges were] mostly in getting food harvested and to consumers. I’ve read articles about crops being turned into compost because they couldn’t get it picked and transported.”

**How could Tasmania’s food system could be better prepared in the future?**

When asked how Tasmania’s food system could be better prepared in the future, 698 respondents provided an open-ended response indicating potential strategies towards building a resilient and sustainable food system in Tasmania. We grouped the main responses into seven key themes using thematic analysis.

**Balance food exports with local needs**

Some respondents felt Tasmania could grow sufficient food to meet the needs of its population.

• “Tasmania should be completely self-sufficient, only importing what is out of season or cannot be grown here (at high taxed rate) and only exporting what is excess to the State needs”

• “Keep Tassie food in Tassie”

• “address the gap between Tasmanian producers and Tasmanian consumers - most of the food we produce is exported, much of the food we eat is imported.”

The possibility of Tasmania being self-sufficient was thought to be a key strategy to keep businesses functioning in future disasters and pandemics.

• “Businesses need to have the right balance of exporting their produce and supplying locally. They won’t close their doors if they aren’t relying too heavily on the export market”.

Contrasting views were presented on whether the food system should “Continue to diversify” the food supply as a strategy to ensure self-sufficiency, and whether stockpiling foods grown outside the state was a possibility.

• “State (government) might ‘encourage’ strategic stockpiles in state due to our isolation by sea from mainland logistic routes”

The issue of food exports emerged strongly when respondents discussed food tourism.

• “Don’t pretend that the economy depends on tourism”

**“Keep Tassie food in Tassie”**

Respondents expressed a desire for local food producers to prioritise and meet the needs of the local community before growing produce for national and international export.

• “Tasmania should be completely self-sufficient, only importing what is out of season or cannot be grown here (at high taxed rate) and only exporting what is excess to the State needs”

• “Keep Tassie food in Tassie”

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• “State (government) might ‘encourage’ strategic stockpiles in state due to our isolation by sea from mainland logistic routes”

The issue of food exports emerged strongly when respondents discussed food tourism.

• “Don’t pretend that the economy depends on tourism”
Whilst Tasmania has an outstanding reputation for producing premium food and wine, respondents felt these foods did not match local needs, were out of reach for most residents, and that the affordability of locally-grown food should be prioritised.

- “it seems like buying locally is restricted to the more wealthy or to people like myself ‘as a treat’”
- “produce more affordable food in Tasmania instead of artisan products only”

### Strengthen local food systems

Respondents felt that actions should be taken to shorten food supply chains to protect against future shocks and to benefit both consumers and food producers.

- “be less reliant on Bass Strait imports”
- “Producers who provide for local consumers as their primary source of income are more resilient to disaster”

Sometimes, respondents thought that further investment in small-scale farming and distribution networks would help improve food system resilience.

- “there is an opportunity for local government/not-for-profit to act as an enabler to drive innovative local food production and distribution - including availability to all communities at reasonable price”

Respondents suggested a number of strategies to support the purchase of locally-grown products, including greater marketing and clearer labelling.

- “there needs to be clear labelling so we know a foods provenance”

Some respondents stated that further protections against selling prime agricultural land for foreign investment could protect the local food supply in the future.

- “be more conscious of issue of foreign ownership of agricultural land”

### Increase consumer awareness of food supply chains

While major supermarkets were seen as important food retailers, some respondents felt the current food system lacks the diversity needed for resilience.

- “It doesn’t feel secure to rely on 2-3 private owned supermarket chains”

Some respondents felt that retailers needed to prioritise locally-grown produce either “of their own volition” or be “forced to pay local producers’ reasonable prices and stock a wide range of local produce”. Respondents identified several possible benefits of having a greater emphasis on local food, including supporting consumer values, providing farmers with the “confidence to supply local markets [in the] long term”, and improving the local food culture so consumers could “take pride in and buy Tasmanian produce”.

“it doesn’t feel secure to rely on 2-3 private owned supermarket chains”
Several respondents also suggested that Tasmania could protect itself against future shocks to the food system if local food was prioritised by the community.

- “educate people and change the culture to encourage new eating and purchasing behaviours that prioritise consumption of seasonal and local produce”

**Build collaboration and connection in the food system**

Some respondents suggested there are opportunities to promote stronger connections between local food producers through initiatives like small grower networks, which could provide “stronger networks and support for more smaller producers”. It was suggested that these networks could contribute to contingency planning and provide support and connection for a more responsive food system in future disaster-type situations.

- “Producers need to have systems in place which would allow them to quickly change the way in which they supply their customers. e.g. online service, home delivery”.

Respondents indicated that they valued the new ways of getting food to the community that were established by food suppliers and producers at the beginning of the pandemic. This included online platforms which “allowed more direct connection between groups of growers and consumers”.

**Embed clear contingency arrangements**

Respondents reported wanting government and businesses to develop and implement food-related disaster preparedness plans.

- “there should be detailed and improved logistics and supply chain systems for pandemics and disasters, implemented even prior to a pandemic or state of emergency being announced to prevent supply shortages”

Respondents also identified a lack of a coordinated response which impacted food supply chains, stressing that “better co-ordination with providers who distribute the food” would be required in the future. The need for “stronger political control” in future pandemics or disasters was also emphasised, as industry-implemented restrictions were perceived as being too little and too late.

Respondents thought that the “rationing imposed by shops is ineffective and unfair”, reporting they disproportionately affected some households.

- “Some larger families I spoke to struggled to get enough food to feed their families”

Some respondents suggested developing contingency plans for redistributing locally grown food through a network or coalition of stakeholders. Such plans would support local producers and develop “a better understanding of the food system by connecting foodies at a regional scale via a dedicated food-systems group”. In the longer-term, ongoing “counter-disaster discussion meetings” with diverse food industry stakeholders were suggested.

Lastly, respondents sometimes discussed the reliance on overseas workers to support primary producers as a weakness or threat to food security during periods of disaster or pandemics.

- “the heavy reliance on overseas workers to harvest produce is one of the biggest weaknesses exposed by COVID-19”

**Support community capacity building and individual self-sufficiency**

Some respondents suggested there were clear opportunities for governments to invest in community capacity building and to promote self-sufficiency at an individual level. Suggested initiatives included support for individuals to “grow their own staple vegetables and fruit” and to learn permaculture and composting. Nutrition education including healthy cooking and seasonality was also suggested.

- “If more people were aware of the seasonality of produce, they may be less expectant to have things available all year round and not freak out when suddenly one particular item isn’t available”

Financial support for community initiatives to support food literacy and self-sufficiency was suggested by some.

- “Put more funding, resources etc into community gardens, especially for schools”

**The food system coped well**

A minority of respondents reported being minimally affected or felt that the food system was robust throughout the beginning of the pandemic.

- “there was still plenty of food, just not necessarily everything we are used to”
- “I think our supply chain is efficient and well organised”
Where next?

Learning from Tasmanian residents’ experiences of the food system during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that robust strategies must be developed to ensure the rapid implementation of activities that would minimise the impact of disasters. The voice of consumers is crucial in food systems policy directions given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food access and availability for vulnerable groups.

This report demonstrates that from a consumer perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic substantially impacted the Tasmanian food system. From a policy and practice perspective there is a clear need to transition away from emergency food relief models towards regional development strategies to build further sustainability and resilience into Tasmania’s food system. Our report suggests this could be obtained by balancing food exports against local consumer needs, continuing to strengthen local food systems, building stronger regional food networks and supporting self-sufficiency at a community level.

Strategies towards strong, community-driven food security solutions would contribute to minimising the impact of future disasters on the Tasmanian food system, and improving food security for all Tasmanians. These could include a closer collaboration between agencies responsible for implementing policies around food systems and disaster/emergency agencies, greater investment in community capacity building to increase food systems literacy skills, and developing resources at the community level to respond to the impacts of pandemics in the future.