



everyone's family

Perceptions and concerns around the gap between Australia's 'haves' and 'have-nots', and the financial and educational impacts of COVID-19

A survey of community attitudes and experiences conducted by Essential Research on behalf of The Smith Family

Concern about gap between Australia's 'haves' and 'have-nots'

Q A recent 'Inequality in Australia' report by ACOSS (the Australian Council of Social Service) and UNSW Sydney revealed large and persistent gaps in income and wealth between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in Australia – 'haves' refers to people with a lot of money and 'have-nots' refers to people with very little money.

How concerned are you about the gap between Australia's 'haves' and 'have-nots'?

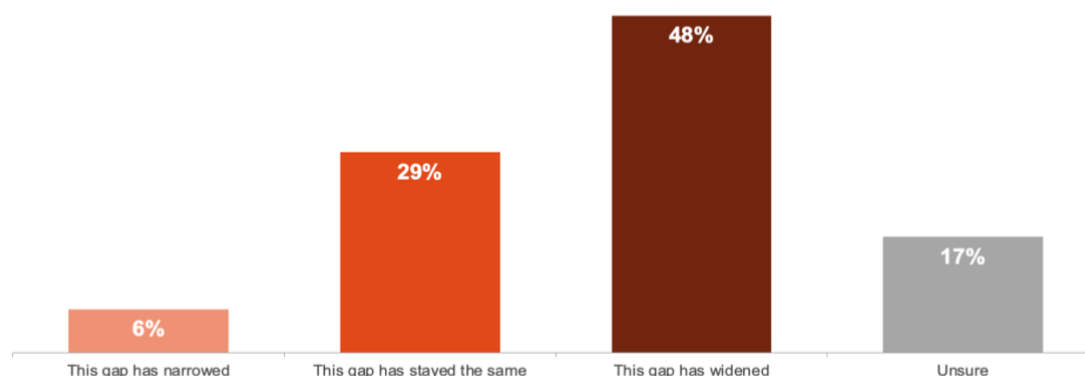


■ Very concerned ■ Moderately concerned ■ Not that concerned ■ Not concerned at all ■ Unsure

| | Total | Gender | | Age | | |
|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Very concerned | 30% | 31% | 30% | 22% | 31% | 37% |
| Moderately concerned | 32% | 28% | 37% | 34% | 33% | 31% |
| Not that concerned | 24% | 29% | 20% | 30% | 22% | 22% |
| Not concerned at all | 5% | 6% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 6% |
| Unsure | 8% | 6% | 9% | 10% | 10% | 4% |
| TOTAL: Concerned | 63% | 59% | 67% | 56% | 64% | 68% |
| TOTAL: Not concerned | 29% | 35% | 23% | 34% | 26% | 28% |
| Base (n) | 1,087 | 527 | 560 | 328 | 374 | 385 |

Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on gap between Australia's 'haves' and 'have-nots'

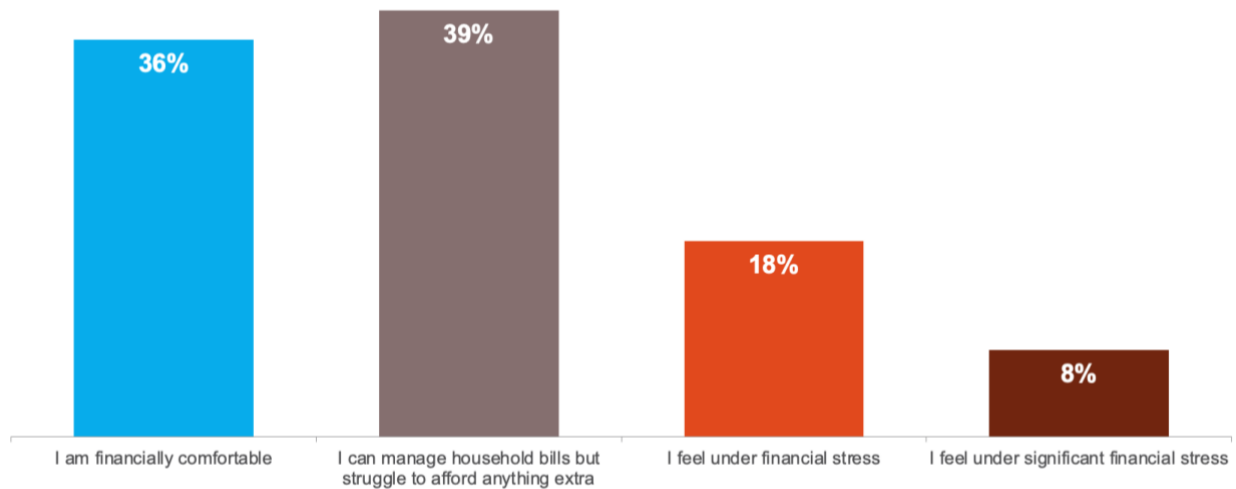
Q How do you think this gap between Australia's 'haves' and 'have-nots' has changed since the COVID-19 pandemic began?



| | Total | Gender | | Age | | |
|------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| This gap has narrowed | 6% | 7% | 5% | 10% | 8% | 1% |
| This gap has stayed the same | 29% | 33% | 25% | 30% | 31% | 26% |
| This gap has widened | 48% | 48% | 49% | 41% | 45% | 58% |
| Unsure | 17% | 12% | 21% | 19% | 16% | 15% |
| Base (n) | 1,087 | 527 | 560 | 328 | 374 | 385 |

Current financial situation

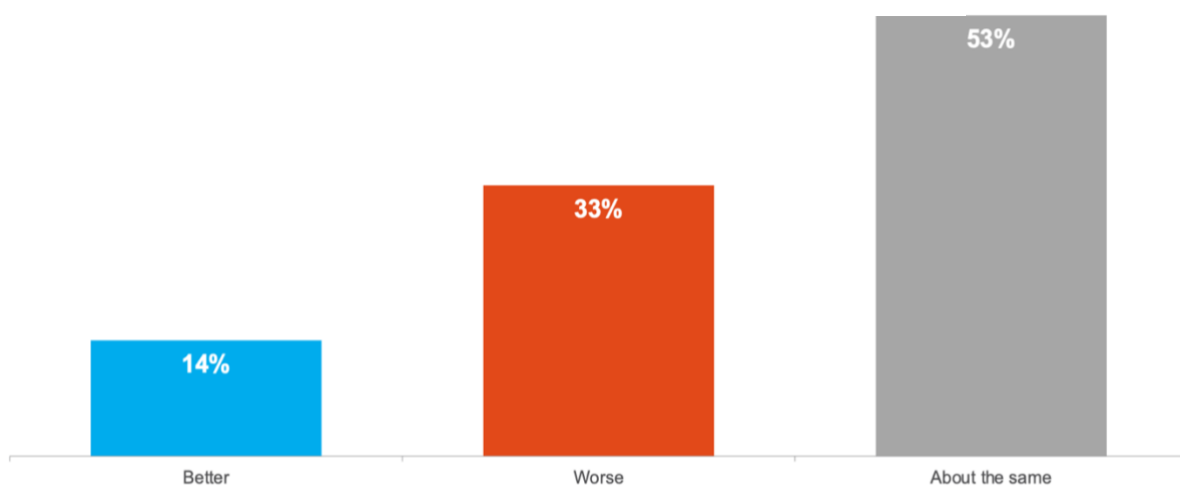
Q Which of the following best describes how you feel about your current financial situation?



| | Total | Gender | | Age | | |
|--|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| I am financially comfortable | 36% | 41% | 31% | 26% | 36% | 45% |
| I can manage household bills but struggle to afford anything extra | 39% | 36% | 41% | 37% | 37% | 41% |
| I feel under financial stress | 18% | 17% | 19% | 27% | 18% | 9% |
| I feel under significant financial stress | 8% | 6% | 10% | 9% | 10% | 5% |
| Base (n) | 1,087 | 527 | 560 | 328 | 374 | 385 |

Change in financial situation since COVID-19 pandemic

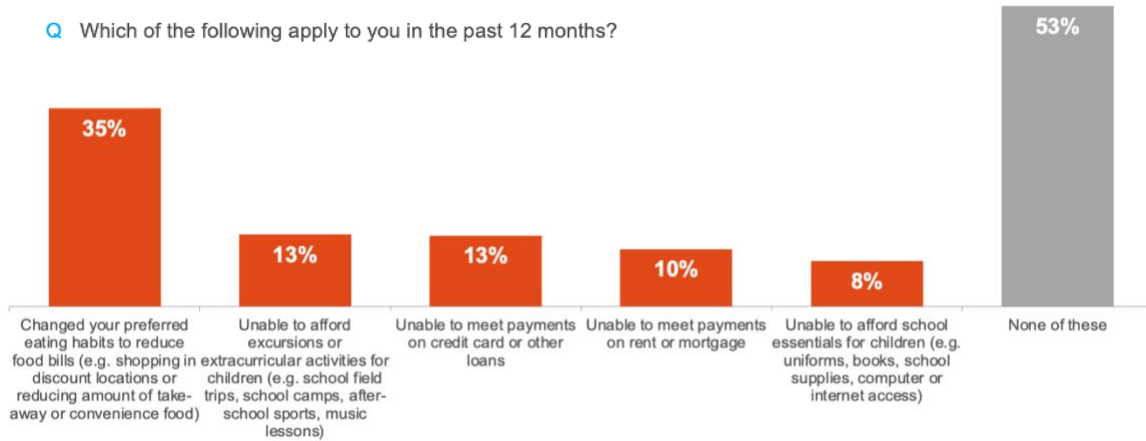
Q Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, how would you describe your own financial situation?



| | Total | Gender | | Age | | |
|----------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Better | 14% | 17% | 11% | 14% | 21% | 7% |
| About the same | 53% | 55% | 52% | 45% | 49% | 65% |
| Worse | 33% | 28% | 37% | 42% | 30% | 28% |
| Base (n) | 1,087 | 527 | 560 | 328 | 374 | 385 |

Experience of financial struggle in past 12 months

Q Which of the following apply to you in the past 12 months?



| | Total | Gender | | Age | | | Household Dependent Children |
|---|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-----|------------------------------|
| | | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ | |
| Unable to meet payments on rent or mortgage | 10% | 10% | 10% | 18% | 10% | 4% | 12% |
| Unable to meet payments on credit card or other loans | 13% | 12% | 13% | 21% | 14% | 4% | 17% |
| Changed your preferred eating habits to reduce food bills (e.g. shopping in discount locations or reducing amount of take-away or convenience food) | 35% | 30% | 40% | 42% | 39% | 25% | 39% |
| Unable to afford school essentials for children (e.g. uniforms, books, school supplies, computer or internet access) | 8% | 9% | 7% | 14% | 9% | 2% | 12% |
| Unable to afford excursions or extracurricular activities for children (e.g. school field trips, school camps, after-school sports, music lessons) | 13% | 12% | 14% | 23% | 13% | 3% | 21% |
| None of these | 53% | 56% | 50% | 37% | 48% | 71% | 46% |
| Base (n) | 1,087 | 527 | 560 | 328 | 374 | 385 | 459 |

Concern about impacts of COVID-19 on children and young people

Q Thinking about the wider social and educational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people in Australia, which of these are most concerning to you?

Families not being able to afford school essentials or activities for children (e.g. uniforms, books, school supplies, excursions, extracurricular sports or music)



Children struggling at school or disengaging from their learning due to financial stress at home



Widening of literacy and numeracy gaps for children in low-income households who haven't been able to keep up with their learning during periods of home schooling



Children regularly changing schools due to unstable family situations or lack of affordable housing



Young people not having the digital resources they need (e.g. a computer or the internet) to access remote learning or study at home



■ Very concerned ■ Moderately concerned ■ Not that concerned ■ Not concerned at all

| | TOTAL: Concerned | TOTAL: Not concerned | Very concerned | Moderately concerned | Not that concerned | Not concerned at all |
|---|------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Families not being able to afford school essentials or activities for children (e.g. uniforms, books, school supplies, excursions, extracurricular sports or music) | 80% | 20% | 39% | 41% | 15% | 5% |
| Young people not having the digital resources they need (e.g. a computer or the internet) to access remote learning or study at home | 74% | 26% | 32% | 42% | 20% | 6% |
| Children struggling at school or disengaging from their learning due to financial stress at home | 80% | 20% | 40% | 40% | 15% | 5% |
| Widening of literacy and numeracy gaps for children in low-income households who haven't been able to keep up with their learning during periods of home schooling | 79% | 21% | 41% | 38% | 17% | 4% |
| Children regularly changing schools due to unstable family situations or lack of affordable housing | 79% | 21% | 34% | 44% | 16% | 5% |

About this poll

This report summarises the results of a fortnightly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted online from 16th to 20th June 2021 and is based on 1,087 respondents.

The weighting efficiency applied to the results is 94%, which gives an effective sample size of 1,017. The margin of error at this effective sample size is $\pm 3.1\%$ (95% confidence level).

The full methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of the report.

Note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a fortnightly online omnibus run by Essential Research with sample provided by Qualtrics from online panels.

The online omnibus is active from the Wednesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. The target population is all Australian residents aged 18+. Participants were invited to participate and completed the survey online without an interviewer present and incentives were offered for participation.

The response rate varies each week, but usually delivers 1000+ interviews. Quotas are applied to be representative of the target population by age, gender and location.

RIM weighting is applied to the data using information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The factors used in the weighting are age, gender, location and party ID.

Information for the weighting efficiency, effective sample size and margin of error for each poll (from June 2021) can be found here:
<https://essentialvision.com.au/about-this-poll>

All Essential Research staff hold Research Society membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour. This research is compliant with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards.