

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE AUSTRALIAN HR COMMUNITY

PULSE SURVEY RESULTS #3



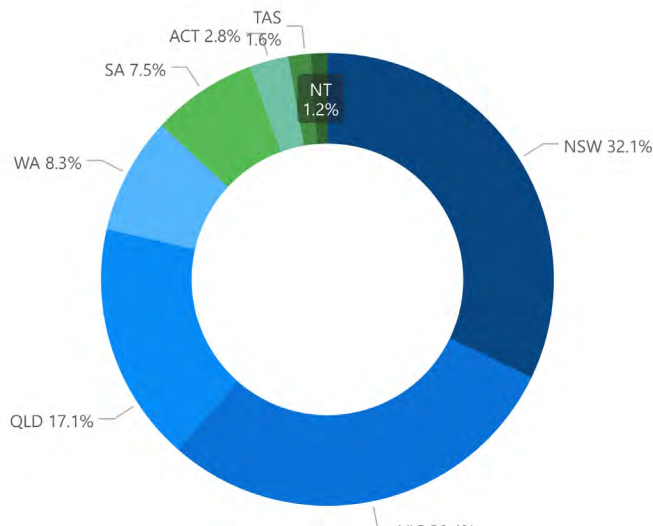
DEMOGRAPHICS

The Australian HR Institute surveyed 252 HR leaders between 5th and 12th of June 2020, on their ongoing experiences resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

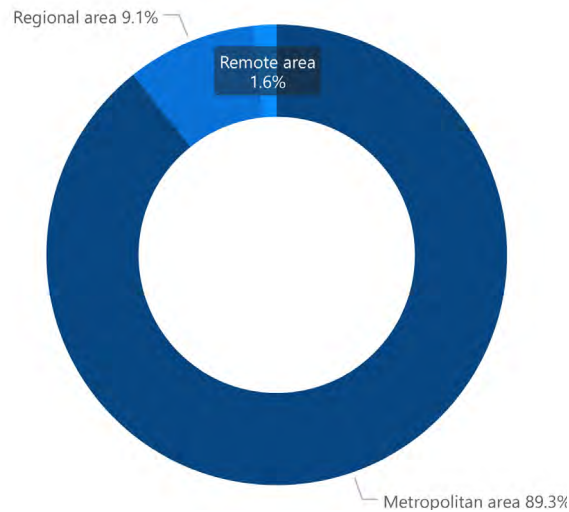
The majority of respondents reside in New South Wales (32.1%) and Victoria (29.4%), in a Metropolitan area (89.3%).

The large majority are HR practitioners (86.9%), while others are those in a non-HR role (6.7%), HR consultants (4.8%), or HR academics (1.6%).

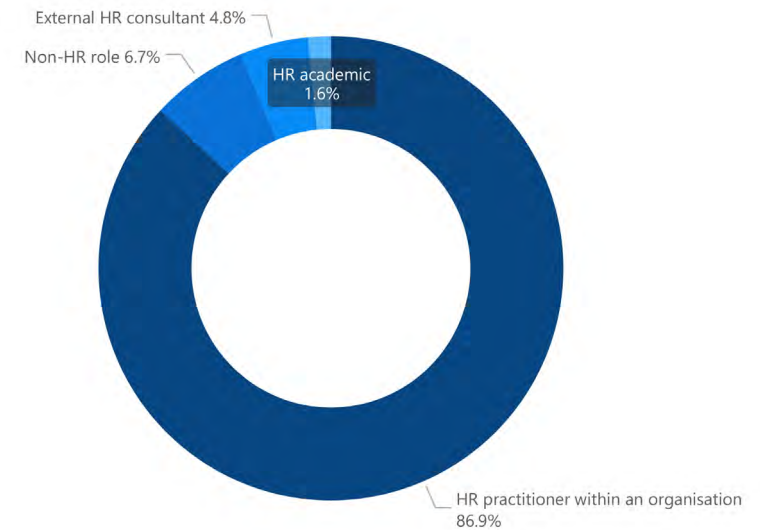
State/territory (N=252)



Location (N=252)



Job role (N=252)



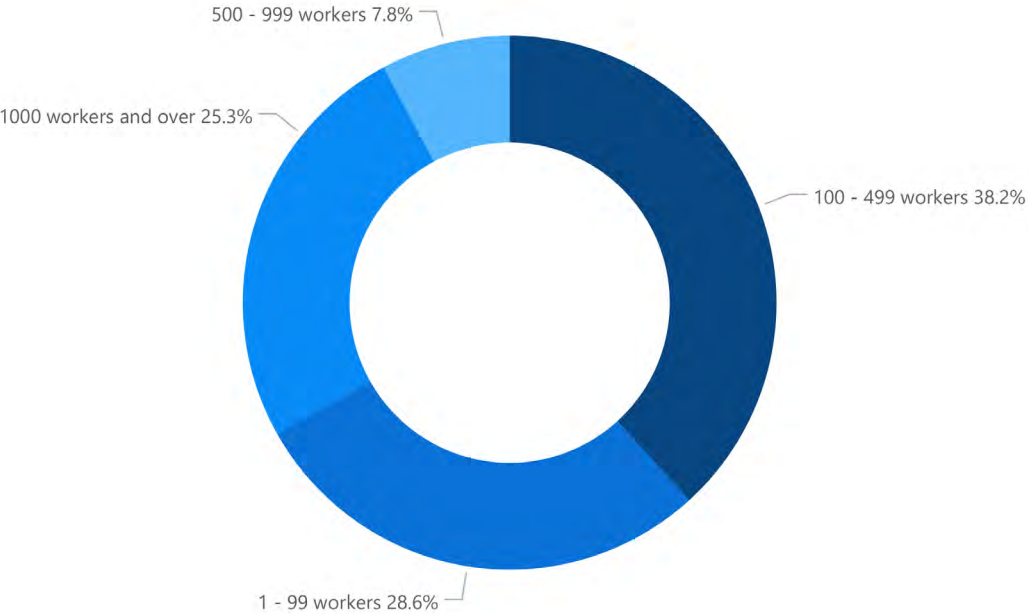
DEMOGRAPHICS

For the purposes of the survey, those who report themselves as external HR consultants (4.8%), HR academics (1.6%) or those in a non-HR role (6.7%) were filtered out of questions regarding their own organisation or job function.

The majority of respondents report either working in med-sized organisations (100-499 workers, 38.2%) or small organisations (1-99 workers, 28.6%).

Regarding job function, much of the sample (36.4%) are HR managers, with the next largest groups describing themselves as HR business partners (17.1%) or HR advisers (10.1%).

Organisation size (N=217)

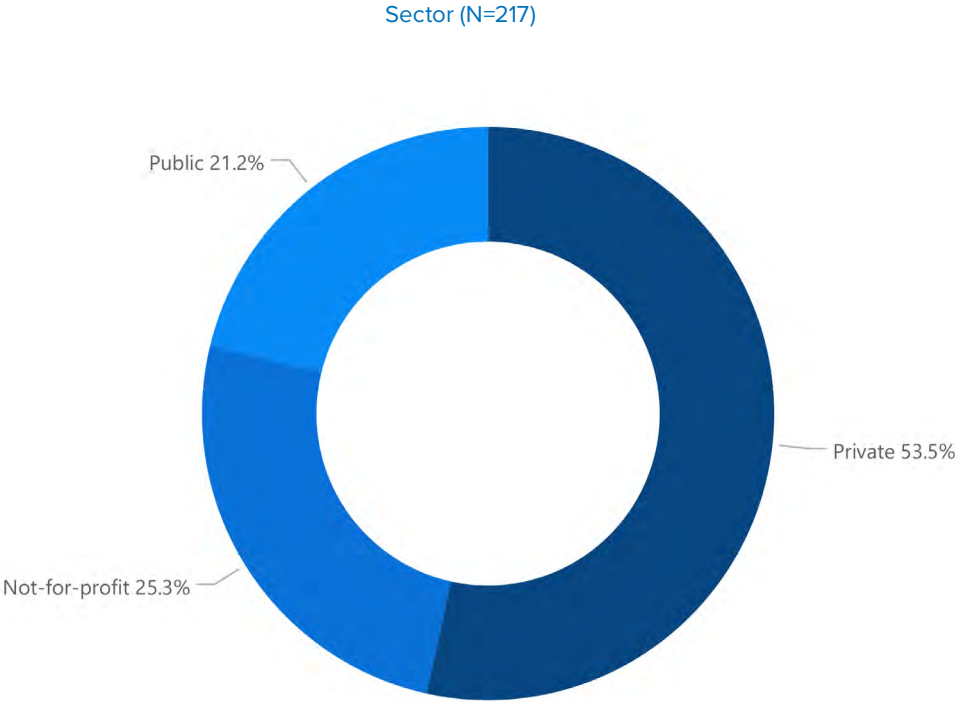


Job function (N=217)	%
HR Manager	36.4%
HR Business Partner	17.1%
HR Adviser	10.1%
HR Director (national focus)	10.1%
Senior Executive team	6.0%
HR Administrator	5.5%
HR Consultant	4.2%
HR Director (state focus)	3.2%
HR Director (global focus)	1.8%
Consultant	0.5%
Other (please specify)	5.1%

DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of respondent organisations are in the private sector (53.5%), and in the Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry (18.4%).

A further 12.9% report 'other' industries which includes community services, HR software, recruitment, technology, and architecture, among other industries.



Industry (N=217)	%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	18.4%
Financial and Insurance Services	12.0%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	12.0%
Education and Training	8.8%
Information Media and Telecommunications	5.1%
Public Administration and Safety	4.6%
Manufacturing	4.2%
Construction	3.2%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3.2%
Wholesale Trade	2.8%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	2.3%
Mining	2.3%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	2.3%
Administration and Support Services	1.4%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1.4%
Arts and Recreation Services	1.4%
Retail Trade	1.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	0.5%
Other services (please specify)	12.9%

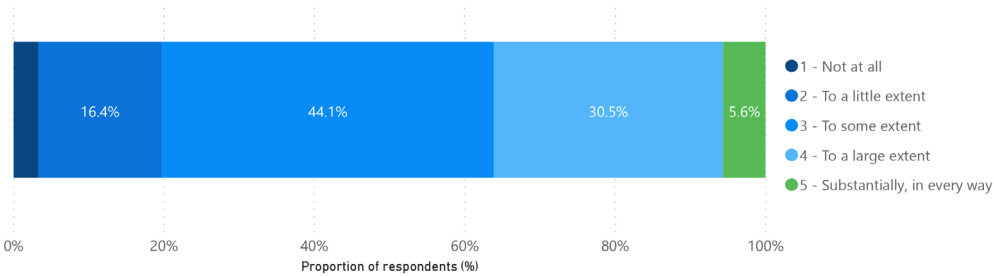
FUTURE OF WORK

Respondents were asked the level of impact that COVID-19 is having on their organisation's operations and strategy, specifically current and foreseen impact.

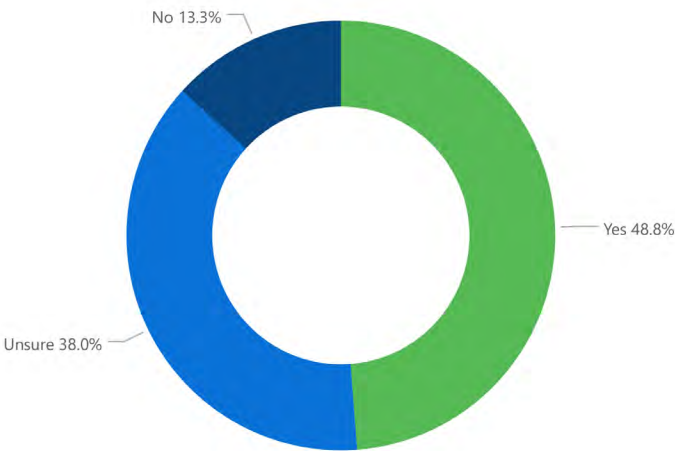
Over 4/5 of the sample (80.3%) believe their organisation has or will change its operation, delivery and/or strategy due to COVID-19.

Further, almost half of those that reported an impact (48.8% of N=166), said that this was likely to be a permanent change to their operating model.

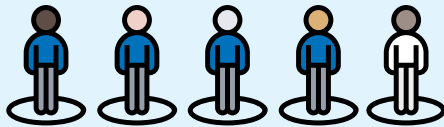
Extent of COVID-19 impact on respondent organisations' operations and strategy
(N=213)



Is this adjustment likely to be a permanent change to your operating model?
(N=166)

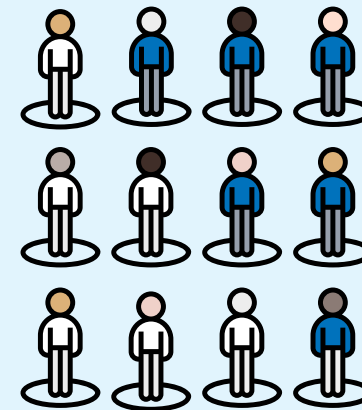


Future of Work



4 out of 5

Believe their organisation has,
or will change it's operations, delivery
and/or strategy due to COVID-19



48.8%

Reported this was likely to be
a permanent change to their
operating model.

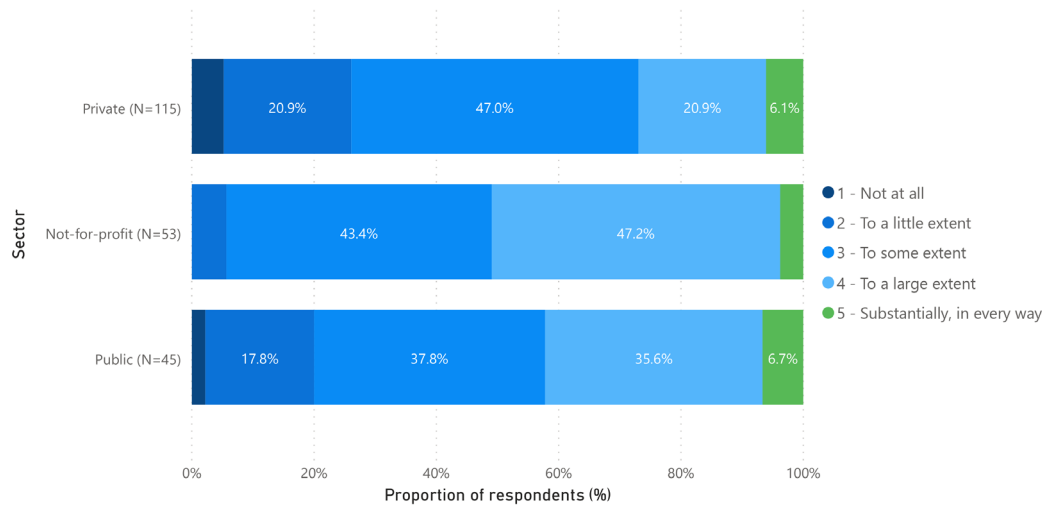
FUTURE OF WORK

The operation and strategy shift was less apparent in the private sector, as only 27.1% of private sector respondents reported a large impact, as opposed to 42.3% in the public sector and 51% in the not-for-profit sector.

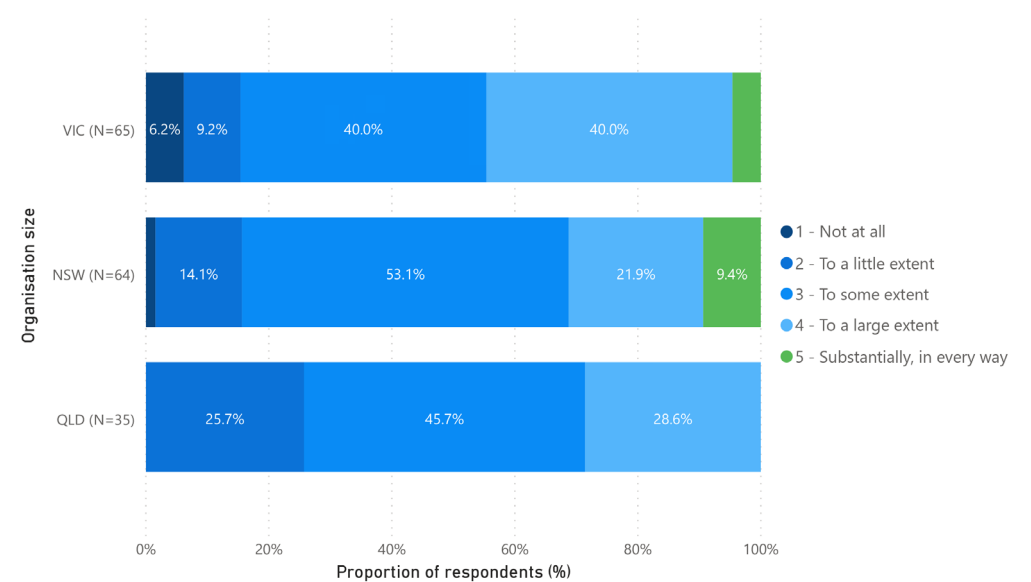
Further, the shift was more apparent in Victoria (44.6%) than in New South Wales (31.3%), or Queensland (28.6%).

Data for other states is not represented here due to low sample sizes.

Extent of COVID-19 impact on respondent organisations' operation and strategy by sector
(N=213)

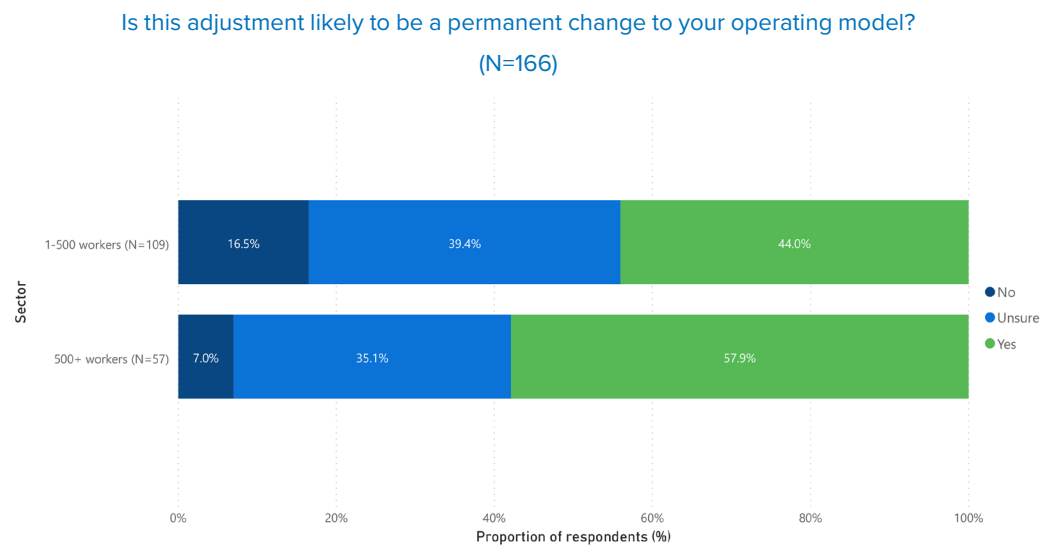
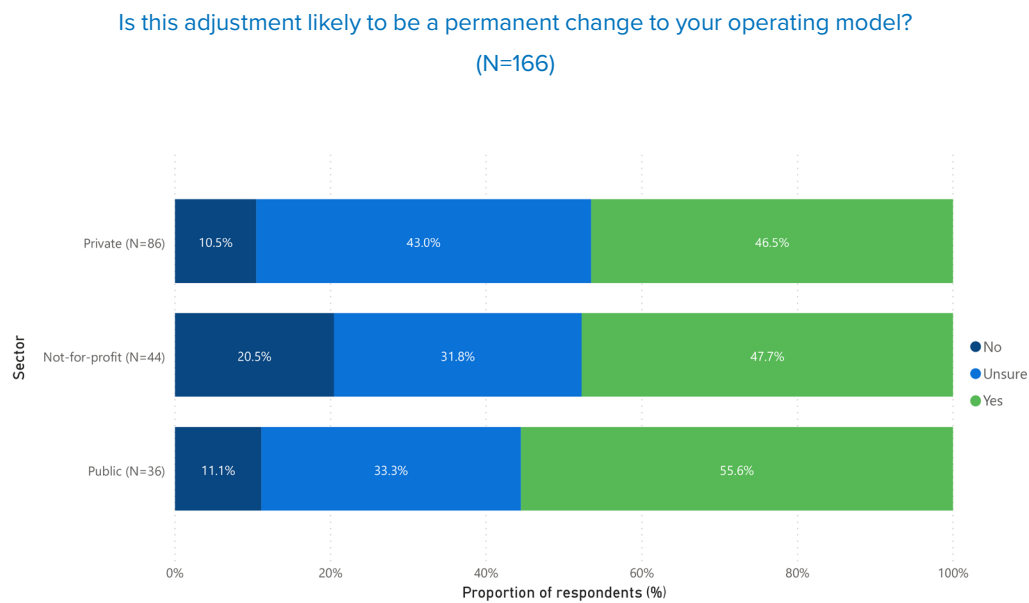


Extent of COVID-19 impact on respondent organisations' operation and strategy by state
(N=164)



FUTURE OF WORK

Respondents were more likely to suggest this would be a permanent shift in the public sector than in other sectors (55.6%, which is 7.9% more likely), as well as for larger organisations above 500 workers opposed to smaller organisations (57.9%, which is 13.9% more likely).



FUTURE OF WORK

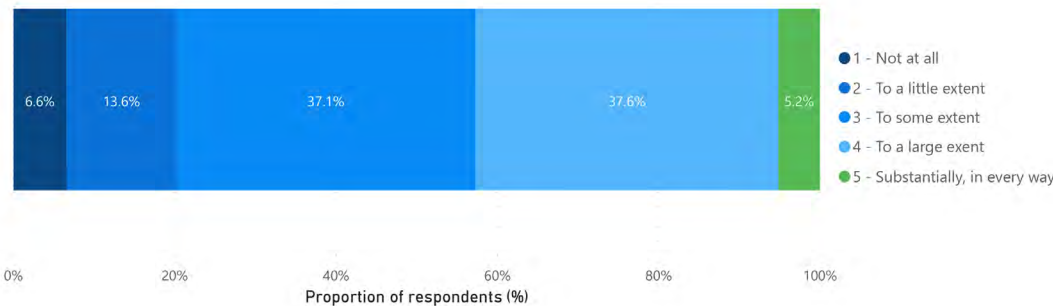
The majority of organisations are consulting with their employees on the future direction of the organisation (93.4%), however only 42.8% are consulting to at least a large extent.

The types of organisational changes implemented due to COVID-19 were varied in theme.

Themes included:

- Greater flexibility
- More digital and online services provided
- Virtual training
- Organisation restructuring
- Digitisation to focus on efficiencies

To what extent is your organisation consulting with employees on the future direction of the organisation?
(N=213)



“

“The type of support our clients were wanting from us during COVID actually opened our eyes and we realised that we actually don’t know our clients as well as we thought. Luckily we are in the process of developing our new 5 year strategic plan and didn’t get too deep in before researching what our clients actually need from us.”

“Reducing manual processes. Removing paper-based product/processes. Moving to electronic systems. Remote work for the first time in this industry.”

“Refreshed short term business goals, changes to policies to support customers experiencing hardship. Shift to greater flexibility / dispersion of workforce”

”

FUTURE OF WORK

Respondents indicated a number of skill areas that will need to be developed due to sustain their new operating models.

Themes included:

- Resilience
- Flexibility
- Digital skills & virtual capabilities
- Communication
- Agility

What skills and capabilities will be required of the workforce to sustain the new operating model?
(N=131)



FUTURE OF WORK

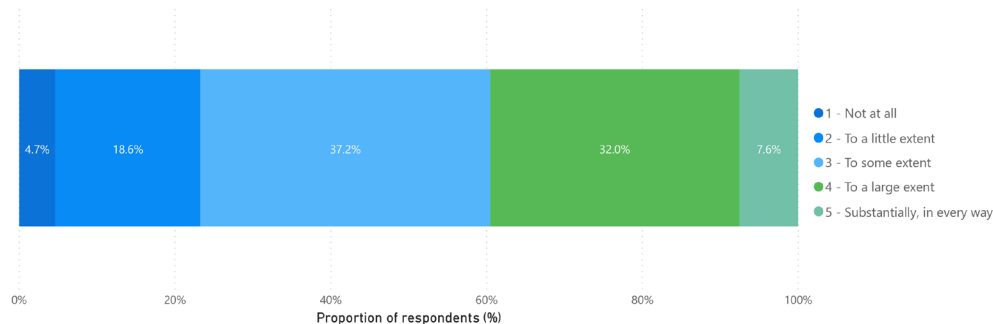
Respondents suggested they have been largely impacted by COVID-19 in terms of the type of work they are now undertaking, with 76.8% suggesting at least some impact, and 39.6% suggesting a large impact.

We asked what type of new work is being undertaken.

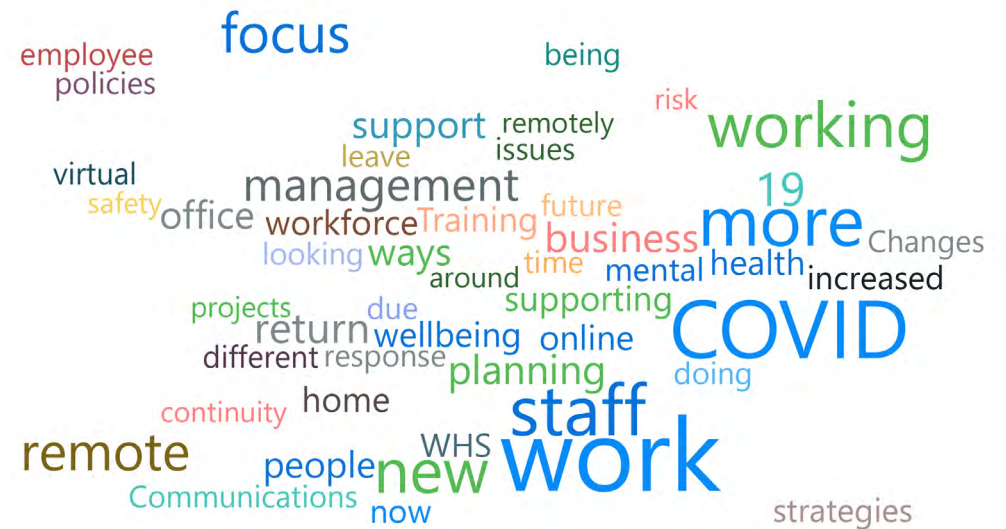
Themes included:

- Facilitating remote working
- Supporting employee wellbeing
- Change management
- Return to workplace planning
- Creating new policies
- More on workplace health and safety

To what extent have you and your colleagues been impacted by COVID-19 in terms of the type of work you are now undertaking? (N=172)



What new work are you and your team undertaking due to COVID-19? (N=148)

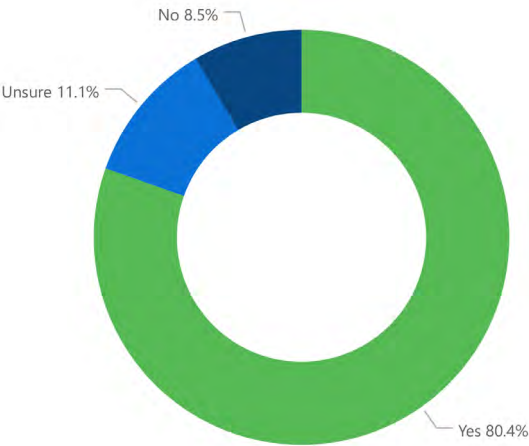


REMOTE WORKING PREFERENCES

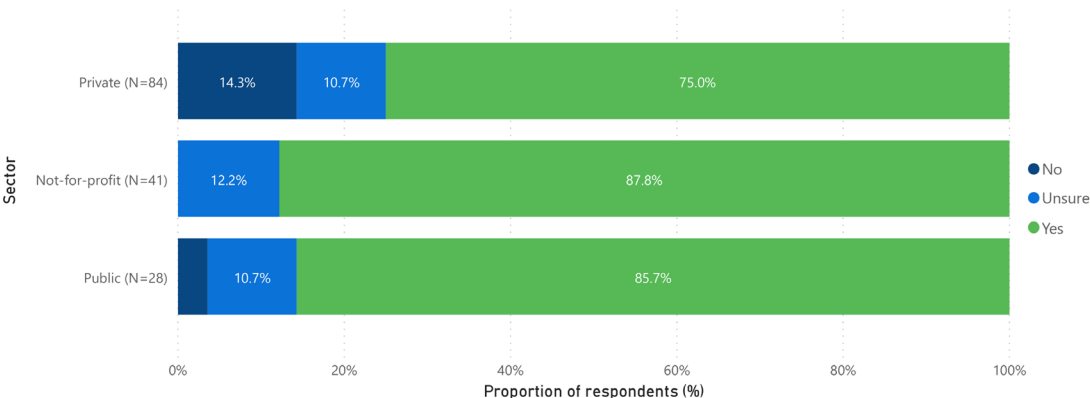
Over 4/5 respondents (80.4%) believe their organisation would allow more employees to work remotely, at least to some degree, due to COVID-19.

However, this view was not as apparent in the private sector, where it was at least 10.7% less likely than other sectors.

As a result of COVID-19, do you think your organisation will allow more employees to work remotely to some degree?
(N=153)



As a result of COVID-19, do you think your organisation will allow more employees to work remotely to some degree?
(N=153)



Remote Working Preferences



4 out of 5

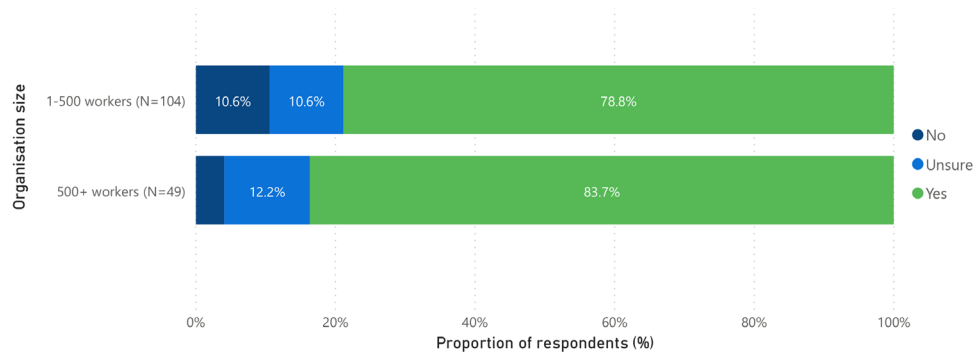
Believe their organisation would
allow more employees to work
remotely, at least to some degree.

REMOTE WORKING PREFERENCES

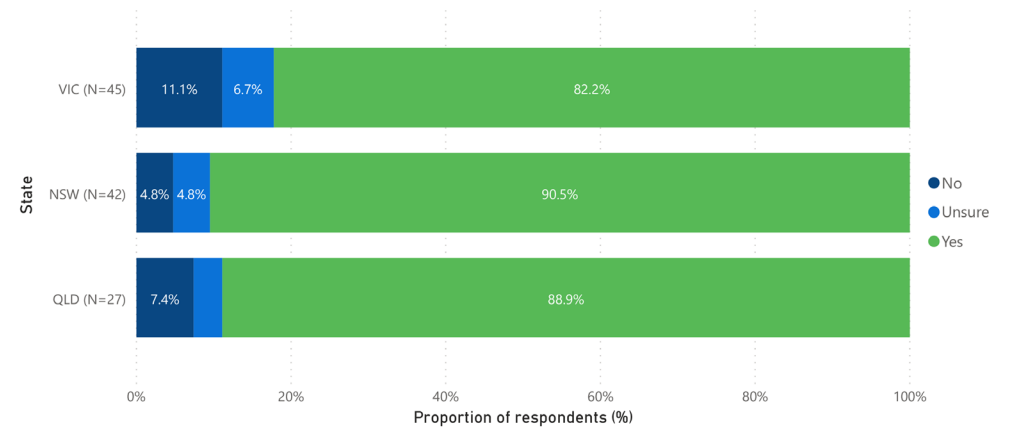
This view was favoured less by smaller organisations than larger (4.9% less likely) as well as those in Victoria, as opposed to New South Wales or Queensland (6.7% less likely).

Data for other states is not represented here due to low sample sizes.

As a result of COVID-19, do you think your organisation will allow more employees to work remotely to some degree?
(N=153)



As a result of COVID-19, do you think your organisation will allow more employees to work remotely to some degree?
(N=114)



REMOTE WORKING PREFERENCES

Respondents who said their organisation would be more likely to allow employees to work remotely due to COVID-19, were asked why that was the case.

Themes included:

- Proven efficiency and productivity
- Technology in place
- Better work life balance
- Processes changing to enable this
- Employee demand
- Saved costs

Further, we asked respondents what the enablers and barriers of remote working in their organisation were. Interestingly, a lot of the enablers and barriers were identical.

Enablers included:

- Technology & digital capability
- Trust
- Communication
- Organisation culture
- Management support
- Consultation

Barriers included:

- Technology & digital capability
- Trust
- Communication
- Difficulty with collaboration
- Maintaining organisation culture
- Lack of management/c-suite support

“It has been clearly shown that there has not been a loss of productivity and it provides flexibility to our staff”

“It is shown it can work. We have all the tech installed to be connected from home. People have come to enjoy not commuting, having more time with family etc”

“People have shown they can be productive and continue to effectively serve clients while working remotely; people want a more blended model going forward; it is also an opportunity to save costs on premises and amenities”

What are the enablers of remote working in your organisation?



What are the barriers of remote working in your organisation?



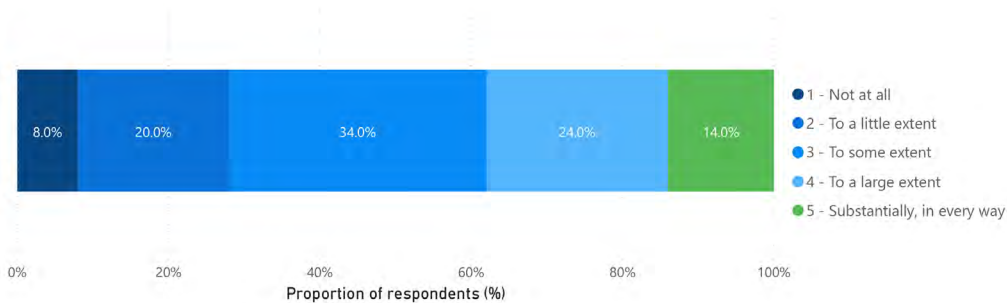
REMOTE WORKING PREFERENCES

Over 2/3 of respondents (68%) stated that remote working was at least somewhat being considered as part of their organisation's long-term real estate planning.

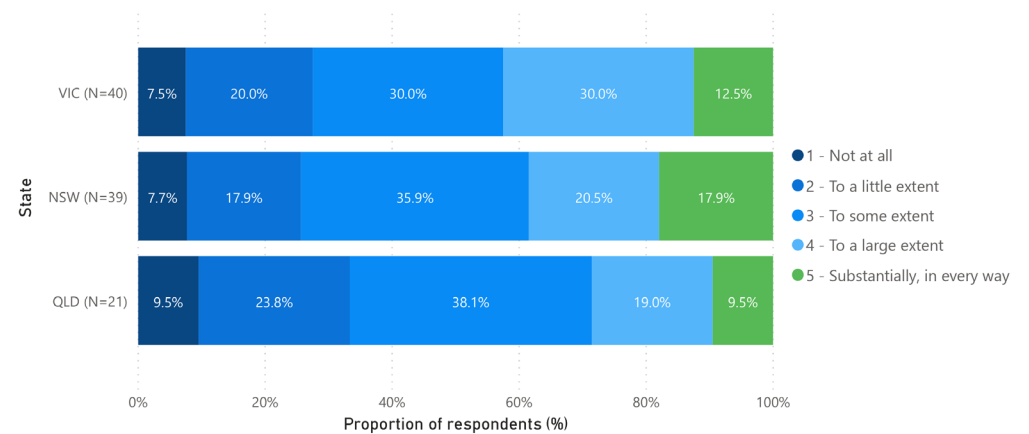
This view was less favoured in Queensland as opposed to Victoria or New South Wales (5.9% less likely).

Data for other states is not represented here due to low sample sizes.

To what extent is working from home being considered as part of your organisation's long term real estate planning?
(N=131)



To what extent is working from home being considered as part of your organisation's long term real estate planning?
(N=100)



Remote Working Preferences



68%

Of respondents stated that remote working was at least somewhat being considered as part of their organisation's long-term real estate planning.

RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

We asked respondents which roles in their organisation were involved in planning the return to the workplace. Largely, the CEO, HR team, business unit leaders and workplace health & safety team made up the majority of the planning groups.

Respondents suggested the following measures were being considered to accommodate the return to the workplace:

- Physical distancing, minimising human contact
- Office layout (e.g. 50% of desks, increasing desk space)
- Increased focus on hygiene and cleaning
- Changed start and finish times
- Staggered returns to the office
- Alternating days
- Continuation of online meetings where possible
- Increased signage
- Limiting capacity to certain areas (e.g. lifts, meeting rooms and kitchen areas)
- Temperature checks

What changes are you considering accommodating in the return to the workplace?
(e.g. the physical layout, systems and processes)



Roles involved in RTW planning (N=131)	%
CEO	86.3%
HR team	78.6%
Business unit leaders	61.1%
Workplace health & safety team/ reps	48.1%
CFO	32.8%
Head of facilities	31.3%
All employees	29.8%
Head of risk	26.0%
Head of IT	25.2%
General Counsel	22.1%
Company Board	20.6%
Marketing/comms	15.3%
Unsure	0.8%
Other (please specify)	18.3%

RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

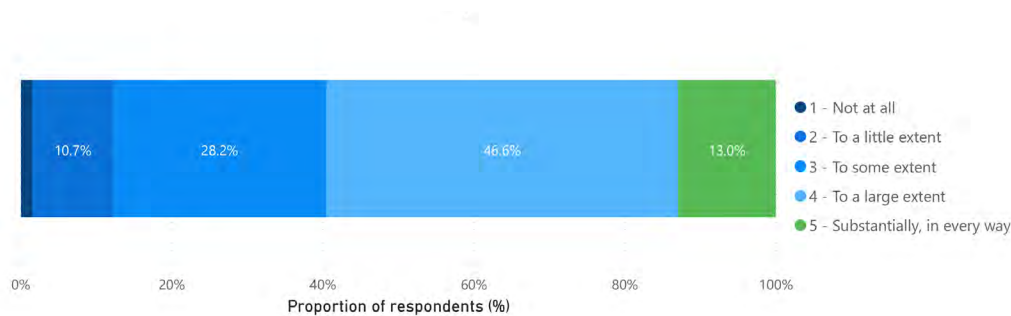
The majority of respondent organisations were consulting with their employees about the return to the workplace to a large extent (59.6%).

For those who were consulting at their organisation (N=129), we asked how comfortable they thought the employees at their organisation were in returning to the workplace.

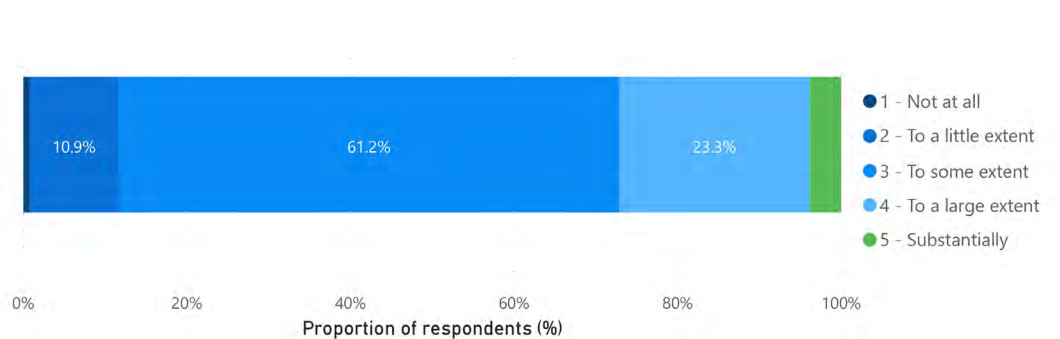
The majority stated employees were only somewhat comfortable (61.2%), and only 27.2% said they were comfortable to a large extent.

This is in alignment with our [May Pulse Report](#), where we found 47.2% were worried about their health and safety when returning to the workplace.

To what extent is your organisation consulting with employees about the return to the workplace
(N=131)



From your employee consultations, to what extent do employees feel comfortable returning to the workplace?
(N=129)

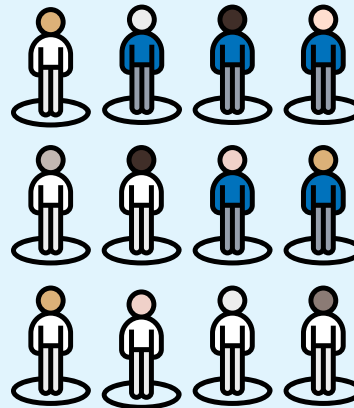


Return to the Workplace

Organisations found

61.2%

Of employees were only somewhat comfortable to return to the workplace.



While only

27.2%

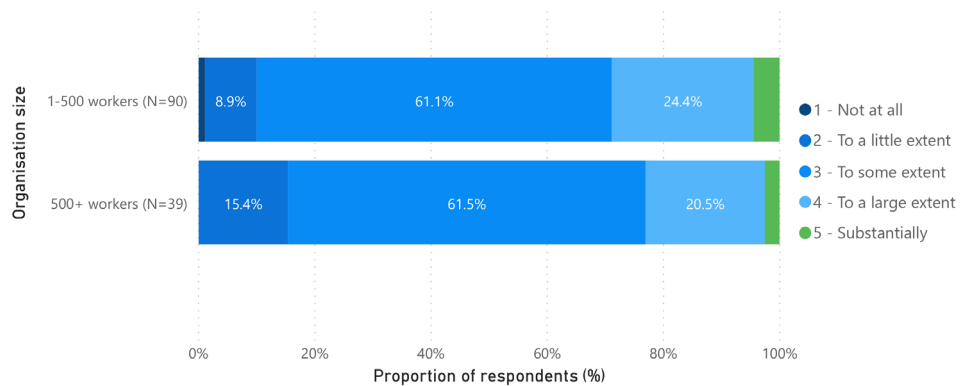
Said they were comfortable to a large extent to return.

RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

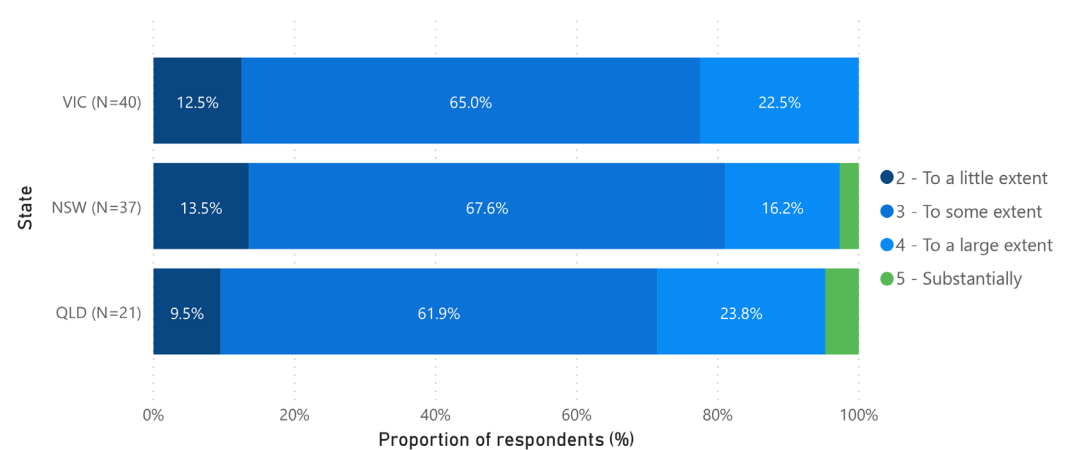
The hesitation to return to the workplace was slightly more prominent in larger organisations above 500 workers (5.8% difference).

Further, respondents in New South Wales and Victoria noted their employees were more hesitant than those respondents in Queensland (6% difference).

From your employee consultations, to what extent do employees feel comfortable returning to the workplace?
(N=129)



From your employee consultations, to what extent do employees feel comfortable returning to the workplace?
(N=98)





AUSTRALIAN HR INSTITUTE

Level 4, 575 Bourke Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

T +61 3 9918 9200
E enquiries@ahri.com.au

ahri.com.au/research

