

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE AUSTRALIAN HR COMMUNITY

PULSE SURVEY RESULTS #2



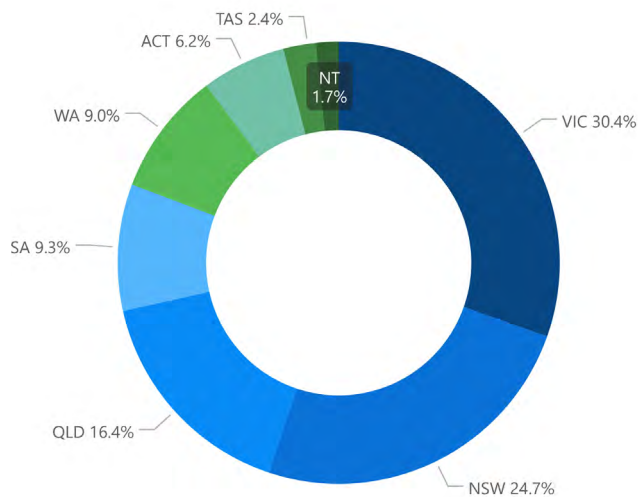
DEMOGRAPHICS

The Australian HR Institute surveyed 421 HR and business leaders between the 4th-11th of May 2020, on their ongoing experiences resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

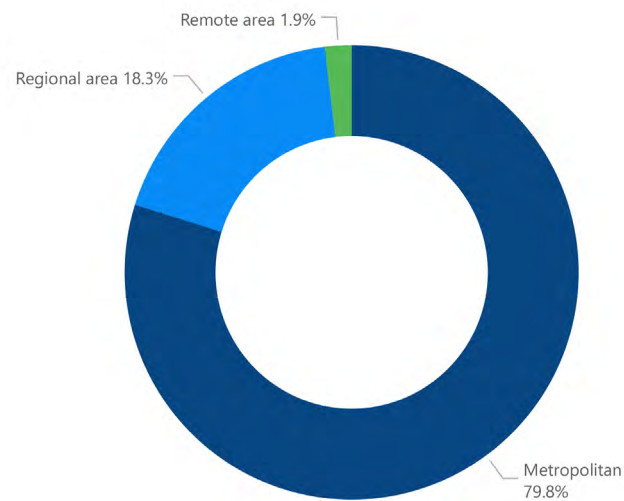
The majority of respondents reside in Victoria (30.4%) and New South Wales (24.7%), in a Metropolitan area (79.8%).

The greater part of the sample are HR practitioners (80.5%), while others are either external HR consultants (11.9%), HR academics (2.6%), or those in a non-HR role (5%).

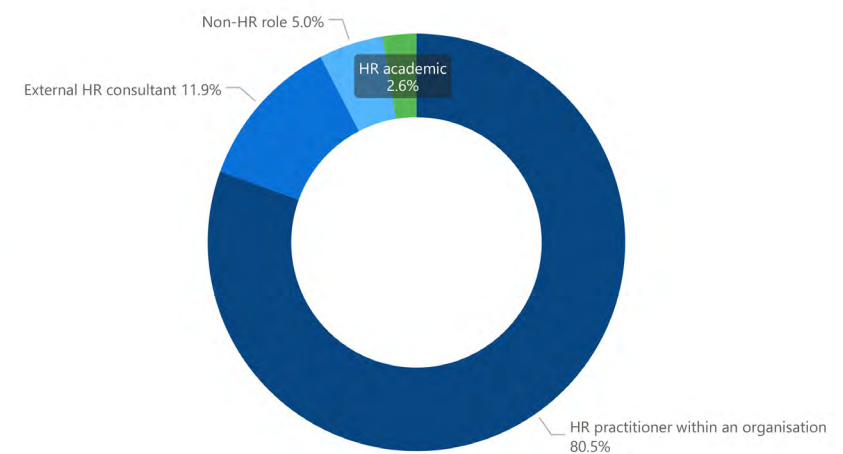
State/territory (N=421)



Location (N=421)



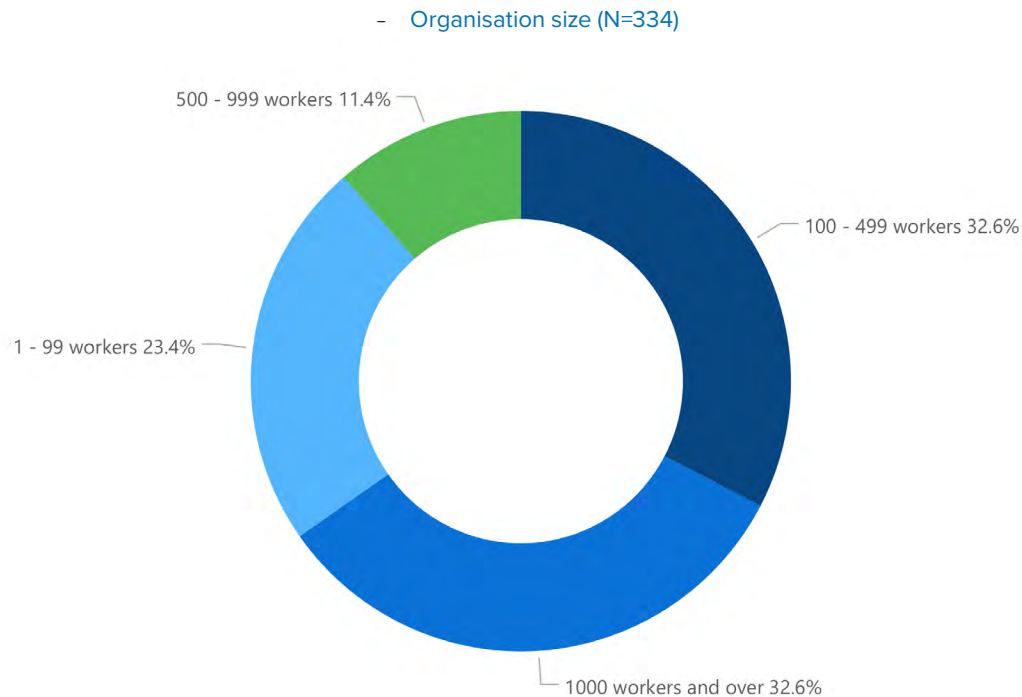
Job role (N=421)



DEMOGRAPHICS

For the purposes of the survey, those who report themselves as external HR consultants (11.9%), HR academics (2.6%) or those in a non-HR role (5%) were filtered out of questions regarding their own organisation or job function.

The majority of respondents report either working in medium size organisations (100-499 workers, 32.6%) or very large organisations (1000+ workers, 32.6%).



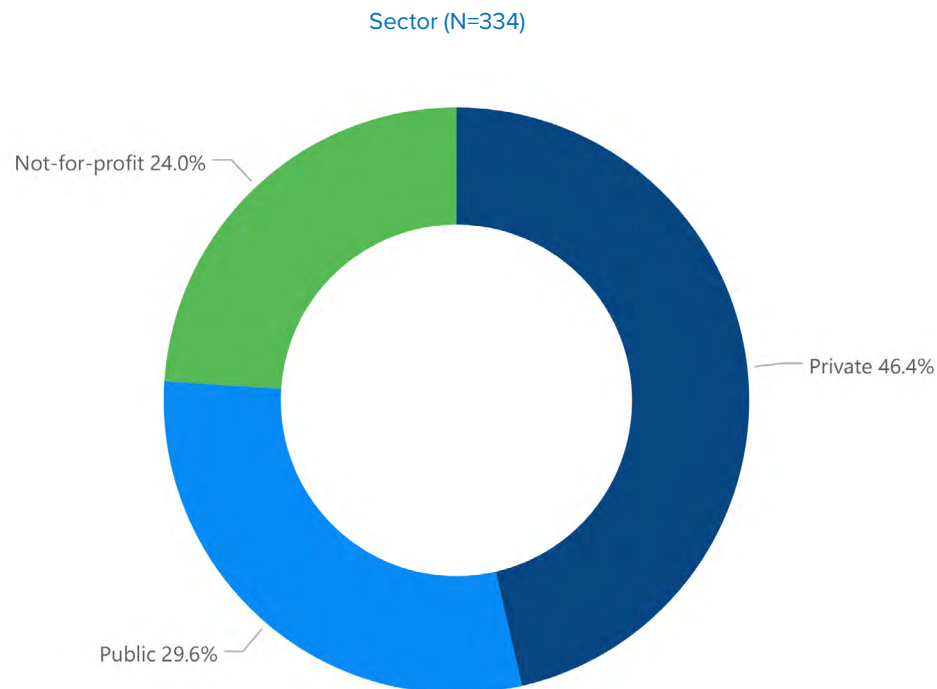
Regarding job function, the majority of the sample (33.2%) are HR managers, with the next largest groups being HR business partners (15.6%) or HR advisers (14.4%).

Job function (N=334)	%
HR Manager	33.2
HR Business Partner	15.6
HR Adviser	14.4
HR Director (national focus)	11.4
Senior Executive team	6.3
HR Administrator	3.9
HR Consultant	3.9
HR Director (state focus)	3.6
HR Director (global focus)	2.7
CEO	0.6
Consultant	0.3
Other (please specify)	4.2

DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of respondent organisations are in the private sector (46.4%), and in the Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry (17.4%).

A further 15.6% report 'other' industries which includes community services, medical research, recruitment, technology, and animal welfare, among other industries.

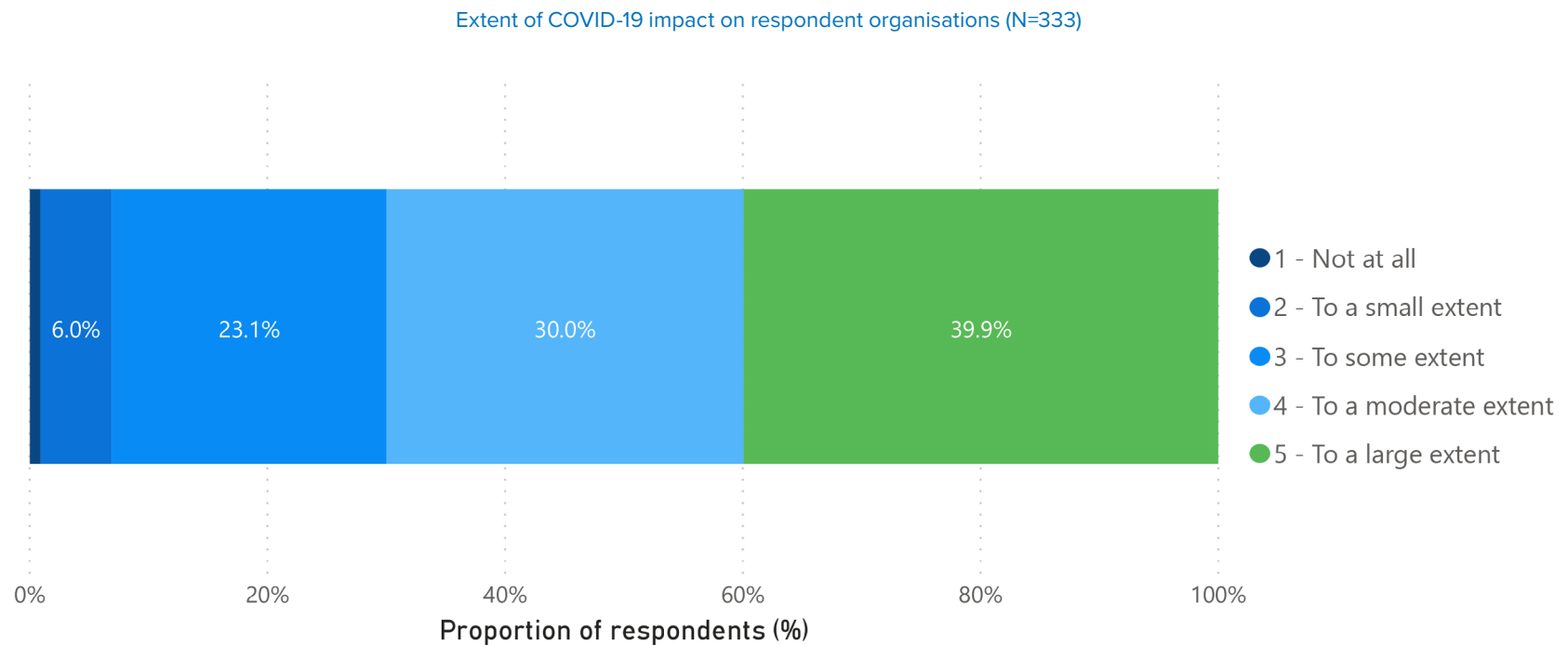


Industry (N=334)	%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	17.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	13.2
Education and Training	10.5
Public Administration and Safety	7.2
Financial and Insurance Services	6.0
Manufacturing	6.0
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	4.2
Construction	3.6
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3.3
Information Media and Telecommunications	3.0
Accommodation and Food Services	2.7
Retail Trade	2.1
Wholesale Trade	1.8
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1.5
Administration and Support Services	0.6
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0.6
Arts and Recreation Services	0.6
Mining	0.3
Other services (please specify)	15.6

ONGOING IMPACT OF COVID-19

Respondents were asked the level of impact that COVID-19 is having on their organisation. We compared their results to our April COVID-19 pulse survey, which was conducted between March 30th and April 6th 2020.

A sizable majority of respondents are now reporting either a moderate or large impact of COVID-19 on their organisations (69.9%), however that has decreased slightly since April's figure (75.6%). A mere 0.9% report no impact, and 6.0% report a small impact.

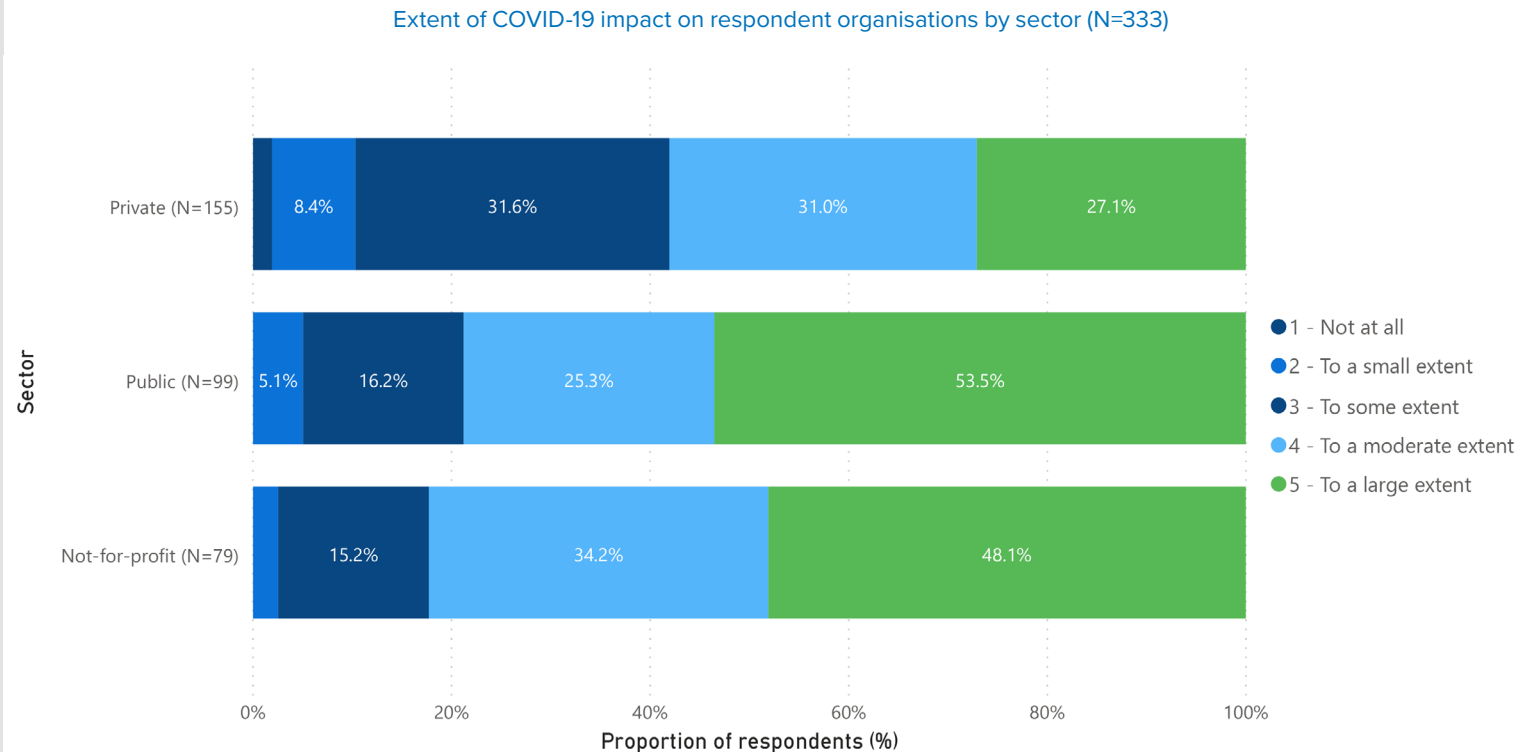


ONGOING IMPACT OF COVID-19

The level of impact of COVID-19 on respondents' organisations was broken down by sector.

The public and not-for-profit sectors report a larger impact of COVID-19 on their organisations than in the private sector, with 78.8% of public sector respondents and 82.3% of not-for-profit respondents reporting a moderate or large impact.

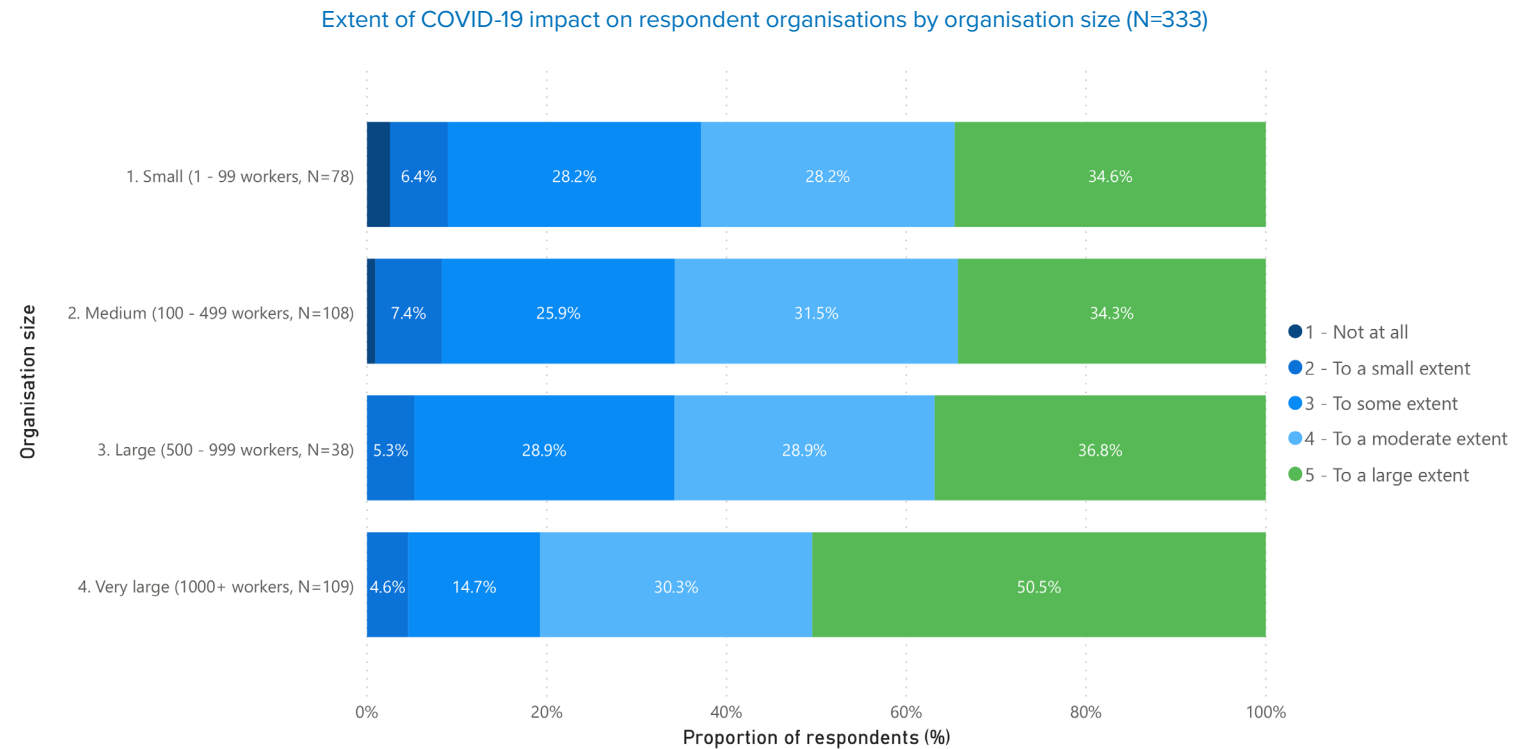
This contrasts with 58.1% of private sector respondents reporting a moderate or large impact of COVID-19.



ONGOING IMPACT OF COVID-19

The level of impact of COVID-19 on respondents' organisations was broken down by organisation size.

Respondents from very large organisations report the highest levels of impact, with a moderate or large impact of 80.8%, followed by medium (65.8%), large (65.7%), and small organisations (62.8%).

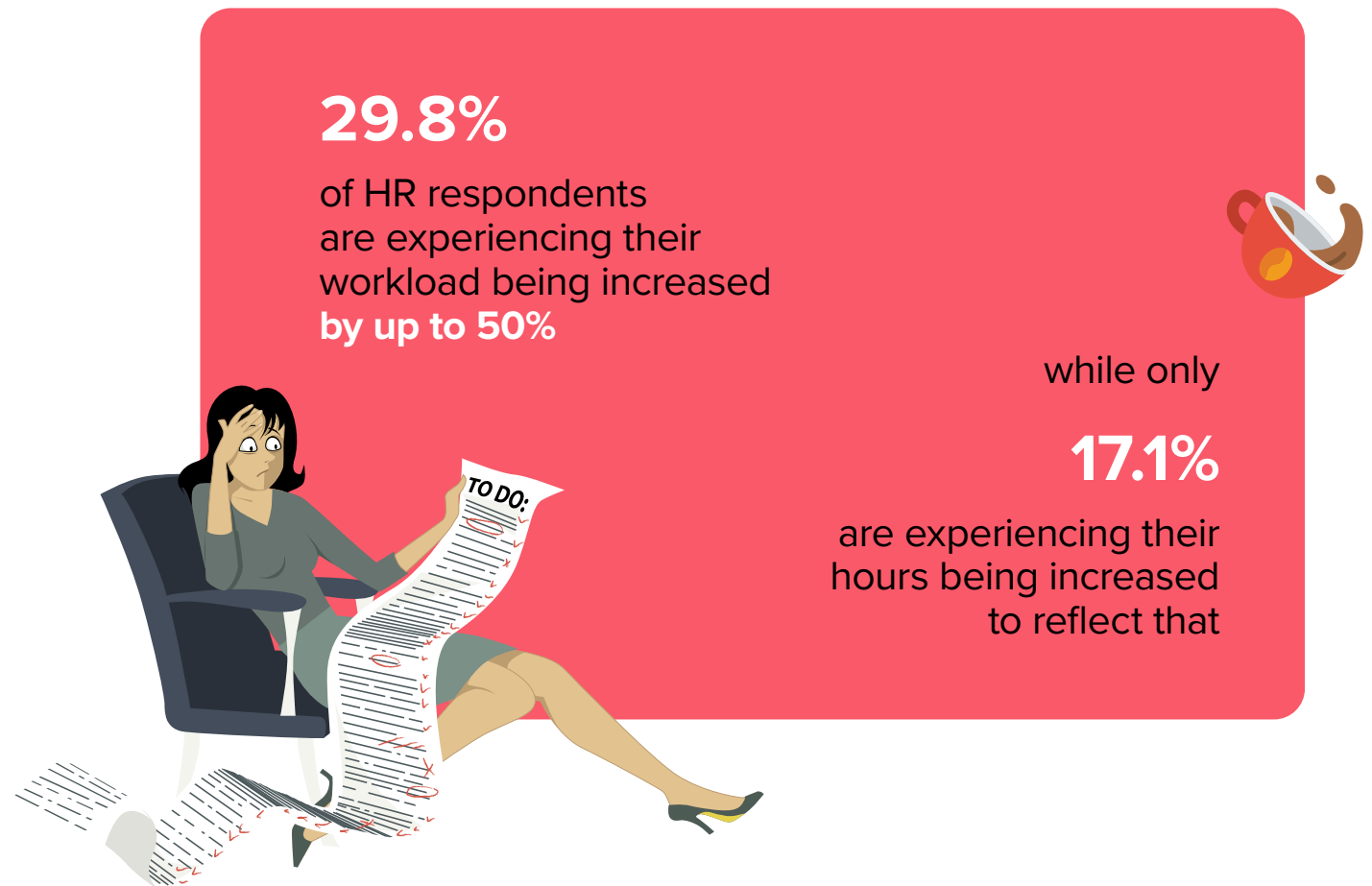


WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES

The large majority of HR respondents now work from home (84.2%), as well as at least some employees in their teams (96.4%) and their organisations (95.1%).

Further, almost 1/3 of HR respondents (29.8%) are experiencing their workload being increased by up to 50%, while only 17.1% are experiencing their hours being increased to reflect that.

Many respondents reported at least some people in their organisation had been directed to take leave (35.5%), as well as some reported reduced hours by up to 50% (33.9%) or workload being decreased by up to 50% (34.5%).



WORKING REMOTELY

240 HR practitioners were asked how they are finding working remotely.

A sentiment analysis of comments found the majority of respondents reported their organisations were undertaking a range of activities in response to the crisis. The top activity reported was remote work (94.1%), followed by redeploying employees (46.9%) and retraining employees (24.5%).

*“Have now settled into a routine and **enjoy not having the transit time** to/ from the office (or having to find a park). Can see I will **continue to work from home** on a more regular basis once business resumes from the office.”*

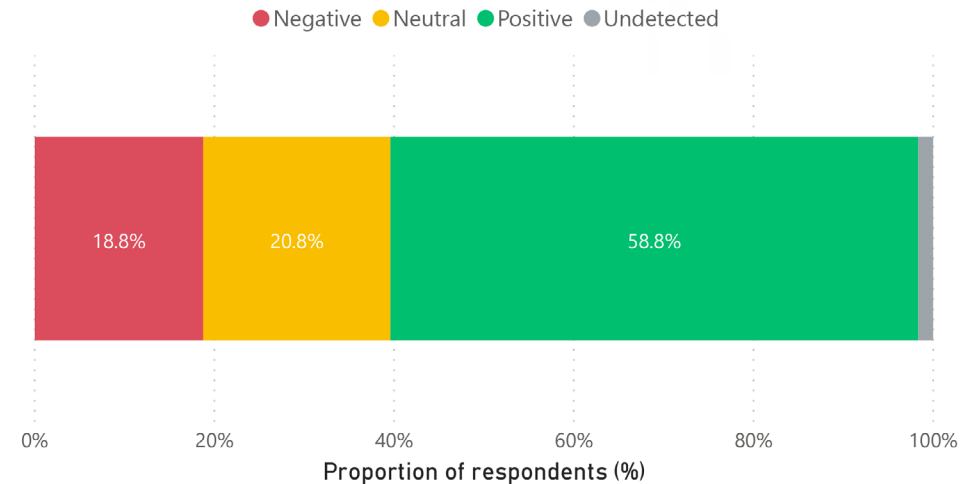
*“A real challenge, **a greater demand on my time** to connect with my team and others daily. Balancing home learning of our 3 kids with a senior role is difficult. **I tend to work longer hours** and across the weekend to compensate.”*

*“There are pros and cons. **Not having to commute and spending more time with the family** have been pluses. The **additional HR workload** combined with home schooling and ‘less hours’ has presented challenges.”*



Additional comments can be found on our [AHRI COVID-19 pulse survey comments dashboard](#).

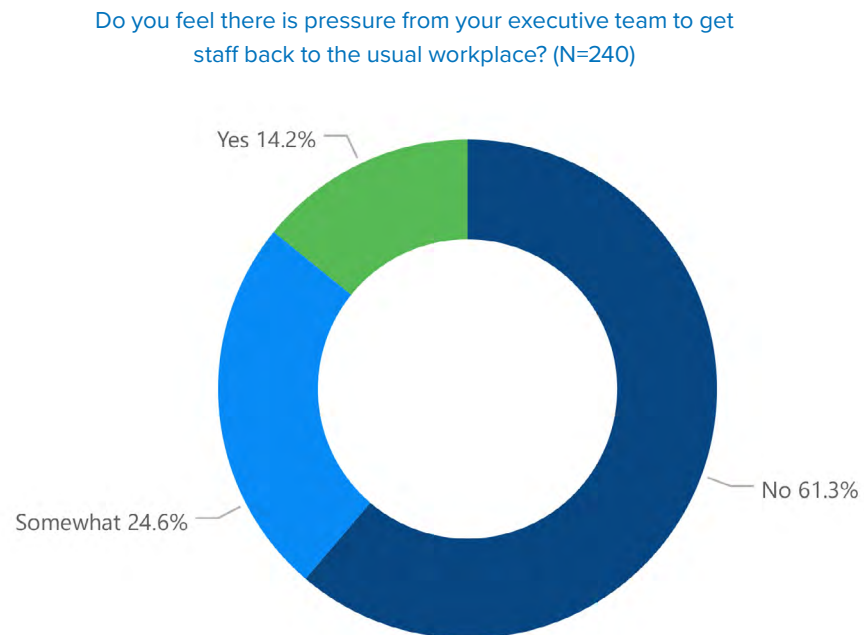
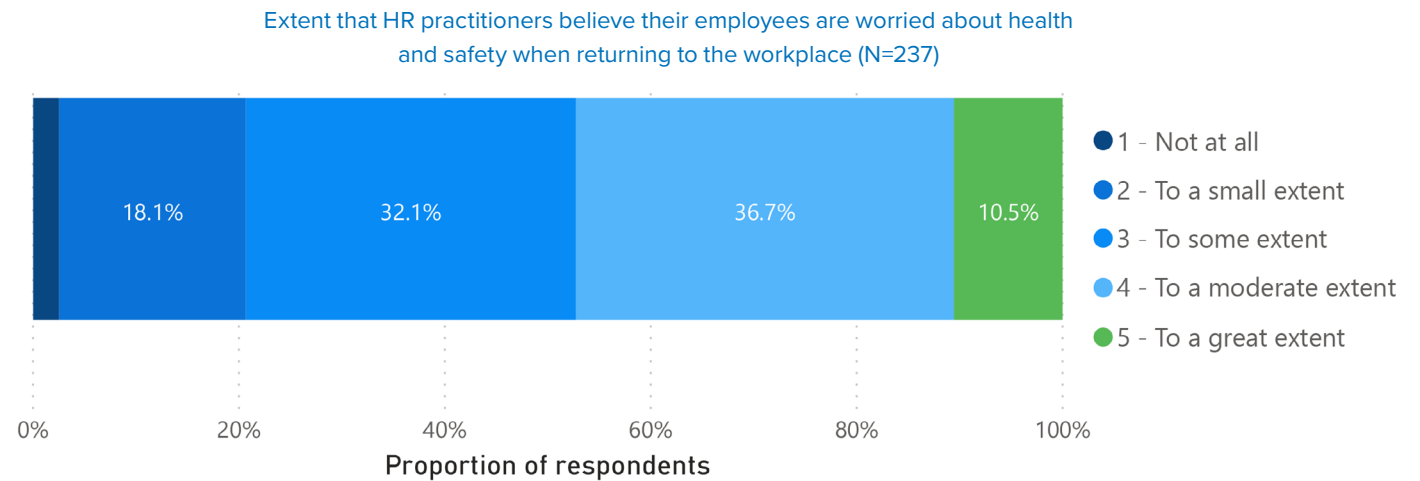
Working from home sentiment analysis (N=240)



RETURN TO WORK

Almost half of HR practitioners (47.2%) report their employees are worried about health and safety when returning to the workplace.

The majority of HR practitioners are not experiencing pressure from the executive team to get staff back into the office (61.8%).



THE TOP 5 ISSUES FOR HR IN THE COMING MONTHS ARE

**66.4%**Reintegrating staff
to the office**48.3%**Loss of
revenue**47.6%**Downturn
in business**42.5%**People continuing
to get sick**35.3%**Further government
restrictions

Additional issues reported include:

- Meeting health and safety standards
- Job security
- The economy in general
- Staff burnout
- Employee wellbeing
- Employee engagement



HR SKILLS AND METRICS

HR practitioners were asked what HR skills and competencies they thought it would take to navigate this crisis.

Themes from a sample of 292 comments include:

- Change management
- Strategic workforce planning
- Resilience
- Open and clear communication
- Flexibility

Further, HR practitioners were asked what metrics they were implementing due to COVID-19.

Themes from a sample of 223 comments include:

- Wellbeing
- Pulse surveys
- Remote work performance
- Health and safety tracking
- Return to work preferences



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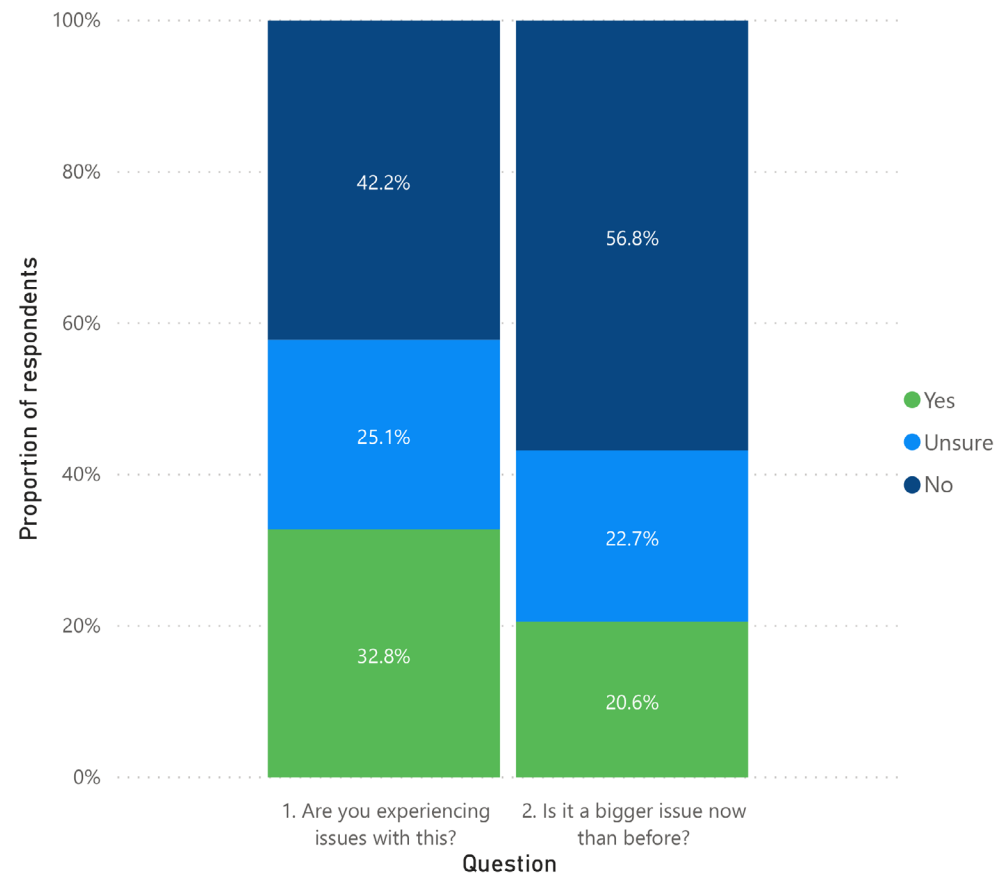
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

32.8% of HR practitioners are experiencing issues with performance management, however only 20.6% are finding it to be a bigger issue now than before COVID-19.

*“There is **an increase in enquiries from managers regarding employee behaviours**, loss of productivity and other employee management related matters requiring specialist HR advice or action”*

*“**Some are working harder** than others and also choosing which emails they will respond to in the timeframe set. Team cohesion and assumptions of what people are or aren’t doing are the main drivers behind this.”*

Impact of COVID-19 on performance management (N=287)



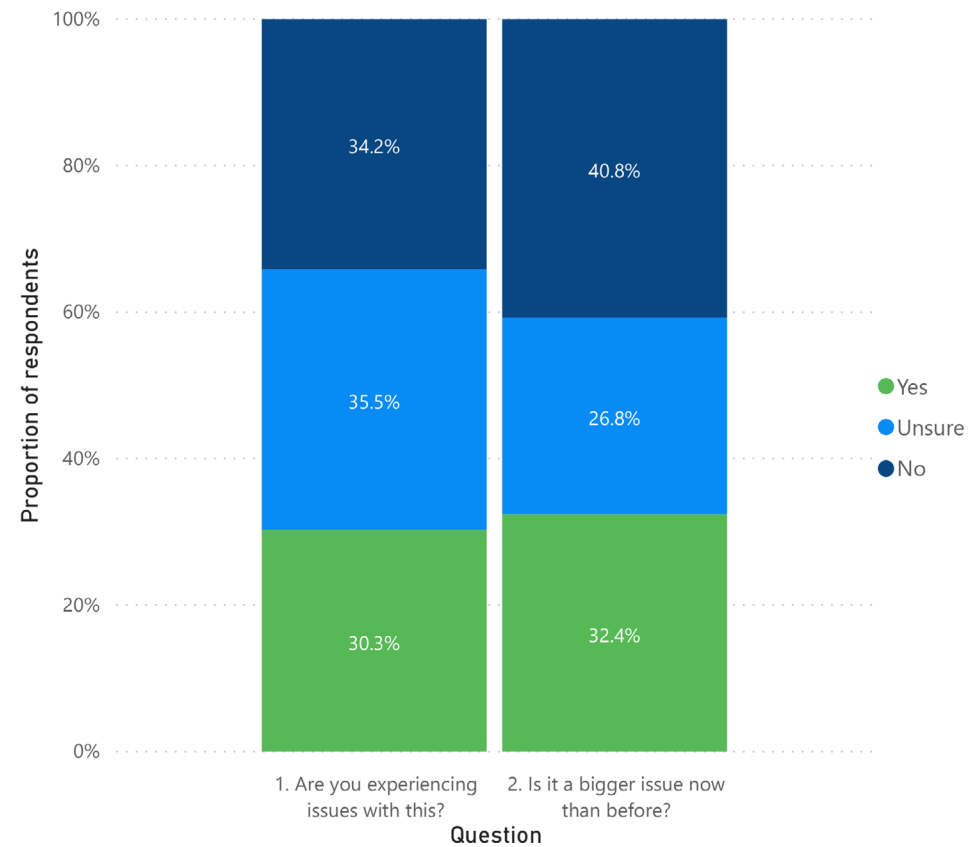
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

30.3% of HR practitioners are experiencing issues with employee engagement, and 32.4% are finding it to be a bigger issue now than before COVID-19.

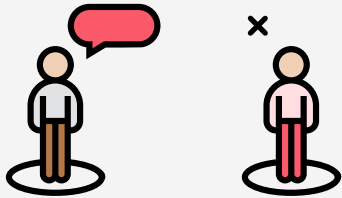
*“Internal survey found
50% of team are disengaged”*

“Introverts and those who wish to go under the radar are more able to when working remotely if they also report to someone who shares these attributes. Engagement metrics were not known before pandemic, so impossible to say how they are now affected.”

Impact of COVID-19 on employee engagement (N=287)

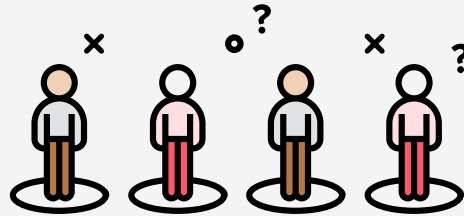


EMPLOYEE CONNECTEDNESS



41.8%

Of HR practitioners are experiencing issues with **employee connectedness**.



44.6%

Are finding this to be **a bigger issue now** than before COVID-19.

*“Some have openly discussed their surprise at their **need for social connection through work** - and the surprise factor for them, is that pre-COVID they would have said they didn’t need work to provide connectedness.”*

*“It’s about **finding a balance** of being connected and not encroaching in peoples personal space”*

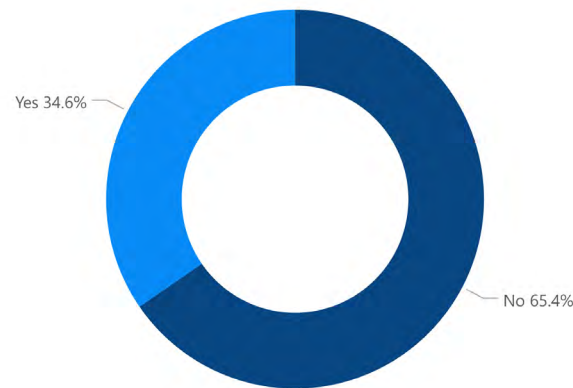
JOBKEEPER

HR practitioners were asked if their organisation had signed up for JobKeeper support. Over one third of respondents reported that they had (34.6%).

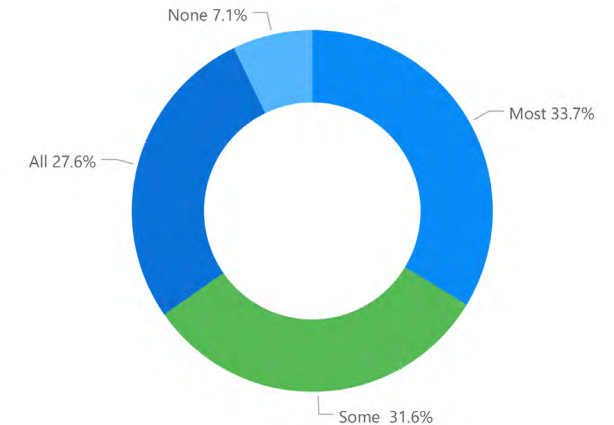
Of those whose organisation had signed up, the majority of employees at their organisation were expected to work normal hours (most – 33.7%, or all 27.6%).

Almost half of those respondents whose organisations had signed up reported that JobKeeper had been effective in retaining staff to a moderate or large extent (46.9%).

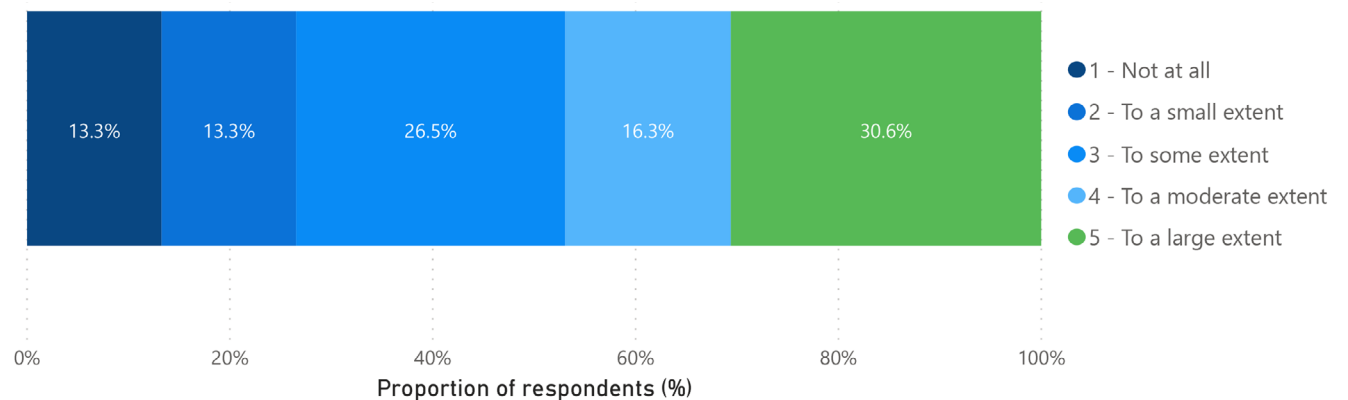
Has your organisation signed up for JobKeeper support? (N=286)



What proportion of those entitled to JobKeeper at your organisation will be expected to work normal hours? (N=98)



To what extent has JobKeeper been effective in retaining and engaging staff? (N=98)



JOBKEEPER

The 98 HR practitioners that stated their organisation was entitled to JobKeeper payments, provided comments about issues they see emerging with JobKeeper.

“We had to stand down some staff who we’d just employed after the 1 March cut of and they’re not entitled to JobKeeper. 1 had been a casual with us for almost but not quite a year. Very sad and frustrating.”

“It fails to cover our expatriates and new hires after 01 March 2020.”

“Yet to receive for employees due to requirement of loss of revenue. Not eligible until May. Only a solution until September but forecast business impacts are far outside of September. Disengaged employees wanting to sit at home for the funds rather than work.”

“Management want part time and casual to work up to the \$1500 wage subsidy”

“Just the payroll element of understanding the administrative and legal aspects of implementing”

“Casuals won’t want to work as many hours knowing they will still get paid and paid a lot more than preCovid19”

Are there any particular issues with JobKeeper that you are seeing emerging?

(N=98)



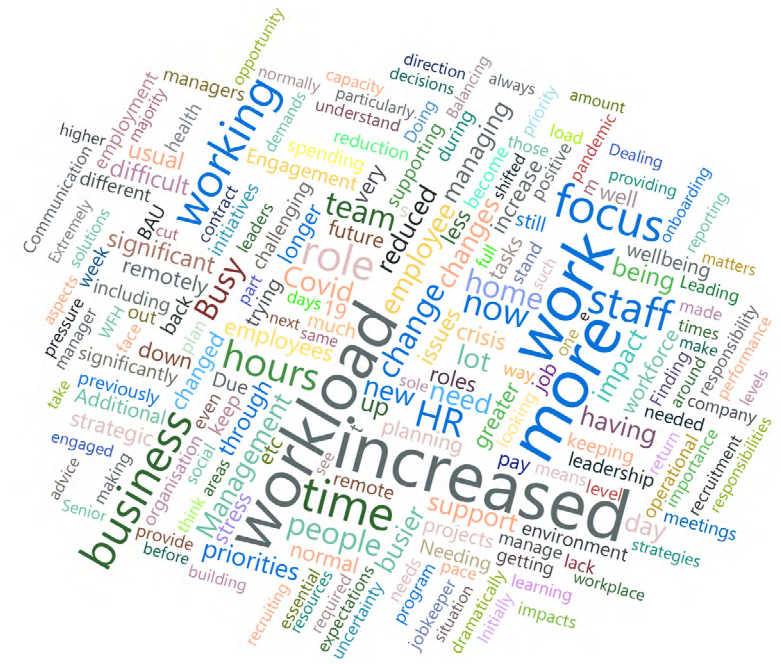
Additional comments can be found on our [AHRI COVID-19 pulse survey comments dashboard](#).

*"It has meant my 'day job' has almost moved to the side. Initially mobilising our workforce became a full time role in considering government restrictions, employee health and safety, client experience and business performance. **Now the focus is shifting on how and when to return our staff to the office and what the 'new normal' will look like for us.**"*

*“Significant increase in workload and hours - **shifted focus from the strategic plan to more crisis management, business continuity and fire fighting.**”*



What impact is the crisis having on your role? (N=273)



MANAGING COVID-19 SUCCESSFULLY

HR practitioners were asked what success looks like in managing the impact of COVID-19. Themes from a sample of 273 comments include:

- Employees engaged
- Employees supported
- Motivated employees
- Minimal impact on mental health
- Minimal impact on productivity

“Ensuring our employees (both stood down and still working) are connected, well looked after and feel valued. Ensure our values are still in place and used in all our communication with all our employees. Re-engaging our employees in a meaningful and welcoming way to ensure engagement with the business moving forward.”

“That managers in the business use this time to **step up and show leadership, support the business to be resilient and bounce back** from where we were/are in a better place - to be innovative, responsive to change, and work flexibly.”

“Healthy and safe workforce who are 100% productive and a business with a strong workload pipeline through to end of calendar year”

“Return to work with smooth transition & flexibility between working from home & in office, retention of talent & achieving organisational targets, and **maintaining employee engagement & performance**”

“Maintaining employee **trust, loyalty, engagement and work ethic.**”

What does success look like for you in managing the impact of COVID-19
(N=273)



Additional comments can be found on our [AHRI COVID-19 pulse survey comments dashboard](#).

IMPACT ON HR CONSULTANTS

External HR consultants were asked what the main issues they were working on with organisations to solve. Themes from a sample of 43 comments include:

- Employee wellbeing
- Employee engagement
- Remote work
- Workplace health and safety
- IR/ER

“Legalities around decreasing work hours, coupled with contract changes; JobKeeper Q&A; Managing employees who choose to do what they want - not following employer’s instructions on some challenging decisions, e.g. employee’s hours decrease to amount manageable under JobKeeper, so employee demands to stay home preferring to be stood down.”

“Crisis Management Planning; Working From Home Policy and Guidelines; Terminations/Stand down; JobKeeper”

“Transformation of workforce in corporations to reshape post COVID recovery and to fit workforce to improve future capability profile”

“IR/ER issues particularly around redundancy. Workforce planning options. JobKeeper queries.”

“The logistics of conducting business remotely.”

What are the main issues in relation to COVID-19 that you have been working with organisations to solve? (N=43)



Additional comments can be found on our [AHRI COVID-19 pulse survey comments dashboard](#).



Experiences due to COVID-19

