

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE AUSTRALIAN HR COMMUNITY

PULSE SURVEY RESULTS



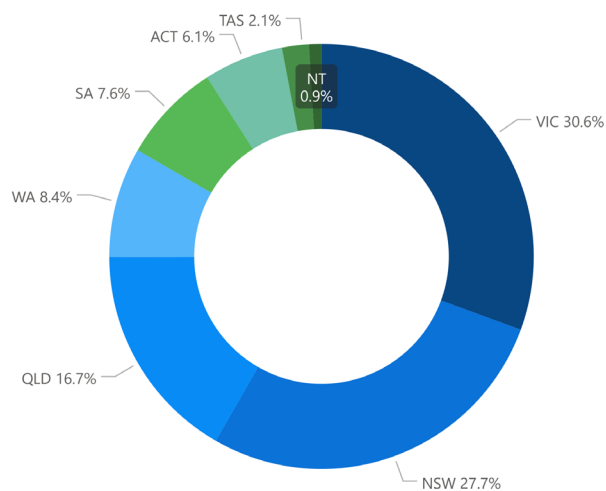
DEMOGRAPHICS

The Australian HR Institute surveyed 1170 HR and business leaders between March 30th and April 6th 2020, on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

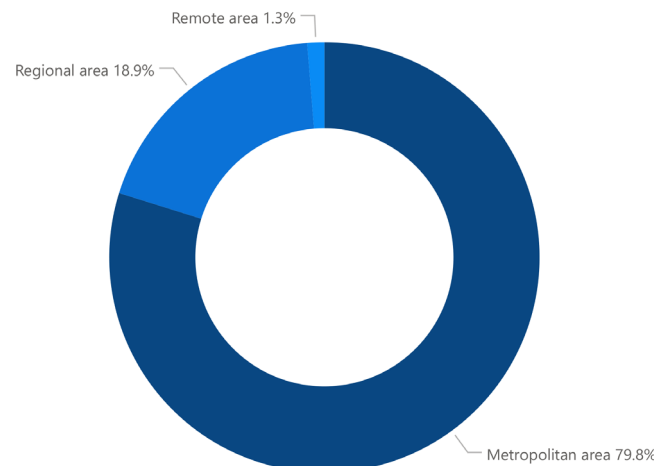
The majority of respondents resided in Victoria (30.6%) and New South Wales (27.7%), in a Metropolitan area (79.8%).

The greater part of the sample were HR practitioners (76.3%), however there were external HR consultants (12.3%), HR academics (1.5%), as well as those in a non-HR role (9.8%).

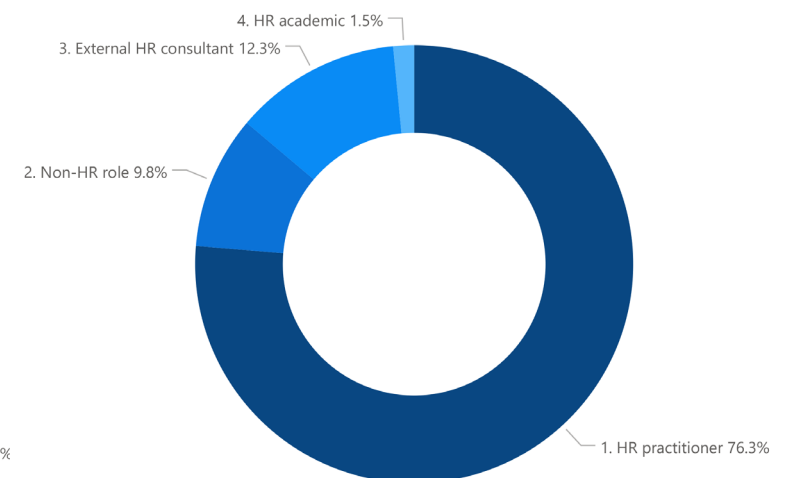
State/territory (N=1170)



Location (N=1170)



Job role (N=1170)



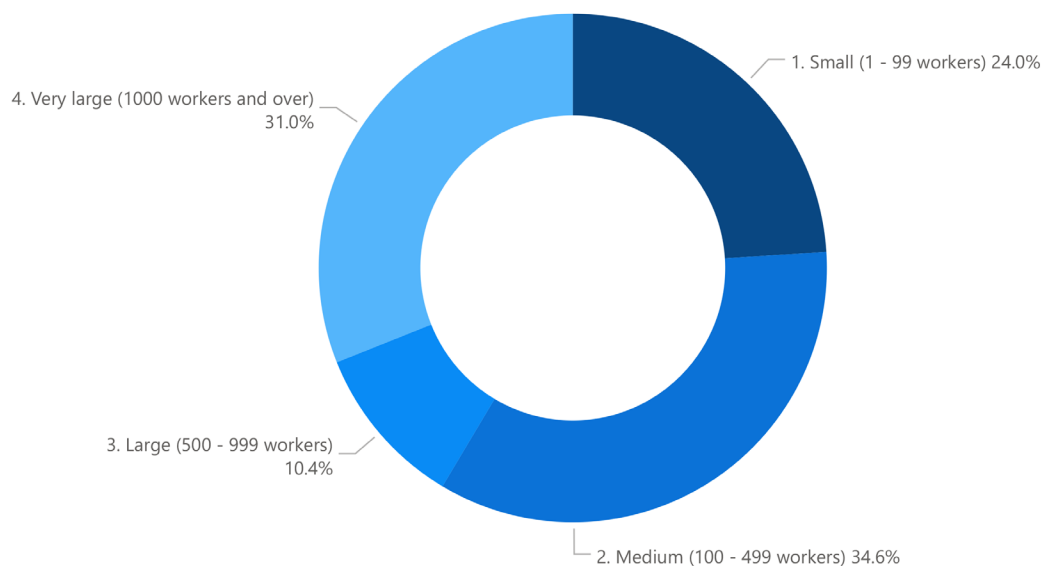
DEMOGRAPHICS

For the purposes of the survey, those who reported themselves as external HR consultants (12.3%), were filtered out of questions regarding their own organisation or job function.

The majority of respondents reported working for medium size organisations (100-499 workers, 34.6%).

When job function was broken down, 28.5% were HR managers, and a further 13.9% were HR advisers or HR business partners (13.1%).

Organisation size (N=992)



OTHER JOB FUNCTIONS INCLUDED

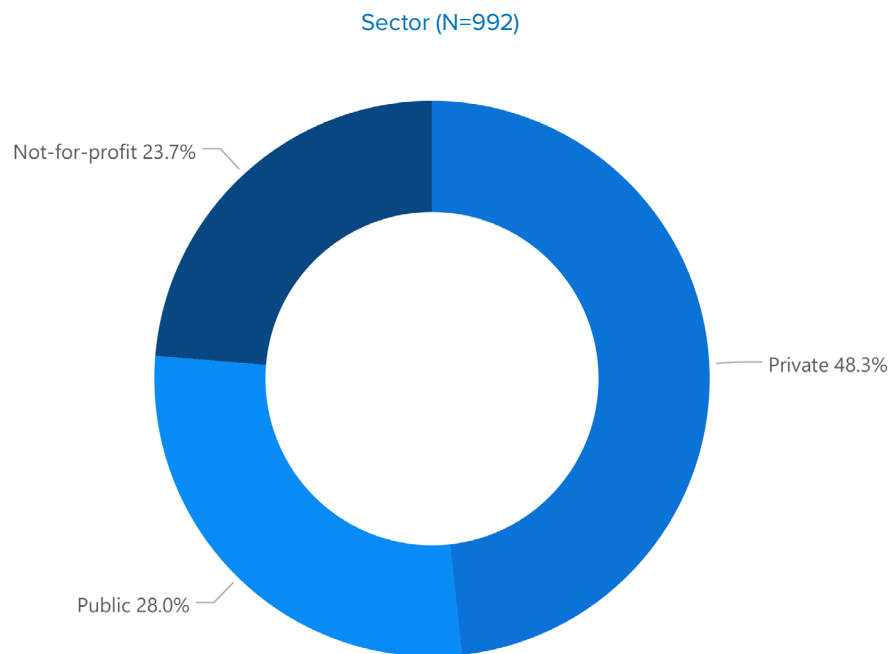
Data scientist	Finance manager
Sales	Wellbeing coordinator
ER/IR consultant	Change manager
Recruitment consultant	OD specialist

Job function (N=992)	%
HR Manager	28.5%
HR Adviser	13.9%
HR Business Partner	13.1%
HR Director (national focus)	9.0%
HR Administrator	5.4%
Senior Executive team	5.4%
HR Director (state focus)	3.7%
HR Consultant	3.4%
HR Director (global focus)	2.3%
Line Manager	1.7%
Academic	1.5%
Consultant	1.5%
CEO	0.9%
Contract/freelance	0.5%
Board Director	0.5%
Other (please specify)	8.5%

DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of respondents' organisations were in the private sector (48.3%), and in the Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry (15.2%).

A further 16.9% reported 'other' industries which included community services, clinical research, recruitment, technology, and industry associations, among other responses.



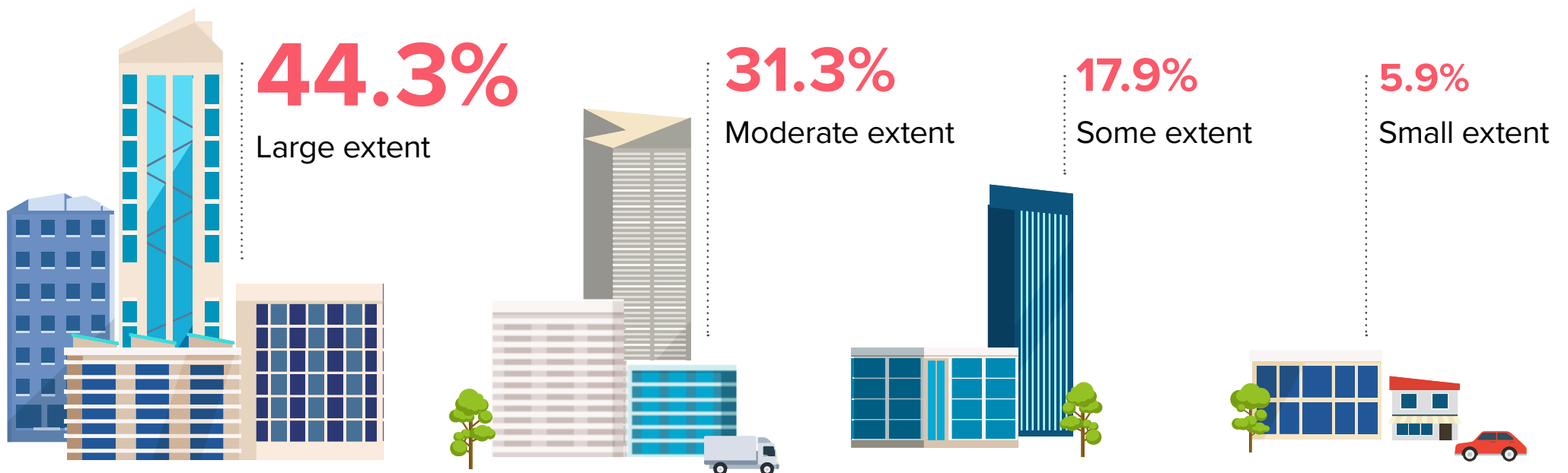
Industry (N=992)	%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	15.2%
Education and Training	13.1%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	9.4%
Financial and Insurance Services	8.0%
Public Administration and Safety	6.0%
Manufacturing	5.4%
Information Media and Telecommunications	4.5%
Construction	3.3%
Retail Trade	3.0%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	2.9%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2.2%
Mining	2.1%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	1.4%
Arts and Recreation Services	1.3%
Wholesale Trade	1.1%
Administration and Support Services	1.0%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1.0%
Other (please specify)	16.9%

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Respondents were asked the level of impact that COVID-19 was having on their organisation.

A sizable majority of respondents (75.6%) reported either a moderate or large impact of COVID-19 on their organisation. A mere 0.7% reported no impact, and 5.9% reported a small impact.

EXTENT OF COVID-19 IMPACT ON RESPONDENT ORGANISATIONS (N=854)



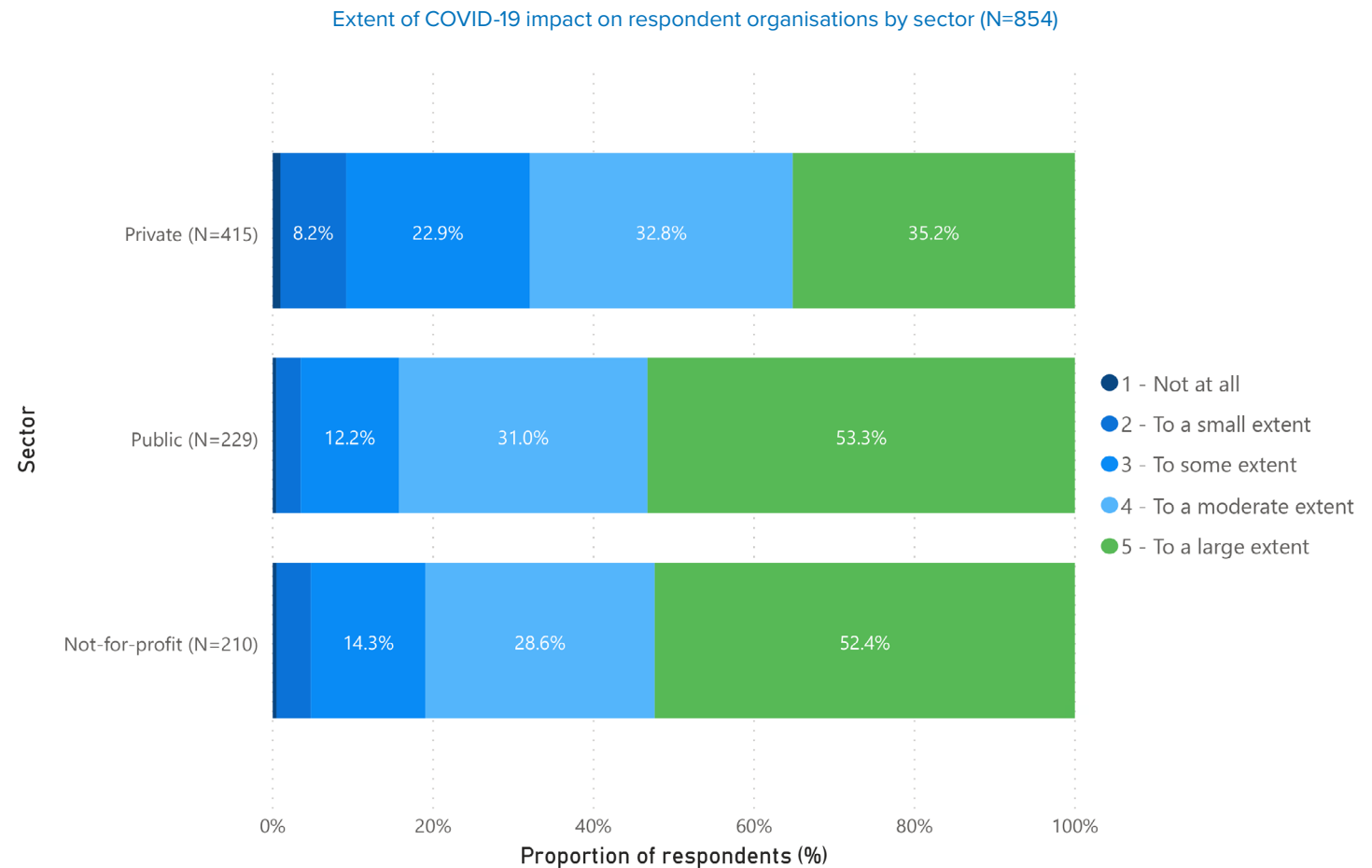
IMPACT OF COVID-19

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

The public and not-for-profit sectors reported a larger impact of COVID-19 on their organisations than the private sector, with 84.3% of public sector respondents and 81% of not-for-profit respondents reporting a moderate or large impact.

This contrasted with 68% of private sector respondents reporting a moderate or large impact of COVID-19.

The scope of this survey did not investigate the reasons for impact differences between sectors, but the Australian HR Institute will endeavour to investigate this further in future surveys.



IMPACT OF COVID-19

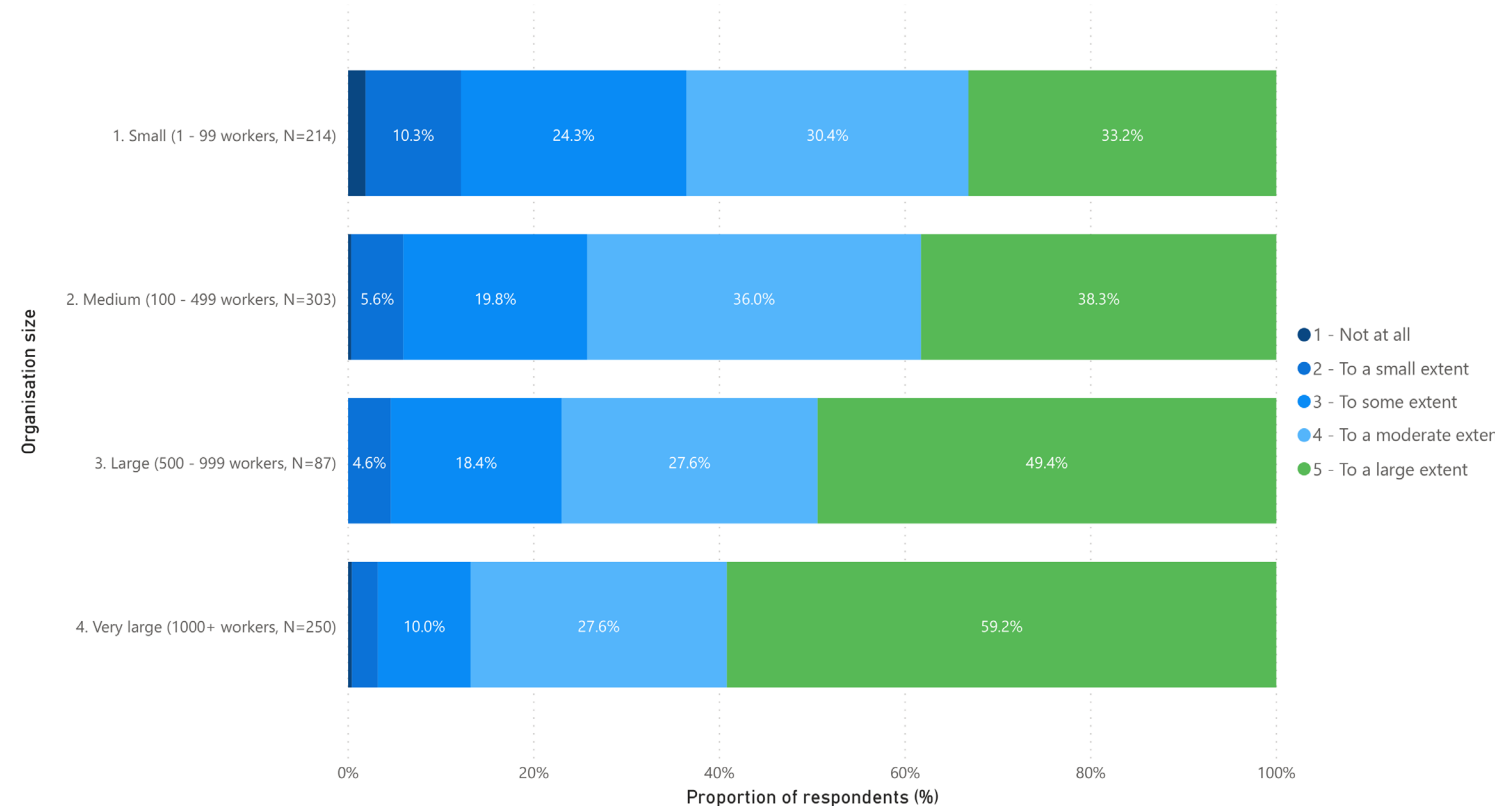
The level of impact of COVID-19 on respondents' organisations was broken down by organisation size.

The data illustrated a trend in relation to organisation size, whereby the larger the respondent's organisation, the more likely the respondent was to report a higher impact of COVID-19 on their organisation.

Respondents from very large organisations reported the highest levels of impact, with a moderate or large impact of 86.8%, followed by large (77%), medium (74.3%), and small organisations (63.6%).

The scope of this survey did not investigate the reasons for impact differences between organisation sizes, however the Australian HR Institute endeavour to investigate this further in future surveys.

Extent of COVID-19 impact on respondent organisations by organisation size (N=854)

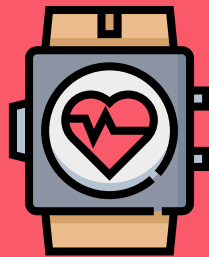


STRESS POINTS FOR HR

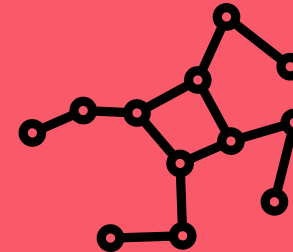
To investigate which areas organisations were seeing the impact of COVID-19, the survey asked respondents to rate a selection of potential stress points by the level to which they were being challenged by them.

Stress points for respondents were ranked from highest to lowest by weighted average.

TOP 5 STRESS POINTS



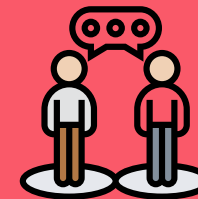
1.
The wellbeing
of the workforce



2.
Understanding shifting
business priorities



3.
Government and
legislative arrangements



4.
Managing effective
employee engagement



5.
Remote working

ORGANISATION PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Respondents were asked if their organisation was adequately prepared to respond to COVID-19, as well as what activities their organisation was undertaking in response to the crisis.

The majority of respondents thought their organisation was only 'somewhat' prepared to respond to COVID-19 (55.8%), with a small minority reporting they were prepared (19.5%), and a minority reporting they were not prepared (24.8%).

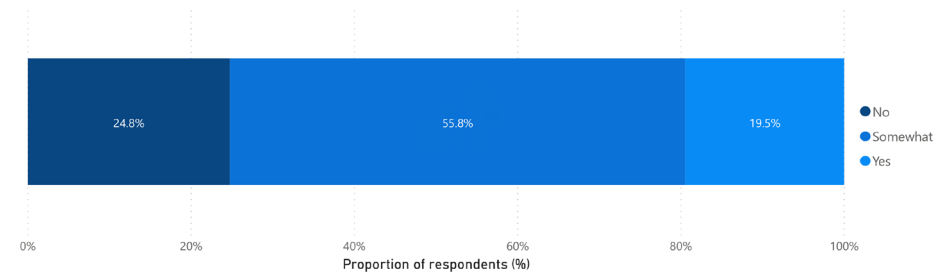
Respondents reported their organisations were undertaking a range of activities in response to the crisis. The top activity reported was remote work (94.1%), followed by redeploying employees (46.9%) and retraining employees (24.5%).

A smaller proportion reported their organisation was downsizing (21.7%), and only 1.4% stated their organisation was doing nothing in response to the crisis.

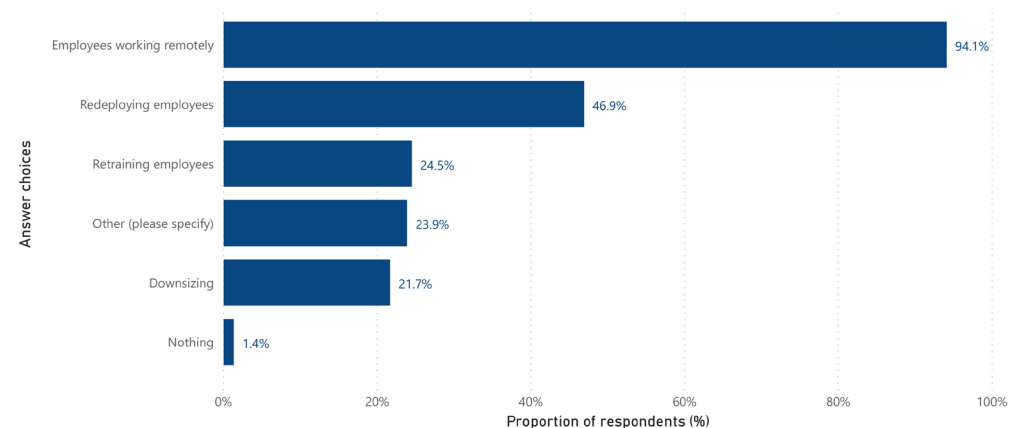
Other activities that respondents reported their organisations undertaking included:

- Reducing work hours
- Increasing leave access and flexibility
- Introducing policies and procedures to manage social distancing
- Recruiting short-term staff
- Recruitment freezes
- Wage cuts

Do you feel your organisation was adequately prepared to respond to this crisis? (N=812)



What activities is your organisation undertaking in response to the crisis? (N=812)



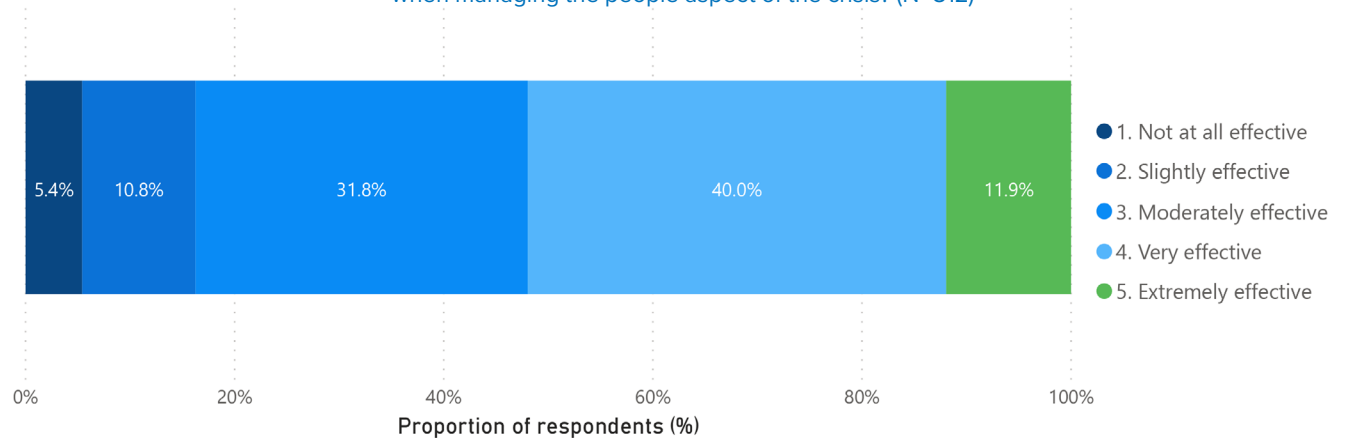
HR UTILISATION

Respondents were asked how effective their organisation has been in utilising the skills of the HR team when managing the people aspect of the crisis. They were also asked to provide additional comments about what the HR team was doing in response to COVID-19.

The majority of respondents (51.9%) held the opinion that their organisation had been either very or extremely effective in utilising the skills of the HR team during this crisis. A further 31.8% reported the organisation was moderately effective at this, with only 16.2% reporting a low level of effectiveness.

Respondents were also asked about the additional ways their HR team have been utilised at this time.

How effective has your organisation been in utilising the skills of the HR team when managing the people aspect of the crisis? (N=812)



“Creating business continuity plans, continuing recruitment via virtual means for business-critical positions, maintaining communication with candidates as roles are placed on hold. Documenting process such as onboarding and exiting remotely. Employee engagement such as social activities and connections that can be done virtually. Monitoring the mental welfare of front-line staff.”

“We are providing support by directing people to support resources and checking in with employees and managers as much as we can”

To see additional comments please visit the [AHRI COVID-19 pulse survey comments dashboard](#).

IMPACT ON RESPONDENTS' ROLE

Finally, respondents were asked what impact the crisis had on their role.

"I am under extreme pressure 24/7. Working an average of 70-hour weeks to design, lead and implement changes such as redundancies and contract variations. In addition, I am responsible for formulating communications in these and other areas relating to coronavirus (i.e. leave- how and when to use it)."

"As the only HR person, as other 2 stood down, very stressful to understand all changes and communication and to ensure the leaders are compliant"

"My desk has been cleared of everything apart from COVID-19 related items. So I have a better clarity of focus. But mine is usually a very people-centric role and it's very isolating for me and my co-workers to have that ability to casually chat about work things reduced."

"Role focus changed from employee development to workplace relations and compliance."

"The HR team are working remotely from home and our roles have been nonstop for a few weeks now. With the daily changes it is difficult to provide the company with accurate information and we are the key to ensuring all our managers are communicating and communicating more to their teams to keep connected and engaged during this stressful period"

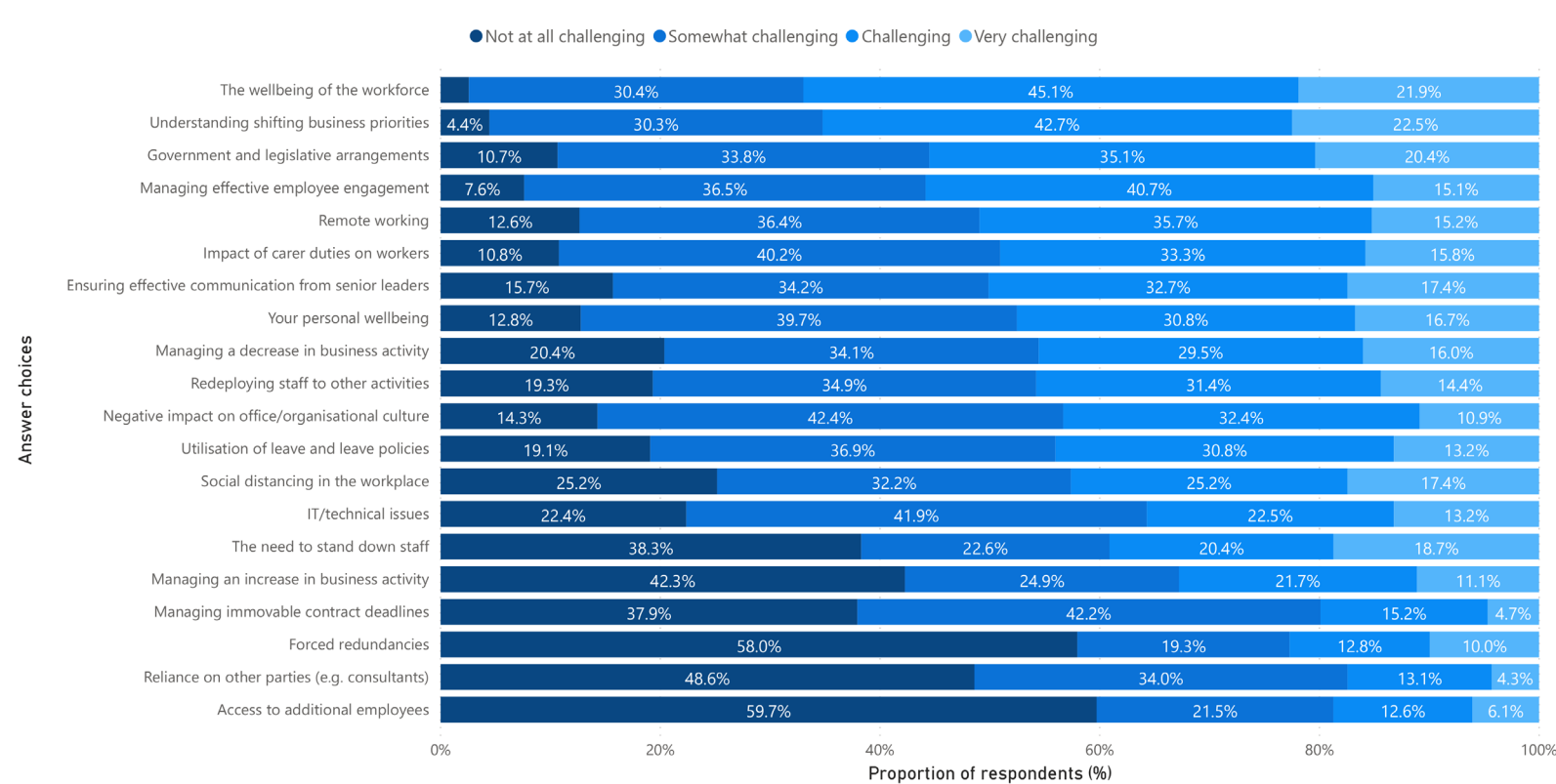
"Since I am involved in a community based non-profit organisation, all our activities are on hold. We are trialling zoom sessions to support one another at this time."

"Spending 90% of my time on COVID-19 related planning, analysis, financial scenario planning, training and communications design and managing employee and executive mental health."

To see additional comments please visit the [AHRI COVID-19 pulse survey comments dashboard](#).



Stress points for respondents, ranked from most to least challenging (N=854)





Extent of COVID-19 impact on respondent organisations (N=854)

