

Mini Report: Mental Health

Are we really ok?

August 2021



introducing.



Are we really ok?

Catalyst is an open-source research and insights program that allows its community to engage in quality market research to interrogate the major environmental and social issues that we face.

With mental health a topical issue across Australia this month, due in large part to lockdowns and restrictions across the country, the Catalyst study took the opportunity to investigate how Aussies are really feeling.

This mini-report showcases mental health in the context of other issues, digs deeper into our individual actions to address the issue and asks what we expect businesses to be doing to help address this challenge.

We hope this provides inspiration for your business to consider what you can do to support your team and your community.

Thanks for supporting research for good.

The Catalyst Team.

global warming	ocean pollution
plastic and packaging waste	animal and plant extinction
COVID-19	domestic violence
poverty	homelessness
drug and alcohol abuse	unfair treatment of indigenous people
crime	job security
physical health	affordability of housing
water and sanitation	comfort in retirement

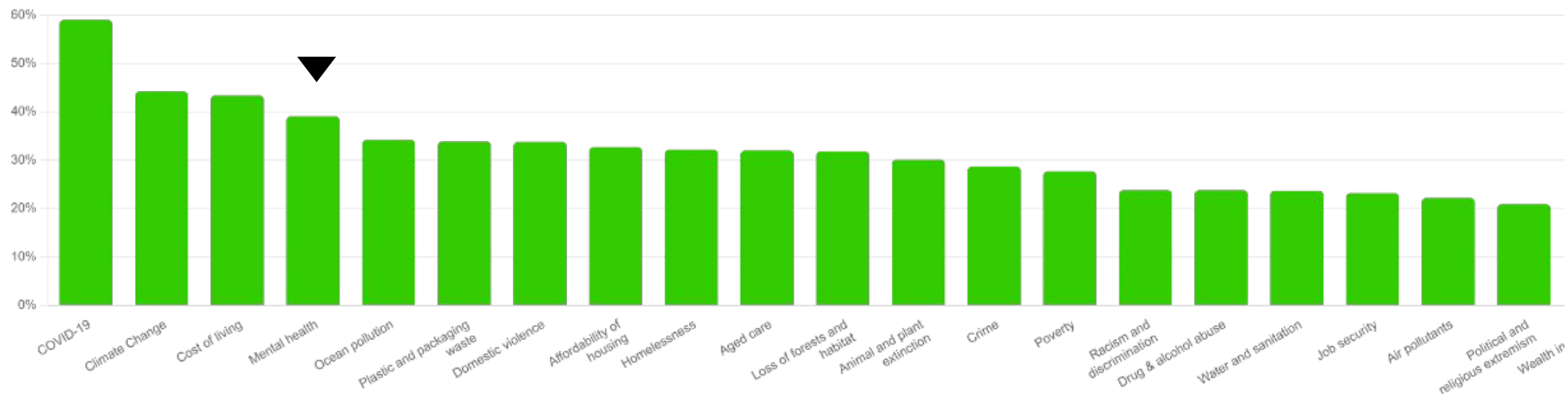
air pollutants	droughts, floods and storms
loss of forests and habitat	bushfires
racism and discrimination	Ethical sourcing
mental health	sexual harassment
gender inequality	LGBTIQA+ inequality
aged care	cost of living
work-life balance	political and religious extremism
wealth inequality	workplace inequality

The mental health pandemic?

The unprecedented social isolation due to **COVID-19** lockdowns continues to negatively affect the mental wellbeing of Australians, with 39% citing **mental health** as the most pressing concern for society. However, the increased mental strain can be attributed to

factors that may continue long after the pandemic's end. The **cost of living** (43%), **domestic violence** (34%) and **affordability of housing** (33%) have risen into the top 10 most concerning issues, initiated by the pandemic.

However, unlike the pandemic, these issues cannot be solved by a vaccine, and these challenges are likely to pose significant risks to the mental health of Australians well into the future. Are we seeing the beginning of a mental health pandemic?



differences by age.

Youth concerned.

The mental wellbeing of the younger age group appears to be most affected by the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, with nearly **1 in 2** 18–24 year olds naming **mental health** as one of the most pressing societal concerns right now.

When compared to the responses by all adults in the study — a significantly lower 39% state mental health as a pressing concern — we see the effects of the pandemic have become more stressful issue for the Gen Z age group.

This effect is likely due to the pandemic's disruptive impact at a formative stage of their lives as they establish careers and independence as adults.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has noted the same pattern: **“While COVID-19 affects people in different ways, the social and economic impacts on young people have been substantial. Compared with older age groups, young people have experienced high rates of psychological distress, loneliness, educational disruption, unemployment, housing stress and domestic violence.”** – [AIHW](#)

Tim Clover, Founder and CEO of Glow, says mental health will continue to be an issue as lockdowns persist through 2021: **“For older teenagers and young adults, who have suffered so much while spending what should be the time of their lives stuck at home, the pessimism really is palpable.”**

48%

of 18–24 year olds named mental health as an issue requiring the most immediate attention

differences by age.

Youth proactively tackling the challenge.

Whilst there is high anxiety amongst youth regarding mental health there thankfully, also appears to be a commitment to tackle this head on.

In a week when we are reminded to check in on family, friends and colleagues for RUOK? Day, Catalyst research shows that 50% of those aged 18 to 24 had talked about mental health with their family and/or friends compared to 39% of overall respondents.

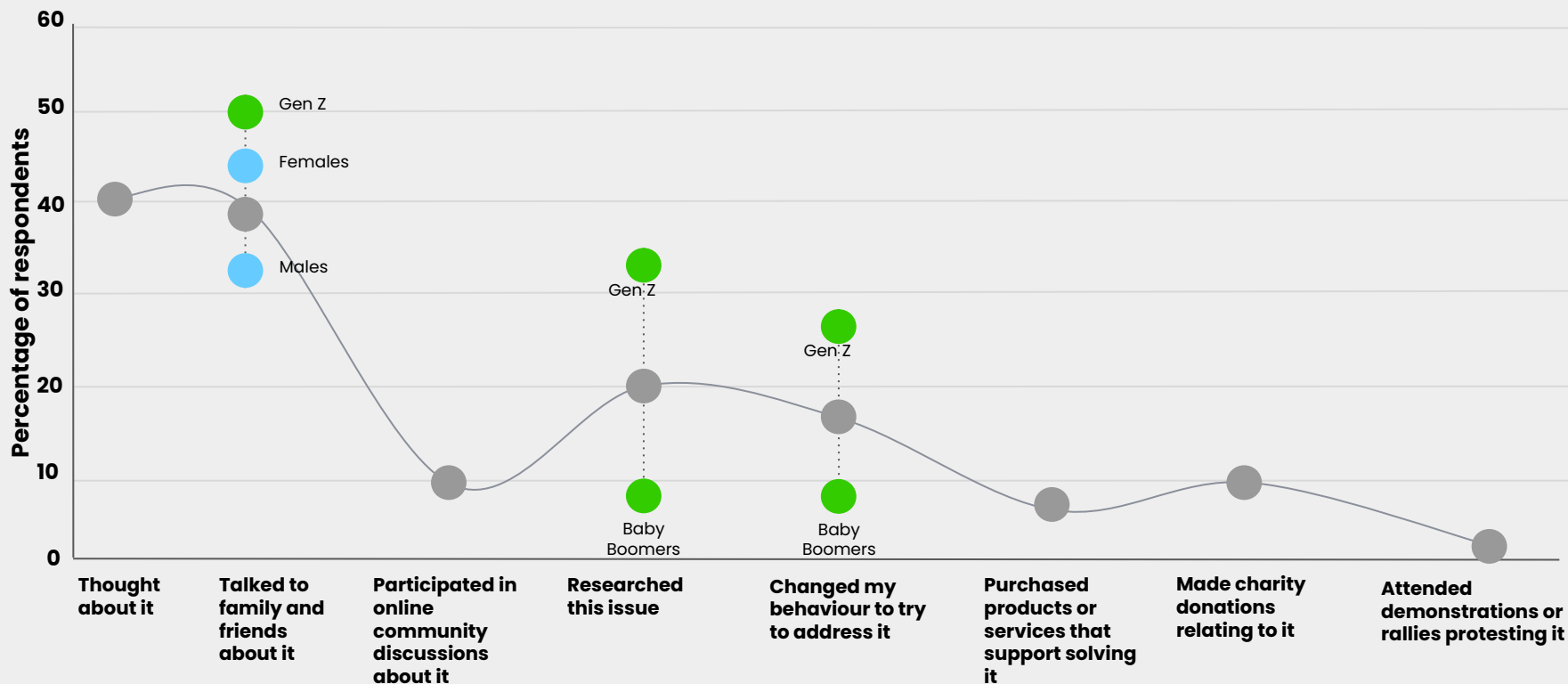
In addition nearly one in four Gen Zs (23%) say they've changed their behaviour to tackle mental health challenges compared to just 13% of Baby Boomers (aged over 55). A third of Gen Zs (33%) had also personally researched mental health issues, compared to just 10% of Baby Boomers. These stats (see over page) provide some confidence that youth are resilient enough to work through these challenges.



50%

of respondents aged 18 to 24 had talked about mental health with their family and/or friends

Actions taken in last 12 months to address issue of Mental Health



Source: Catalyst program, August 2021. (n=1241)

Note: Green/Blue icons highlight statistically significant differences from All Adults.

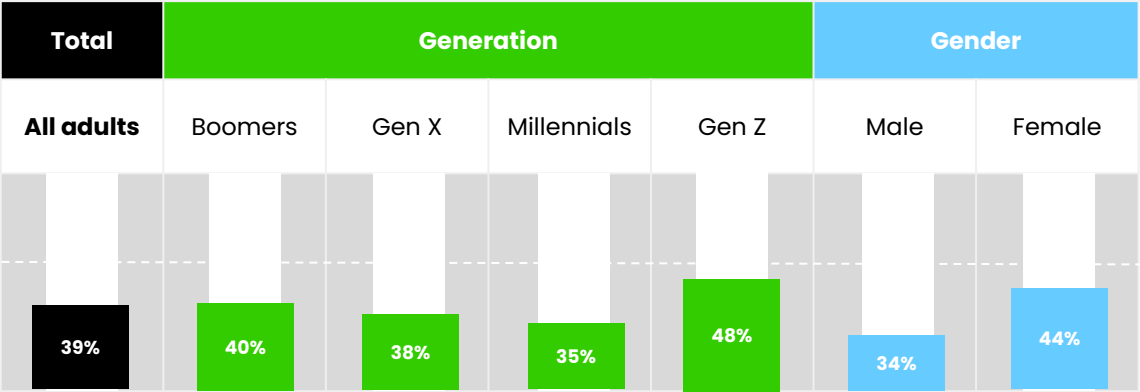
gender differences.

Women are feeling it.

The latest data also suggests that **women** are more concerned about **mental health** than their male counterparts, with **44%** of females most concerned with mental health — as opposed to **34%** of men.

A build up of responsibilities and household organisation (that typically fall to women more often than men) has been identified as a factor contributing to the elevated level of concern amongst women.

Believe mental health is the most concerning issue



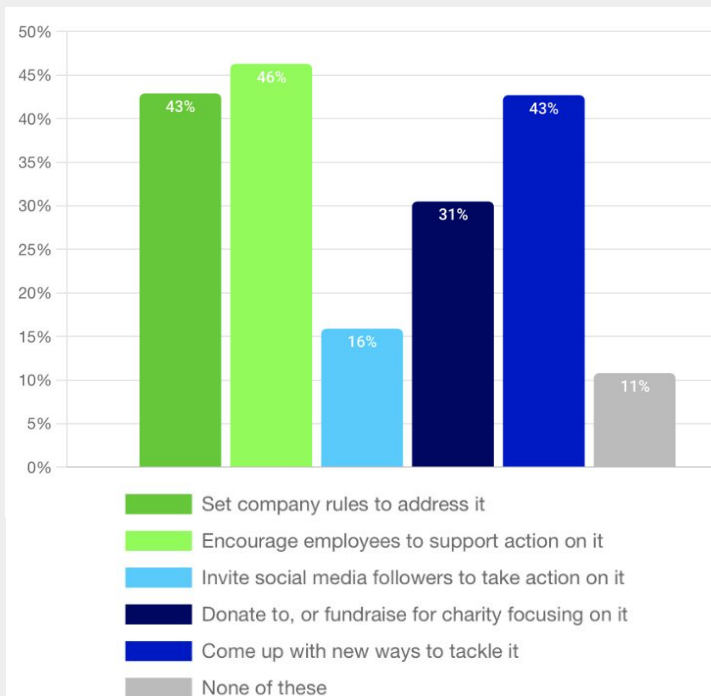
Source: Catalyst program, August 2021. (n=1241)

how should businesses respond.

Businesses are expected to act.

Respondents were asked: **“What action should businesses take to help solve the issue of mental health?”**

Results show that encouragement from employers can go a long way, with 46% stating they believe businesses should encourage their employees to take action on mental health. 43% also believe businesses should set company rules to address mental health — perhaps by implementing programs that ensure employee wellbeing is a priority. As for measures outside the business itself, 31% of respondents would like to see businesses donating to, or fundraising for, charities related to mental health.



Source: Catalyst program, August 2021. (n=1241)

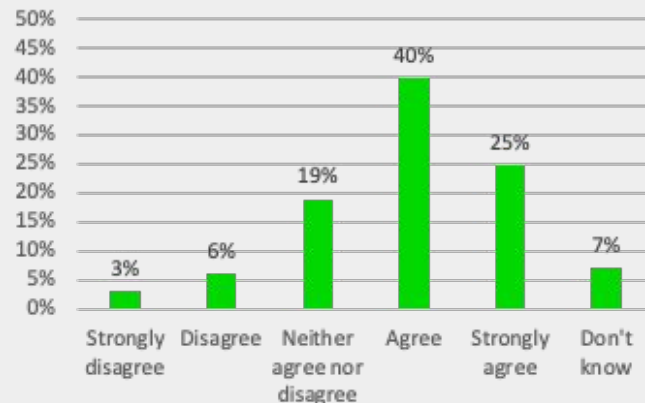
willingness to invest in ethical businesses.

Funds will flow to businesses that do good.

Around one third of respondents to our study hold investments in stocks and shares. Those with a household income of over \$75,000 per annum were twice as likely to invest as those below this threshold.

And the data shows they are also willing to make investments that support society and the planet. Two thirds (65%) of this group indicate they are likely to invest in a company if it takes action to solve mental health issues. Millennial investors are driving the conversation, with 82% of this group will to invest in businesses supporting mental wellbeing.

I am more likely to invest in a company that takes action to solve mental health



65%

Of Australians who are currently investing in stocks or shares say they are more likely to invest in a company that takes action to solve mental health issues.

**Thank you for reading
and supporting the
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and environmental
research for good.**

**For more Catalyst data:
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