

ATLASSIAN



Return on Action Report 2021

**THE RISING
RESPONSIBILITY
of BUSINESS**

Foreword

Atlassian launched the first multinational Return On Action report in March 2020. This was based on comprehensive research conducted by PwC Australia across the US and Australia. The goal was to better understand employee expectations around employer responses to societal issues. It identified a tipping point in how workers view the role of business in impacting the world around them.

For most around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has delivered a great deal of change in a relatively short amount of time. In this second Return on Action report, we look at how employee perceptions have changed. Which issues matter most to workers, how should business respond, and what's on the line for those who get it right or wrong?

It's now clear that employees expect their employers to make a difference. We are seeing an increasingly activist workforce that holds business to account and prioritises wellbeing over career progression. This report reveals the return on action for businesses tackling the issues that matter to their workers.

Cover photo: Mauro Mora



“The era of the corporation being an invisible entity is gone. Employees expect more, the world expects more. We have an awesome opportunity to take inspiration from the hearts and minds of our global workforce, and drive change for the betterment of our world.”

MIKE CANNON-BROOKES

Co-Founder, Co-CEO, Atlassian

“The consequences of inaction are very real. We're in a global war for talent and employees want change. There have never been higher expectations on business, and how we respond as leaders is crucial. If this groundswell of support for action is ignored, it will open businesses up to the risk of alienating the emerging workforce.”

SCOTT FARQUHAR

Co-Founder, Co-CEO, Atlassian

A word on the research

This report provides a unique opportunity to understand how the priorities and expectations of the workforce have changed over the past year, and the implications for businesses and leaders.

It shows us that stakeholders expect organisations to acknowledge their responsibility and use their platform to take a stand on important societal issues. When an organisation's actions or inaction are incongruent with their stated values, we see the negative impact on employee sentiment. Employees are telling us that silence is complicity.

PwC Australia undertook the research to support Atlassian with the completion of this report, including the year-on-year analysis that identifies the genuine shifts in the perceptions and expectations of the workforce in Australia and the US. This robust evidence base provides rich insight into what matters to employees.

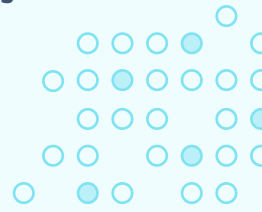
The survey for this report was completed late February to mid-March 2021 and the sample provided representation across demographics, geographies, employment industries and business size by number of employees.

This report summarises the findings for the Australian market.



OF AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYEES

1,225



GEN Z (21-24)

10%

GEN Y (25-42)

45%

GEN X (43-54)

27%

BABY BOOMERS (55-65)

17%

Male

46%

Female

54%

Unspecified

<1%

INDUSTRIES

18%

Professional, scientific, and technical services

18%

Health

17%

Manufacturing

17%

Retail

16%

Information, media, and telecommunications

14%

Financial and insurance services

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Executive summary

In our multinational study, we identified a new landscape of expectations on business, where accountability and leadership around social issues are imperative.

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The importance of health and wellbeing

The relative importance of societal issues has changed in the past year. Economic matters have fallen behind mental health and wellness.

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Pressure on business to adapt and act

Employees are demanding more from businesses. This includes addressing societal issues and being accountable for their actions.

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Values matter more than job security

Despite tough economic conditions, employees are more likely to seek work that meets their needs with employers who share their values.

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Action helps attract and retain talent

Employees want businesses to speak out and take action on societal issues. This has become a key factor in finding and keeping the best people.



AUSTRALIA SNAPSHOT

Top priorities for Australian workers

Mental health and wellness has emerged as the top issue of importance in 2021.

We identified a new landscape of expectations on business, where accountability and leadership around social issues is an imperative. Since Atlassian's last Return on Action report, Australians have faced a pandemic, economic upheaval and historic floods. We saw a long overdue societal awakening focused on racial injustice and a national conversation on sexism and misogyny sparked from within Canberra's corridors of power.

It's now clear that health and the economy matter most to Australian employees. Mental health and wellness is the biggest societal issue, with access to healthcare and cost of living also front of mind.

An increasingly activist workforce is demanding that businesses act on the major issues of the day. Employment is more than just a job, and there are benefits on offer for organisations able to meet these increased expectations. But those that fail to hit the mark will struggle to attract and retain their best people.

Mind matters most

Mental health and wellness is the most important issue in 2021, taking the place of cost of living (now third) and followed by access to healthcare.

Mental health trumps career growth

69% of employees would turn down a promotion in favour of preserving their mental health. This trend is true across all age groups and income levels.

The bottom line on social impact

74% of employees agree businesses should be just as concerned with their social impact as their financial results. This is a significant increase from 69% in 2020.

Values over job security fears

55% of Gen Z are worried about future job prospects, yet 54% of those would quit their jobs if employer values did not align with their own.

Action as a factor in job satisfaction

54% of employees are satisfied with their current employer. This increases to 89% amongst those satisfied with the level of action their employer takes.



AUSTRALIA SNAPSHOT

Why this is happening



Employees put wellness before work

The experiences of the past 12 months have shaken up priorities and put what matters into perspective for Australians. The majority of workers agree mental health is the biggest concern this year, with career goals now taking a back seat as priorities are reassessed. This has created a new blueprint for employers which demands businesses take a more comprehensive view of their employees wellbeing, including greater flexibility, mental health services, and alternative career paths and opportunities for growth. The ‘work-first’ culture is being replaced by a workforce that is increasingly prioritising life outside the office and expect their employers to do the same.



Gen Y are leading the charge

Aussie workers have made it clear: our current and future workforces will not tolerate inaction. These changemakers have borne the brunt of the economic instability created by the pandemic, driving them to new levels of social activism. It’s no coincidence that they have also shown the greatest increase in support of businesses addressing a broad set of societal issues usually considered the responsibility of government at both a state and federal level. Whether it’s protecting the environment, improving the economy, or increasing equality, the momentum for change is growing.

What it means for leaders



Personal health

Employers must recognise and respond to this shift in priorities or risk losing valuable employees and future talent. Most workers now value health and happiness over career progression.



Social action

Employers must be vocal and decisive on the issues that matter most to their employees. With a bias for action coming from Gen Y and Gen Z workers, an increasing proportion of the workforce will no longer accept a passive approach.



Job satisfaction

Understanding and acting on what matters to the future workforce will be critical for business leaders. Positive action and value alignment now breeds loyalty.



Underlying approach

Employers need to move away from a single business function owning corporate social responsibility in a silo. Workers want to see corporate social responsibility (CSR) completely integrated into how their leaders “do business.”

KEY THEMES

A multinational look



Importance of health

Health is a top priority for employees across the globe. In Australia, the relative importance of mental health and wellness has significantly increased in 2021 compared to last year and it's now the #1 societal issue, overtaking cost of living. In the US, three health related issues lead the importance scoreboard with access to healthcare #1, overtaking cost of healthcare which was #1 last year.



Younger generations lead

Younger generations are leading the drive for change in both regions. In Australia, Gen Y has joined forces with Gen Z in being the strongest drivers of this sentiment, whilst Gen Y continues to lead the charge in the US.



Demand for action

The demand for business action on societal issues has grown substantially in just twelve months. More of the workforce in Australia and the US agree that businesses and their leaders need to speak up and use their platforms to influence change around key societal issues, particularly those relating to the economy and the environment.



Business action and employee satisfaction

In both regions, employee satisfaction with the level of action taken by employers to address societal issues is growing, and increasing at a faster rate in the US compared to Australia. Job satisfaction also increases among employees who recognise the increased action taken by their employers.

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Australia 2021: 1,225 US 2021: 2,391



01

The importance of health & wellbeing

2020 changed what matters most to Australian workers

2020 was a unique year, centred around once-in-a-lifetime societal impacts; most notably the global pandemic, as well as political upheaval, environmental disasters, economic volatility and a recession that accelerated trends impacting the way we live and work. This report provides us with a unique opportunity to explore the cumulative impact of these factors on the workforce's expectations of their employer and business in general.

This study focused on key questions including:



What are the societal issues that matter most to workers today?



How has the relative importance of these issues changed in the past 12 months?



How much do employees agree with a number of pointed attitude statements related to experiences of the past 12 months in regards to employment and employers?

How the societal issues that matter most to Australian workers have changed

The primary goal of this research was to find out which issues are most important to workers, and how these priorities have changed during the past year.

There has been a shift in relative importance of societal issues, with three statistically significant changes.



Mental health now #1

Mental health and wellness has significantly increased this year compared to last, and is now the most important societal issue for employees. While cost of living (#1 in 2020) is still very important, it now ranks third, behind access to healthcare.



Drought less of a concern

The relative importance of drought and access to water has significantly declined this year compared to last. It now clusters with other issues relating to the environment, such as waste and pollution, and climate change/global warming.



Racism climbs in importance

The relative importance of racism has significantly increased this year compared to last, and is now the second most important issue of equality, behind access to education.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mental health and wellness overtakes cost of living as the most important societal issue

EXHIBIT 1

Considering your own personal values, please identify the issue that is most important to you, and the issue that is least important to you personally.



The scale of relative importance is a trade-off quantitative measure, where higher scores imply greater importance and lower scores imply lesser importance. For example, the most important item for 2021 is **mental health & wellness** which is about two and a half times as important as **unemployment**, and about eight times more important than **gun control/gun rights**.

<p>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</p> <p>2021: 1,225 2020: 1,214</p>	<p>ISSUES RELATING TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health and wellbeing ● Equality ● Economic ● Environmental ● Human/legal rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● = significantly more important than 2020 ● = significantly less important than 2020
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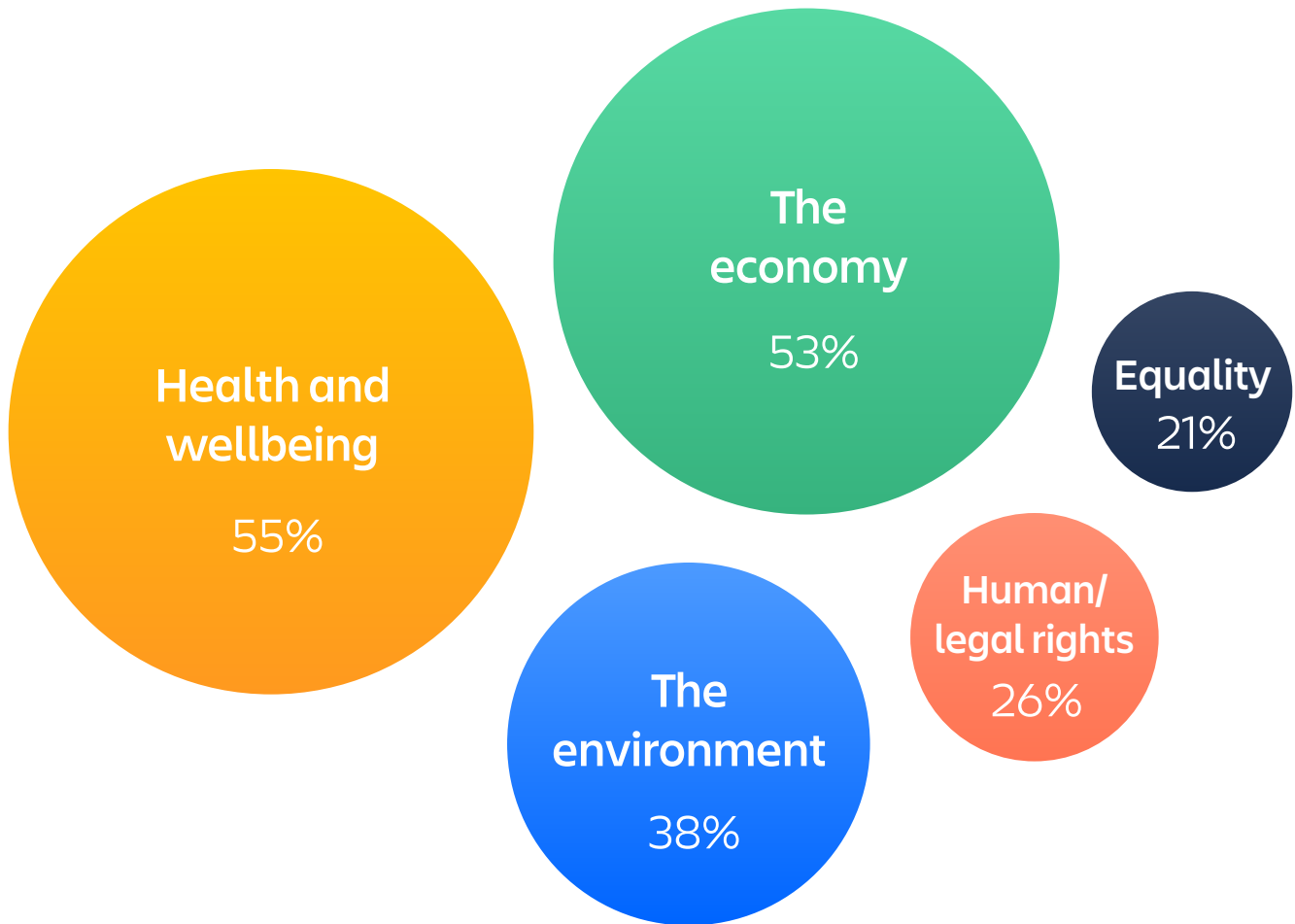
The breadth of issues that are important to employees is increasing, with health and economic issues front-of-mind

More than half of participants say that issues relating to **health and wellbeing** (55%) and **the economy** (53%) are more important than before. This response is consistent across all generations. The breadth of issues that are important to Australian employees is on the rise.

EXHIBIT 2

Thinking about the importance of these societal issues to you personally, how have your perceptions changed over the past 12 months?

Participants who answered “more important now”



TOTAL RESPONDENTS

2021: 1,225

“THE SAME IMPORTANCE” Health & wellbeing: 42% | The economy: 42% | The environment: 55% | Human/legal rights: 68% | Equality: 69%

“LESS IMPORTANT TO ME NOW” Health & wellbeing: 3% | The economy: 4% | The environment: 7% | Human/legal rights: 7% | Equality: 10%

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mental health and wellness is particularly important to Gen Z and Gen Y

Mental health and wellness is more important across generations, becoming the number one issue for Gen Z and Gen Y. It has also come into sharper focus for Gen X, rising to second spot behind **cost of living**.

Whilst this study did not explore why societal issues were selected in detail, it is hypothesised that COVID-19 put the collective mental health of Australians under pressure and bought an appreciation of its fragility and importance to the fore.

Amongst Baby Boomers, the **cost of healthcare** has overtaken **access to healthcare** as the most important societal issue. It is hypothesised that COVID-19 amplified the criticality of health overall and the cost of healthcare was under pressure, driven by economic factors.

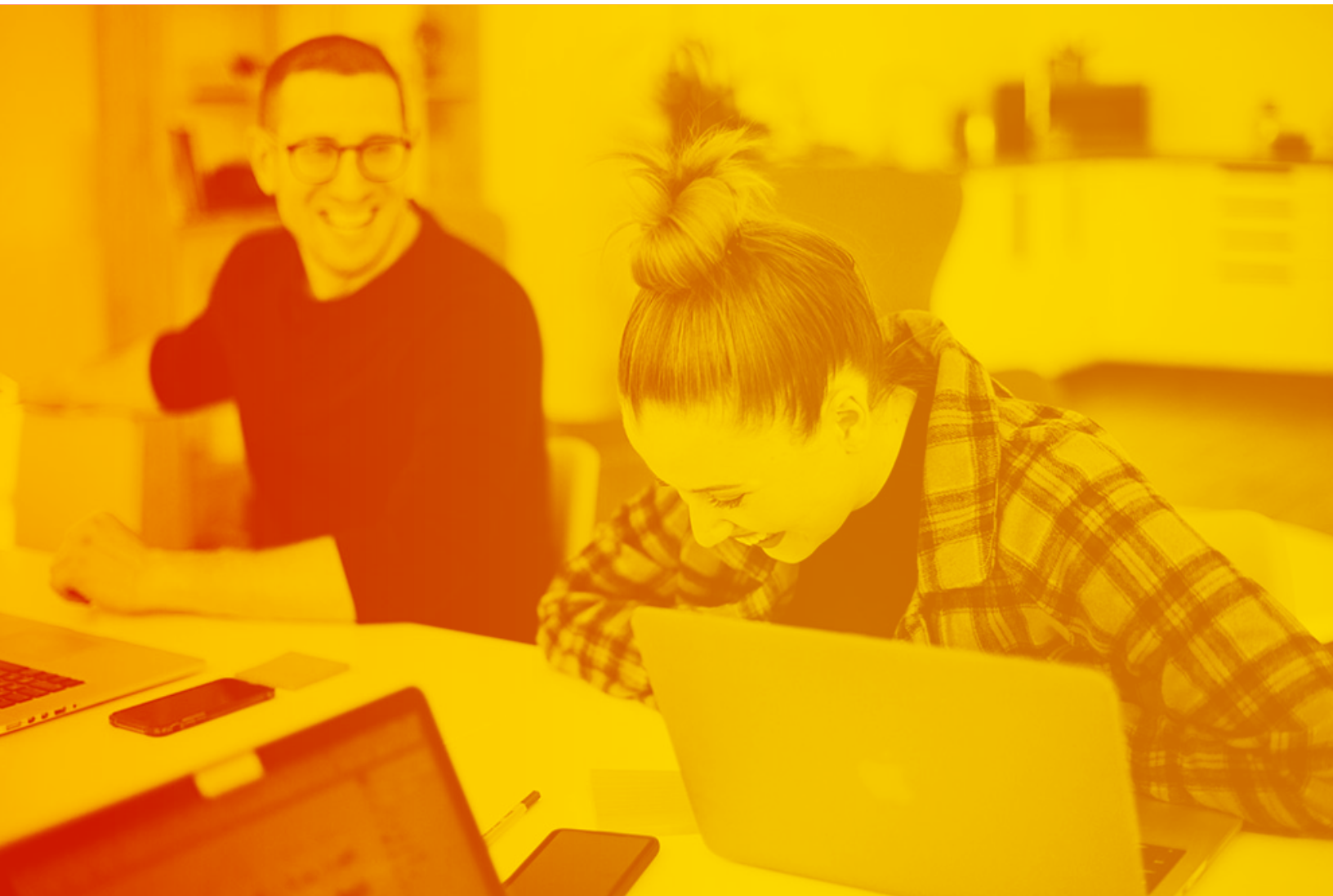
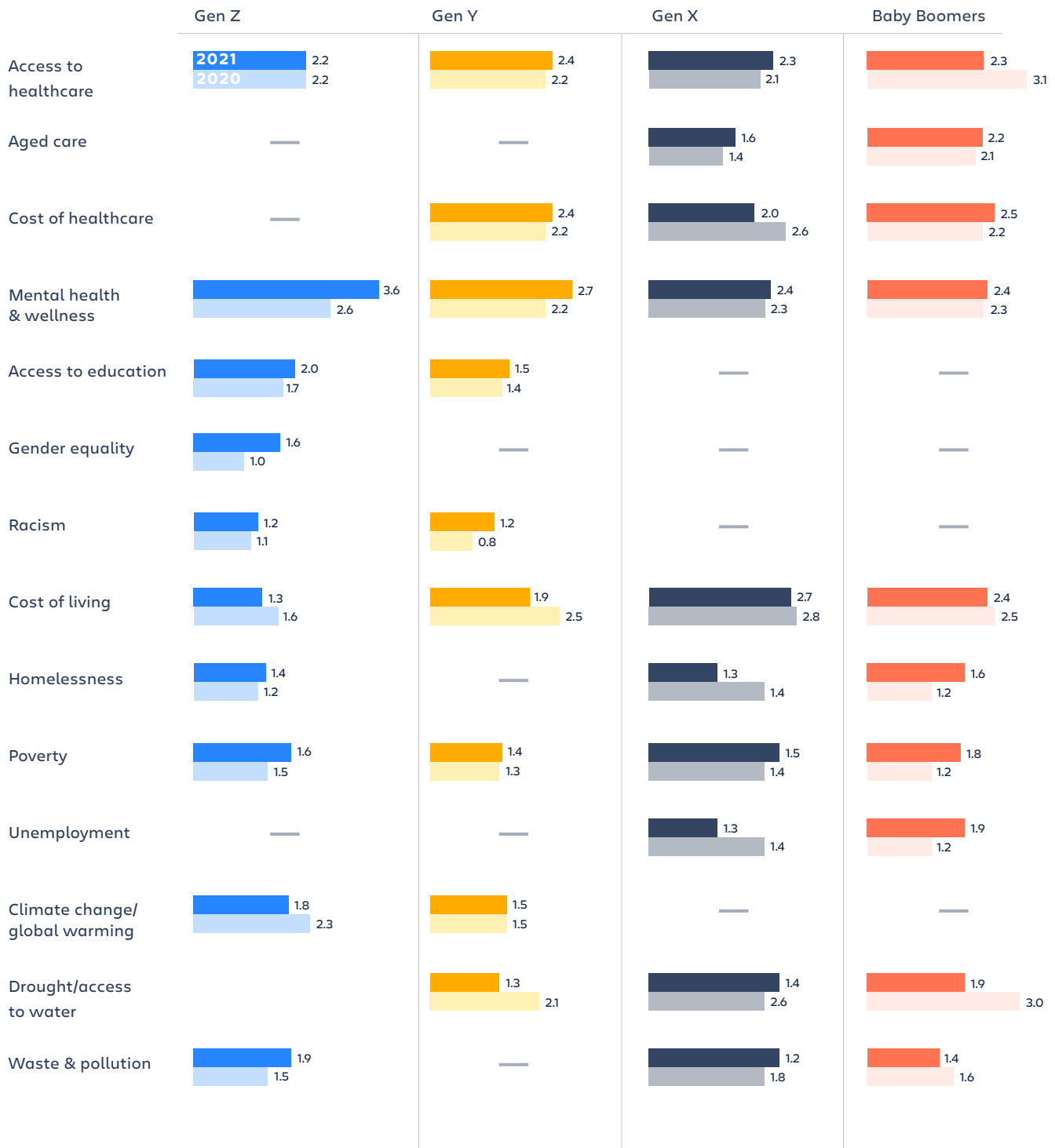


EXHIBIT 3

Comparison of Top 10 relative importance scores for societal issues by generation

Top 10 societal issues ranked on 2021 relative importance scores (scale of best)



Participants responded to the prompt: *Considering your own personal values, please identify the issue that is most important to you, and the issue that is least important to you personally.*

TOTAL RESPONDENTS 2021: 1225 2020: 1214	2021 Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214	— = Not in Top 10
	2020 Gen Z: 126 Gen Y: 516 Gen X: 362 Baby Boomers: 210	

The impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of Australians

At the start of 2020, mental health was already one of Australia's most pressing issues and an area of focus for policy makers and business leaders. The COVID-19 pandemic created global uncertainty and stress, with increased isolation putting further pressure on workforce mental wellbeing.

Younger generations are far more likely to have experienced anxiety, stress or depression than their older counterparts. Almost half (45.8%)* of Gen Z experienced a mental health condition during the lockdown period led by **anxiety** (30.8%), **stress** (29.6%) and **depression** (20.1%).

Protecting and strengthening the mental health of Australia's workforce is more critical than ever given the increasingly blurred boundaries between our work and our home lives.



“Due to the pandemic the rise in mental health problems has been concerning. The additional pressures on people with no clear and definite end in sight. Whilst, age care, poverty, environment and homelessness is important, as a younger individual we need to continue to talk about mental health more. We all suffer so much in silence.”

FEMALE, GEN Y

NSW/ACT

Works in financial and insurance services

* Roy Morgan Single Source Australia
Base: Australians aged 14+ years

January - March 2020: 10,862
and April - June 2020: 17,260

More than one-third of employees look to their employer as the main source of mental health support

While business generally was not deemed primarily responsible for addressing issues of health and wellbeing (primary responsibility falling with government or self, family and friends), more than a third of employees (37%) look to their employers as the main source of mental health support.

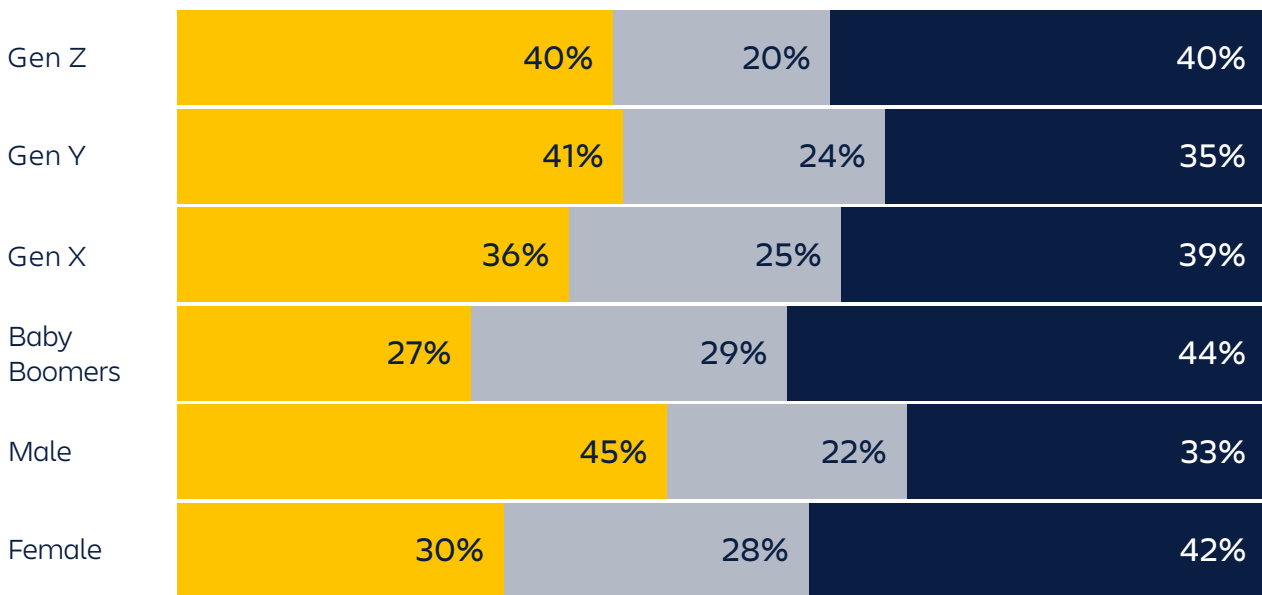
This rises to 41% amongst Gen Y and to 45% of male employees compared to 31% of females (a statistically significant difference by gender).

Beyond point-in-time support, employers have an important role to play in providing holistic mental health support to their workforce.

EXHIBIT 4

How much do you agree or disagree with the statement:

“I look to my employer as the most important provider of mental health support.”



KEY: ● Strongly agree/agree ● Neither agree/disagree ● Strongly disagree/disagree

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214
Males: 566 Females: 659

Workers are divided on how well employers supported them through the pandemic experience

There were mixed feelings about the levels of support provided by employers during the pandemic. Overall, **one in four (25%) agreed they did not receive adequate support** and these responses were consistent across generations Z, Y and X.

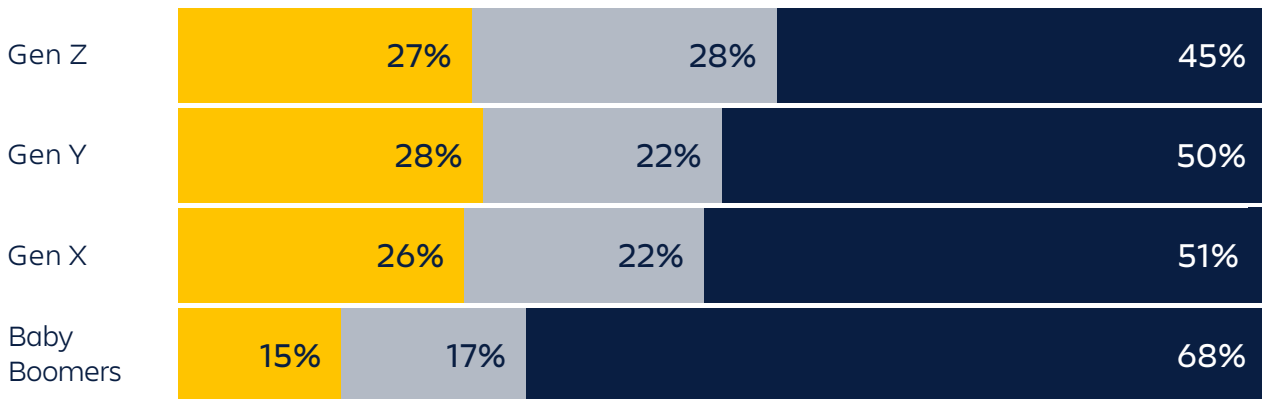
Those with lower incomes of an annual household income of \$50,000 or less were more likely to feel unsupported (34%) compared to those with high incomes of \$150,000 or more (23%), as well as those with two children living in their household (34%) compared to those with none (21%).

Baby Boomers felt most supported by their employer with 68% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement “My employer did not provide adequate support during the pandemic.”

EXHIBIT 5

How much do you agree or disagree with the statement:

“My employer did not provide adequate support during the pandemic.”



KEY: ● Strongly agree/agree ● Neither agree/disagree ● Strongly disagree/disagree

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

Data subject to rounding and may not add to 100%.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Changes to workplace experiences over the past 12 months have likely influenced the increase in importance of mental health

One in four respondents (26%) experienced **ill mental health and distress** over the last 12 months, rising to 41% among Gen Z and 31% among Gen Y. This was more common among women (31%) than men (18%). An **inability to switch off from work/burnout** was experienced by 30% of Gen Z and 23% of Gen Y employees in the past 12 months. Gen Z were also most hard hit financially over the past 12 months where 32% experienced a reduction in hours or pay, 16% applied for financial hardship and 11% stood down or lost their job.



During the past 12 months have you personally experienced any of the following?



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

% of participants who answered "yes"

Anxiety is amplified by concern over future job prospects

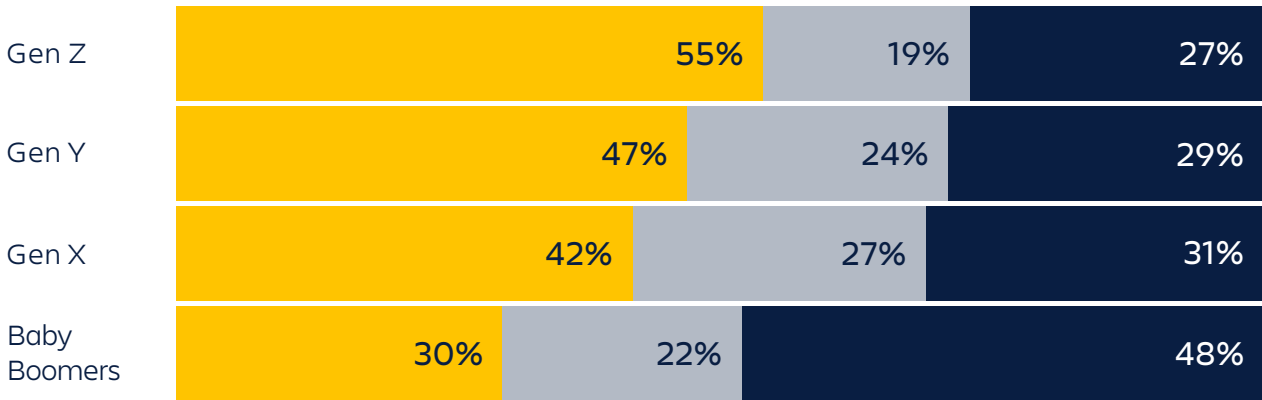
Anxiety regarding job prospects is high with 43% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement “I am worried about my future job prospects with the current economy.”

More than half of Gen Z respondents agree (55%), compared to significantly less Baby Boomers at 30% and concerns are higher among men (49%) than women (38%).

Workers in the **information, media, and telecommunications** industry report the highest levels of anxiety, with 61% worrying about future job prospects because of the current economy.

EXHIBIT 7

How much do you agree or disagree with the statement:
“I am worried about my future job prospects with the current economy.”



KEY: ● Strongly agree/agree ● Neither agree/disagree ● Strongly disagree/disagree

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

Data subject to rounding and may not add to 100%.

A majority of workers would turn down a promotion to preserve their mental health

Two in three respondents (69%) would consider turning down a job promotion in order to preserve their mental health, with responses broadly consistent across generational cohorts.

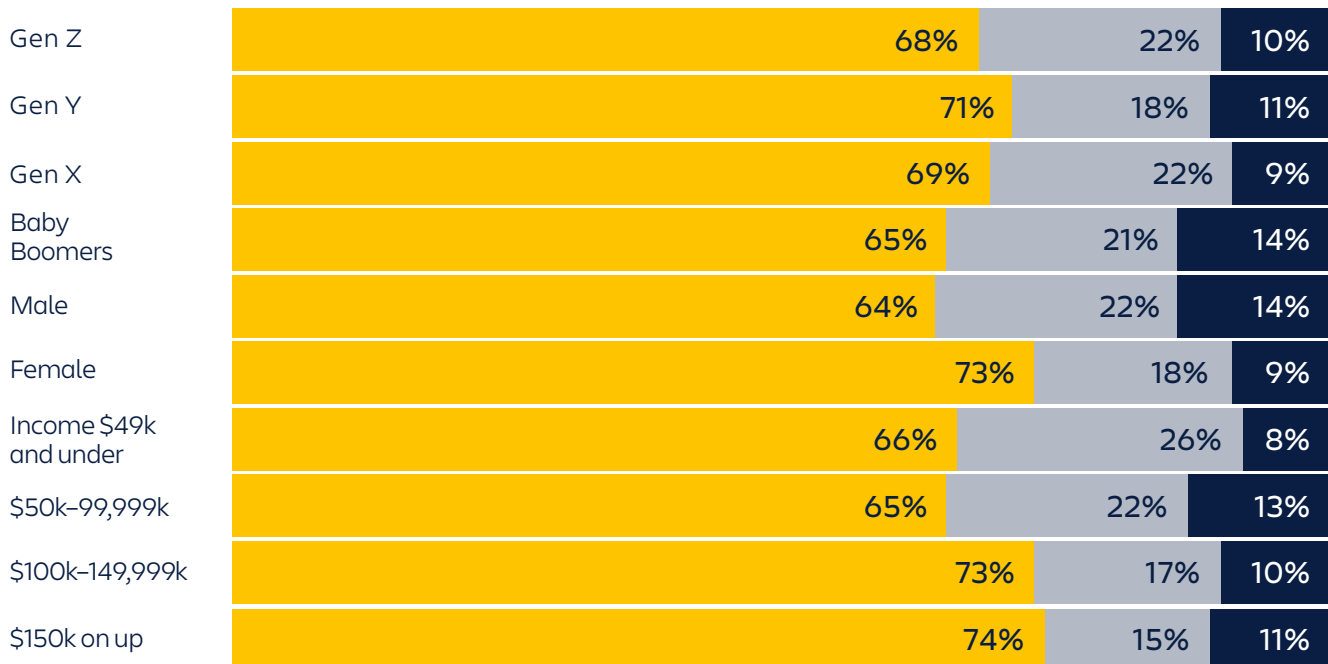
There is a significant difference between men and women, with 73% of female respondents agreeing with this statement, compared to 64% of males.

Workers in **financial and insurance services** and **retail** industries are most likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement at 74% and 72% respectively.

EXHIBIT 8

How much do you agree or disagree with this statement:

“I would consider turning down a job promotion in order to preserve my mental health.”



KEY: ● Strongly agree/agree ● Neither agree/disagree ● Strongly disagree/disagree

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

Data subject to rounding and may not add to 100%.

What this means for business leaders

Mental health and wellness has become the number one societal issue for Australian employees, with many considering their employer the most important source of support.

The social contract for business should be clear regarding support for the mental health and wellness needs of employees, and built on a nuanced understanding of expectations and vulnerabilities of the workforce.

It's time to double down on services and benefits that encourage wellness and enable psychological safety at work. ●

Increased pressure on business to adapt and act



Social activism is on the rise and this has implications for business

2020 was a year of impact. What was the impact on employee expectations of business in addressing key societal issues today?

Employees have even higher expectations of business this year, compared to last, to play their part in addressing a greater range of societal issues and engage employees differently than they did before.

To identify employee expectations for business and pinpoint opportunities for leaders, the survey explored:



What do the workforce expect of business and their employer in regards to their role in societal issues?



Who should be doing more and how?



How much do employees agree with a number of pointed attitude statements regarding business and business leader involvement?

PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

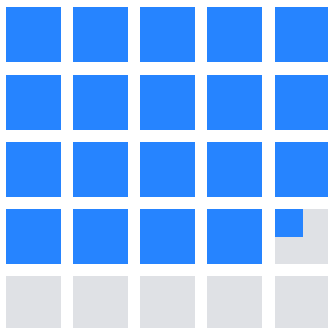
There is greater pressure to act on important societal issues

In 2020 we learnt that the majority of Australian workers surveyed wanted business to be accountable. They wanted a company’s impact on society to be treated as seriously as its financial performance.

In 2021 this sentiment has grown with statistically significant increases in agreeance that businesses should be just as concerned with their social impact as they are with their financial performance, that big business has increased responsibility to address key societal issues facing our country and that it’s important for business to speak up/act on issues their employees care about. Momentum related to expectation for business action is building.

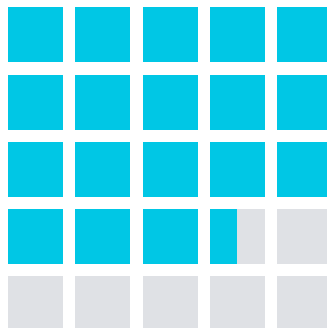
EXHIBIT 9

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:



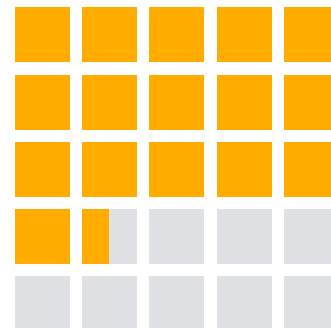
77% (+10)

“It is important for businesses to speak up or act on societal issues that impact their employees, and that their employees care about.”



74% (+5)

“Businesses should be just as concerned with their social impact as they are with financial performance.”



66% (+4)

“Big businesses have increased responsibility, now more than ever, to address key societal issues facing our country.”

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

% of participants who answered “strongly agree” or “agree”
(+n) = change relative to 2020

PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

Expectations for business action have increased across all generations

Over the last 12 months, there has been a significant increase in the number of employees who believe business should take action to address societal issues.

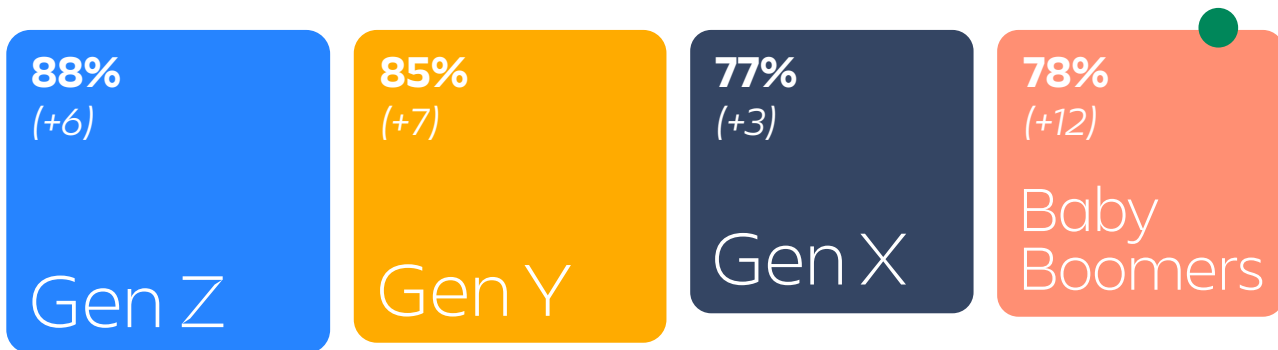
82% of employees agree businesses should take some form of action, up from 75% last year. Whilst all generational cohorts recorded a notable increase, the most significant increase was seen among Baby Boomers (78% compared to 66% in 2020).

Gen Z remain most supportive of business action, with 88% agreeing to specific business actions across the issue types.

EXHIBIT 10

What should businesses be doing to address societal issues?

% agree or strongly agree business should take some specific actions (i.e. excluding “no action”, “don’t care” or “don’t know”) net average across the issue types (equality, health and wellbeing, environmental, economic, human rights/legal).



● = statistically significant increase + = indicates the % point increase from 2020

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Total: 1,225 Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214



TOTAL EMPLOYEES

82% (+7)

PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

Increased expectation on business extends to economic, environmental and equality issues

In exploring the intersection between perceptions for which institutions are primarily responsible for addressing societal issues, and issues around which there is an expectation that more should be done, businesses are expected to take action even though primary responsibility is overwhelmingly associated with government across all issues.

Where workers expect business action most is across economic, environmental and equality issues. Economic expectations for businesses has increased most in the past year.

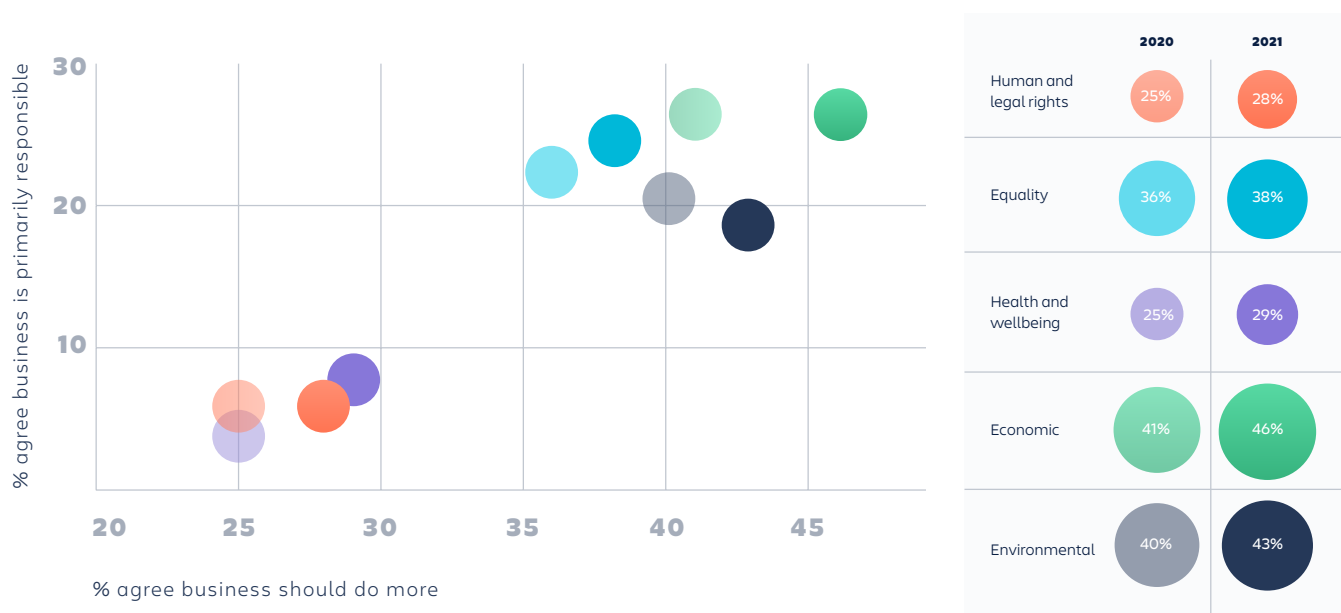
Expectations for business to “do more” in areas of the economy and equality has significantly increased this year compared to last amongst Gen Y employees (43% to 52% and 37% to 45% respectively).

EXHIBIT 11

Vertical axis: *In your opinion, who is primarily responsible for addressing each of these issues?*

Horizontal axis: *Which of these institutions should be doing more to address each of these issues?*

% score for “Business”



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2020: 1,214 2021: 1,225

CATEGORIES: ● Economic ● Environmental ● Equality ● Health and wellbeing ● Human/legal rights

PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

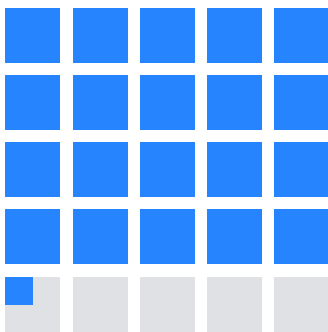
Expectations of business accountability for environmental impact grows, despite a fall in the relative importance of some environmental issues

Waste and pollution maintains 6th rank of most important societal issues, however drought and access to water fell from 2nd most important in 2020 to 7th in 2021 (Exhibit 1). Despite a shift in focus amongst some environmental issues, the pressure on business to be accountable for their environmental footprint grows.

The sentiment from employees is that businesses need to take responsibility for their environmental impact, invest in and use renewable energy, and have the ability to greatly improve the impacts of climate change has significantly increased in the last 12 months.

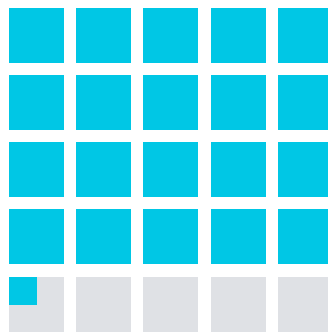
EXHIBIT 12

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:



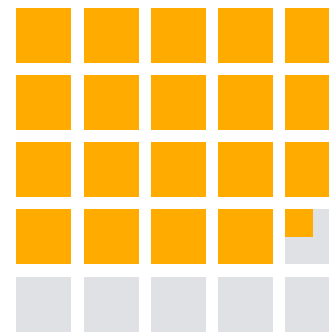
81% (+3)

Agree business needs to take full responsibility for their environmental impact
e.g. 100% renewable, carbon neutral



81% (+7)

Agree business should invest in and use renewable energy, instead of fossil fuels like oil and coal



77% (+8)

Agree business could significantly reduce the impacts of climate change if they act now

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

% of participants who answered "strongly agree" or "agree"
(+n) = change relative to 2020

PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

Australian workers are more united in their support for businesses to drive change across key issues

The top 4 issues identified as issues business should use their resource and influence to drive change for (Exhibit 13, see page 28), are consistent with 2020 and these reflect areas which employees feel are inherent for business accountability today:

-
- Waste and pollution
 - Unemployment
 - Data privacy
 - Mental health and wellness

Some societal issues are still off-limits for business, with the research finding four examples where the majority of employees believe ‘business should not use their resources and influence to drive change’:

-
- Immigration
 - Overpopulation
 - Gun control/gun rights
 - Abortion



PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

There is significantly more support for business to act on equality and racism issues

There has been a significant rise in agreement for business to drive change across a range of societal issues. This supports a significant uplift observed for attitude statements which call for business action (Exhibit 9) and demonstrates the overall increase in acceptance for business to act.

Among the top issues for business to drive change for, **gender equality** and **racism** increased significantly compared to 2020 (Exhibit 13). Noting this survey completed data collection just before the “Women’s March 4 Justice” on 15 March 2021.



PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

EXHIBIT 13

Thinking about the specific societal issues, which of these issues do you believe business should use their resources and influence to drive change for?



KEY: YES NO DON'T KNOW

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

ISSUES RELATING TO:
 Health and wellbeing (purple)
 Equality (teal)
 Economic (green)
 Human/legal rights (orange)
 Environmental (dark blue)

Yellow dot = significantly higher compared to 2020
 Red dot = significantly lower compared to 2020

Gen Y joins Gen Z to demand greater business involvement in driving change on equality issues

As shown in Exhibit 13 there is consensus amongst the generations for business involvement in the top issues; waste and pollution, unemployment, and data privacy. For issues relating to equality, such as gender equality, racism and LGBTQ+ rights, we see expectations on business being led by the younger cohorts of Gen Z and Y (Exhibit 14). In particular, Gen Y are driving momentum for change in 2021 with statistically significant shifts in agreement across these issues of equality.

EXHIBIT 14

Thinking about the specific societal issues of equality, which of these issues do you believe business should use their resources and influence to drive change for?



PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

The majority of employees agree that business has a role to play in addressing racial injustice

Two-thirds of all employees agree that business needs to play a bigger role in addressing racial injustice during the next five years. The proportion is even higher among Gen Z (73%) and Gen Y (71%).

“The latest issues with racism made this topic more important to me again. At the beginning of the pandemic there was a fair amount of racism and there was also the Black Lives Matter movement.”

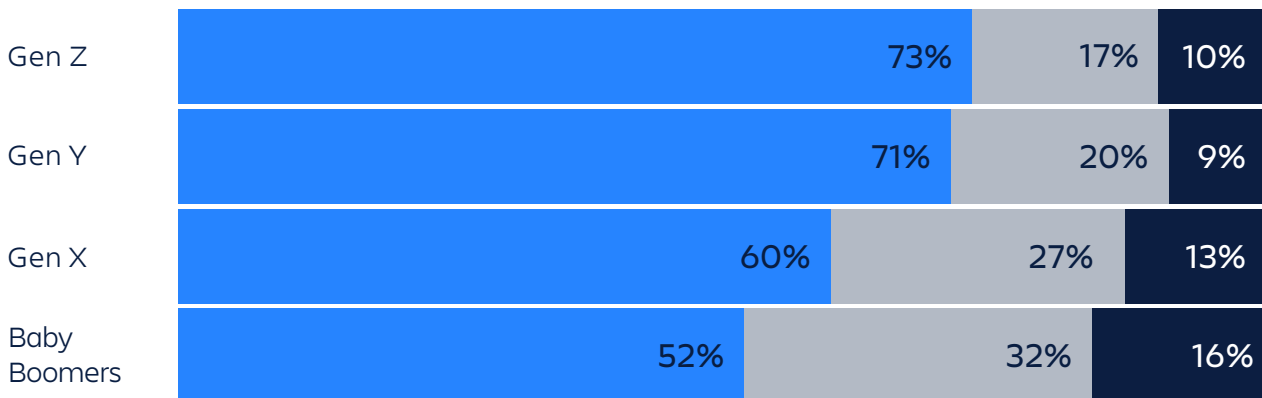
FEMALE, GEN X

Works in professional, scientific and technical services

EXHIBIT 15

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement:

“Business will need to play a bigger role in addressing racial injustice over the next 5 years.”



KEY: ● Strongly agree/agree ● Neither agree/disagree ● Strongly disagree/disagree

TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

Data subject to rounding and may not add to 100%.

PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

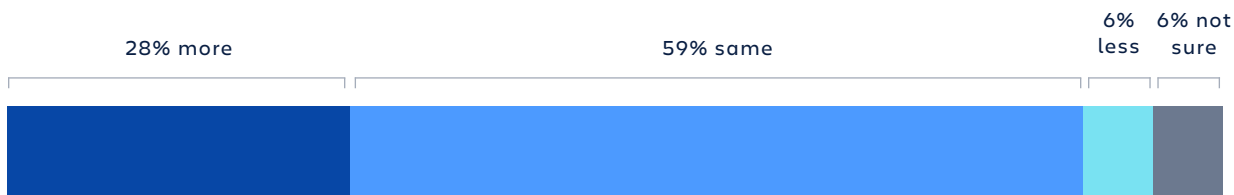
The business community is responding with increased action and employees are more satisfied with the levels of action taken

When prompted, more than a quarter of employees (28%) say their employer has ‘advocated more in the past 12 months to address societal issues than times prior’. This increases to 42% for **information, media, and telecommunications industry** employees.

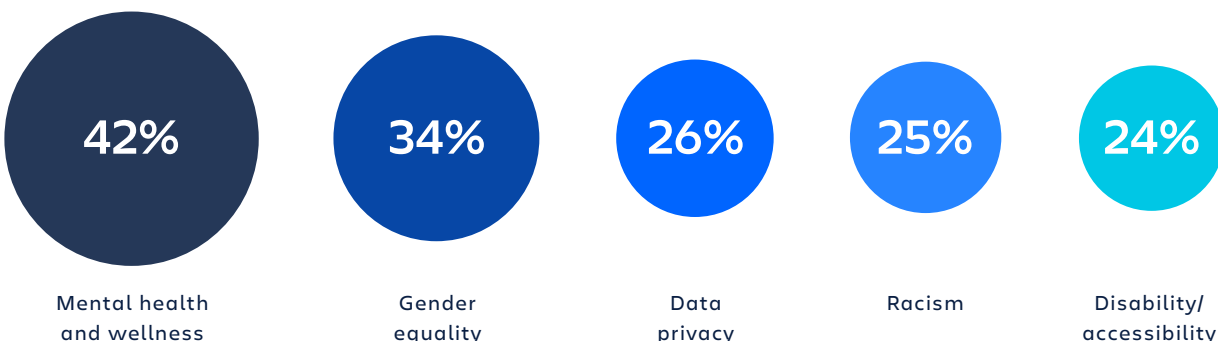
Satisfaction with the level of action employers are taking is significantly higher, up from 34% in 2020 to 42% in 2021. Intuitively, satisfaction of employer action also rises dramatically amongst those who recognise increased action this year compared to last (satisfaction of employer action being 71% amongst those who say their employers have taken more action in the past 12 months). The specific issues where employees recognise business action are in line with those expected of business to act on (Exhibit 13, see page 28), including **mental health and wellness, gender equality and data privacy**.

EXHIBIT 17

Do you feel your employer has advocated for or taken action to address societal issues more or less in the past 12 months when compared to times prior?



Thinking about your own employer, which if any, societal issues are you aware of that your company advocates for or takes action to address?



PRESSURE TO ADAPT & ACT

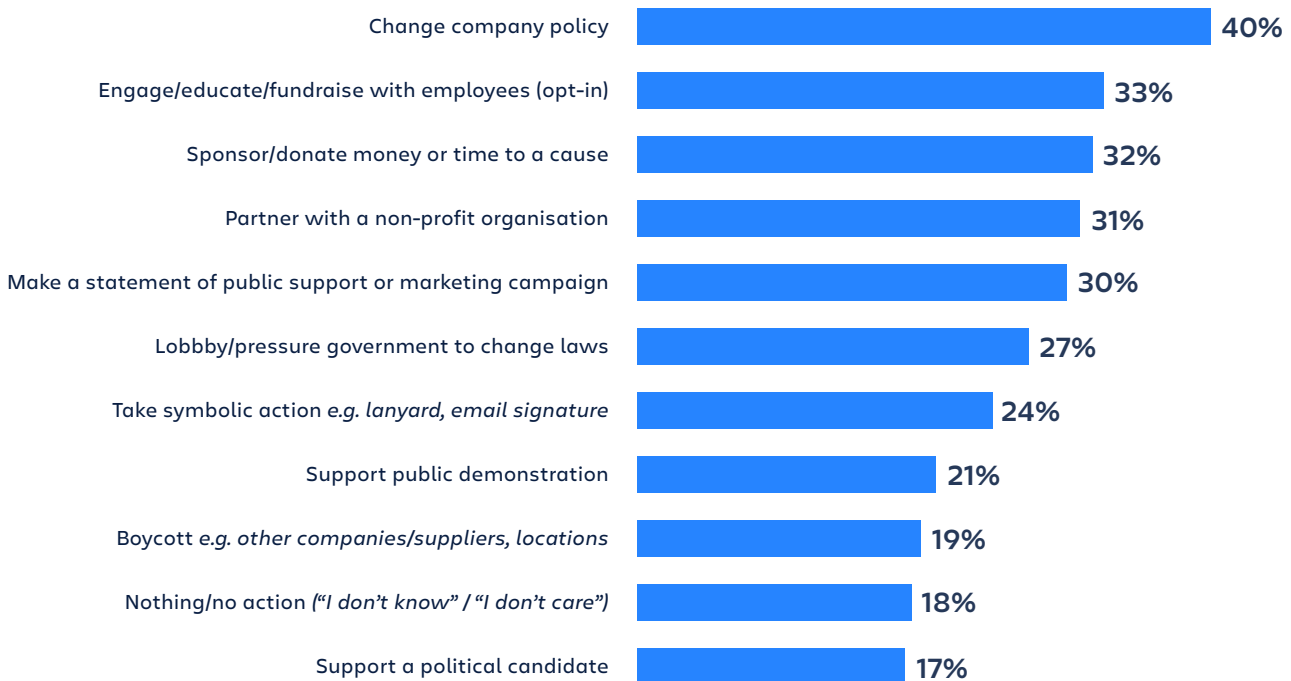
Employees expect more business action and outline specific actions including changes to company policy

Business is expected to take a broad range of actions, from changing internal behaviours to making public displays of support. As observed in 2020, expectations for companies to ‘change policy to address societal issues’ is the lead action sought, followed by ‘the education of staff’.

There are also nuanced expectations by issue types. For equality issues, employees want to see fundamental policies. For **health and wellbeing**, they are more likely to expect that employers get educated and seek not-for-profit partnerships. For issues relating to **the environment** and **human/legal rights** support is expected to be more overt, including the boycotting of associations that contribute to the problem.

EXHIBIT 18

Consider the relationship between business and each of the broad societal issues. What should businesses be doing to address these issues?



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

% of participants who answered “strongly agree” or “agree”

What this means for business leaders

As expectations surrounding business action on societal issues continue to grow, driven by a values-led workforce that has been busy making noise in a year of significant change.

The economic case for businesses to take a meaningful stand on societal issues is now clear. Those that take action will be rewarded by a more satisfied and engaged workforce, and provide a critical foundation for a resilient and sustainable business. ●



03

Employee values matter
more than job security

The critical importance of values alignment

It's been a year of change. Business have a new social contract with society and employees are seeking a new social contract with employers. Despite job security fears in the challenged economic environment, employees are reassessing their personal priorities and examining the type of employer they want to work for - a job is no longer just a job.

To understand these dynamics and apply context to our measure of issue importance we explored:



Workplace related experiences of the past 12 months



Rank of personal priorities



How much do employees agree to a number of pointed statements around terms of employment and values alignment



Behaviours employees will support

VALUES OVER JOB SECURITY

Despite the challenges of the past 12 months, more than one in four employees improved work-life balance

COVID-19 forced many employees to re-examine personal and professional priorities. About one-quarter of all respondents has improved work-life balance during the past 12 months.

This varied between industries. Those in **financial and insurance services** (39%) or **professional, scientific, and technical services** (35%) were more likely to experience improved work-life balance. It was less likely in **retail** (19%).

'Working more flexibly' was more likely to be experienced by employees in **information, media and telecommunications** (38%), **financial and insurance services** (35%), and **professional, scientific, and technical services** (34%) industries. This flexibility was harder to come by in **manufacturing** (21%), **retail** (18%) and **health** (15%).



VALUES OVER JOB SECURITY

EXHIBIT 19

During the past 12 months have you personally experienced any of the following?



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1,225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

% of participants who answered "yes"

VALUES OVER JOB SECURITY

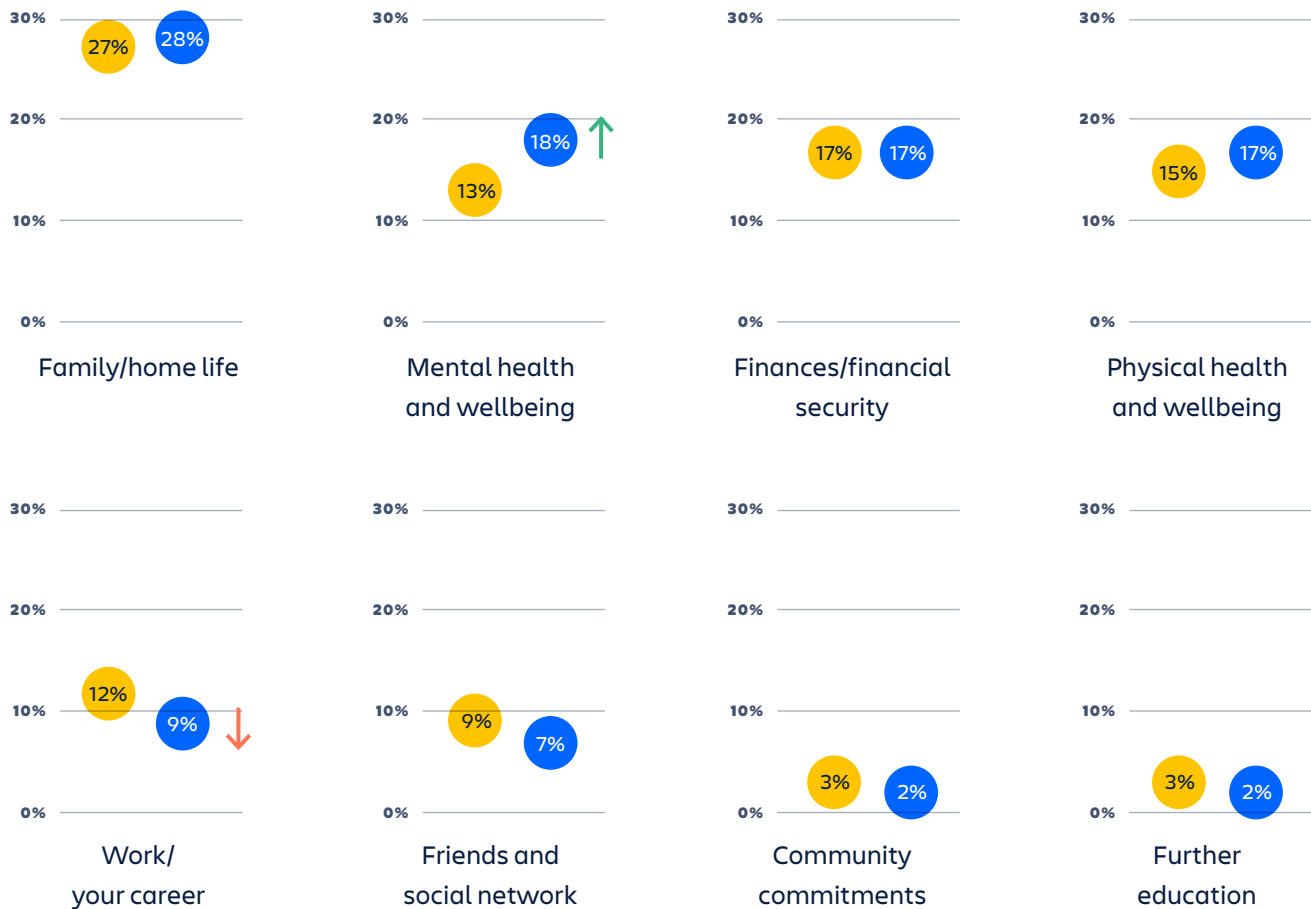
Careers are less important as employees rethink priorities

When employees are asked to rank their personal priorities, ‘family / home life’ is most likely to be selected first. This was true before and after COVID-related experiences.

Directly comparing pre COVID-19 rankings to now, the likelihood of selecting **mental health and wellbeing** as the #1 priority has significantly increased and the likelihood of selecting **work/career** as #1 priority has significantly declined.

EXHIBIT 20

Please rank the following in regards to your personal priorities at this current point in your life. Thinking back to before the pandemic, how would you rank your priorities then?



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1225

● Importance score pre-COVID
● Importance score now

↑ Significantly higher/
↓ lower than pre-COVID

% probability: The % scores are the likelihood of people selecting that item as 1st or 'most important.'

VALUES OVER JOB SECURITY

Flexibility is an increasingly valuable component of the employment value proposition

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted individuals, communities and workplaces worldwide, changing the way people live, work and socialise.

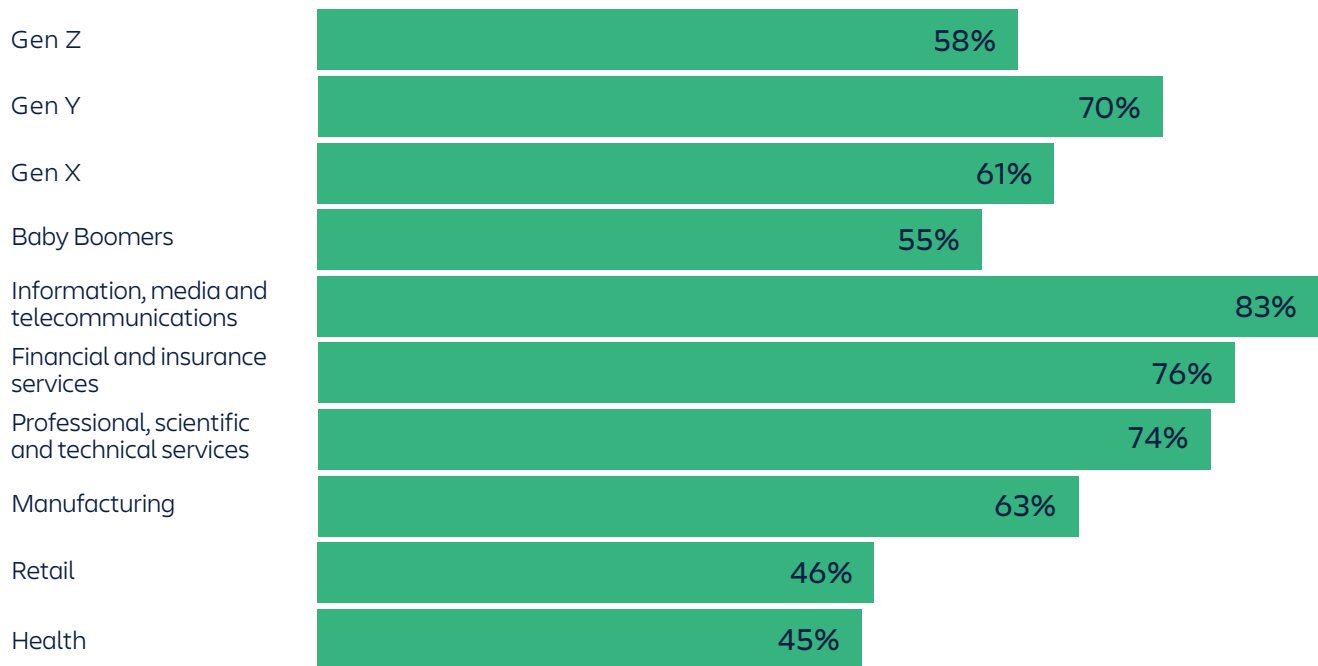
Over the prior 12 months, most (64%) respondents agreed that their employer had been supportive of flexible and remote working. This is especially true of Gen Y (70%) where the majority agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *“My employer has been supportive of flexible and remote ways of working.”*

It also varies significantly by industry, due in some degree to the nature of work. For example, 83% of workers in the **information, media, and telecommunications** industry agree, compared to 45% in **health** and 46% in **retail**.

EXHIBIT 21

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement:

“My employer has been supportive of flexible and remote ways of working.”



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

% of participants who answered “strongly agree” or “agree”

VALUES OVER JOB SECURITY

Employees are dictating the terms of employment to suit their needs

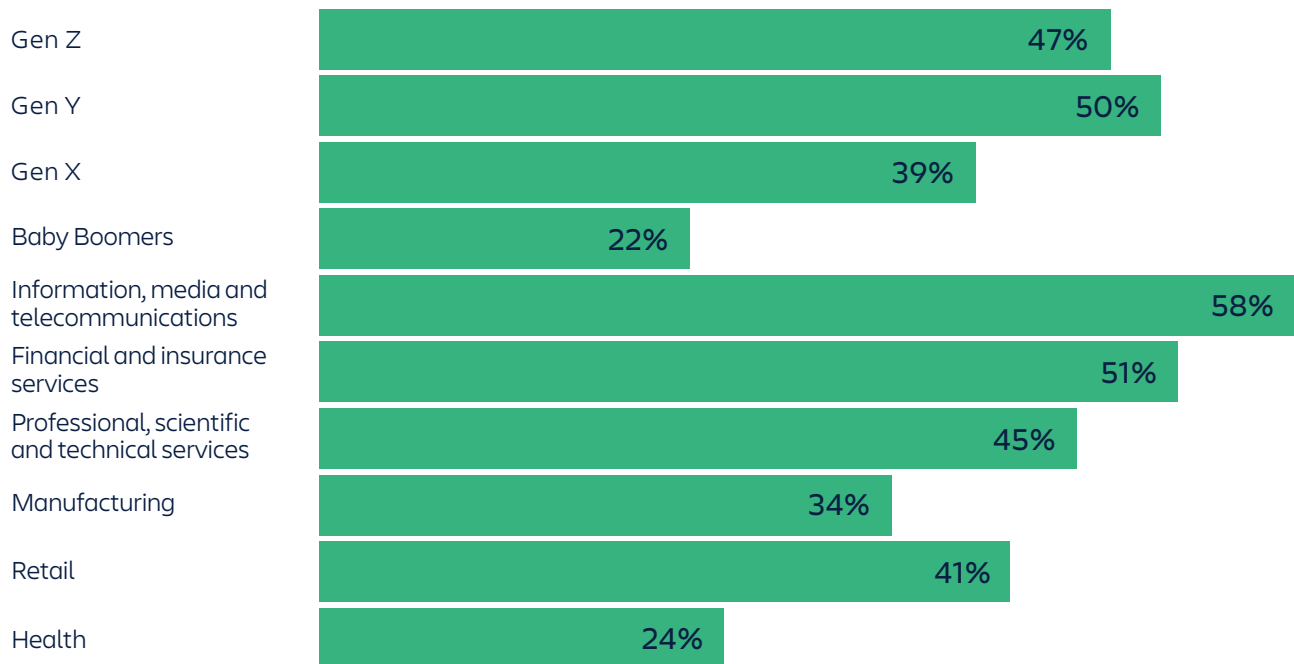
42% of all workers agree with the statement: “I would consider changing jobs to get more access to remote work”, increasing to 50% for Gen Y, who are the future business managers and leaders of the workforce. It also varies by industry, due in some degree to the nature of the work. 58% for workers in the **information, media, and telecommunications** industry agree they would consider a job change to access more remote work however fewer in **health** (24%) and **manufacturing** (34%) say the same.

50% of Gen Y would consider changing jobs to get more access to remote work

EXHIBIT 22

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement:

“I would consider changing jobs to get more access to remote work.”



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
2021: 1225

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

% of participants who answered “strongly agree” or “agree”

VALUES OVER JOB SECURITY

An increasing number of employees, notable in younger generations, will quit their jobs if employers don't act on important issues

In 2020 we witnessed the importance of action on key social issues and learnt that in the context of the war for talent, the wrong steps by employers will drive some employees away.

In 2021 this sentiment has increased significantly and 37% of employees now agree that they would quit their job if their employer were to act in a way that didn't align with their values (a 6% point increase overall).

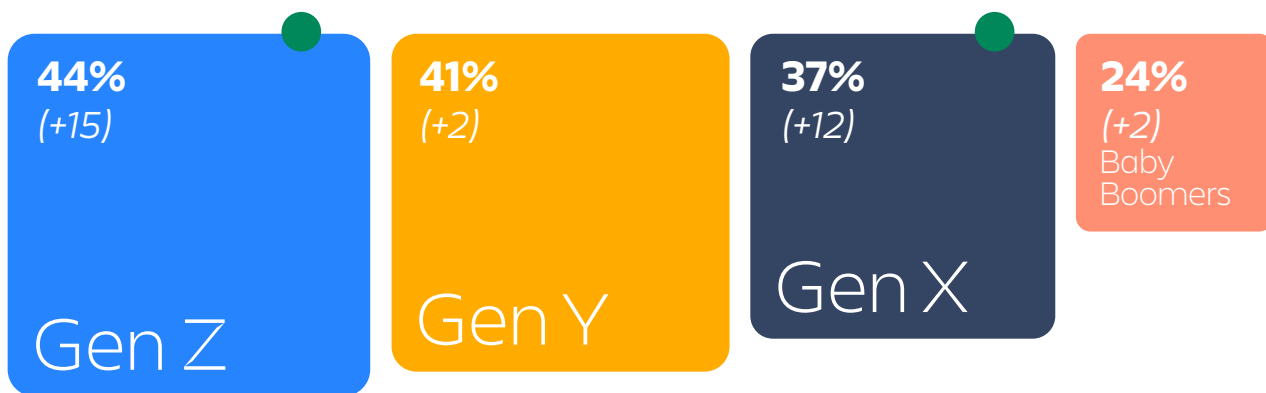
Gen Y led this charge last year but now it applies more broadly across most generations, encapsulating the bulk of the current workforce. This sentiment cannot be ignored.

Furthermore, amongst those who agreed they are worried about job prospects with the current economy, many still claim they would quit if values did not align (54% of Gen Z, 54% of Gen Y, 46% of Gen X and 38% of Baby Boomers who are concerned about job prospects).

EXHIBIT 23

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement:

"If my employer were to act in a way that didn't align with my values I would quit my job."



● = statistically significant increase + = indicates the % point increase from 2020

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214



TOTAL EMPLOYEES

37% (+6)

% of participants who answered "strongly agree" or "agree"

What this means for business leaders

Personal and professional priorities have changed. Workers, especially the younger generations, have been exposed to remote working and value this greater flexibility.

They now hold more power than ever before, dictating the terms of employment to suit their needs. As our future workforce, understanding what makes this group tick is critical. As the research says, an increasing number will quit their jobs if employers don't act on the issues important to them. ●

A background image showing a crowd of people, with a prominent raised fist in the center, overlaid with a red and blue gradient. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible.

04

Action leads to reward
for both employers and
employees

Return on action increases and a passive approach won't be tolerated

The workforce is dynamic, and they seek a dialogue with employers to fulfill their expectations and deliver the value employers seek. Employees want their voices heard in this relationship, and there is reward for business advocacy.

To build a nuanced understanding, this research explored:



Views on the extent to which workers should be able to voice their views on societal issues at work



The extent to which companies who take a stand on societal issues are recognised and rewarded for it by their workforce



The degree of importance placed on employers taking a stance on societal issues when making choices and decisions about changing jobs



The degree of trust placed in business to speak with authenticity



The relationship between satisfaction with an employers voice on societal issues and satisfaction with employment

ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

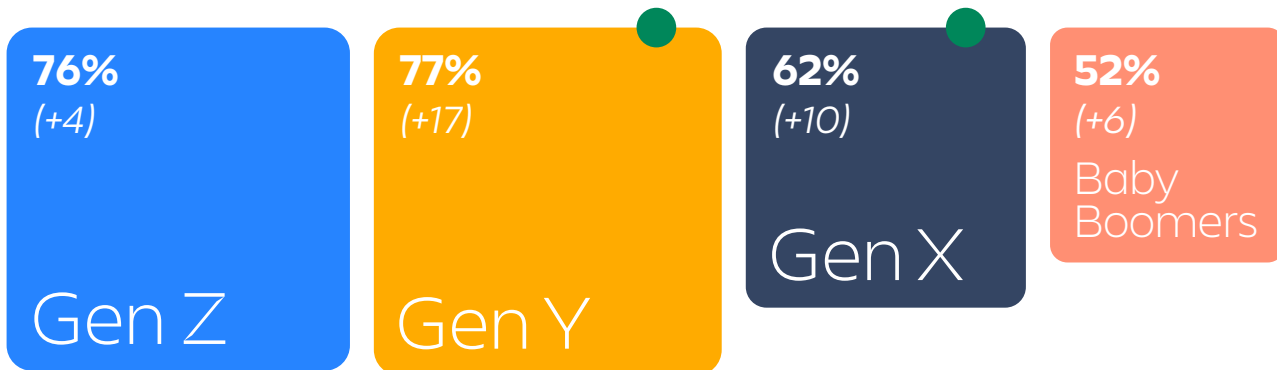
The reward for action is increasing, and businesses that speak out on issues are more attractive as future employers

Over three quarters of Gen Y workers agree or strongly agree that an employer who speaks out on issues that are personally important is more attractive as a future employer, up from 60% in 2020. Gen X also posted a significant increase in the past 12 months.

EXHIBIT 24

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement:

“A business known for speaking out on issues that are important to me, is more attractive as a future employer.”



● = statistically significant increase + = indicates the % point increase from 2020

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214



TOTAL EMPLOYEES

68% (+11)

% of participants who answered “strongly agree” or “agree”

ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

Employees expect to be heard and want to see employers tackle the issues they care about

Two thirds of employees (64%) agree they want to be heard i.e. allowed to voice their opinions at work on issues that matter to them and this rises to 73% of Gen Z and 70% of Gen Y with significant increases this year compared to last amongst Gen X. The importance of the employee voice is only becoming more prevalent in Australian workplaces.

This year there were also significant increases amongst Gen Y and X in agreeing they want a say in the issues their employers take action on. The employment relationship is shifting to a social contract requiring continuous dialogue.

64%

of employees
want **to be heard**
(+3)

55%

of employees want
to influence decisions
(+10)

● = significantly higher than 2020

+ = indicates the % point increase from 2020

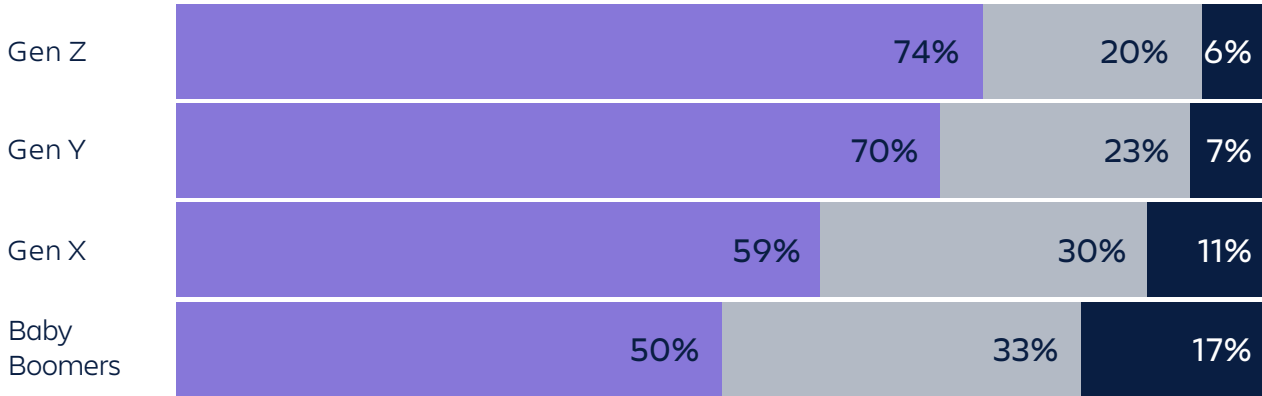


ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

EXHIBIT 25

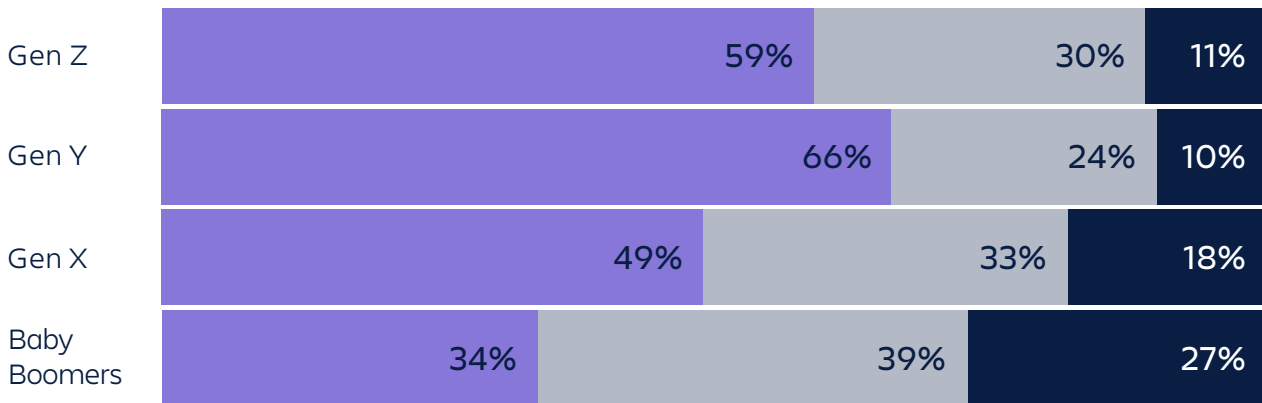
How much do you agree or disagree with the statement:

“Employees should be allowed to voice their opinions at work on political and societal issues that matter to them.”



How much do you agree or disagree with the statement:

“I want to have a say in what societal issues my employer takes action on.”



KEY: ● Strongly agree/agree ● Neither agree or disagree ● Strongly disagree/disagree

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214

Data subject to rounding and may not add to 100%.

ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

Gen Y have aligned with Gen Z in recognising and applauding businesses who take action

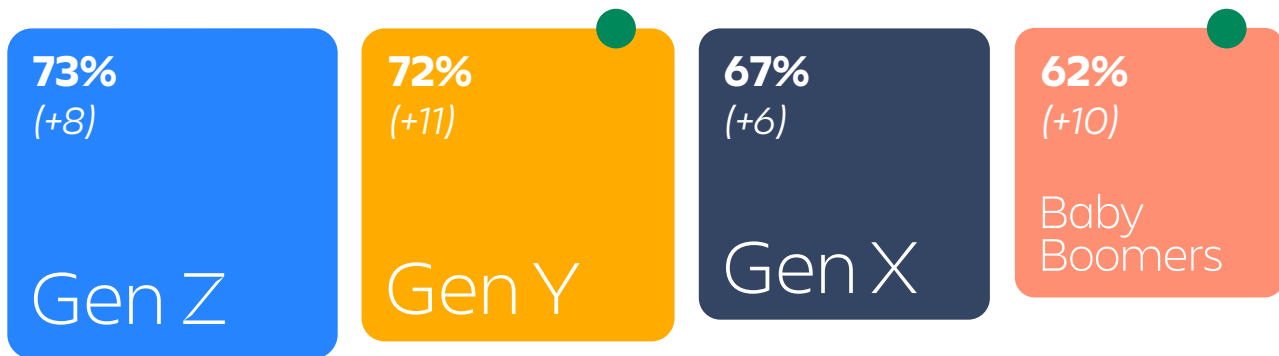
There is a statistically significant increase in agreement for applauding a company for having a public stand on important issues not directly related to their business; 69% agree in 2021 vs 60% in 2020.

Taking a public stand is striking a chord across the generations, with significant increases among Gen Y (51% in 2020 to 72% in 2021) and Baby Boomers (52% in 2020 to 62% in 2021).

EXHIBIT 26

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement:

“A business known for speaking out on issues that are important to me, is more attractive as a future employer.”



● = statistically significant increase + = indicates the % point increase from 2020

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Gen Z: 124 Gen Y: 551 Gen X: 336 Baby Boomers: 214



TOTAL EMPLOYEES

69% (+9)

% of participants who answered “strongly agree” or “agree”

ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

Gen Y leading the charge

Gen Y have driven the greatest uplift across key statements compared to the other generational cohorts. Gen Y employees have made it clear; our current and future workforces will not tolerate inaction. These changemakers have borne the brunt of work-related upheaval over the past 12 months which has meant their priorities have been reassessed.

It's no coincidence that they have also shown the greatest increase in support of businesses addressing a broad set of societal issues usually considered the responsibility of government. Whether it's protecting the environment, improving the economy or increasing equality, the momentum for change is growing.

EXHIBIT 27

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements:

% agree or strongly agree



TOTAL RESPONDENTS
GEN Y: 2021: 551 2020: 516

Participants responded "strongly agree" or "agree" to the question statement: "it is important for businesses to speak up/act on societal issues their employees care about/that impact their employees."

ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

Trust in business authenticity on societal issues has also increased

More than half of workers (55%) agree or strongly agree that business ‘can be trusted to be authentic when speaking out on societal issues’, up from 49% in 2020.

Views differed based on the size of the employer’s business with the least (and declining) trust among small business workers and the greatest trust gains among workers of medium-sized businesses (60%).

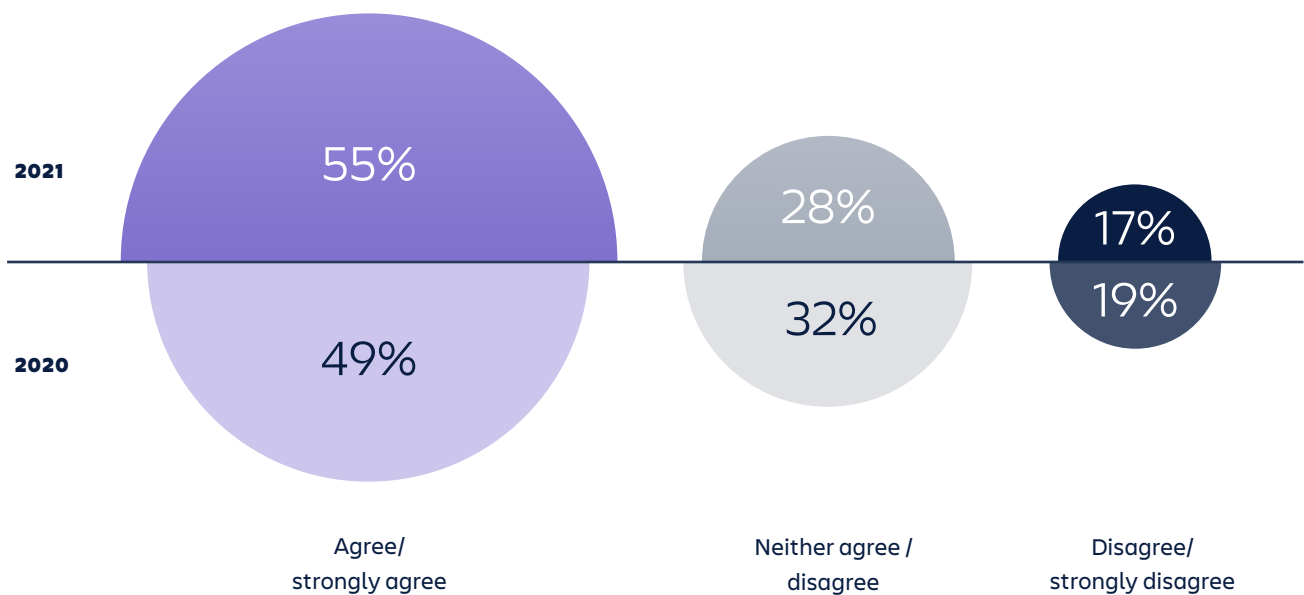
Trust also varies by industry, with significant gains reported by **financial and insurance services**, and **information, media, and telecommunications**, compared to industries such as **retail** and **health**.

Interestingly, a trust decline was reported in the **health** industry in a year when the all eyes were on businesses in this space.

EXHIBIT 28

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement:

“I trust businesses to be genuine when speaking out on societal issues.”



TOTAL RESPONDENTS

2020: 1214 | 2021: 1225

ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

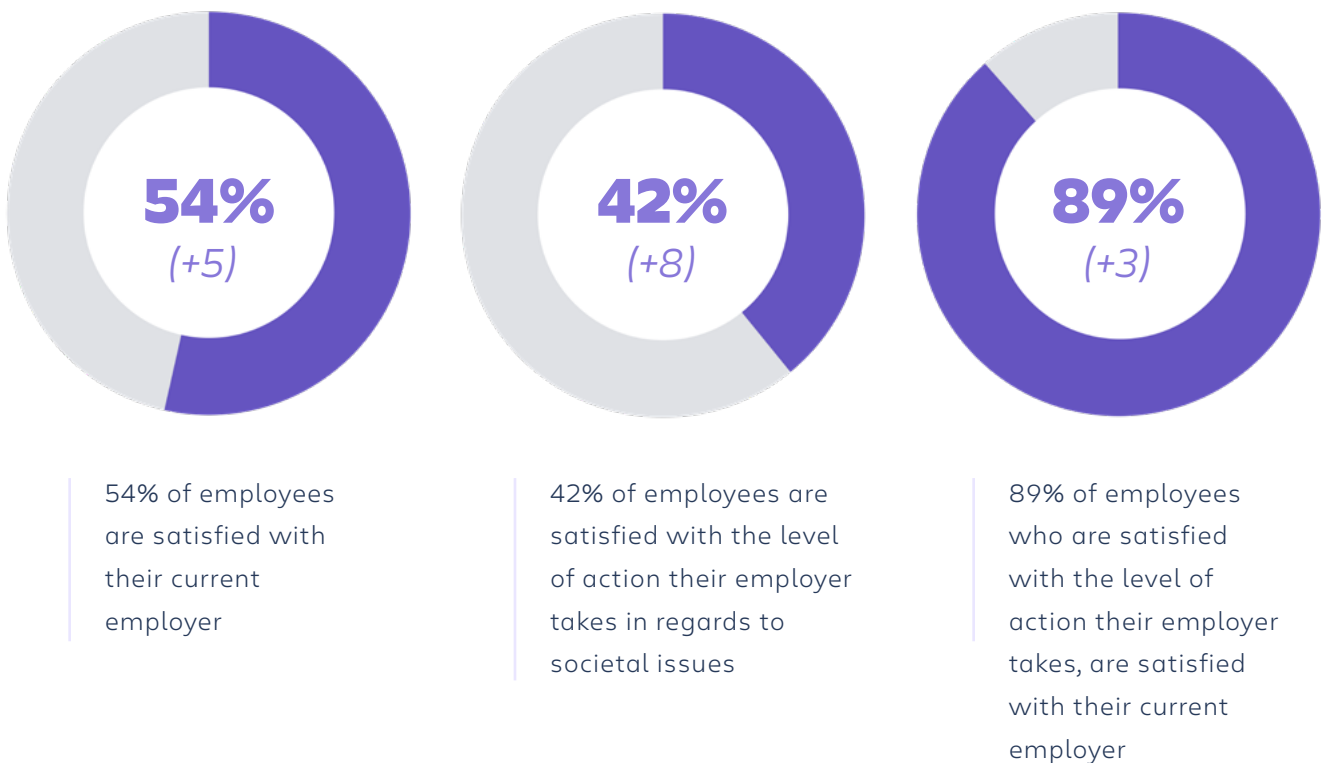
There is a clear relationship between business action and workforce satisfaction

Over half of workers surveyed (54%) were satisfied with their current employer, yet only 42% were satisfied with the level of action their employer takes in regards to addressing societal issues. Satisfaction with employer action is improving year on year (8% point increase) however these scores suggests that there is more work to be done by employers to address the issues with are important to employees.

Among those satisfied with the level of action taken by their employer, 89% are also satisfied with their current employer. This indicates a positive relationship between business action on societal issues and workforce satisfaction.

EXHIBIT 29

To what extent are you satisfied with the level of action your employer takes in regards to addressing societal issues?



TOTAL RESPONDENTS

2021: 1,225 Satisfied with level of employer action: 515

+ = indicates the % point increase from 2020

ACTION LEADS TO REWARD

“I believe we all play a role in social issues like gender equality, racism, environment, and mental health. From single persons to large businesses and governments, these issues should be a collective response and actions, working together to achieve the best outcomes.”

FEMALE, GEN X

Works in health

“Businesses should be taking more responsibility for their actions rather than simply say they are acting within the rules and that is all they need to do.”

MALE, BABY BOOMER

Works in manufacturing

“Money is a powerful force. If business can change its mindset from benefit the shareholders to benefit humanity we all win in the end.”

MALE, GEN Y

Works in retail



What this means for business leaders

With the line between work and life becoming increasingly blurred, a 360-degree appreciation of the workforce and what matters needs to be reflected dynamically in the employee value proposition.

Employers need to move away from the model of a single corporate social responsibility (CSR) function in the business, and make it an underlying pillar of how they do business.

This includes anticipating what's ahead and increasing the appeal and maturity of what's offered to the emerging workforce. ●



Appendix

Research methodology

PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting (Australia) Pty Limited completed the research to support this work. The research aimed to deepen understanding of how societal issues are regarded by the Australian workforce in terms of:

-
- Relative importance and support
 - Risks and opportunities for business
 - Expectations of responsibility

This report takes a workforce perspective, exploring how views differ by segments such as demographics, industry and size of business. The aim is to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how businesses can act to improve outcomes not only for society, but for their employees.

The second year of the Return on Action report

The Return on Action report was first launched in March 2020. The insights for the 2020 report were generated from exploratory qualitative research to determine the research scope, and quantitative research provided comparative analysis across demographics, regions, employment industries and other profile measures (as identified on page 59).

This allowed for the identification of:

-
- Which societal issues matter most, by how much and to whom
 - Size of perceptual differences and gaps

The online survey was up to 15 minutes in length and conducted between 9/12/19 - 18/12/19 running simultaneously in both Australia and the US. Noting that this time was also when Australia was experiencing emergency level bushfires across multiple states.

The quantitative survey was repeated in February 2021 between 24/02/21 - 15/03/21 and once again run simultaneously in both Australia and the US. The sample structure and majority of the survey construct were consistent year on year to allow for comparability of data. To enable greater contextual understanding for the 2021 findings, a few new questions were added to firstly validate perceptions of change, i.e. are particular societal issues more, the same or less important to you now compared to 12 months ago, and secondly to better understand the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on employees.

Research methodology

Quantitative research details

1225 Australian employees participated in the 2021 survey, with representation across demographics, region and a cross section of employment industries. ‘Employees’ were defined as those employed on a permanent, part time or casual basis, who work at least 15 hours per week, have been employed by their current, main workplace for at least 3 months and work within one of 6 designated industries (identified on page 59).

The survey analysis included a trade-off task known as Maxdiff or Best/Worst, to determine the relative personal importance of 25 issues identified as key concerns in the qualitative research. The exercise presented respondents with a subset of four (4) specific issues. They were asked, considering their own personal values, from each subset, to identify the issue that is most important to them and the issue that is least important to them personally. This task was repeated, showing each respondents 10 sets of issues, selected randomly.

The data in this report is significance tested to a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of 3% which means statistics are within 3 percentage points of the real population 95% of the time.

In some visual representations of the data, results are subject to rounding and may not add to 100%.

APPENDIX

A year in context

For additional context of this research it is worth noting that between the first and second Return on Action reports, Australians have experienced some significant societal events, including (but not limited to):

 25 January, 2020	 4 March, 2020	 20 March, 2020	 21 March, 2020
First confirmed case of COVID-19 in Victoria	All bushfires contained or extinguished, 9 months after the first one of this season began	Australian borders closed to all non-residents and individual states and territories closing their borders to varying degrees	Social distancing rules imposed and state governments started to close “non-essential” services
 23 March, 2020	 30 March, 2020	 1-5 June, 2020	 19 June, 2020
Centrelink and myGov websites crash due to too many people simultaneously applying for unemployment benefits	Start of JobKeeper government payments	Anti-racism protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and to demonstrate against police brutality, institutional racism and Aboriginal deaths in custody	A large scale cyber attack against the Australian government is believed to have occurred
 July 2020	 2 August, 2020	 21 February, 2021	 March, 2021
Peak unemployment rate of 7.5% (since lowered to 5.6% in March 2021)	Peak of COVID-19 in Australia with stage 4 restrictions introduced in Victoria	The first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine was administered	Widespread flooding in New South Wales and Queensland

APPENDIX

Twenty-five social issues were explored as part of the research

Economic 1. Cost of living 2. Poverty 3. Overpopulation
4. Wealth gap 5. Homelessness 6. Tax reform
7. International trade 8. Unemployment

Environmental 9. Climate change/global warming
10. Waste and pollution 11. Animal welfare
12. Drought and access to water

Equality 13. Gender equality 14. LGBTQ+ rights
15. Racism 16. Disability/Accessibility 17. Access to education

Health and wellbeing 18. Access to healthcare 19. Aged care
20. Mental health and wellness 21. Cost of healthcare

Human and legal rights 22. Immigration 23. Abortion
24. Gun control/gun rights 25. Data privacy

APPENDIX

Research sample

	2020 1,224		2021 1,225	
Gen Z (21-24)	126	10%	124	10%
Gen Y (25-42)	516	43%	551	45%
Gen X (43-54)	362	30%	336	27%
Baby Boomers (55-65)	210	17%	214	17%
Male*	572	47%	566	46%
Female	641	53%	659	54%
New South Wales/ Australian Capital Territory	387	32%	400	32%
Victoria	360	30%	364	30%
Queensland	199	16%	214	17%
Western Australia	154	13%	128	10%
South Australia /Tasmania/ Northern Territory	114	9%	119	10%
Greater capital city areas	999	82%	1026	84%
Regional areas	215	8%	199	16%
Information, media, and telecommunications	200	16%	197	16%
Financial and insurance services	205	17%	176	14%
Professional, scientific and technical services	203	17%	220	18%
Manufacturing	204	17%	203	17%
Retail	200	16%	208	17%
Health	202	17%	202	18%
Employees of small 5-19	244	20%	210	17%
Employees of med 20-199	379	31%	392	32%
Employees of large 200+	591	49%	623	51%

Quantitative Sample for Australia 2020 (margin of error 3%) Quantitative sample for Australia 2021 (margin of error 3%)



PASO PEATONAL EN DOS TIEMPOS

