



Australian Unity Wellbeing Index: Survey 40

The economy, our carers and Australians' wellbeing

Tracking our wellbeing in 2023

Wellbeing in a time of crisis

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index offers an annual insight into Australians' wellbeing—and the results from the 2023 survey reflected a difficult year.



Until the last couple of years, few people had ever heard the word “permacrisis”. Yet this combination of “permanent” and “crisis” is used with increasing regularity to refer to an extended period of insecurity and instability. Sadly, that term also sums up the context in which the latest Australian Unity Wellbeing Index survey took place.

A tumultuous year

Each year, the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index—which is conducted in partnership with Deakin University—tracks how people are feeling about their personal lives and the nation as a whole. Back in June 2023, the survey collected data from more than 2,000 people around the country.

“At the time, there were some concerning things going on around the world,” admits lead researcher

Dr Kate Lycett, from Deakin University’s School of Psychology.

The international stage was tumultuous, with the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine continuing to dominate headlines. At the same time, climate change was causing alarm, with the Northern Hemisphere beginning its hottest summer on record.

Against that global backdrop, cost of living was dominating the headlines in Australia. Many households were also struggling to stay afloat as the cost of essentials—including housing, energy and groceries—surged.

“In June 2023, cost-of-living pressures were really hitting home,” says Kate. “We’d had 12 interest-rate hikes in just one year, and a national survey in February by the Melbourne Institute showed that half of Australians were feeling financially stressed and were struggling to make ends meet.”

These combined pressures made the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index survey particularly relevant. How were Australians coping?

Understanding our wellbeing

“Wellbeing is different for everyone, it’s subjective,” says Kate. “So we look at how satisfied people are with their ‘lives as a whole’ and ‘their life in Australia’, but we also drill down deeper into satisfaction with different domains across their lives.”

The seven key domains, or areas, of the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) that the survey explores are: relationships, achieving in life, standard of living, health, community connectedness, personal safety and future security. The survey also tracks six domains of the National Wellbeing Index, including our satisfaction with the economic situation, the

natural environment, social conditions, the government, business and national security.

By measuring these fundamentals annually, the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index can develop a robust assessment of how we’re tracking as a nation.

This year’s survey also delved into a number of topical areas. “Mental distress was a big focus, because we’ve tracked it throughout the pandemic, and so we wanted to check how it was going this year,” says Kate.

One fresh area of investigation was the wellbeing of our carers, who play such a vital role in our community, but also face unique challenges. “We know we have an aging population,” explains Kate. “So caring is going to become even more important in the future.”

The Wellbeing Index offers a multifaceted and holistic view of wellbeing that recognises

its role in every aspect of our lives. It’s an approach that is increasingly being recognised at a governmental and policy level—most notably, in the Treasury’s recent *Measuring What Matters Framework*, which seeks to integrate wellbeing into Australia’s measures of national progress.

“The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index has been going for over 22 years now,” says Kate. “It’s really exciting that the Treasury is now also talking about the importance of subjective wellbeing as one of the core indicators they will be tracking.”

A brief history



For more than 20 years, the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index has tracked both the personal wellbeing and national wellbeing of Australians.

The Personal Wellbeing Index tracks how satisfied Australians are with their own lives across a range of “domains” or areas: standard of living (finances), health, achieving in life (sense of purpose), relationships, personal safety, community connectedness and future security. In addition, the National Wellbeing Index measures our satisfaction with our life in Australia, across the economy, the environment, social conditions, government, business and national security.

The first national survey was conducted in 2001 by Robert A Cummins, Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Deakin University. Since then, more than 75,000 Australians have been interviewed and the Personal Wellbeing Index has become the pre-eminent survey of its kind, informing and influencing the concept of wellbeing across academia, government, business, media and the community.

Today, the Personal Wellbeing Index has been adopted for use by both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), while Australia and other countries like New Zealand, Scotland, Wales, Iceland and Finland are now incorporating wellbeing measures into their national budgets and policies.



Learn more

1. [What is Real Wellbeing?](#)
2. [The science of wellbeing](#)
3. [Why measure wellbeing?](#)

Key findings: wellbeing continues to stagnate

Australians’ wellbeing has faced unprecedented challenges over the past few years. But the latest Australian Unity Wellbeing Index research shows we’re not out of the woods just yet.

“I can’t get no satisfaction” was the line famously sung by The Rolling Stones’ Mick Jagger. Unfortunately, this rather cheerless declaration also seems to sum up the current mindset of many Australians this year, according to the latest data from the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index.

Continuing challenges for our wellbeing

The 2023 findings paint a largely gloomy picture. Last year, the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index survey found that our scores for “satisfaction with life as a whole” plummeted to the lowest levels on record, with a score of 74.5. This year, the needle hardly budged. Despite Australia finally leaving behind the most disruptive effects of

COVID-19, there was no tangible improvement in 2023.

“A lot of that is probably coming from the cost-of-living pressures people are feeling,” explains lead researcher Dr Kate Lycett. “When they think how satisfied they are with their life overall at the moment, most Australians aren’t very satisfied.

“We need to improve this. We need people to have a good level of satisfaction with their lives because we know that has real consequences for our health and for the economy.”

The Wellbeing Index also studies a related metric focusing on our “satisfaction with life in Australia”. This considers the question through a national lens, exploring how content we are with life in this country. This slight change of angle, however, delivered practically identical

results. Last year we witnessed the lowest score on record, while 2023 was almost identical.

Given these findings, it may come as little surprise that our national wellbeing scores have also continued to drop. After a record high in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Australians’ national wellbeing is now only slightly higher than the lowest score in the Wellbeing Index’s history.

When the researchers drilled down to explore the various domains, or areas, that contributed to this result, it was easy to find the main culprit. “The one that absolutely out stood out was ‘satisfaction with the economic situation in Australia,’” says Kate. “That has registered a sharp decline since 2020 and is now below the average range.

“We think that’s quite important

because even when we looked at the Global Financial Crisis in 2008, it didn’t drop that low. People are very dissatisfied with the overall economic situation in Australia and we know it is hurting people in different ways.”

Age and income inequities

You don’t have to be a social researcher to figure out the reasons for this national malaise. Rapid-fire interest-rate rises and a housing shortage increased our mortgages and rents, which was compounded by surging grocery and energy costs. Yet the fallout is hitting certain groups particularly hard.

This year’s Wellbeing Index found a marked disparity in personal wellbeing levels. “There seemed to be a clear divide,” says Kate. “Anyone from a household with an income of \$100,000 or less had personal wellbeing scores below or at the bottom of the average range. The same was true of anyone aged 55 years and

under compared to older adults.”

These groups also registered significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their standard of living—reinforcing the idea that pronounced wellbeing inequities are developing within Australian society based on income and age.

A boosted sense of connection

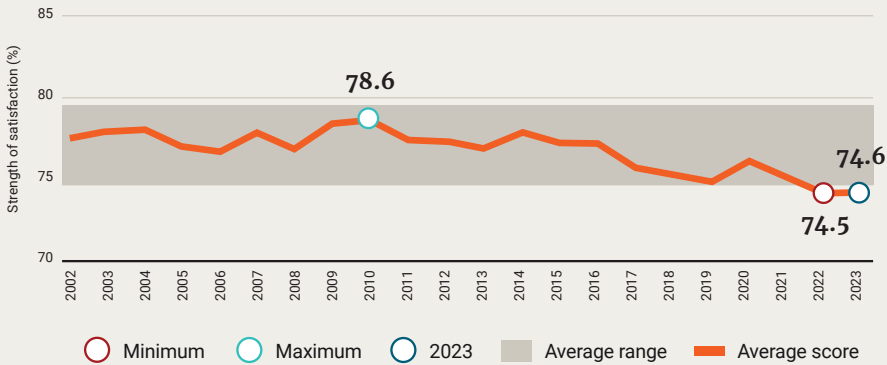
Searching for more positive news, the research found that personal wellbeing scores in 2023 enjoyed what Kate describes as a “pretty marginal” rise. But there was one undeniable highlight, with our sense of community connectedness recording a tangible increase. In fact, this measure—which relates to our sense of community and how connected we feel to those around us—is the factor Kate believes was responsible for pulling up overall Personal Wellbeing Index scores.

“We’re speculating, but this may be because, in June 2023,

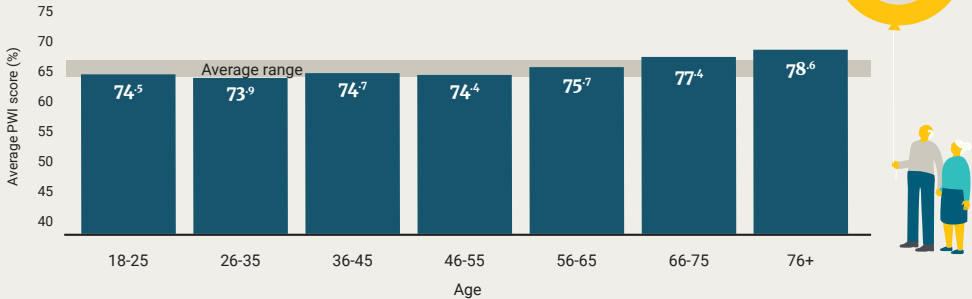
things had returned to normal in terms of the pandemic,” she says. “There was no longer a need to isolate, for instance. So people were probably able to revive those community connections that they had pre-pandemic.”

As one of the seven domains that contribute to our overall wellbeing, community connectedness is always important. Yet, in a year when so many Australians have reported being financially stressed, it perhaps becomes even more valuable. Our sense of community can, after all, fuel us with a feeling of belonging, support and emotional connection—and when we’re going through tough times, this can be the glimmer of light we need.

Satisfaction with life as a whole



Our personal wellbeing scores by age



Learn more

[Australian Unity Wellbeing Index: Survey 40](#)

The changing impact of income on wellbeing

Our income has a clear impact on our wellbeing. But as cost-of-living pressures continue to mount, that relationship is changing.

The Australian identity is centred on the idea that we live in an egalitarian society. We proudly celebrate the fact that we sit in the front seat of taxis and are far more likely to address someone as “mate” than “sir”. Sadly, as a growing chasm emerges between Australia’s “haves” and “have-nots”, this long-held belief is starting to look like a glossy myth.

Income, wellbeing and the “everyday Australian”
Our financial situation is crucial to our wellbeing. Australian Unity Wellbeing Index data shows a clear link between low income and lower levels of personal wellbeing. Past research has found that people managing on a household

income of less than \$60,000 had their personal wellbeing most affected. Over the past two years, however, that dial moved in an alarming direction.
“In 2023, all groups on a household income of \$100,000 or less had personal wellbeing scores below the average range,” says lead researcher Dr Kate Lycett. “It’s really significant to see that.”
The jump from \$60,000 to \$100,000 is concerning. According to ABS Census data, the median household income in Australia is around \$92,000 per year. This means it’s not just those on below-average finances whose wellbeing is low—it’s the majority of Australians. “More than 50 percent of the population have a household income below \$100,000,” says Kate.

It’s a shift that has the potential to resonate throughout the lives of those affected. Wellbeing Index research has long identified the presence of a “golden triangle of happiness”—that is, three life areas that are the key to predicting overall life satisfaction. These are standard of living (financial wellbeing), achieving in life (a sense of purpose) and personal relationships.
This year’s research showed an income-based divide in satisfaction with those areas. There were stark gaps when it came to standard of living and achieving in life, where people with a household income of \$100,000 or less were far less satisfied than people living in households earning more than \$100,000.

“There’s a pattern where people living in households on less than \$100,000 had lower scores on average across those three areas,” says Kate.

A growing divide
A striking development is also visible in more prosperous households. Wellbeing Index research has traditionally found that wellbeing scores increase in line with income, but only up to \$150,000. After reaching that threshold, the associated rise in wellbeing would normally be shown to plateau and level off. Now, Kate reveals, that relationship between income and wellbeing is continuing well into the higher wealth brackets.
“In households with incomes from \$101,000 to \$150,000, we’re now seeing a big increase in personal wellbeing, and that rise is repeated in the next group, which is \$151,000 to \$250,000. Once you get above that again, you get an even bigger boost,” she says.

“What we’re seeing is that money matters more to personal wellbeing than ever before, as the cost of basic necessities rise.”

Compounding financial pressures
The news that Australian households with incomes lower than \$100,000 are struggling is grimly predictable for Ben McAlpine, Acting CEO of the NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS).
“We’ve got the compounding effects of COVID-19, sky-high inflation, successive disasters,

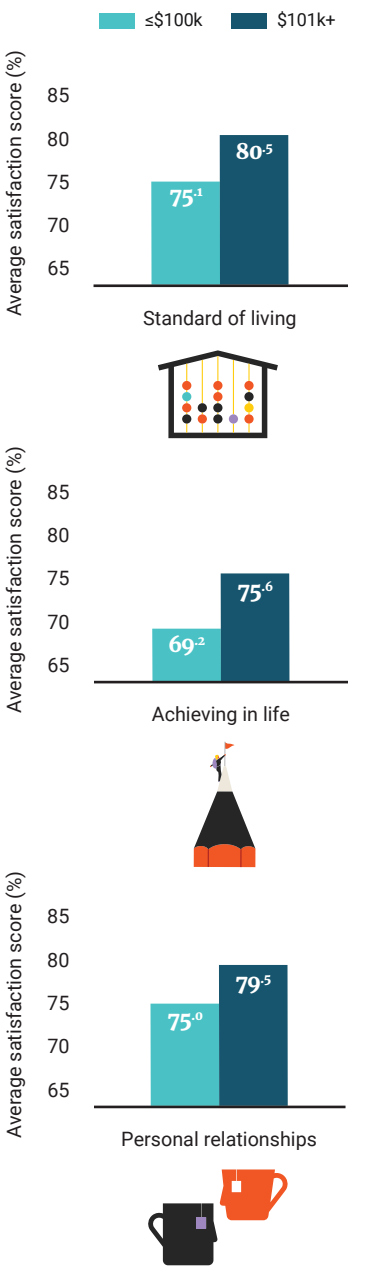
flatlining wages—all of these things are combining to push many towards breaking point,” explains Ben.
“We’re seeing skyrocketing rents and month after month of interest-rate rises. And as housing costs increase, that takes up more of a family’s budget, so they need to either somehow earn more income or make increasingly difficult and fraught sacrifices.”

NCOSS is seeing widespread evidence of the pain this situation is wreaking on middle-income Australia. “Our members—critical frontline service providers—are seeing more families, including dual-income families who have never required support before, coming to seek help,” he says, pointing to rapidly increasing housing costs and the surging prices of everyday essentials—including power bills and food—as critical problems.

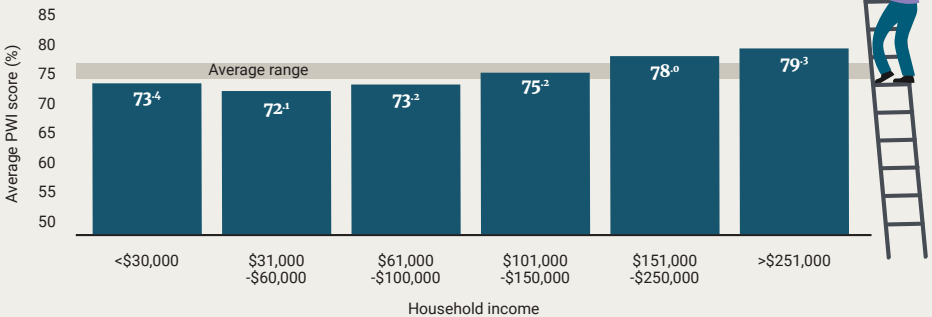
All this is concerning news for the notion of Australia being egalitarian and the country of the “the fair go”.

“The significant risk here is that as more and more people are pushed to the edge, they are only one financial crisis away from homelessness,” emphasises Ben. “That is the type of ripple effect that could create significant gaps between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’.”

Golden triangle domains by household income



Personal wellbeing by household income



Learn more

- [1. The changing impact of income on wellbeing](#)
- [2. How our finances affect our wellbeing](#)
- [3. The golden triangle of happiness](#)

Wellbeing in an economic crisis

Australian Unity Wellbeing Index research is demonstrating a clear connection between our economy and our wellbeing. Our experts unpack the results.

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2007–08 was the most severe economic disaster to rock the world since the Great Depression of 1929. While the financial world teetered on the brink, Australia faced slowed economic growth, higher unemployment rates and a period of heightened uncertainty.

It therefore speaks volumes about our current situation that Australians right now are significantly less satisfied with the economy than they were during those difficult GFC days. In fact, our satisfaction levels have plummeted to an all-time low on the Wellbeing Index.

Increasing pressure

“Australians are feeling worried about the economy and

financially stressed,” admits lead researcher Dr Kate Lycett.

The data from Australian Unity Wellbeing Index shows that many of us are feeling the pinch and are worried about the economy. Every age group recorded lower satisfaction levels with the economic situation in Australia compared to 2022, with younger adults aged 18 to 45 notably less satisfied with the economic situation than those aged 76 and over.

“There were rises in living costs across the board, but obviously they were particularly hard for people who had mortgages, because of the interest-rate rises, and also for people who don't own homes with rising rental prices,” says Kate.

How much does this financial

unease impact on our national wellbeing? The research shows there's an unavoidable link.

“Satisfaction with the economic situation dropped sharply in 2023 and people's satisfaction with life in Australia overall remained at a record low,” says Kate.

Despite our collective concern over the state of the economy, satisfaction with our overall standard of living—or financial wellbeing—remains steady. The 2023 score remains around the middle of the average range. This doesn't constitute a decline from last year's results, although it still represents a significant drop from the all-time high of 81.2 in 2020. There is, also, a clear generational divide, with standard-of-living satisfaction conspicuously lower for those aged 55 and under compared to those aged 56 and over.

Yet the overall stability of these standard-of-living results offer no meaningful consolation, explains Esther Kerr, Australian Unity's CEO of Wealth and Capital Markets.

“We should not be taking any comfort from standard of living holding steady. If the economy was improving and growing in a productive way, our standard of living should be rising.”

Economic policy and wellbeing

On a more encouraging note, the Australian Government released its *Measuring What Matters Framework* in July. The wellbeing framework looks to broaden our metrics of national success beyond the traditional measures of gross domestic product (GDP), inflation and unemployment to consider the wellbeing impact of policy decisions.

“This idea of the wellbeing economy is about measuring the ultimate outcomes of all policy initiatives and ensuring that dollars are spent in service of wellbeing outcomes,” says Esther. “If we only have a fiscal budget, we are only measuring intermediate outcomes—not whether they've worked or not.”

Shaping our financial wellbeing

What this year's Wellbeing Index results unequivocally show is that the *Measuring What Matters Framework* is a big step in the right direction. But they also highlight new lows in satisfaction with the economic situation in Australia and people's standard

of living, particularly for those aged 55 years and under.

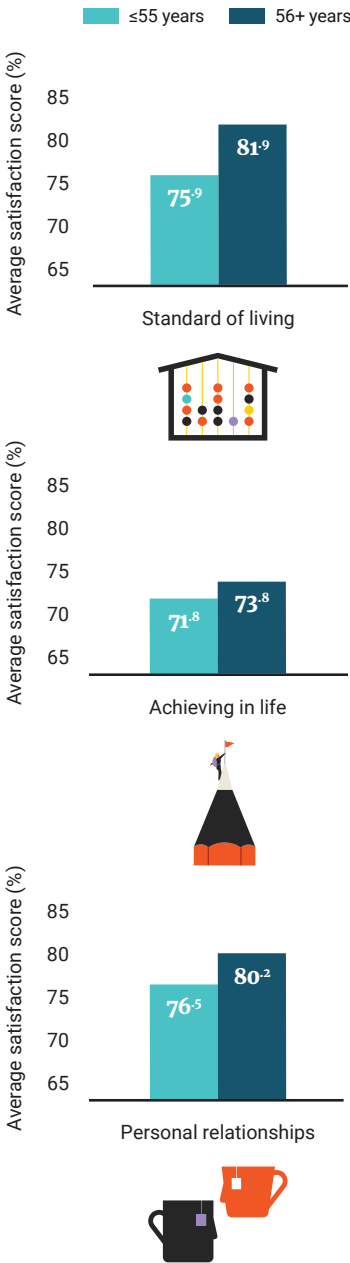
Each of us has an important role to play in our own financial wellbeing, but it is also undeniably shaped by broader environmental factors—such as affordability of childcare, education, aged care and housing—and the policy decisions that drive them. Esther points to that stark generational divide in satisfaction with standard of living as an example of this, highlighting the government's long-standing emphasis on accumulating wealth for a comfortable retirement.

“Pre- and post-retirement, there is a substantial difference in how people feel about their standard of living,” she says. “Given the disparity, we need more attention on the prospects and the standard of living and the wellbeing—pre-retirement—for people in their 20s, 30s and 40s.”

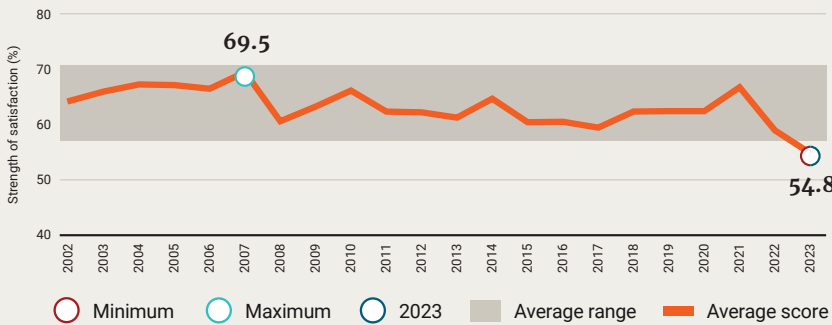
The Australian Government's new emphasis on wellbeing is a positive development. But the very composition of the phrase “wellbeing economy” emphasises the importance of the financial elements that underpin Australians' wellbeing. This year's Wellbeing Index results only serve to further highlight the connection between our economy and our wellbeing.

“If we are going to boost Australian's wellbeing,” says Kate, “we have to see a change in the economic situation of the country, and one that prioritises wellbeing of younger Australians.”

Golden triangle domains by age



Satisfaction with the economic situation



Learn more

[Wellbeing in an economic crisis](#)

[How our finances affect our wellbeing](#)

The wellbeing of our informal carers

Australian Unity Wellbeing Index research shows that many informal (unpaid) carers struggle to cope with the intense demands of the role.

“The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.” It’s a quote that’s been variously attributed to both Mahatma Gandhi and former US vice president Hubert Humphrey. Yet whoever actually said it, there’s surely truth to those words, a recognition that how we look after our most powerless groups—whether sick, elderly, disabled or young—is a marker of our broader humanity.

Being a carer constitutes a vital social duty, but that’s not to say it’s an easy one.

Take Harry*, a 49-year-old Melburnian who lives with his wife and 12-year-old son while working full-time for a local council. His parents—aged 86 and 92—are separated, but

Harry provides informal care to both. He estimates those caring duties amount to about 10 hours a week.

That might not sound like an overwhelming burden, but it still poses a logistical challenge that takes its toll on other areas of his life. Harry can never anticipate when one of his parents will need him, often at short notice, making it impossible for him to plan his time and energy.

“The most challenging part is the impact it has on my family and myself, because it’s impossible for me to be a carer and for it to not impact the people around me,” says Harry.

Lower wellbeing and higher mental distress

While hardly unusual, Harry’s experience demonstrates the sort

of unspoken demands and issues that informal carers face. “We know that demand for unpaid or informal caring will increase with our aging population,” says lead researcher Dr Kate Lycett. “So understanding the wellbeing of this group is paramount for us as a society. Anything we can do to improve it is really important.”

Reflecting this, this year’s Australian Unity Wellbeing Index had a special focus on the wellbeing of carers—and the results were concerning.

Some 21 percent of respondents identified as informal carers, with their roles ranging from helping a neighbour a couple of times a week to providing round-the-clock care to a family member. These informal carers showed a pattern of lower levels of personal wellbeing



Personal wellbeing by hours spent caring each week

Less than 20 hours

75.⁶

20 to 39 hours

71.⁷

40+ hours

70.¹

and higher mental distress and loneliness compared to non-carers and professional carers. This demonstrates the toll that informal caring can take.

The impact on everyday life

Such findings are grimly predictable, admits Judith Abbott, CEO of Carers Victoria. “Many unpaid carers are performing their role around the clock, seven days a week. They often leave knowing that circumstances can change quickly, and that they’ll need to provide additional support without notice. That can really impact the health and wellbeing of those unpaid carers because of the level of uncertainty they have to live with.

“That can also lead to increased loneliness because it can be quite hard to maintain friendships and social connections if you are having to juggle two full-time jobs [caring and paid employment].”

The need for support

One of the biggest factors that determines the wellbeing of an unpaid carer is their overall caring load—that is, how long they spend each week on caring duties. As Harry’s example shows, caring in any capacity poses challenges. But this year’s Wellbeing Index found that the bigger the carer’s time commitment, the more likely they were to run into trouble.

“Any informal carer who worked more than 20 hours a week had lower personal wellbeing and higher levels of mental distress,” says Kate. “And as that caring load increased to above 40 hours, it was even worse.

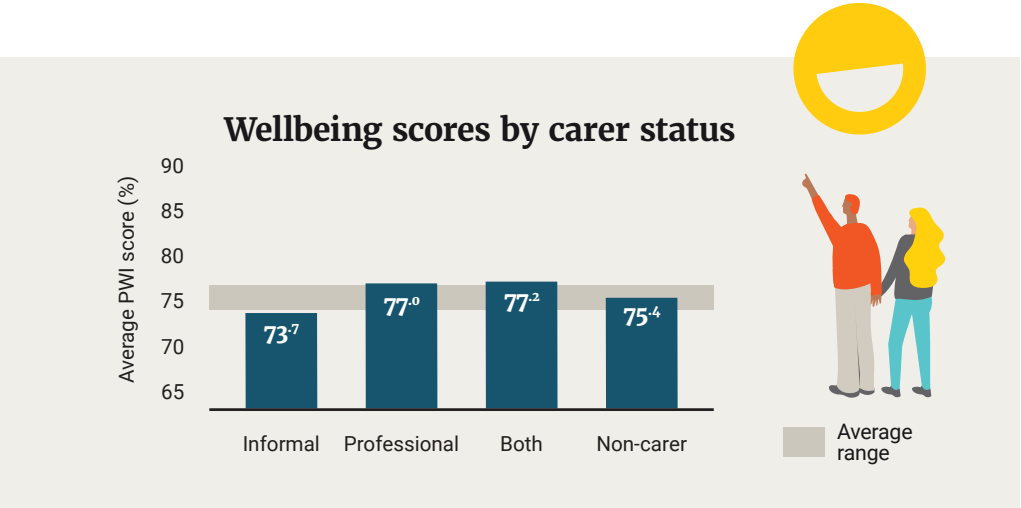
“It really shows us that if people are doing that number of hours, we need to give them more help—this might be in terms of extra home care or mental health support. These are good learnings for us going forward as a society when we think about the aging population and just how big the care economy is going to become.”

With that in mind, how can the average person support this silent army of informal carers? Judith believes that one step available to everyone is the simple act of acknowledgement combined with the offer of practical support.

“Carers don’t want to be recognised as heroes, but they want to be understood, and they want to be seen,” says Judith. “Just taking the time to check in regularly, to recognise what they’re doing, to ask how they can be supported—those small actions can be really powerful things.”

Informal carers were captured by asking all participants: “Do you currently provide any unpaid care for another person due to their ongoing illness, disability or old age?”. Interviewers were advised that receiving government assistance (e.g., carers allowance) for a caring role does not exclude respondents from providing unpaid care.

*Not his real name



Learn more

[Our informal carers are struggling. How can we help?](#)

Professional carers: the power of support

The demand for professional carers is growing rapidly—but how do care organisations attract and retain these vital employees? The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index has some insights.

Australia's population is aging fast. This year, the Australian Government's *Intergenerational Report* estimated that the number of people aged 65 and over will more than double over the next 40 years, while the number aged 85 and over will more than triple. The likely result? An increasing demand that's set to fall on the nation's carers.

In 2020–21, around 460,000 Australians worked as professional carers. But that number is woefully inadequate for what lies ahead. The *Intergenerational Report* suggests that in order to meet surging demand, the care workforce in 2049–50 may need to be twice the size it was in 2020–21. "Professional carers are

fundamental to the health of an aging population," insists Prue Bowden, CEO of Home Health for Australian Unity.

"It's the human connection they bring to that activity," she says, pointing to the vital work carers do to monitor their customers' health and identify changing needs for support and services. "It's incredibly important that there are trusted people who are providing that social, emotional and physical care."

Comparing carers' wellbeing
Carers are critical for our society, but the role can be challenging and is often undervalued. This year's Australian Unity Wellbeing Index showed that professional carers had personal wellbeing scores that sat at the top of

the average range. By contrast, informal carers fared decidedly less well.

Prue isn't surprised by the fact that professional carers tend to fare better than their unpaid counterparts, pointing to the vocational aspect of the job for many people, as well as the benefits of training and support, connections with colleagues and, of course, remuneration for their efforts.

"When you think about the elements of Real Wellbeing, it's about social connection, a sense of achievement, security, and safety," says Prue. "Professional carers have the skills to be able to do their job effectively, so they feel safer in the delivery of that care. Having that purpose in the profession you've chosen also means that you're more likely to

get a sense of achievement and joy from your work."

The power of support
Prue's insight is reinforced by this year's Wellbeing Index, which explored how satisfied informal and professional carers were with their access to training and skills courses, access to psychological support and ability to connect with other carers.

"There was a big difference in terms of their levels of satisfaction with access to these supports," says lead researcher Dr Kate Lycett, highlighting that professional carers were far more satisfied across these areas than informal carers.

It's a finding that points to an important opportunity for care organisations as they seek to attract and retain skilled employees.

Creating carer supports
But what does this look like in a practical sense? Leona Macdonald, Home Care Services Branch Manager for Australian Unity, knows firsthand the

benefit that structured support and training can provide. "They feel that they are valued," she says of her team. "They know that when they bring something up, someone's listening."

Established guidelines and ongoing training—both in-person and online—help Australian Unity's carers to feel more confident in their roles, while regular catch-ups, team meetings and one-on-ones with coaches also present opportunities to seek advice or simply vent about a bad day over a cup of tea.

Access to Australian Unity's mental health program Mindstep and an Employee Assistance Program that offers counselling and resources also play an important role in an industry where carers may regularly work with vulnerable people or need to cope with the deaths of long-time customers.

Such measures are significant, says Leona, as they help make a carer's job more sustainable in the long term and lessen the risk of burnout. "You have to be able

to switch off when you go home because sometimes you can take things with you," she says.

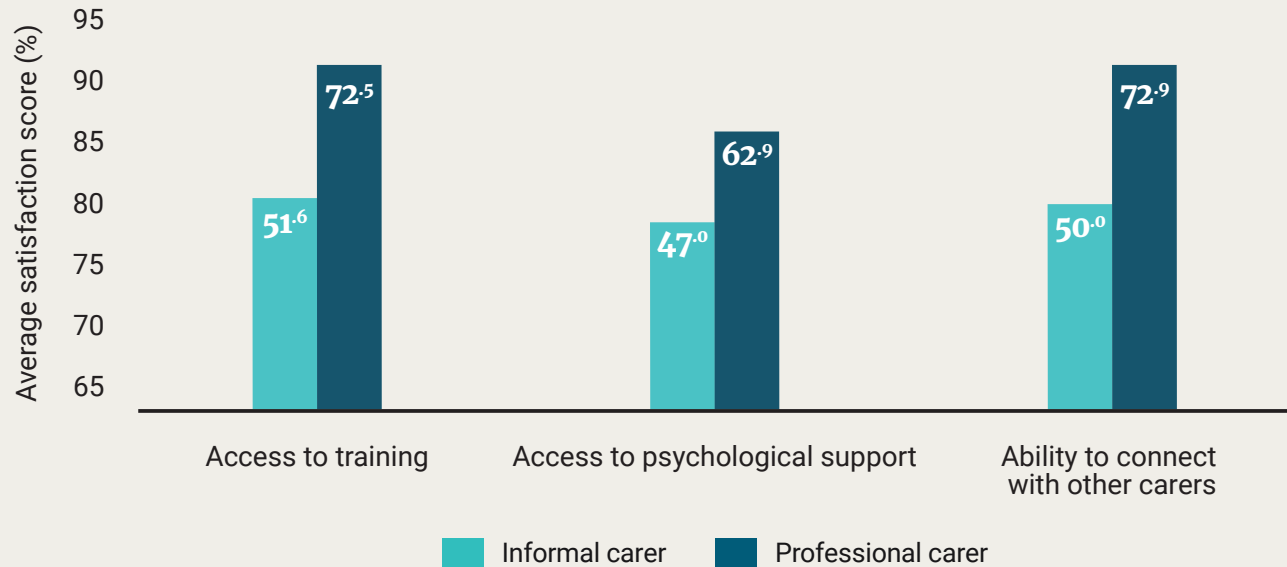
This sort of training, support and connection can help make a demanding role more viable and fulfilling—something that's particularly vital given Australia's need to recruit a vast number of carers in the years ahead. "We need to find ways to encourage people to consider it as a career pathway," emphasises Prue. "It really is one of the most wonderful professions."

Professional carers were captured by asking all participants: "As part of any paid work you do, do you currently provide care to people due to their ongoing illness, disability or old age?"



Learn more
[Empowering our carer workforce](#)

Satisfaction with carer supports



Contributors



Kate Lycett
is NHMRC Research Fellow at Deakin University's School of Psychology, and the lead researcher of the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index.



Tanja Capic
is a PhD candidate and a research assistant at Deakin University.



Mallery Crowe
is an epidemiologist and project officer on the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index at Deakin University.



Robert A. Cummins
is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Deakin University, and the creator of the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index.



Georgie Frykberg
is the project coordinator for the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index at Deakin University.



Matthew Fuller-Tyszkiewicz
is a Professor in the School of Psychology at Deakin University. He is a biostatistical adviser for the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index.



Delyse Hutchinson
is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Deakin University. She is a scientific adviser for the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index.



Sarah Khor
is a data analyst and clinical psychologist.



Craig A. Olsson
is a Professor of Child and Adolescent Health (Psychology) and Director of the Centre for Social and Early Emotional Development at Deakin University. He is a scientific adviser for the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index.



Prue Bowden
is the Chief Executive Officer of Home Health at Australian Unity. On pages 12 and 13, she discusses the wellbeing of care workers and the importance of attracting and retaining these vital employees.



Esther Kerr
is the Chief Executive Officer of Wealth and Capital Markets at Australian Unity. On pages 6 and 7, she discusses the impact our finances have on our wellbeing.

Australian Unity Editorial Team

- Head of Brand and Content**
Billy Falkingham
- Program Lead**
Maddy Stamatescu
- Senior Manager – Content**
Jeremy Little
- Creative Services Lead**
John Bollen
- Senior Multimedia Designer**
Claire Tao
- Graphic Designer**
Nick Singh
- Content Specialist**
Karlee Ventre
- Editorial Consultants**
Laura Stansfeld and Nancy Csutoros (Context Agency)
- Contributing Writer**
Luke Benedictus

Methodology

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is conducted by Deakin University using the following methodology to ensure the integrity of our research.

Academic rigour

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is one of the world's leading measures of subjective wellbeing conducted at a national level. It is an academic study that adheres to rigorous recruitment and statistical standards, with each survey being approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Deakin University. A team of academics within the School of Psychology at Deakin University is responsible for the recruitment of participants and data analysis.

Research method

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is a national survey of a random, geographically representative sample of English-speaking Australian adults, aged 18 years and over.

An even gender split is sought to reflect the national population in all surveys. The age composition of the sample is not actively managed, but yields a breakdown similar to that of the national population as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.



For the first 14 years of data collection, surveys were conducted between two and four times per year, and have subsequently been conducted once per year.

Approximately 2,000 participants are contacted via phone at each wave, with interviews typically lasting around 10 minutes. In 2018, the recruitment methodology changed from calling mostly landline numbers to calling only mobile phones, in accordance with the latest changes in telecommunication trends.

Presentation and type of analyses

All personal and national wellbeing data have been converted to a percentage of scale maximum score, which standardises the results to a 0–100 percentage point scale.

In this report the term “average” has been used in place of “normative” for ease of understanding.

These normative ranges have been calculated for the Personal Wellbeing Index, National Wellbeing Index, and each of their domains, by combining data across surveys. Analyses were conducted using Stata SE version 18, R and R studio.

A report for each survey, together with raw data and a data dictionary are available from “Cross-sectional surveys” at the Deakin University Australian Centre on Quality of Life website: <http://www.acqol.com.au/publications#reports>

Report organisation

All information presented herein is sourced from the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index data, unless indicated otherwise.



**Australian
Unity** 
Real Wellbeing

australianunity.com.au/wellbeing