



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 4940.0 - Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey, 14-17 Apr 2020

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### MEDIA RELEASE

1 May 2020

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### COVID-19: One-third of households financially worse off

Nearly half (45 per cent) of Australians aged 18 years and over had their household finances impacted by COVID-19 in the period mid-March to mid-April, according to results from the second ABS Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey.

The survey also highlighted changing patterns in how Australians are keeping in touch with each other and differences among age groups as to changes in emotional and mental well-being.

“One third of Australians (31 per cent) reported that their household finances had worsened over this period, while one in seven (14 per cent) reported an improvement,” said Michelle Marquardt, ABS Program Manager for Household Surveys.

While the majority of Australians (81 per cent) said their household could raise \$2,000 for something important within a week, lower than the 84 per cent reported in the *2014 General Social Survey*, a small number of Australians reported experiencing financial hardship.

“One in 13 Australians (7.5 per cent) said their household lacked the money to pay one or more bills on time, and one in ten (10 per cent) had to draw on accumulated savings to support basic living expenses,” added Ms Marquardt.

A quarter of Australians aged 18 years and over (28 per cent) said they received the first one-off \$750 economic support payment, announced by the Commonwealth Government in March as part of the COVID-19 economic stimulus package.

“Those aged 65 years and over were more likely than those aged 18 to 64 to have received the first one-off \$750 economic support payment (60 per cent compared with 19 per cent)” said Ms Marquardt.

“Around half (53 per cent) of persons who received the economic support payment added it to savings, with persons aged 65 years and over more likely to do so than persons aged 18 to 64 (71 per cent compared with 37 per cent).”

The survey also collected information about Australians’ emotional and mental well-being over the period mid-March to mid-April, and compared the findings to results from the ABS’ *2017-18 National Health Survey* (NHS).

“Compared to the *2017-18 National Health Survey* almost twice as many adults reported feelings associated with anxiety, such as nervousness or restlessness, at least some of the time over the last four weeks” said Ms Marquardt.

“Adults aged 18 to 64 years were nearly twice as likely as those aged 65 years and over to experience feelings related to anxiety at least some of the time.”

With limitations on movements associated with coronavirus restrictions, fewer Australians were seeing friends and family outside the home compared to the results from the *2014 General Social Survey* (48 per cent compared to 76 per cent in 2014), but many were using alternative ways to

stay in touch while in lockdown during the first two weeks of April.

“Two thirds of Australians (65 per cent) increased their frequency of non face-to-face contact with family and friends outside of their household, most commonly via audio-only calls (92 per cent), text and instant messaging (86 per cent), and video calls (67 per cent),” said Ms Marquardt.

The ABS would like to thank those Australian households that contributed to these survey results. The ABS plans to release additional information about the impacts of COVID-19 on Australian households over the next few months.

Further information can be found in Household Impacts of COVID-19 (cat. no. 4940.0).

**Media notes:**

Findings from the General Social Survey, 2014 and National Health Survey, 2017-18 referred to in this media release have not previously been published.

The ABS is producing a range of additional data to measure the impact of COVID-19 on Australia. Further information is available on the ABS website here.

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For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team on 1300 175 070 (8.30am - 5pm Mon-Fri).

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