

# THE ANZ ROY MORGAN FINANCIAL WELLBEING INDICATOR

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QUARTERLY UPDATE  
JUNE 2021



## FINANCIAL WELLBEING OVERVIEW

Financial wellbeing is an important measure when considering how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact lives and livelihoods in Australia. Since prior to the start of the pandemic, the ANZ Roy Morgan Financial Wellbeing Indicator (FWBI) has been reported as a 12-month rolling average, with quarterly updates showing the movement in aspects of financial wellbeing across locations and for a range of segments in the community (see [bluenotes.anz.com/financialwellbeing](https://bluenotes.anz.com/financialwellbeing) for updates).

A year on from the initial shock of the pandemic, this update now draws on a full 12 months of financial wellbeing data (to March 2021). For the first time, the Indicator enables a cumulative view of how Australians are faring a whole year on since COVID-19 first took effect in this country. This milestone update illustrates just how things have changed for Australians over the last 12 months and the many continuing effects, particularly for more vulnerable groups in the community.



### INDICATOR

The ANZ Roy Morgan Financial Wellbeing Indicator shows that as a result of COVID-19, the financial wellbeing of Australians

**DECLINED** **FROM** **5.3%** **60.7** (as a score out of 100) in the 12 months to March 2020 → **TO** **57.5** in the 12 months to March 2021 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

## INDICATOR (CONTINUED)

From April 2020 to February 2021, the spot monthly Financial Wellbeing scores have stayed in the range of 56.5 to 58.5 (out of 100). However in the month of March 2021, financial wellbeing reached its highest spot score since pre-COVID-19 (59.0 out of 100), indicating that at an aggregate level that the financial wellbeing of Australians is on its way to recovery.



While all components of financial wellbeing declined post COVID-19 (Table 1), the biggest decline in the 12 months to March 2021 was in **'Feeling Comfortable'** about one's current and future situation, down 8.2% year-on-year, from 56.0 to 51.4 out of 100. However, over the last 12 months spot results have improved since the initial shock. Australians are feeling more comfortable now and this element has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels.



**'Meeting Everyday Commitments'** was down 6.4% year-on-year, from 73.0 (out of 100) in the 12 months to March 2020 compared to 68.3 (out of 100) in the 12 months to March 2021 (Table 1). The monthly spot results for 'meeting everyday commitments' has continued to fluctuate around this lower level since May 2020. The ongoing trend in this dimension will depend on the impact of government support for those negatively affected by the coronavirus ending after March 2021, and any further COVID-19 setbacks to come.



**'Resilience for the Future'** – the ability to cope with financial setbacks – remained fairly steady year on year, declining by only 0.8% for the 12 months to March 2021 (52.8 out of 100) compared to 12 months to March 2020 (53.2 out of 100) (Table 1). We have observed that both institutional support in response to the pandemic and deferred consumption have contributed to keeping deposit balances healthier than anticipated.



## IN THIS RELEASE

- 12 months after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic we can see that the impact on financial wellbeing has led to the increase in size of both the 'Struggling' and 'Getting By' segments while the 'No Worries' segment has shrunk substantially (Figure 3).
- Financial wellbeing has declined across all **states and territories**. The largest decline in the 12 months to March 2021 was in Victoria (down 7.4%), with WA experiencing the smallest decline in financial wellbeing (down 1.5%) (Figure 4).

FIGURE 1: FINANCIAL WELLBEING IN AUSTRALIA, MONTHLY SPOT DATA AND 12-MONTH MOVING AVERAGE (JAN-14 TO MAR-21)

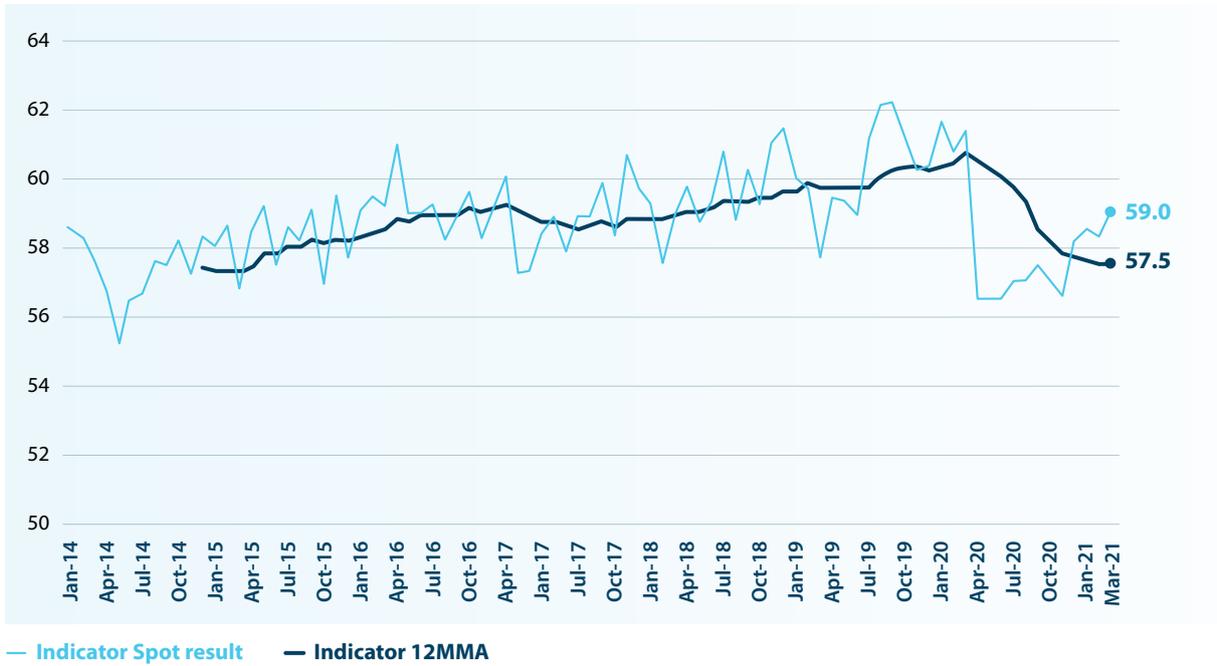
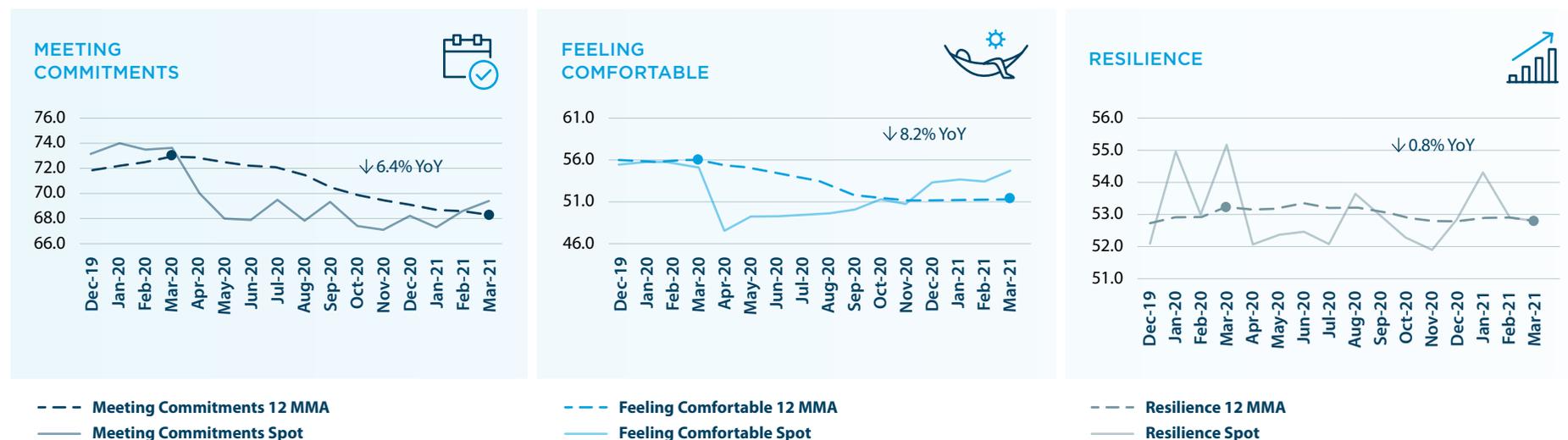


TABLE 1: FINANCIAL WELLBEING DIMENSIONS IN AUSTRALIA  
(12-MONTH MOVING AVERAGE AND SPOT MONTH VIEW)

	ANZ Roy Morgan FWB Indicator															YoY % Change
	12 months		Spot Result												12 months	
	Dec-19	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Mar-21	
Financial Wellbeing	60.2	<b>60.7</b>	56.5	56.5	56.5	57.0	57.0	57.5	57.0	56.6	58.2	58.5	58.3	59.0	<b>57.5</b>	-5.3%
Meeting Commitments	71.9	<b>73.0</b>	70.1	67.9	67.9	69.5	67.8	69.4	67.4	67.1	68.2	67.3	68.6	69.4	<b>68.3</b>	-6.4%
Feeling Comfortable	55.9	<b>56.0</b>	47.5	49.2	49.2	49.5	49.6	50.1	51.3	50.7	53.3	53.7	53.4	54.8	<b>51.4</b>	-8.2%
Resilience for the Future	52.7	<b>53.2</b>	52.1	52.3	52.5	52.1	53.6	53	52.3	51.9	52.9	54.3	52.9	52.8	<b>52.8</b>	-0.8%

FIGURE 2: FINANCIAL WELLBEING DIMENSIONS IN AUSTRALIA,  
MONTHLY SPOT DATA AND 12-MONTH MOVING AVERAGE (DEC-19 TO MAR-21)



## FINANCIAL WELLBEING SEGMENTS

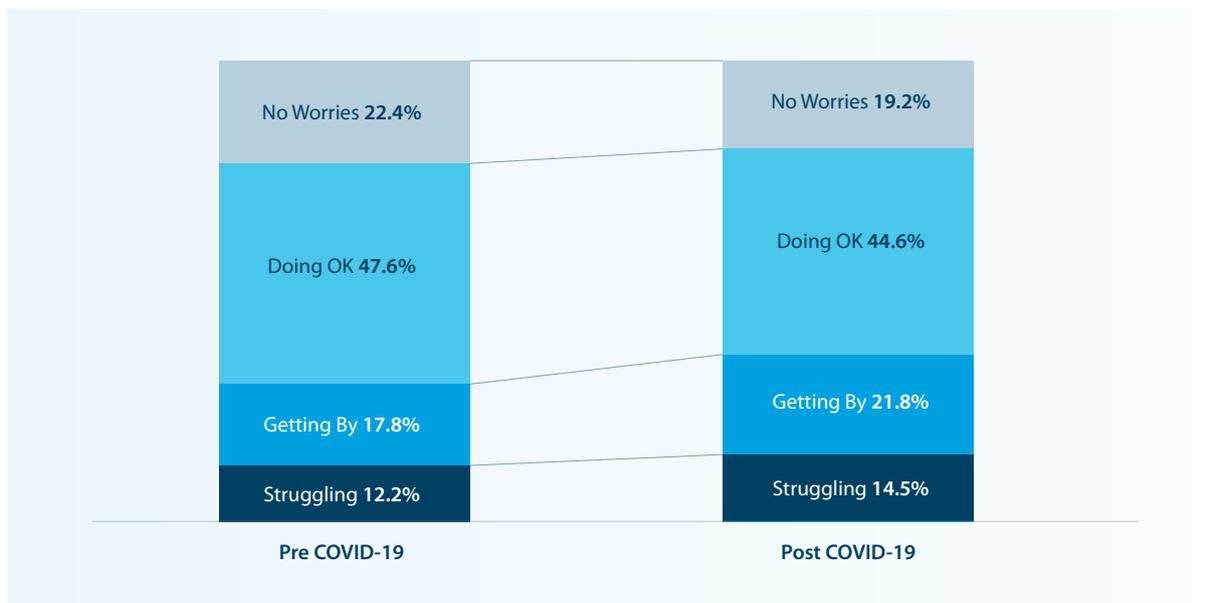
Respondents were divided into four segments according to their overall financial wellbeing score (out of 100). These segments were described in ANZ's 2017 ANZ Financial Wellbeing Survey<sup>1</sup>:

- **Struggling:** (0–30) Most describing their current financial situation as 'bad', having little or no savings and finding it a constant struggle to meet bills and credit payments. Very few are confident about their financial situation over the next 12 months.
- **Getting By:** (>30–50) Many describing their financial situation as 'bad', less confident in their money management skills and their ability to control their financial future.
- **Doing OK:** (>50–80) Current financial situation is 'fair' or 'good' and reasonably confident about their financial situation over the next 12 months.

- **No Worries:** (>80–100) Financial behaviours – active savings and not borrowing for everyday expenses – contributing positively to financial wellbeing. High levels of confidence in managing money and substantial amounts in savings, investments and superannuation.

The proportion of people with the highest financial wellbeing ('No Worries') declined with the onset of COVID-19, from 22.4% in the 12 months to March 2020 to 19.2% in the 12 months to March 2021. Whilst the majority of the Australian population (44.6%) were 'Doing OK', this had also contracted from 47.6% in the 12 months to March 2020. The bottom two segments 'Getting By' and 'Struggling' both increased post COVID-19, now representing 36.3% of Australians in the 12 months to March 2021 (up from 30% in the 12 months to March 2020), with 21.8% 'Getting By' and 14.5% 'Struggling' (Figure 3). The impact of COVID-19 appears to reverse the trend of recent years, which has seen growth in the upper segments in line with improvements in longer-term financial wellbeing.

**FIGURE 3: CHANGE IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE FINANCIAL WELLBEING SEGMENTS ('PRE COVID-19' 12 MONTHS TO MAR-20 VS 12 MONTHS TO MAR-21 'POST COVID-19' VIEW)**



**Note:** Pre COVID-19 data includes the 12 months to March 2020. Post COVID-19 data includes the 12 months to March 2021.

1. ANZ (2018). *Financial Wellbeing: A Survey of Adults in Australia*. <http://www.bluenotes.anz.com/financialwellbeing>

## FINANCIAL WELLBEING BY STATE AND TERRITORY

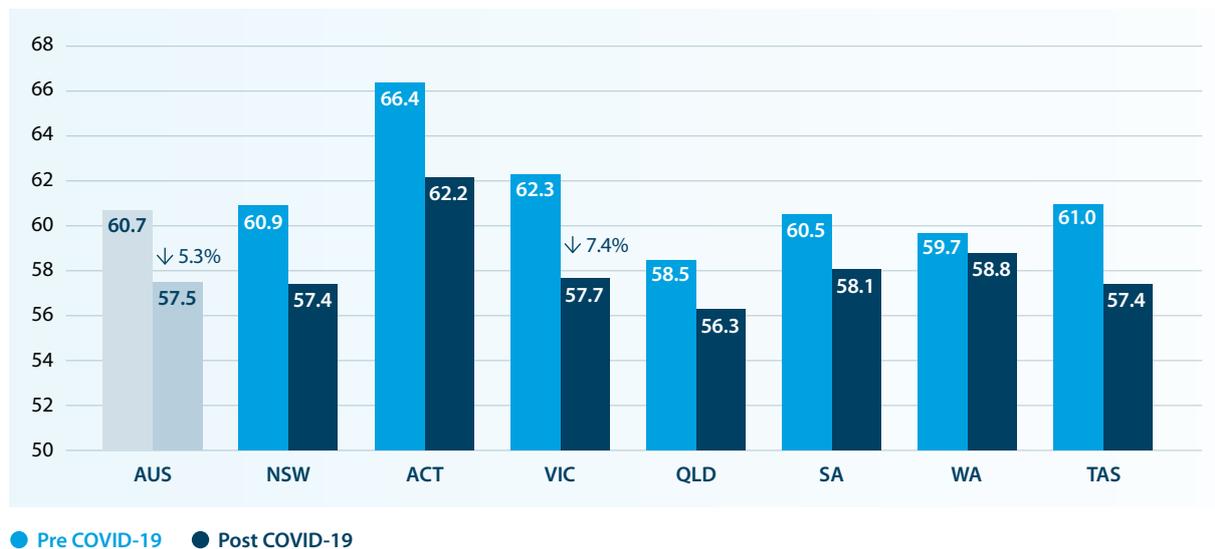
The impact of COVID-19 resulted in all states and territories recording lower scores in overall financial wellbeing (Figure 4), and most states and territories recording lower scores in all three dimensions of financial wellbeing for the 12 months to March 2021.

Respondents from ACT had the highest financial wellbeing score of 62.2 (out of 100) post COVID-19 in the 12 months to March 2021, 4.7 points higher than the national average and 3.4 points higher than WA with the next highest level of financial wellbeing (58.8). QLD had the lowest level of financial wellbeing at 56.3 (out of 100) (Figure 4).

Victoria experienced the largest decline in financial wellbeing in the 12 months to March 2021, down 7.4%, though it still sits just above the national average (57.7 in Victoria compared to 57.5 nationally). WA experienced the smallest decline in financial wellbeing, down 1.5%, moving from sitting below the national average pre COVID-19, to above the national average in the 12 months to March 2021 (Figure 4).

It is clear that COVID-19 had an impact on the proportion of people in the 'No Worries' segment, reducing across all states and territories in the 12 months to March 2021 (post COVID-19). WA was the only state where the proportion of people in the 'Struggling' segment did not increase when compared to the 12 months to March 2020 pre COVID-19. Victoria had the largest combined increase in people either 'Struggling' or 'Getting By', up 9.4 points from 26.8% in the bottom two segments pre COVID-19 (better than the national average) to 36.2% post COVID-19 (in line with the national average).

**FIGURE 4: FINANCIAL WELLBEING IN AUSTRALIA, BY STATE AND TERRITORY ('PRE COVID-19' 12 MONTHS TO MAR-20 VS 12 MONTHS TO MAR-21 'POST COVID-19' VIEW)**



**Note:** Pre COVID-19 data includes the 12 months to March 2020. Post COVID-19 data includes the 12 months to March 2021.

## ABOUT THE ANZ ROY MORGAN FINANCIAL WELLBEING INDICATOR

The ANZ Roy Morgan Financial Wellbeing Indicator is a statistically robust snapshot of the personal financial wellbeing of Australians, reported as a 12-month moving average every quarter.

The Indicator is based on the Kempson *et al.* conceptual model of financial wellbeing that was tested by ANZ in its 2017 financial wellbeing survey (Figure 5). The Kempson model acknowledges five drivers that have a proportionate impact on personal financial wellbeing:

- social environment
- economic environment
- financial knowledge and experience
- psychological factors (attitudes, motivations sand biases)
- financially capable behaviours.

The indicator is derived from data gathered through the weekly Roy Morgan Single Source interview and survey, which canvasses approximately 50,000 Australians annually. The breadth of data gathered through Roy Morgan Single Source enables examination of Australians' financial wellbeing at a more granular level than was possible with previously available data.

The indicator is reported quarterly and periodically. Releases are accompanied with a focus on specific deep dive topics.



More information about the Indicator can be found at [bluenotes.anz.com/financialwellbeing](https://bluenotes.anz.com/financialwellbeing) or by contacting:

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FIGURE 5: THE FINANCIAL WELLBEING CONCEPTUAL MODEL



Source: Adapted from Kempson et al, 2017, with additional data from the 2017 ANZ Financial Wellbeing Survey.

## TECHNICAL APPENDIX

The data items used for the calculation of the indicator and other data items used to measure various drivers of personal financial wellbeing, all derive from the questions listed below from the Roy Morgan Single Source interview and survey.

The indicator is calculated by an algorithm that transforms responses to these questions, weighing the relative importance of each component. The algorithm was developed based on calibrated responses to 11 questions in the 2017 ANZ Financial Wellbeing Survey<sup>2</sup>, as well as answers to the questions below.

There are many additional questions in the Roy Morgan Single Source data collection that are of relevance and can be used as filters or as cross-tabulation variables with the Indicator. The complete list of these variables are not listed here.

ANZ Roy Morgan FWI dimensions	Questions and items from Roy Morgan Single Source
<b>Meeting commitments</b>	Q. Meeting my bills and commitments is a struggle from time to time Q. In the past 12 months I have sometimes been unable to pay bills or loan commitments at the final reminder due to lack of money Q. I sometimes run short of money for food or other regular expenses
<b>Feeling comfortable</b>	Q. I feel financially stable at the moment Q. I have planned enough to make sure I will be financially secure in the future Q. Would you say you and your family are better-off financially – or worse-off than you were at this time last year? Q. Looking ahead to this time next year... do you expect you and your family to be better-off financially – or worse-off than you are now?
<b>Resilience</b>	<p><b>Number of months' income in savings calculated using following questions:</b></p> Q. Household's total present approximate weekly or annual income from all sources before tax – please include all wages, salaries, pensions and other income Q. Would you please say the approximate amount that is in the (main/second) (say institution and account name) account as of today <p><b>Managing a drop in income by a third is calculated using the following questions:</b></p> Q. Household's total present approximate weekly or annual income from all sources before tax – please include all wages, salaries, pensions and other income Q. Approximate amount that is in the (main/second) (say institution and account name) account as of today Q. How much does your family spend on all living and household expenses in an average week? Please include all expenses such as shopping, luxuries, transport costs, bills, credit and loan repayments, rent and home loans, school fees etc. (if living in a shared household, only include your own total living expenses)

2. For more information on the 11 financial wellbeing questions, see page 41 of Financial Wellbeing: A Survey of Adults in Australia. Retrieved from <https://www.bluenotes.anz.com/content/dam/bluenotes/images/financial-wellbeing/ANZ%20Financial%20Wellbeing%20Summary%20Report%20-%20Australia.pdf>