

Australia lockdown lows hit all time high

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Almost two thirds of Australians believe that their life has gotten worse during the pandemic and more than half are feeling more negative about the future compared to the first wave of infections, according to new analysis from The Australian National University (ANU).

In a survey of more than 3000 people in Australia, roughly half said they were more stressed and more than a quarter said their relationship had got more difficult or strained this year compared to 2020.

The survey was conducted while about half of Australia, some 13 million people, experienced lockdown restrictions.

"The dramatic changes in the past four months have led to declines in [life satisfaction](#), worsening in [psychological distress](#) and an increase in loneliness across Australia," co-author of the study ANU Professor Nicholas Biddle said.

"NSW in general and Sydney in particular has experienced the worst of the change, but many other parts of the country have also been impacted."

There was an increase in anxiety and worry for those who lived outside of NSW which rose from 48.5 percent in April 2021 to 56.0 percent in August. NSW's worries grew from 50.7 percent to 67.9 percent over the same period.

"A key measure of the general experience of the COVID-19 period is people's level of anxiety and worry due to the virus," Professor Biddle said.

"We've seen a big rise in worry and anxiety due to COVID-19 from 49.8 percent in April—the lowest during the [pandemic](#)—to 60.9 percent in August 2021."

The study shows Australian's fears about getting infected almost tripled—from 10.7 percent in April to 30.8 percent in August. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations also reported a significant rise in worry about infection.

"Australians think that given the successes of the country early in the pandemic the situation should be far better than it currently is," Professor Biddle said.

"Australians are less satisfied with the direction of the country than at any time during the pandemic. They are also less confident in the federal, state and territory governments."

There was also a large decline in confidence in state and territory governments nationally, from 67.2 percent who expressed confidence in April 2021 to 62.1 percent in August 2021.

In April 2021, 45.4 percent said they had a great deal, or quite a lot of confidence in the Federal Government in Canberra, which dropped to 40.6 percent of Australians by April.

It is well below the peak in confidence during the pandemic of 60.6 percent recorded in May 2020.

"These lockdown blues are impacting on people's reflections on their own lives," co-author Professor Matthew Gray said.

"Australians are more likely to think that their life had gotten worse, were more likely to say that they felt more negative about the future than they were in May, were more stressed, and more likely to say that their relationship had got more difficult or strained."

The [data](#) is taken from Australia's only [longitudinal survey](#) with data from prior to the pandemic.

More information: Study: csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/20210801_Australian%20Longitudinal%20Survey%20-%20August%202021.pdf

Provided by Australian National University

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