

COVID-19 study celebrates public health measures

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Associate Professor Narelle Campbell. Credit: Flinders University

A national study of Australians' responses to COVID-19 public health

measures has found stories of hope, strength and acceptance for such protective measures as social distancing, hand hygiene and even lockdowns.

Flinders University researchers, as part of a team of regional health experts in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia, analyzed feedback from 90 adult participants about their perceptions of positives or 'silver linings' to the large-scale interventions rolled out during the first wave of the pandemic in 2020.

"In spite of negative impacts of public health directives, such as mental wellbeing and restrictions of movement connected to lockdowns, people were cognisant of positives such as safety and security, gratitude and appreciation, social cohesion, community resilience and the opportunity to reset priorities," says lead author Associate Professor Narelle Campbell, from Flinders University.

"By examining the silver linings expressed by Australians during a period of significant public [health](#) restrictions and considerable uncertainty from COVID-19, this study has demonstrated the remarkable ability of people to express positivity and overall resilience in the face of adversity," says Associate Professor Campbell, who is based in Darwin,

The study, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, confirms that the disruptions to [daily life](#) during the pandemic provided an opportunity for many to reflect on and reassess their values and priorities—and to consider what is important for them, their families, and their communities.

"These findings provide unique perspectives when considering the priorities of Australians and the [public health](#) implications for a post-

pandemic society," says co-author University of Queensland Associate Professor Geoff Argus, who is director of Southern Queensland Rural Health based in Toowoomba.

Other contributors to the study are from the WA Centre for Rural Health (University of WA), Darling Downs Health in Toowoomba and University of Queensland, Torrens University Australia in Adelaide, and La Trobe Rural Health School, Bendigo, Victoria.

The article, "Silver Linings Reported by Australians Experiencing Public Health Restrictions during the First Phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Report," has been published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*

More information: Narelle Campbell et al, Silver Linings Reported by Australians Experiencing Public Health Restrictions during the First Phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Report, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.3390/ijerph182111406](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182111406)

Provided by Flinders University

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