



**Global Centre for  
Modern Ageing**



# Finding a Silver Lining

INSIGHTS FROM AN EXPANSIVE STUDY INTO  
AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

APRIL 2020

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*Many people are experiencing challenges during this unprecedented period of social distancing and we would like to build a deep understanding of the key changes that could make a difference for people.*

- Julianne Parkinson, CEO

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## Foreword



There is a silver lining in even the most adverse of circumstances. By understanding the evolving experience, we can help to inform a better tomorrow.

During this unprecedented time, the Global Centre for Modern Ageing has been reaching out to Australians as part of an expansive study to understand their evolving experience during the coronavirus pandemic.

By studying experiences as the crisis unfolds, we will be able to gauge how people are adapting to and navigating changes during this unique period – including what is working well, what elements are proving to be the most challenging and what solutions may be required.

It is hoped that the initial insights outlined in this report, and the insights to come, will help inform businesses, industries and governments to make the necessary changes to improve lives for all into the future.

We trust this report prompts a curiosity in all to find their own silver lining.



**Julianne Parkinson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Global Centre for Modern Ageing

## Key findings

Finding: **Older Australians see a silver lining to the pandemic despite the significant challenges.**

51%

More than half of older Australians believe there have already been positive outcomes from the coronavirus outbreak.

19%

19% of Australians over 60 believe that social cohesion and wellbeing are likely positive outcomes from COVID-19 in Australia.

80%

80% of older Australians surveyed were able to provide examples of support they had received from others.

21%

21% of older Australians have used a new technology for the first time.

29%

29% of older Australians have increased their social media use to stay connected.

19%

When asked about product or service development, nearly one in five older Australians (19 percent) called for improved delivery of products and online services.

61%

Older Australians who use video calls once a week or more were more likely to feel socially connected than those who don't (work related calls 61% v 30% and personal calls 44% v 29%).

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Older Australians express less concern than younger Australians regarding the pandemic (46% vs 52%) and all of the potential impacts of it.



## Possible catalysts:

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### **Embracing of new technology.**

Social distancing has forced older Australians to search for the means to stay connected to those they love and to fill their time with new hobbies.

For many this has meant embracing technology in new and different ways as they seek to retain relationships and stay engaged.

### **Australians have become more introspective.**

Older Australians are evaluating what is important and using this time to reflect on their values and behaviours and are hopeful others are too. This was echoed in the belief that increased family time and reduced environmental impact were positive outcomes of COVID-19.

### **Australians are responding to businesses who offer solutions that help them stay connected.**

To overcome current restrictions, Australians are responding to innovative businesses that provide technological solutions to help them remain connected but there is still scope for this to be improved to increase adoption.

## Opportunity for industry: **Empower Australians to help themselves.**

Now more than ever technology has the power to connect individuals and to ensure Australians are able to access the goods and services they need that would otherwise be out of reach.

Businesses should be investing in digital solutions that speak to the shifting societal values and empower all Australians to help themselves and to connect with others. In particular, digital solutions that are designed with older people in mind, are primed for success with a group that is increasing and diversifying their technology usage each day.



# About the research

## Aim

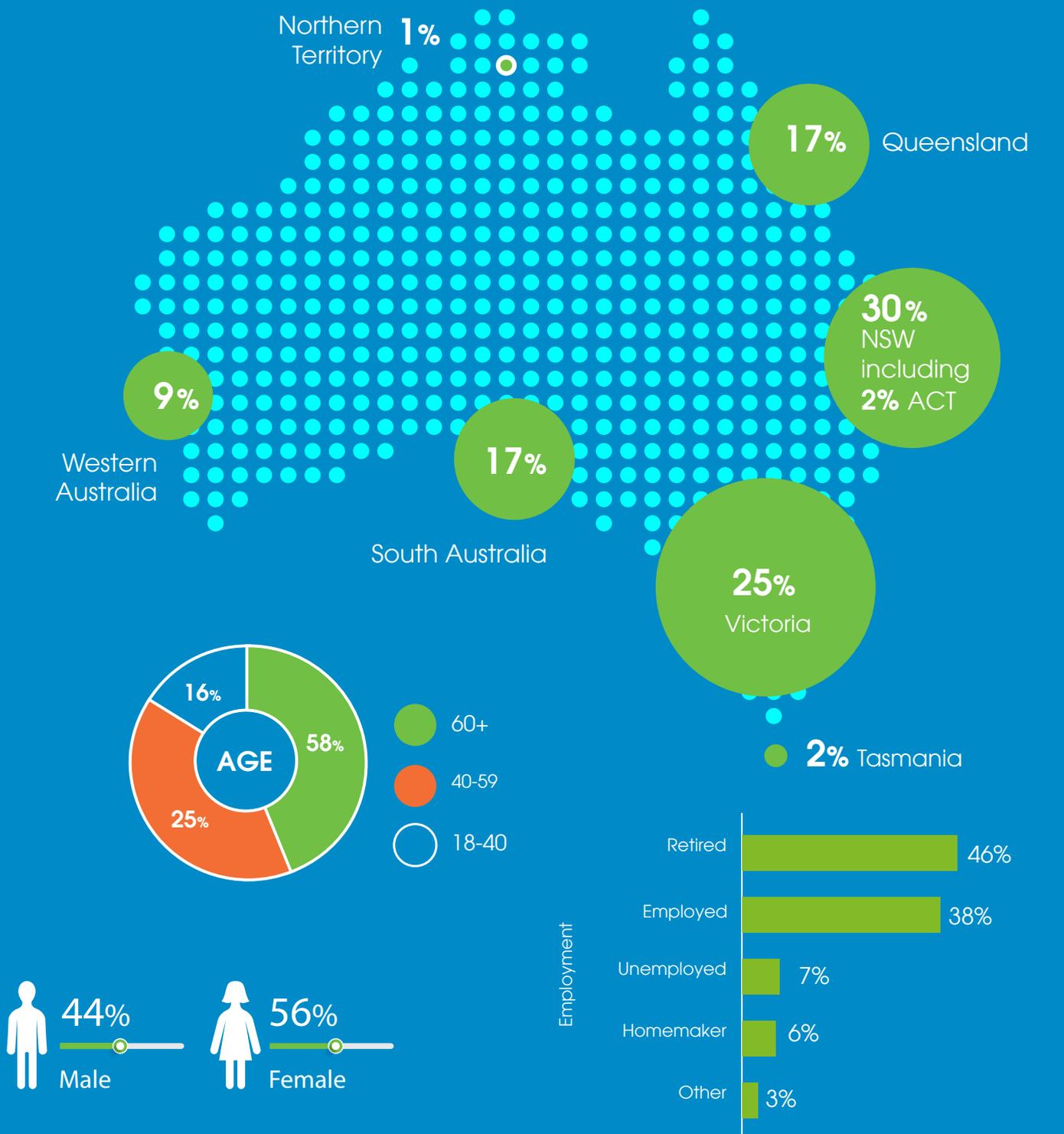
The aim of the research is to understand the evolving experience of Australians during the coronavirus pandemic.

The results in this report are the first part of a larger multi-faceted study to gauge how people are adapting to and navigating changes during this unique period including what is working for them, what elements they are finding the most challenging and what solutions they may require.

## Methodology

Through an online survey, the Global Centre for Modern Ageing received insights from 1,359 Australian adults (18 years and over). The survey was open from 27 March - 14 April 2020.

## The sample



## Questions about the research?

Questions about the COVID-19 research can be directed to the COVID-19 research team leads :

- **Dr Amy Wilson** at [amy.wilson@gcma.net.au](mailto:amy.wilson@gcma.net.au)
- **Dylan Lee** at [dylan.lee@gcma.net.au](mailto:dylan.lee@gcma.net.au)

### What's next?

This report is the first of a multi-staged piece into the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australian life.

To be part of the research, please sign up at [gcma.net.au/covid19/research](https://gcma.net.au/covid19/research)



# About GCMA

The Global Centre for Modern Ageing (GCMA) serves as a leading response to the international ageing phenomenon.

Modern ageing sparks an inclusive future that engages people throughout the whole of life's course to participate and belong in the ways they value.

The GCMA provides world class research, advisory, advocacy and living lab services for governments, businesses and organisations. We help to improve the development of products, services and solutions, and to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing demographic landscape.

The GCMA is a not-for-profit organisation that provides national and global clients with an independent, specialist and internationally acclaimed service offering.

Led by CEO Julianne Parkinson, the GCMA and its LifeLab network includes a product and technology testing environment facilitating user co-design, located in South Australia's Tonsley Innovation District.

**[gcma.net.au](https://gcma.net.au)**



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