

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIA'S OVER 50S REMAIN RESILIENT IN TOUGH TIMES

New Australian Seniors report reveals over 60s more positive about 2021 than younger generations

SYDNEY, X December 2020 – As 2020 draws to a close, more than half (51.6%) of Australia's over 50s are looking forward to closing it out and have high hopes for what 2021 holds. Even though there is still uncertainty surrounding the global health crisis, some border restrictions still in place and the looming economic recession, more than two in five (41.5%) are set to just "get on with things", according to findings in the *Seniors and Resilience* report.

Interestingly, Australians over 60 are more resigned to move through whatever comes their way than their younger counterparts, under 60 years of age (44.4% vs. 36.7%). At the same time, males are also more likely to be more hopeful and positive for the future compared to females (32.4% vs 25.4%).

The *Seniors and Resilience* report forms part of the Australian Seniors Research Series. In its latest instalment, the study explores how Australia's over 50s are continuing to adapt to the 'new normal' and remain resilient in what has been a tumultuous year. The research also compares results to some of the findings previously gathered in the [Connectivity in the Age of COVID-19](#) report.

Associate Professor Christina Bryant, Director of Clinical Psychology at the University of Melbourne, whose work focuses on the psychology of ageing comments on the discrepancies of those over 50 – their resilience, physical and mental health impacts.

"It's no question the last few months have been testing for all of us. However, the older demographic may have a more positive outlook towards these experiences as they have learned to cope with many significant events over the years.

"The research points out that under 60s may feel less optimistic about the future and are finding it more challenging to get on with things than those over 60, which could for a number of reasons. For example, they are dealing with the combined stresses of caring for older and younger generations and often still being fully in the workforce. Once people are in their 60s they may no longer be working, so concerns about job loss may not loom for them. And generally speaking, the 60s tend to be a time of high well-being, which will flow into more optimism in general. These findings show us there is a job to be done to ensure those in their 50s feel supported."

'Tis the season for positivity

When it comes to the upcoming festive season Australians over 50 continue to remain positive. Nearly two-fifths (36.8%) expect their holidays will be compromised, but they still plan on making the most out of any given situation. For example, one-third (33.9%) plan to travel within their state, and one-fifth (20.2%) are seeking to take up new pastimes. Meanwhile, a quarter (25.0%) note there will be no big difference to other years.

The easing of social distancing restrictions is set to help with more in-person gatherings. Compared to the *Connectivity in the Age of COVID-19* report, an increasing number

of seniors are returning to 'normal' family life. The percentage of those unable to gather with their loved ones at Easter has dropped by more than 20 per cent, just in time for the upcoming Christmas holiday season (19.2% vs. 42.6%).

Also signifying a return to normal to some degree, two in five (38.8%) will make efforts to catch up with family in person over the holidays whilst practising safe social distancing, compared to only one in 10 (10.0%) who were able to do so at Easter.

Regarding gift giving this year social distancing has had an influence on the way shoppers choose to buy for their loved ones. Close to one in five (18.5%) will purchase online as opposed to in-store (6.4%). Although purchasing gifts may be a cost to sacrifice, close to one-fifth (16.7%) report they will spend less on gifts this year.

In fact, it is no surprise that more report a decrease in household spending than increase in the last three months due to COVID-19 (26.9% vs. 16.8%). For those who have reduced spending, half (51.5%) feel they are having to go without some of the things they would normally enjoy.

However, the outlook on physical and mental health is not as positive

Regardless of the positive outlook to move forward in these turbulent times and make the most of the holiday season, one in five (19.7%) Australians seniors report that social distancing has made their physical health worse, and one-third (33.2%) report it has made their mental health worse. And like those under 60 less *optimistic* about the future, this demographic reported greater mental health impacts than those over 60 years old (40.8% vs. 28.6%).

Not surprisingly, Victorian seniors do report higher levels of adverse health impacts from social isolation than other states. One-third (29.7%) feel their physical health is worse off and close to half (45.8%) report their mental health is worse off.

"If feelings of being down or on edge are severe or persist, it is important to ask for help and not just put up with it", added Bryant.

Telemedicine more accepted, but not preferred

Although telemedicine is widely accepted, in-person care is still the preferred option for most. Two-fifths (44.7%) view telemedicine more positively now because of the pandemic, however the preference for in-person care trumps telemedicine (48.7% vs. 4.9%).

A similar amount of Australia's over 50s agree the greatest advantages of telemedicine are saving time on traveling and waiting (65.2%) and avoiding exposure to illnesses (63.6%).

Meanwhile, a similar amount think the greatest disadvantages with this health care method are inadequate assessments and possible misdiagnoses (62.2%), as well as, the potential for actually misdiagnosing entirely (58.2%).

Cherished moments of grandparenting resume

When comparing the findings of the two reports *Connectivity in the Age of COVID-19* and *Seniors and Resilience* there is a 40 per cent decrease in those unable to care for their grandchildren (20.4% vs. 61.0%).

Meanwhile, close to half (46.2%) are still actively engaged in caring for their grandchildren, whereas only nearly one-tenth (9 %) are avoiding this due to COVID-19 concerns.

Further insights from the research can be found on the Australian Seniors website:

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About Australian Seniors

Australian Seniors launched in 1998 to meet the needs of the often-ignored over 50s market. Since then, we've helped countless Australians protect the most important things in life – whether it's their family's future, valuable assets, or even their long-planned retirement.

We strive to be different through the diverse offering of our funeral insurance, home and contents insurance, landlords insurance, travel insurance and pet insurance products. By carefully selecting underwriters that share our vision of providing insurance that's simple, easy to understand, and affordable. That's why our policies have helped everyone from hard-working over 50s to self-funded retirees take control of the things that matter most.

About the 'Australian Seniors Series'

The Australian Seniors Series is a research project conducted for seniors, helping to understand the opinions, thoughts and behaviours of Australia's over 50s. Since its inception in 2016, the series has explored a diverse range of topics important to the senior population including grandparenting, modern living arrangements, travel, legacy and more.

The *Seniors and Resilience report* forms part of the Australian Seniors Research Series. In its latest instalment, this study explores how Australia's over 50s are continuing to adapt to the 'new normal' and remain resilient in what has been a tumultuous year. The research also compares results to those gathered previously in the *Connectivity in the Age of COVID-19* report.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Australian Seniors and conducted by CoreData between 14 and 20 October 2020. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 1,305 responses from Australians aged 50 and above, and 5,003 responses from the previous report of Connectivity in the Age of COVID-19.

The sample is representative of the general senior population of Australians in terms of age, gender, wealth, and state/territory.