



# The Evolving Workplace Report

NOVEMBER  
2020

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## About the report

*The Evolving Workplace Report* forms part of the Choosi Research Series and explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Australian workforce. From the role the health crisis has had in gaining a greater appreciation of certain jobs to how it's shaping the future of the workplace, this research sheds light on what's important to the Australian workforce and how we've all had to adapt. The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Choosi and conducted by CoreData between 25<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.

The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 1,336 responses from Australians aged 18 and above and have been largely employed in the last three months.

### Important things to note about the charts

- Footnotes directly underneath the charts (e.g. 'Respondents who have life insurance') mainly refer to the sampling involved per question. This is to differentiate who was asked that particular question in the survey.
- Any chart without a specific note on its sampling was asked to all respondents.
- It also differentiates the types of questions asked. For instance, 'Multiple answers allowed' appears when the question called for more than one answer from the respondent.

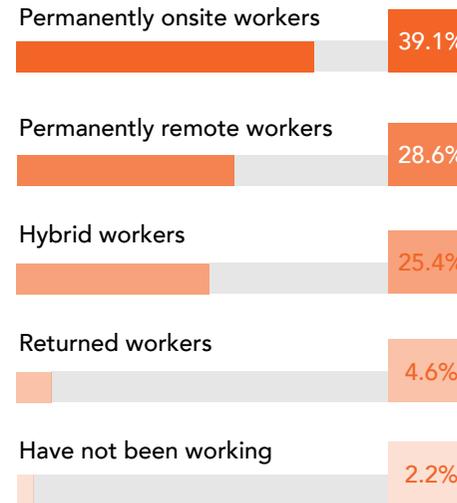
# About the report cont...

The sample is representative of the general population of working Australians in terms of age, gender, wealth and state/territory. Relevant demographics below:

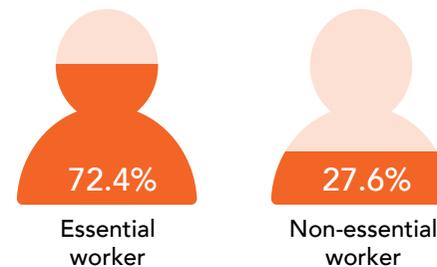
## Respondents are defined as:

- 'Permanently remote' workers are those who work remotely all the time
- 'Permanently onsite' workers are those who work onsite all the time
- 'Returned workers' are those who worked remotely but have returned to working onsite
- 'Hybrid workers' are those who work both onsite and remotely
- 'Essential workers' are those who classified their job role(s) as being an 'essential' worker
- 'Non-essential' workers are those who said otherwise

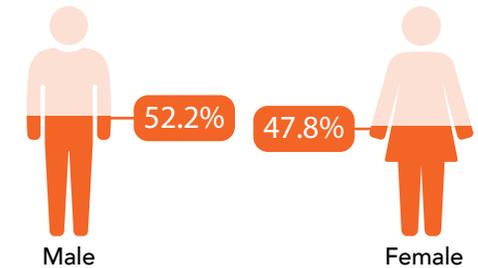
## Remote vs. onsite



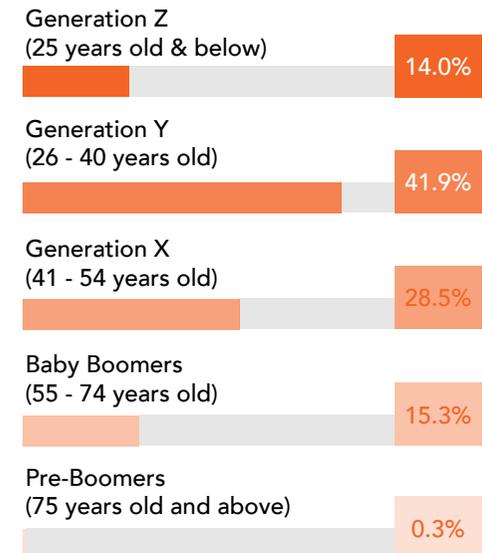
## Essential vs. non-essential



## Gender



## Age generation



**Key  
findings**



# Key findings

## Working from home for the win

- A vast majority of *permanently remote workers* (85.9%) are absolutely loving working from home, with only a small number being 'neutral' (4.4%) or 'hating it' (9.8%).
- This proportion is slightly lower, but remains high for *hybrid workers*. Most (80.4%) are absolutely loving working from home, with 5.1% being 'slightly more neutral' or 'hating it' (14.4%).
- *Remote workers* report similarly high levels of adaptability to working from home, with most (80.4%) saying they've adapted well.

## The pros and cons of working from home

- When asked what the best things about working from home have been, respondents noted that they like the lack of commute (77.7%), not having to get ready (59.0%), and the fact they've been able to keep their job (55.1%).
- Of course, there are some negatives that sometimes come with change. Respondents say that working from home impacted them because they miss co-workers (49.3%), every day feels the same (45.7%), and they miss feeding off a group (43.9%).
- About half (49.0%) of *permanently remote* and *hybrid workers* say that working from home has increased their productivity at least 'somewhat', and only a small proportion (18.8%) have noted a decrease. Most believe this increase in productivity is sustainable to 'some extent' (56.9%), or even to a 'great extent' (38.6%).

## Working away from colleagues can impact relationships

- *Hybrid and permanently remote workers* report that working from home has negatively impacted their relationships with their colleagues in numerous ways. Personal friendships (23.5%), social bonding (47.6%), collaboration (36.0%), and team dynamics (30.4%) have all been negatively impacted to some degree.

## People are feeling positive about their bosses

- When working from home, employees have noticed that their managers and bosses have become more understanding and supportive of employees (43.3%), more flexible in expectations and arrangements (59.9%), and more trusting of employees (38.4%). Most say their managers/employers have dealt with remote working 'extremely well' (25.9%) or 'very well' (66.4%).

## The transition to onsite working is expected to be challenging

- Many employees still working from home feel that the transition back into their workplace (when it occurs) could be 'reasonably' (45.1%) or 'very' (14.3%) challenging.
- The key challenges anticipated include getting used to the routine again (55.9%), safety fears (50.5%), dealing with commuting (46.1%), and loved ones/pets adjusting (36.3%).
- Most think that working from home is a change that's here to stay to a 'great extent' (23.5%), or at least to 'some extent' (58.0%).

# Key findings

## Working onsite comes with mixed emotions

- Over one-third (33.9%) of *permanently onsite and returned workers* 'absolutely hate' having to work onsite, but more (48.1%) 'absolutely love it'. The rest (18.0%) are 'neutral'. Most adapted well and like the balance (59.3%), but about a quarter (23.7%) struggled to adapt to working onsite in the new environment.
- The top benefits of working onsite have been keeping a routine (51.7%), seeing co-workers (48.0%) and just being happy to be working (56.7%).
- The negatives have been the fear of COVID-19 infection (68.5%) and not having it as easy as those who get to work from home (31.4%).

## Relationships can become strained while working onsite, but it's not all bad news

- Both *permanently onsite and returned workers* say that working onsite in the current environment can have a negative impact on tensions/resentment between co-workers (21.2%) and social bonding (34.9%).
- Similar proportions say it can have a positive impact on collaboration (26.1%) and team dynamics (23.3%).
- The pandemic, and its impact on job security and certainty, is causing those *permanently onsite and returned workers* to be more anxious (42.0%) and lose motivation (23.3%). However, it's also making them appreciate their job more (46.3%).

## Job satisfaction has noticeably improved amid the pandemic

- In light of the pandemic, *permanently onsite and returned workers* generally say they feel at least 'somewhat more positive' about their job (36.2%), and only about one in five (18.2%) feel 'more negative'.
- The main reasons cited for this positive shift towards approaching work are that they have pride in keeping things running (52.8%), are glad they still have work to do (68.8%), and a feeling that they're now more appreciated by others than before (31.8%).

## The new expectations of employers are varied

- Australian workers think that their employers will continue with flexible work arrangements, and will want to take advantage of this (67.6%).
- If companies are to continue with remote working, employees expect their employers to provide ergonomic working equipment (55.9%), provide support and training on remote work (43.6%), and provide training and support on technology use (40.4%).
- Currently, employees also have high expectations of their employers helping with mental and general wellbeing. About a quarter (28.2%) say it's a 'critical responsibility of employers', and more (46.2%) say it's 'at least partly their responsibility'.
- Exactly two-thirds (66.7%) say their workplace has done enough to support their mental and general wellbeing during this pandemic.

# Key findings

## The post-pandemic workforce will look different and priorities are expected to shift

- A majority of Australians (45.6%) agree that the post-pandemic workforce will look different to 'some extent' or a 'great extent' (18.3%). Similar proportions (48.4%) also agree that they now have lower expectations of finding the 'perfect job' to at least 'some extent'.
- Many (60.0%) agree that their priorities around what's important in their work have also shifted. They now prioritise security (66.0%), stability (61.5%), and personal safety (49.1%) above all else.

## Career plans look a little different than they did before

- Over 4 in 10 (41.0%) working Australians say their career building plan has been put on-hold by COVID-19 at least to 'some extent'. As a result, many (65.3%) are taking actions to rebuild this path.
- Around half (50.3%) are 'somewhat' concerned and 23.0% are 'very' concerned that a major recession could come in the next 6 months and impact their career progression and stability.
- Over a third (34.8%) say that self-employment has become at least 'somewhat more appealing' in the wake of the pandemic, mainly due to its flexibility (37.2%) and self-sufficiency (41.8%).

## Happy vs. not happy

- 3 in 10 (30.1%) say that COVID-19 has had a positive impact on their happiness in their job. However, a similar proportion (24.7%) say that it's had the opposite impact.

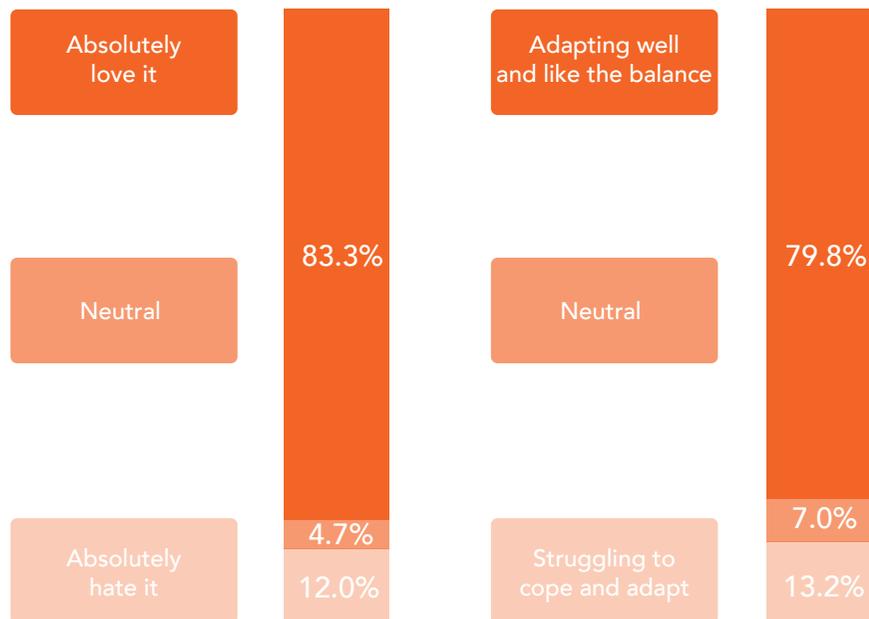


**Working  
from home**



# Working from home is loved by many

Overall, how are you finding the experience of working from home?



Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers

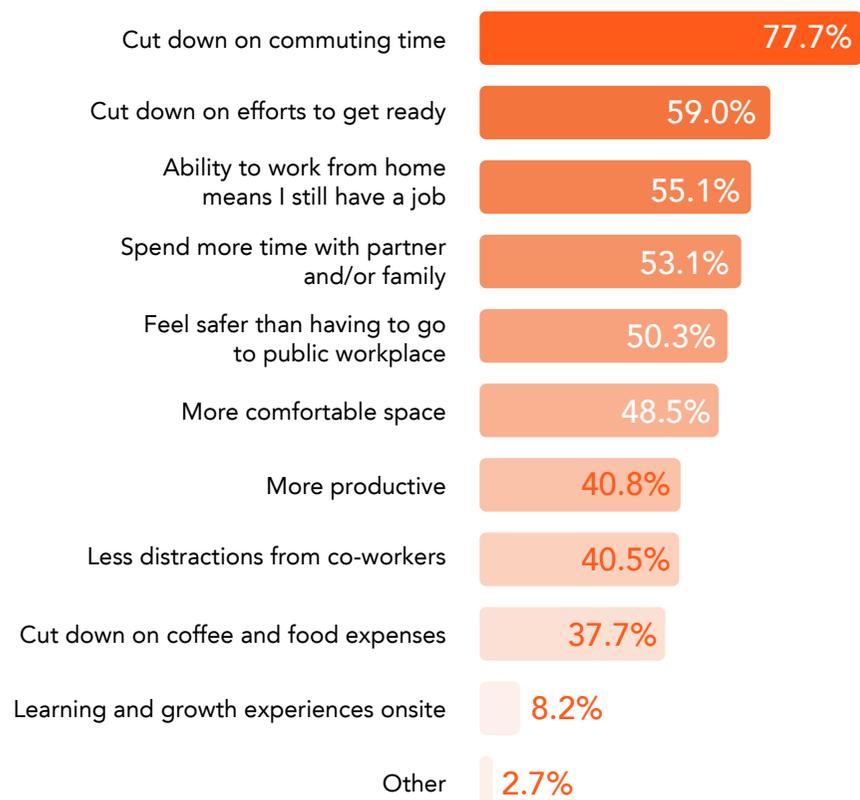


An overwhelming majority of Australians (83.3%) who are working from home 'love it' and are adapting well (79.8%), a very positive sign for the post-pandemic workforce. With that being said, over 1 in 10 (12.0%) say they 'hate it' and are struggling to cope (13.2%). This is a small minority, but still enough to be of concern if remote working does become the new normal.

# The pros and cons of working from home

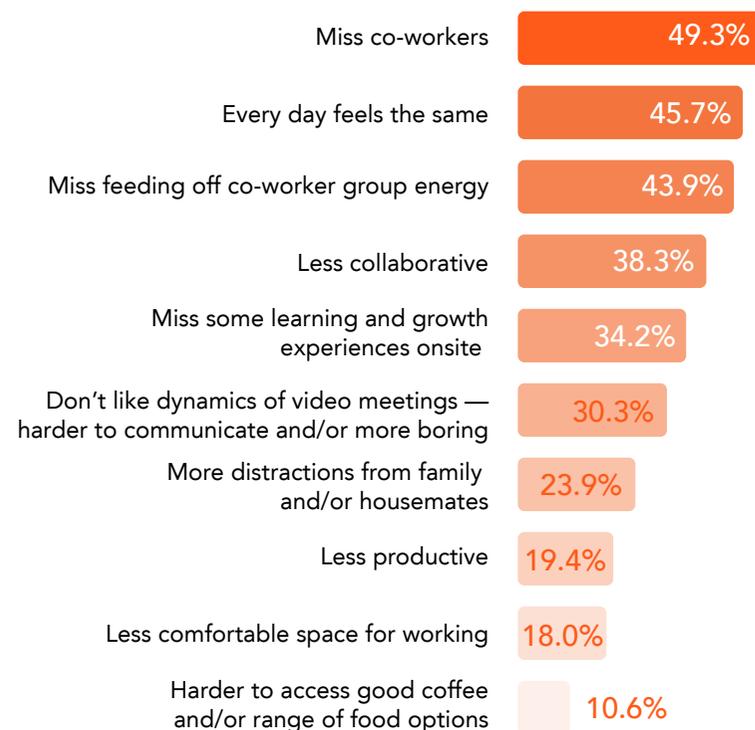
There are a range of pros and cons to working from home, with Australians missing their colleagues, but also enjoying the lack of commute.

## What are the best things about working from home?



Multiple answers allowed  
Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers

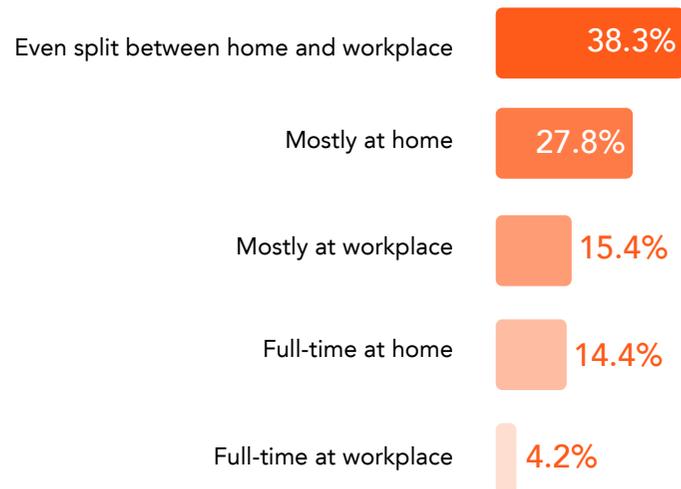
## What are the worst things about working from home?



Multiple answers allowed  
Top 10 answers only  
Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers

# The ideal working environment is one that's a mix of home and the workplace

Thinking about the future of a post COVID-19 world, what would be your ideal preference for working at home vs. at your workplace?



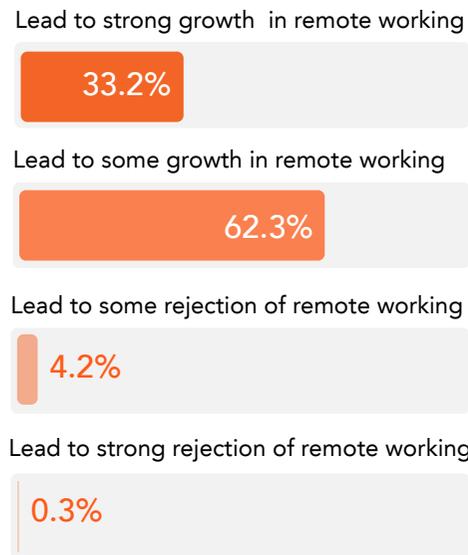
*Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers*

Looking forward to the post-pandemic world, it's clear that many Australian workers want things to stay roughly the same, with the most popular response being that they want to split their time evenly between home and their workplace.



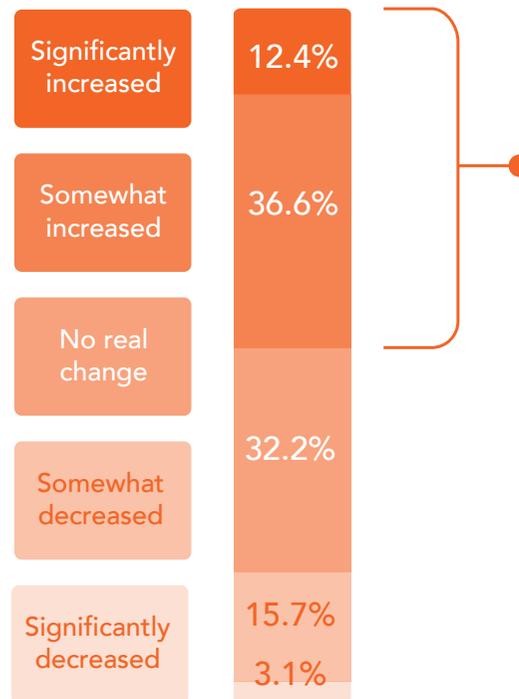
# Remote working is here to stay

Do you think this social experiment with remote working is likely to shift us towards more remote working in the future, or prove that this isn't as great as it may have seemed?



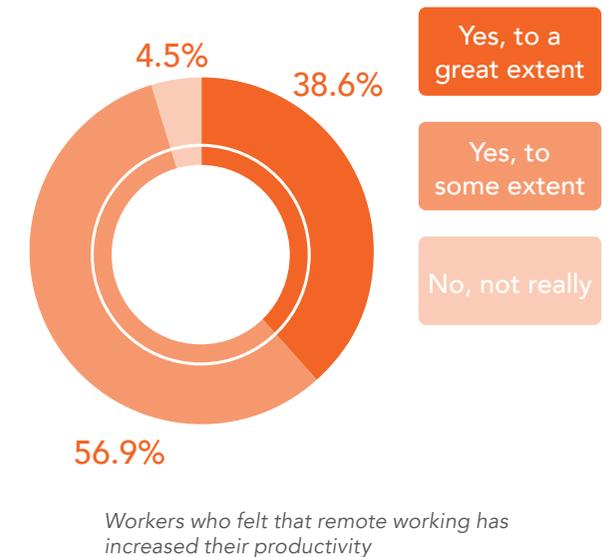
Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers

Ultimately, do you feel that remote working has increased or decreased your productivity?



Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers

Do you think this productivity increase is sustainable in the long-term?



When asked whether this new way of working was here to stay, almost every respondent said that there would be at least some growth in remote working in Australia.

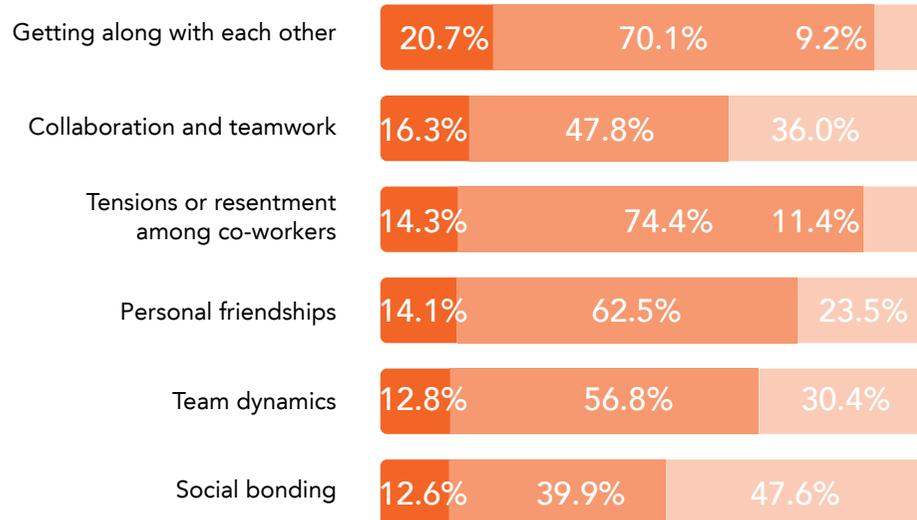
A major concern for companies with remote workers is the productivity of their employees. However, most respondents say that their productivity stayed the same (or even increased) – when working remotely, and almost every one of them said that this productivity shift was sustainable.

**Managing  
remote work  
relationships**



# Remote-working has negatively impacted social bonding between co-workers, but made managers more flexible and understanding

## How has working from home impacted your relationships with colleagues?



Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers



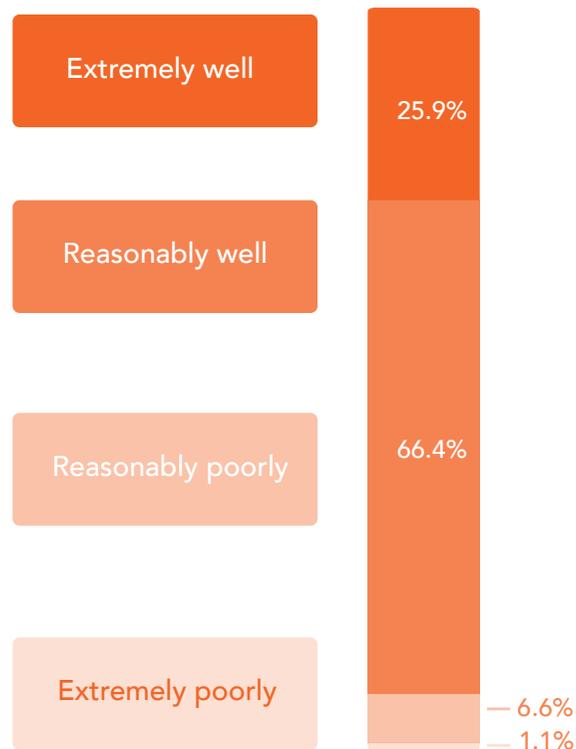
## How has working from home impacted relationships with managers and employers?



Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers

# Most say their bosses are handling things well

Overall, how well do you feel the managers/employers at your work are dealing with remote working and other workplace disruptions due to COVID-19?



*Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers*



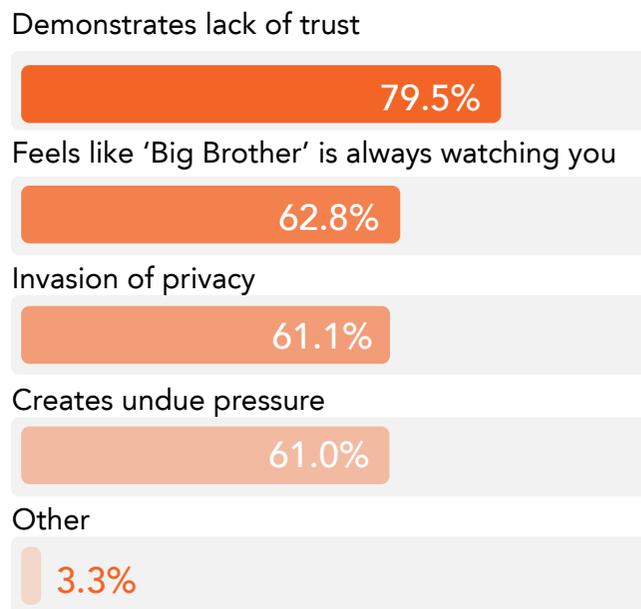
The response of employers and managers during this crisis is something to be praised. Over two-thirds (66.4%) of workers say that their boss has handled this crisis at least 'reasonably well', with about a quarter (25.9%) going so far as to say it's been handled 'extremely well'.

# Employees want to be trusted while working from home

How do you feel about your workplace using software to monitor remote working activity and productivity?



What are the key reasons you're opposed to this?



Multiple answers allowed  
Workers who oppose the usage of software to monitor their working activity and productivity

Trust is a major factor in employer/employee relations, and almost all workers would be at least 'somewhat opposed' to being monitored by software while working from home.

They feel that it demonstrates a lack of trust from their boss, as well as being an invasion of privacy that creates undue pressure for workers.

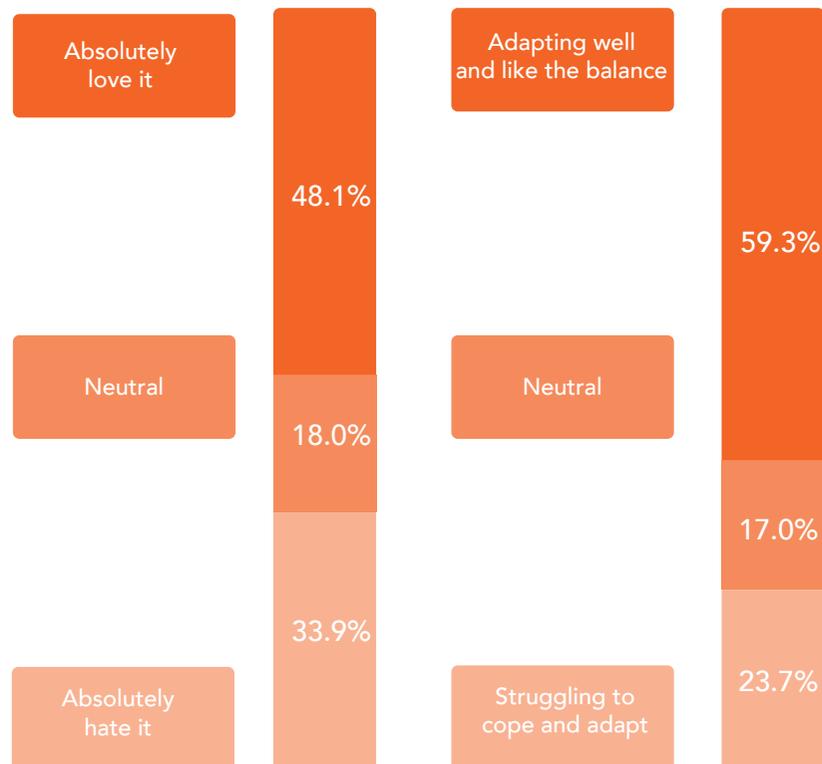
Permanently remote workers and hybrid workers

**Business  
as usual**



# Those working onsite tend to like it and are adapting well

Overall, how are you finding the experience of working onsite these days in the current COVID-19 environment?

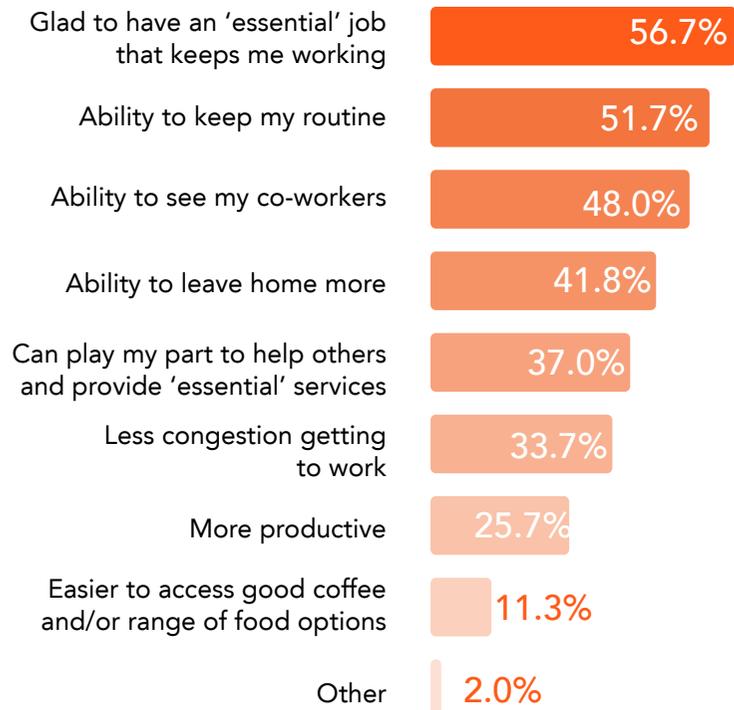


*Permanently onsite workers and returned workers*

Those who have remained onsite (48.1%) during the pandemic agree that they're 'loving it' and adapting well (59.3%). However, there's a significant proportion of permanently onsite and returned workers who say that they 'hate it' (33.9%) and are struggling to cope (23.7%), compared to permanently remote and hybrid workers (12.0% and 13.2%).

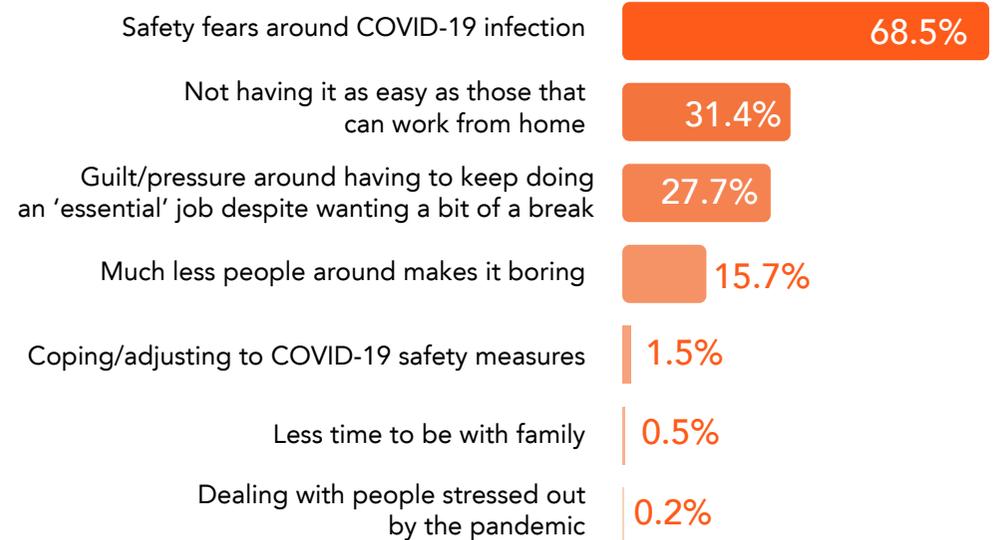
# Onsite workers appreciate being kept busy and having a routine

## What are the best things about working onsite these days?



Multiple answers allowed  
Permanently onsite workers and returned workers

## What are the worst things about working onsite these days?



Multiple answers allowed  
Permanently onsite workers and returned workers

# The support and flexibility has been positive

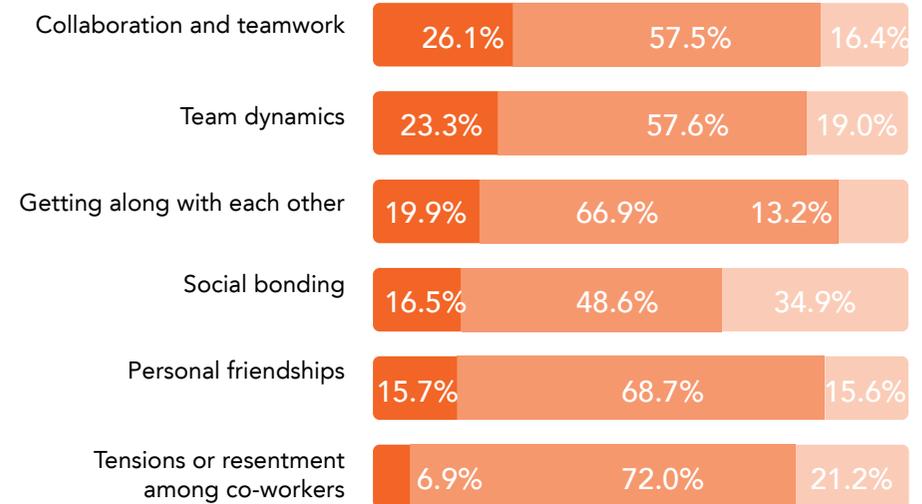
## How has working onsite in the current COVID-19 climate impacted relationships with managers and employers?



Permanently onsite workers and returned workers



## How has working onsite in the current COVID-19 environment impacted your relationships with colleagues?



Permanently onsite workers and returned workers

**The new  
workplace**



# Flexibility is expected in the future

Having experienced working from home these past few months, will you expect your workplace to continue flexible working arrangements when the return to the office is more permanent?

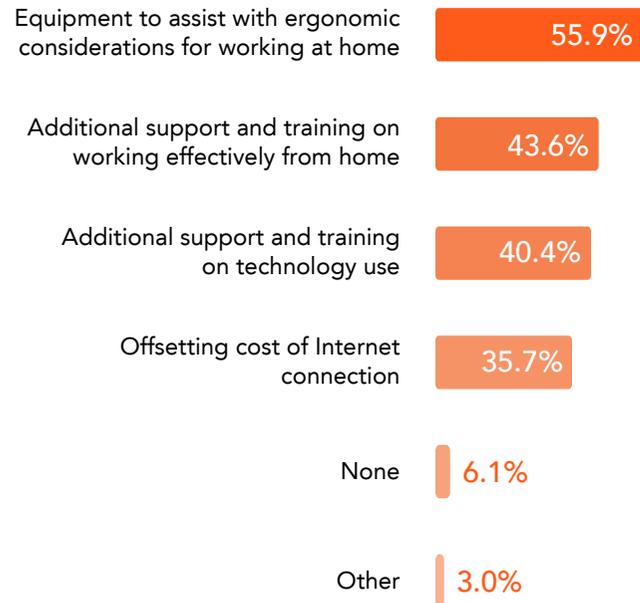


*Permanently remote, hybrid, and returned workers*

Over 2 in 3 (67.6%) believe that their workplace will continue flexible working arrangements post-pandemic and want to take advantage of it. A further 16.2% say that they expect their office to continue such arrangements, but don't expect to use it themselves.

# Expectations now and in the new future

If you were to continue remote working in the future do you expect your employer to provide any of the following?



Multiple answers allowed  
Permanently remote, hybrid, and returned workers

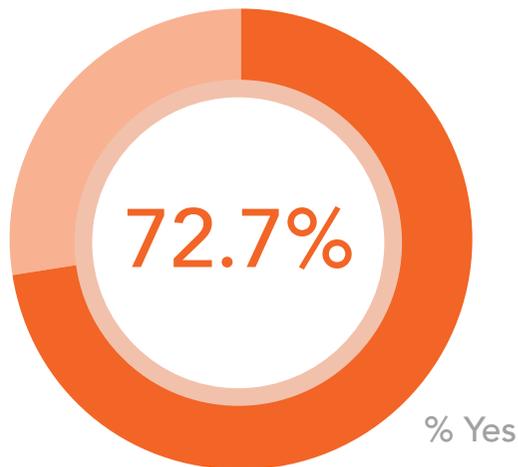
What are your key safety management expectations for a workplace you would want to work in now?



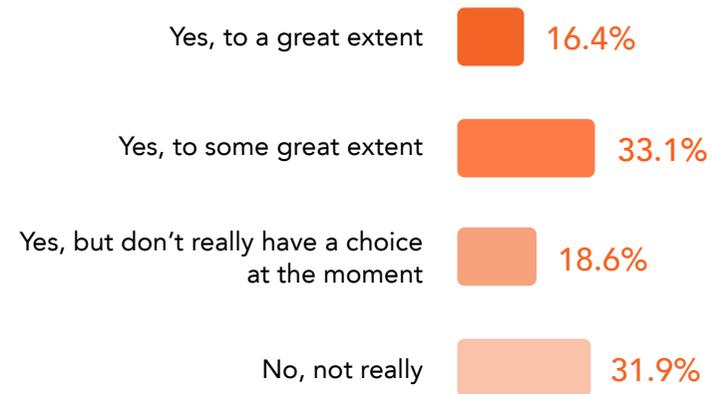
Multiple answers allowed  
Top 8 answers only  
Permanently remote, hybrid, and returned workers

# Most believe that a focus on safety will continue

Do you expect these key safety management practices to be maintained in the longer term?  
i.e. at least over the next 6 months?



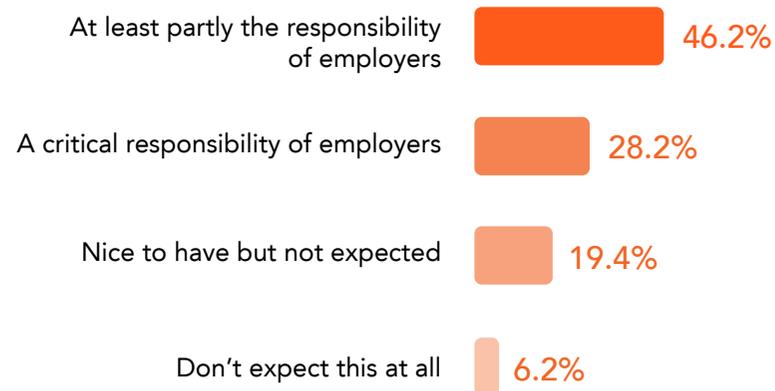
Does having or not having these measures in place at your workplace influence your decision about where you'll work?



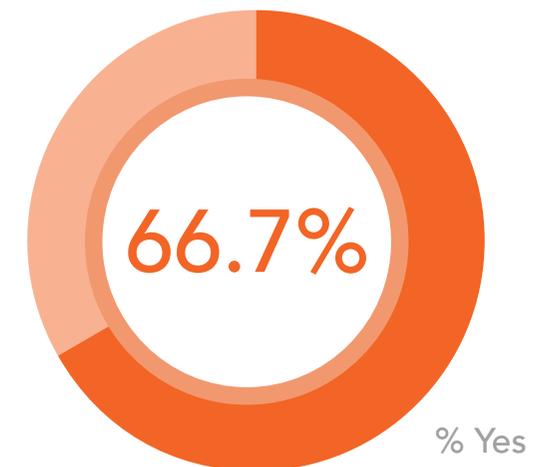
The safety management practices that many employers have undertaken are largely expected to become part of the new normal — to the point where not having these measures in place could seriously influence workers' decisions about where they work.

# Many feel mental health is part of an employer's responsibility

What are your current expectations of the support provided for workers' mental health and general wellbeing in a workplace you would want to work in?



Do you feel your workplace has done enough to support employees' mental health since the start of the pandemic?



Almost half of those surveyed (46.2%) believe that mental health is something that should, 'at least partly', be a responsibility of employers. A further 28.2% see it as a 'critical responsibility' of employers.

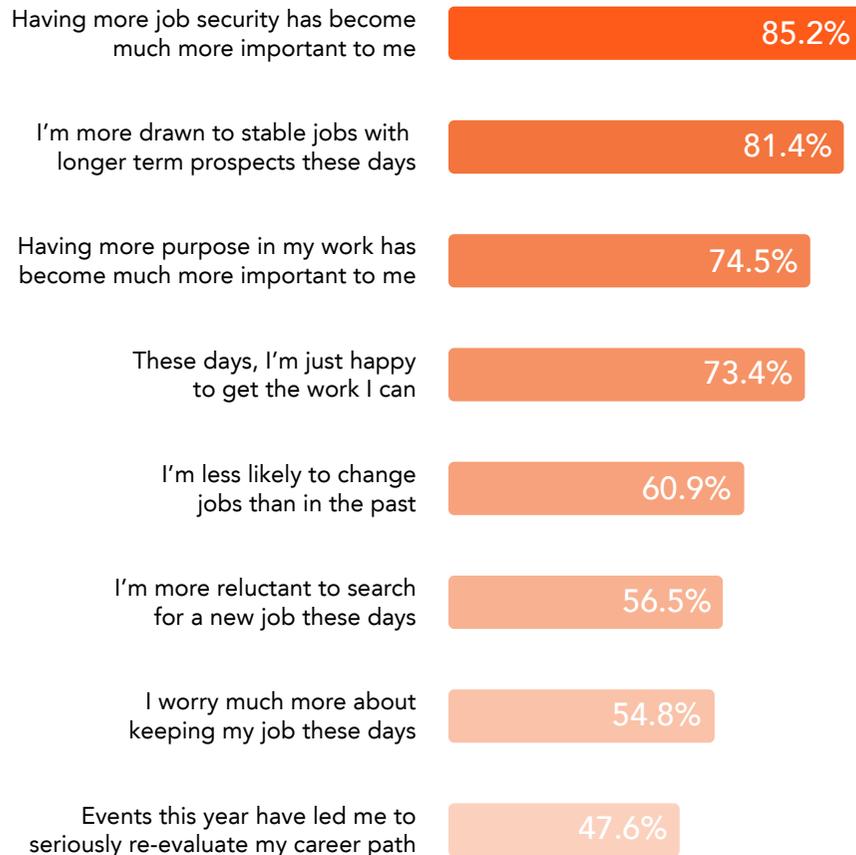
With that being said, two-thirds (66.7%) say their workplace has done enough to support mental health since the start of the pandemic. Generally, this would be a decent proportion, but considering the expectations of workers and the context of these times, this likely wouldn't be seen as enough by most.

**Career  
interrupted**



# COVID-19 has triggered a shift in what's important in a career

How much do you agree with the following statements about your career in light of your experiences through the COVID-19 crisis?



% Agree

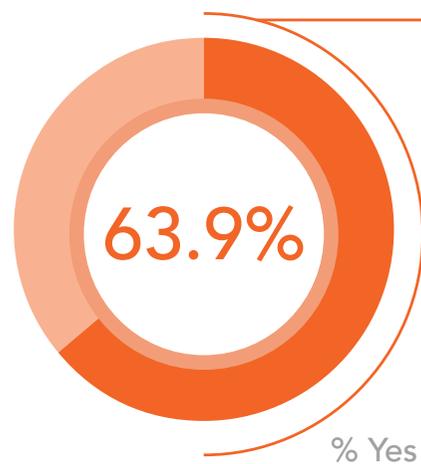
In light of the changing way the Australian workforce views their job, priorities around what they look for in a career have also changed.

At the top of the list now is job security and stability, with an overwhelming majority (85.2%) agreeing that it's something much more important to them now. Workers are also more reluctant to search for a new job, and are worried about keeping the job they currently have.

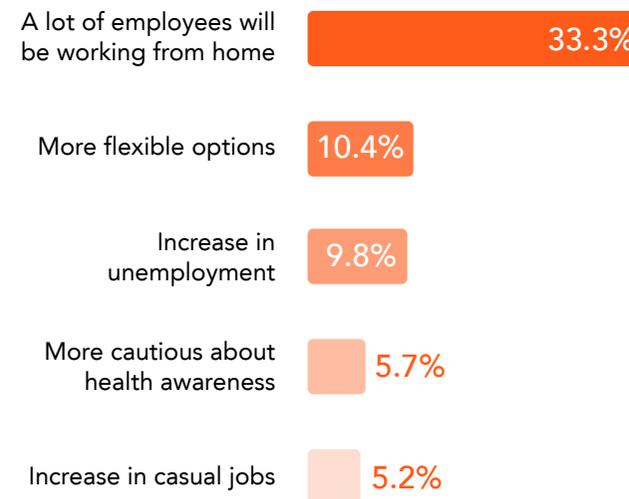


# A majority agree the post-pandemic workforce will look different

Do you think the Australian workforce will look any different post COVID-19?



How will the Australian workforce be different post COVID-19?

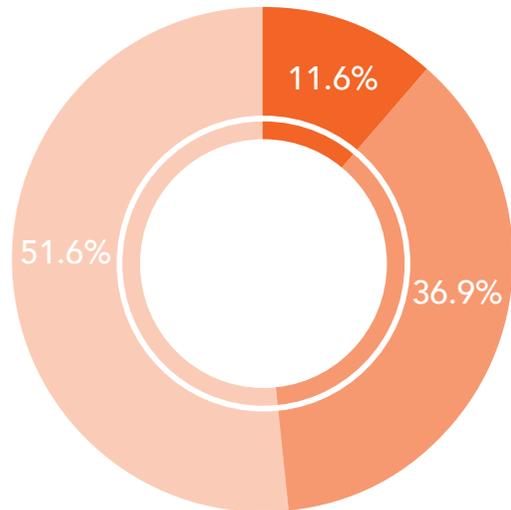


*Top 5 answers only  
Respondents who believe that Australian workforce will look different post COVID-19*

Almost 2 in 3 (63.9%) genuinely believe that the workforce will look different in the post-pandemic world. They say that more employees will work from home, that there will be more flexible options, and more cautious about health awareness. They also fear that there will be increased unemployment and casualisation of the workforce.

# Finding the 'perfect job' is no longer a reality

Do you feel the COVID-19 crisis has lowered your expectations to find that 'perfect' job?

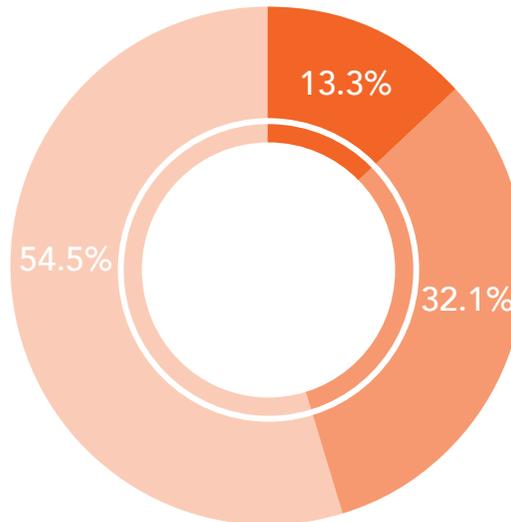


Yes, to a great extent

Yes, to some extent

No, not really

Do you feel the COVID-19 crisis has made you put your job searching on hold?

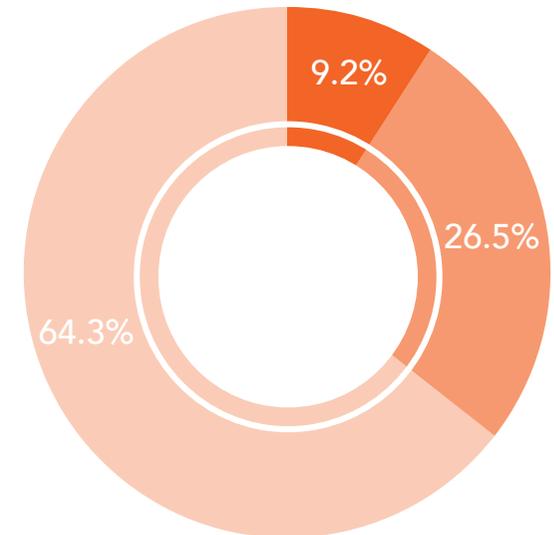


Yes, to a great extent

Yes, to some extent

No, not really

Do you feel the COVID-19 crisis has forced to put your career dreams on hold?



Yes, to a great extent

Yes, to some extent

No, not really

# More research from Choosi coming soon...

## About Choosi

Choosi provides information to help customers compare, choose, and apply for a range of insurance products online and over the phone. Choosi's free comparison service lets you compare the benefits and prices of a range of popular insurance products, so you can confidently choose cover that suits your needs, your budget and lifestyle.

Any advice or information provided in this document is general only, and doesn't take into account your personal objectives, financial situation, or needs.

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