



ORIMA

COVID-19 RECOVERY TRACKER

Results Update Volume 20

May 2022



David Bruce

Partner
Canberra
T: 02 6109 6300
E: david.bruce@orima.com



Paulina Hryniewiecka

Senior Research Manager
Melbourne
T: 03 9526 9000
E: paulina.hryniewiecka@orima.com



General Enquiries

CRT@orima.com

Media Enquiries

Szymon Duniec - Managing Director
Szymon.Duniec@orima.com

About the project

The **COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT)** was implemented in April 2020, shortly after the COVID pandemic first directly impacted Australian society, to measure both the acute impact and then track the speed and consistency of our recovery over coming months and years. The project was deliberately called the 'recovery' tracker for this reason, and questions deliberately written to be relevant both as the pandemic hit and long into the future.

The project aggregates data from multiple surveys to provide a comprehensive overview of how the Australian community is affected. There are two primary sources of data, with all responses combined into an overall database and population weighted results reported fortnightly and monthly:

- A core set of CRT questions appear as a module in a number of monthly national online tracking surveys (average monthly sample n=500-1,000).
- A longer dedicated online CRT survey is completed by a fortnightly nationally proportional sample of 200 people, plus any additional respondents who complete the publicly accessible version (see link below). Data is weighted to major demographic characteristics on a fortnightly basis.

The CRT results are available to track and understand how the Australian community is handling the experience and impact of the Pandemic, and to create benchmarks that can be used to interpret other survey results when selected CRT questions are also included. CRT data is used for benchmarking survey respondents and target audiences, and in all cases where it has been used, there has been an interaction seen between key CRT indicators and the subject matter of the client surveys. All respondents are aged 18+.

As of **16 May 2022**, a total of **34,374** respondents have completed the core questions, with **12,363** who have completed the full extended survey.

This update contains a snapshot of the most current results. Current and historical updates can be found on the ORIMA website (see below).

CRT Links and resources

View or complete the full **online CRT questionnaire**: <https://research.orima.com.au/COVIDRecovery/>

Search and download **CRT Results and Updates** from the publications tab: <https://covidportal.orima.com.au/>

Use of this material

All published ORIMA CRT material can be freely referenced, shared and used for non-commercial purposes. Please attribute: ORIMA.com.au

For additional information, interpretation and analysis, please contact the project managers listed above.

CRT TIMELINE

CRT Data sources:



Core Module in monthly national tracking surveys:

n=22,011



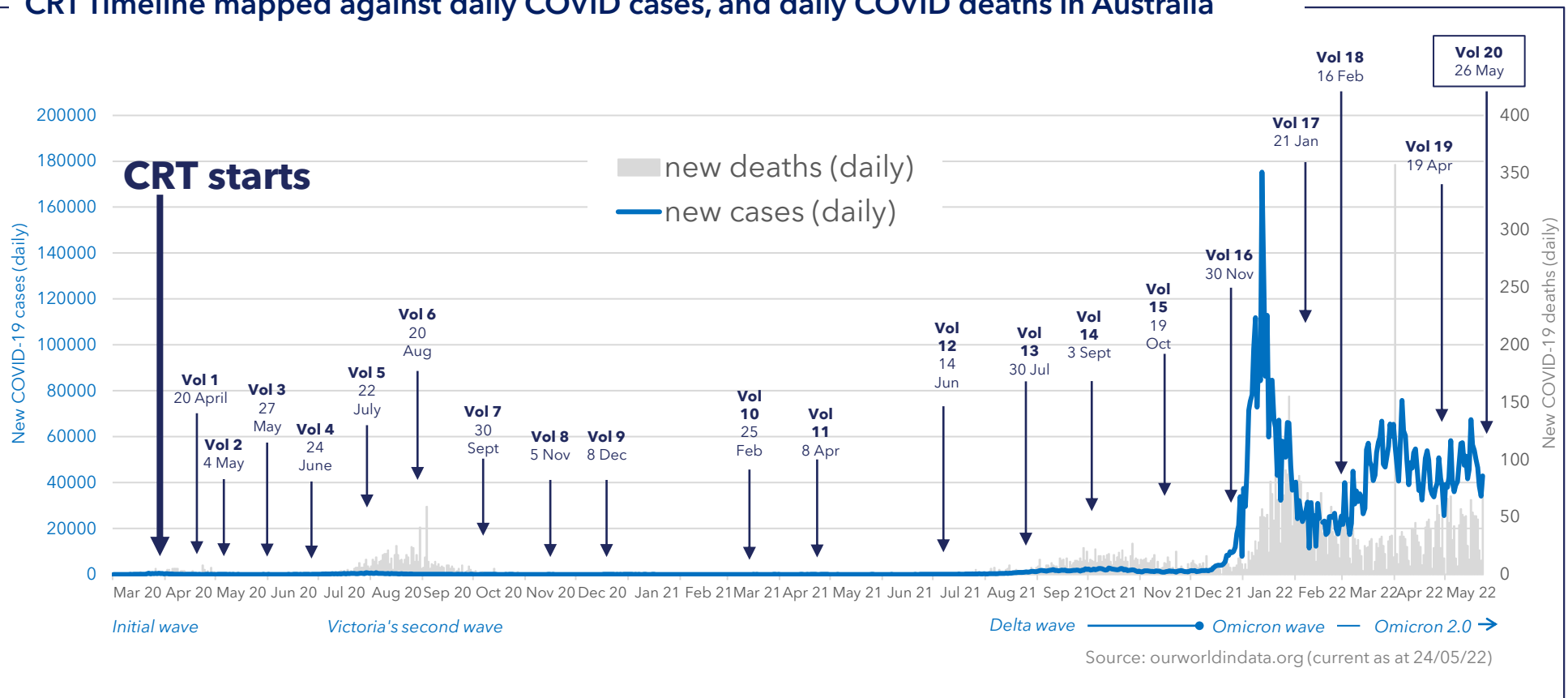
Extended online version with fortnightly samples:

n=12,363

Total

n=34,374

CRT Timeline mapped against daily COVID cases, and daily COVID deaths in Australia



What the current results tell us



2022 has been something of a roller-coaster ride for Australians. The current phase sees us living a mix of the continuing trajectory of COVID (currently less negative), but also the increasing salience of other local and global influences (currently *more* negative). **A new phase appears to be emerging in April-May 2022.**



The rapid onset of the Omicron wave in late 2021 and early 2022 saw the sense of negative impact plummet to its equal worst levels, as seen at the height of previous waves. However, the recovery from that low point has been swift, and **the mid-May 2022 data shows the sense of negative impact is now as *low* as it has ever been.**



Consistent with this, the **persistently high levels of people feeling their mental health has been affected has declined substantially** in the April-May data.



However, **this has been replaced by an increasing sense of financial impact and concern.** Respondents in April-May reported an increase in feeling their household income is negatively impacted, and also concern about future financial security. The sense of negative impact on household income is particularly high in Queensland.



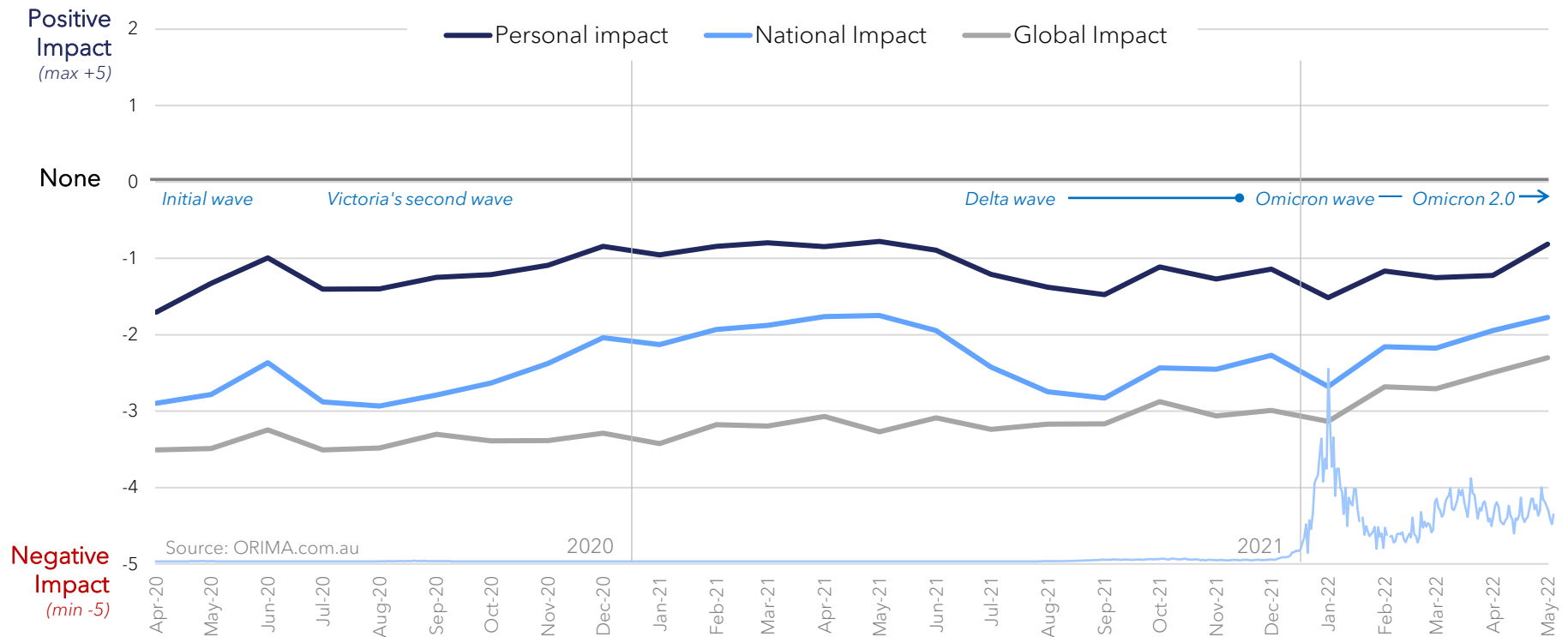
This pattern suggests that **people may be starting to look beyond COVID-19 as being the biggest impact on their current and future lives** - and are now looking also to local and global economic factors, such as the impacts of floods, inflation and global conflicts.

Current impact and mood

Perceived Impact of COVID

In January 2022, with the impact of Omicron, perceived impact dropped sharply to levels equivalent to the most negative seen - at the very start of the pandemic, during the Victorian 'second wave' in 2020, and with Delta in September 2021. However, as the impact of the far more contagious strain turned out to also be much less virulent in the now highly vaccinated Australian community, the sense of impact quickly recovered. By mid-May 2022, perceived impact was back to some of the least negative levels seen, similar to the first half of 2021.

Right at the moment, what do you feel the impact of the COVID-19 situation is...

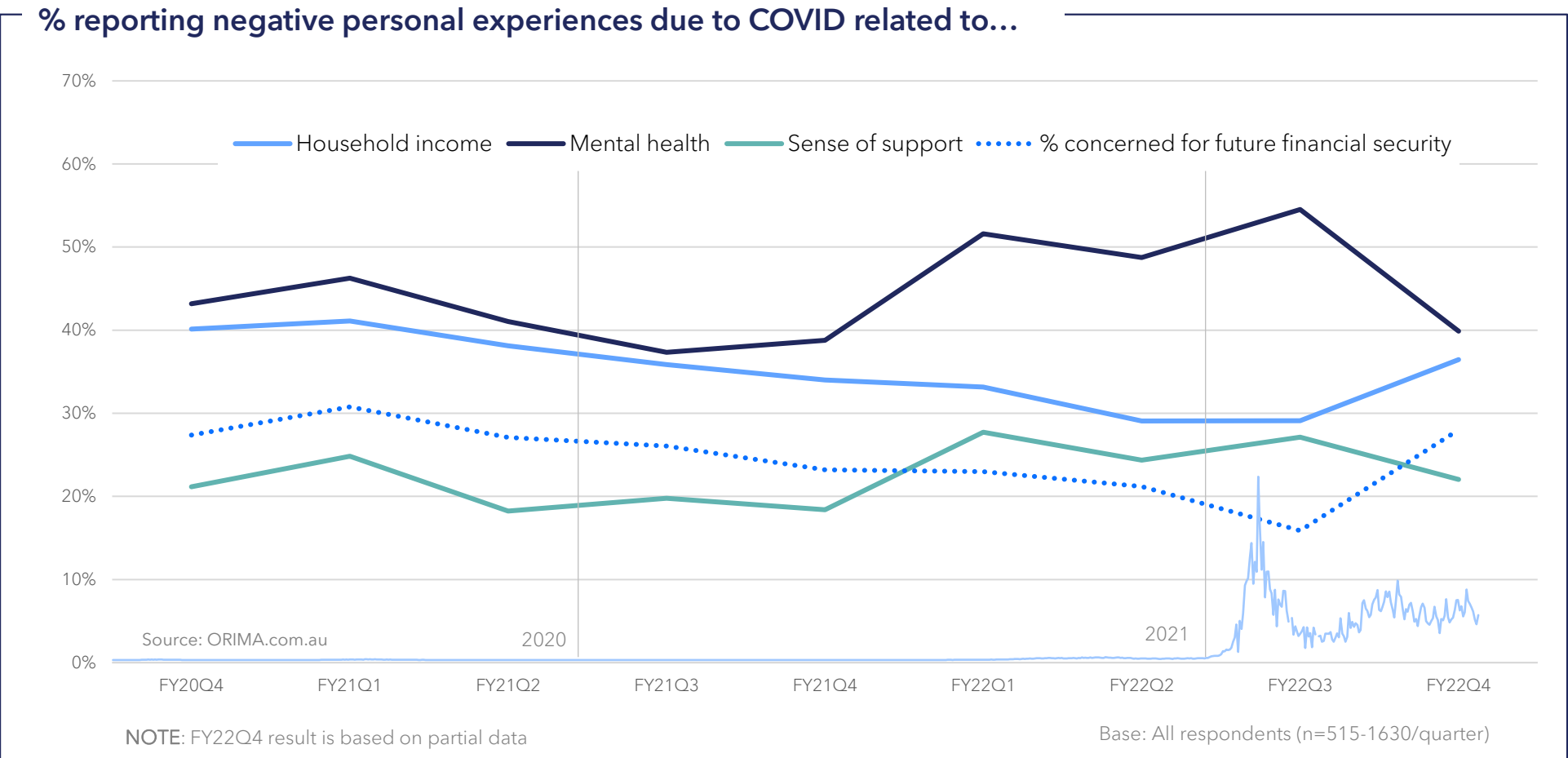


NOTE: May 2022 result is based on partial data

Base: All respondents (n=220-2404/month)

Personal Impact

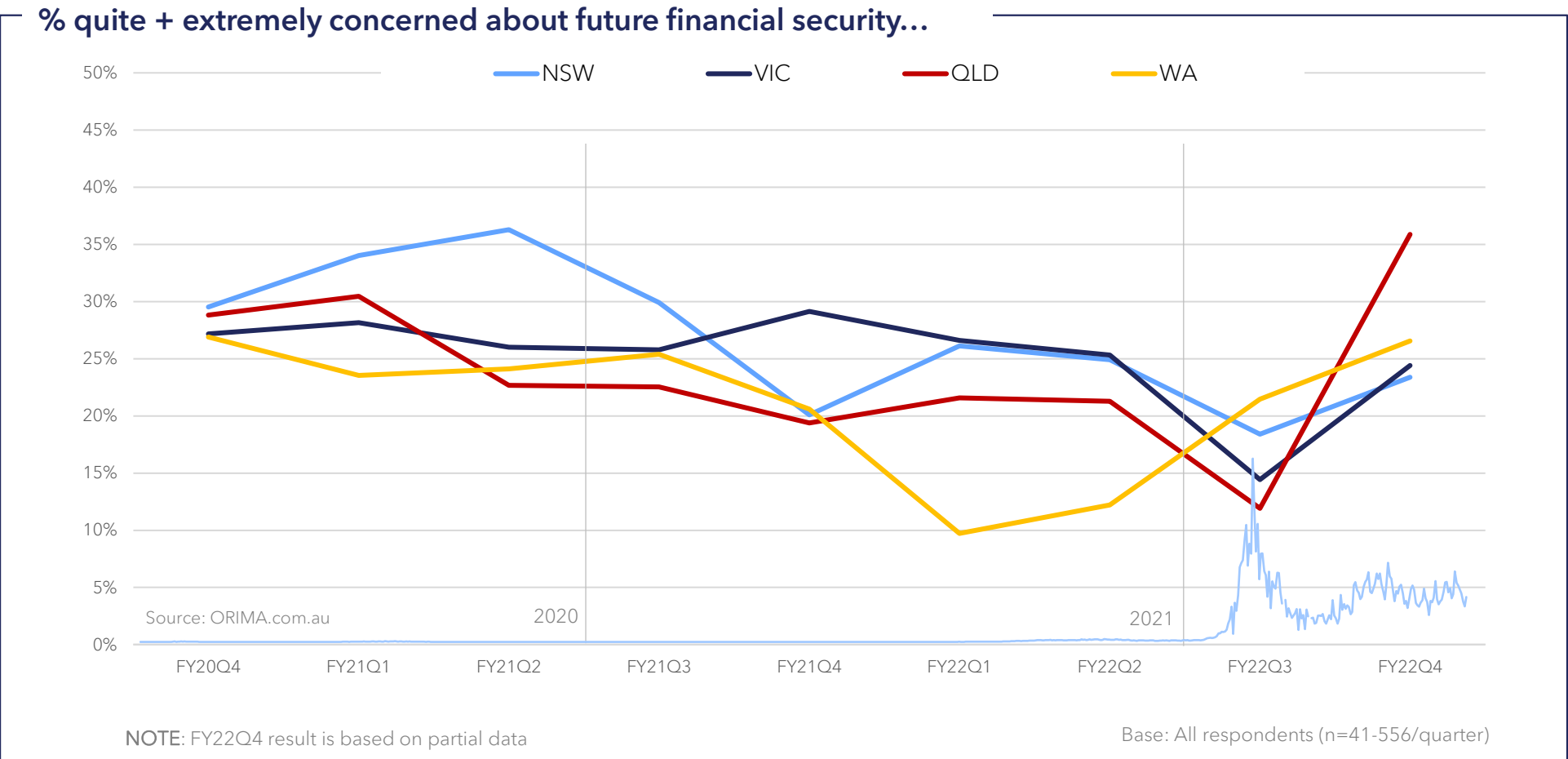
As the sense of negative impact of COVID-19 has decreased from February through to May, we have seen a substantive change in the way people are feeling impacted. Since Delta in the second half of 2021, we saw a sharp and sustained increase in the proportion of people who felt their mental health (and to a lesser extent their sense of support) had been impacted, but a slow decline in the proportion who felt their household income had been. However, we are now seeing a reversal of this pattern, with the sense of financial impact returning. It is likely this reflects less the direct impact of COVID-19 now, and more the impact of global and local economic factors.



Financial Security

The return of financial considerations is also seen in a sharp increase in the level of concern about future financial security. This has increased across the country in the current quarter (April and the first half of May).

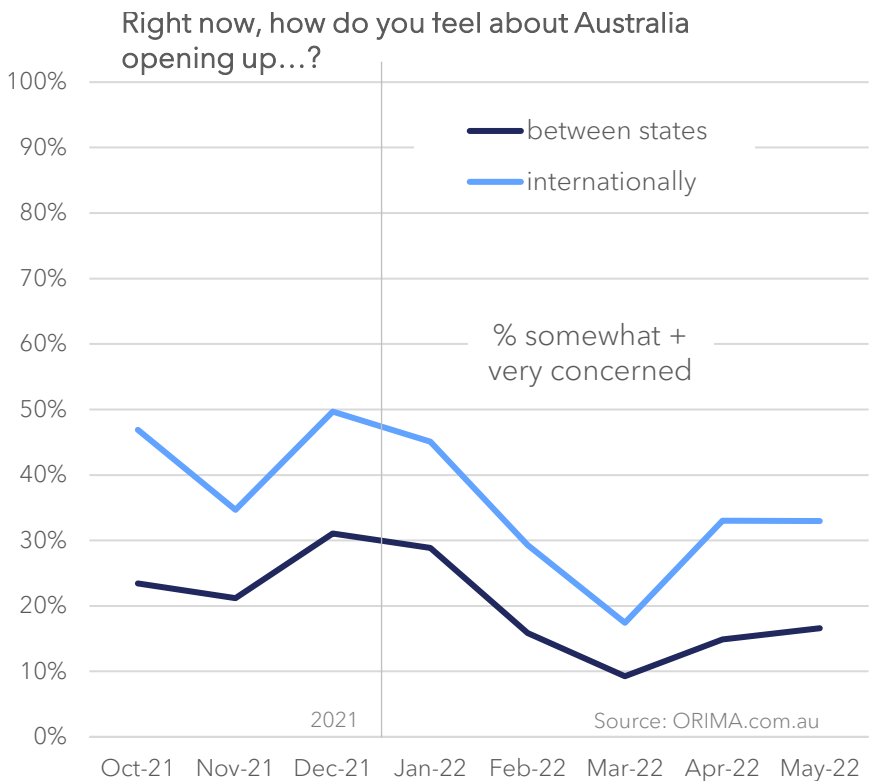
The especially sharp increase in concern about future financial security seen in Queensland respondents is most likely driven by the impact of the floods, as well as COVID. This strong spike in the Queensland results further suggests that respondents are starting to look beyond COVID as the major current and future impact on their lives.



Anxiety about Australia “opening up”

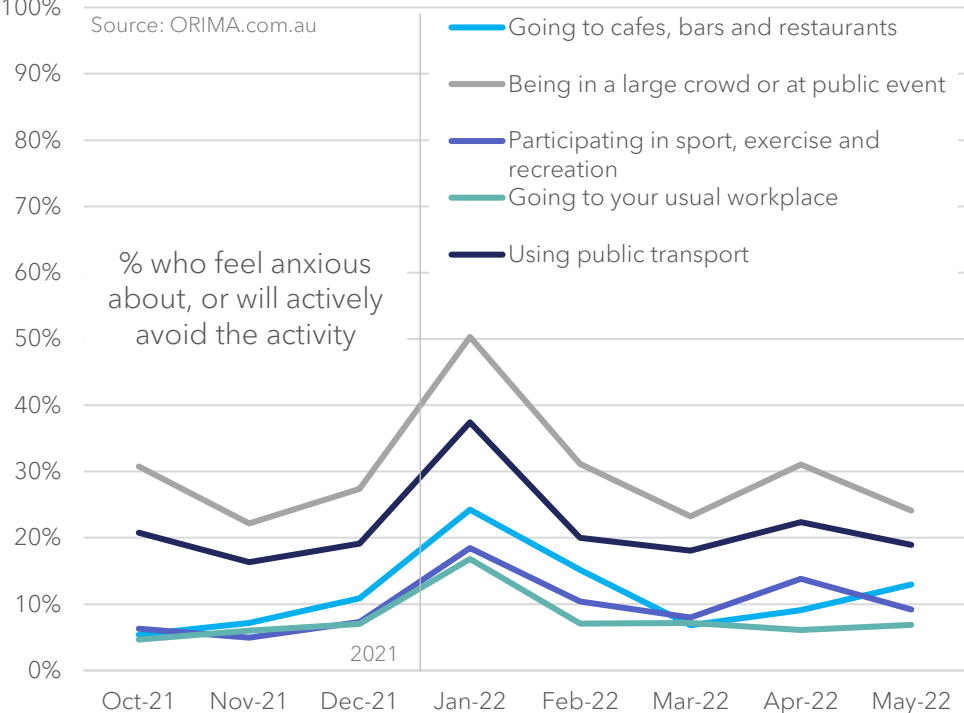
The CRT started tracking in October 2021 how comfortable or anxious Australian’s felt with beginning to open up to travel, and with moving towards a ‘living with COVID’ paradigm. Anxiety initially fell, before increasing sharply in response to Omicron in early 2022. Since then, anxiety in the community has fluctuated, but remained generally low for most situations. Interestingly, it was March that had the lowest levels of anxiety (and the highest levels of comfort and excitement), before April and May saw a slight increase in concern about travel and some variation in anxiety. Given the patterns across CRT indicators, these recent fluctuations may be about more than just COVID.

How Australians feel about re-engaging and opening up



NOTE: May 2022 result is based on partial data

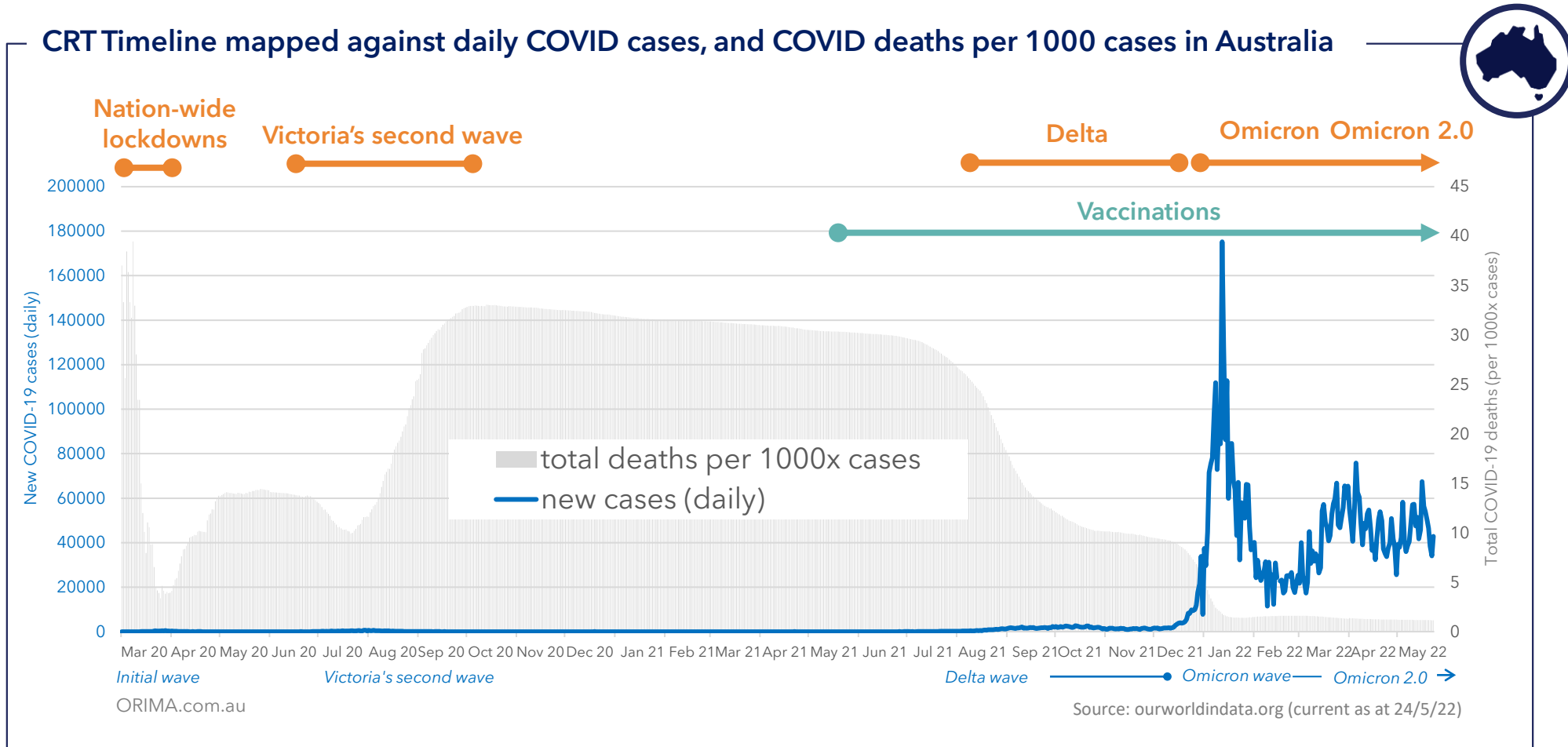
How would you feel about doing each of the following things in the next month?



Base: All respondents (n=82-636/month)

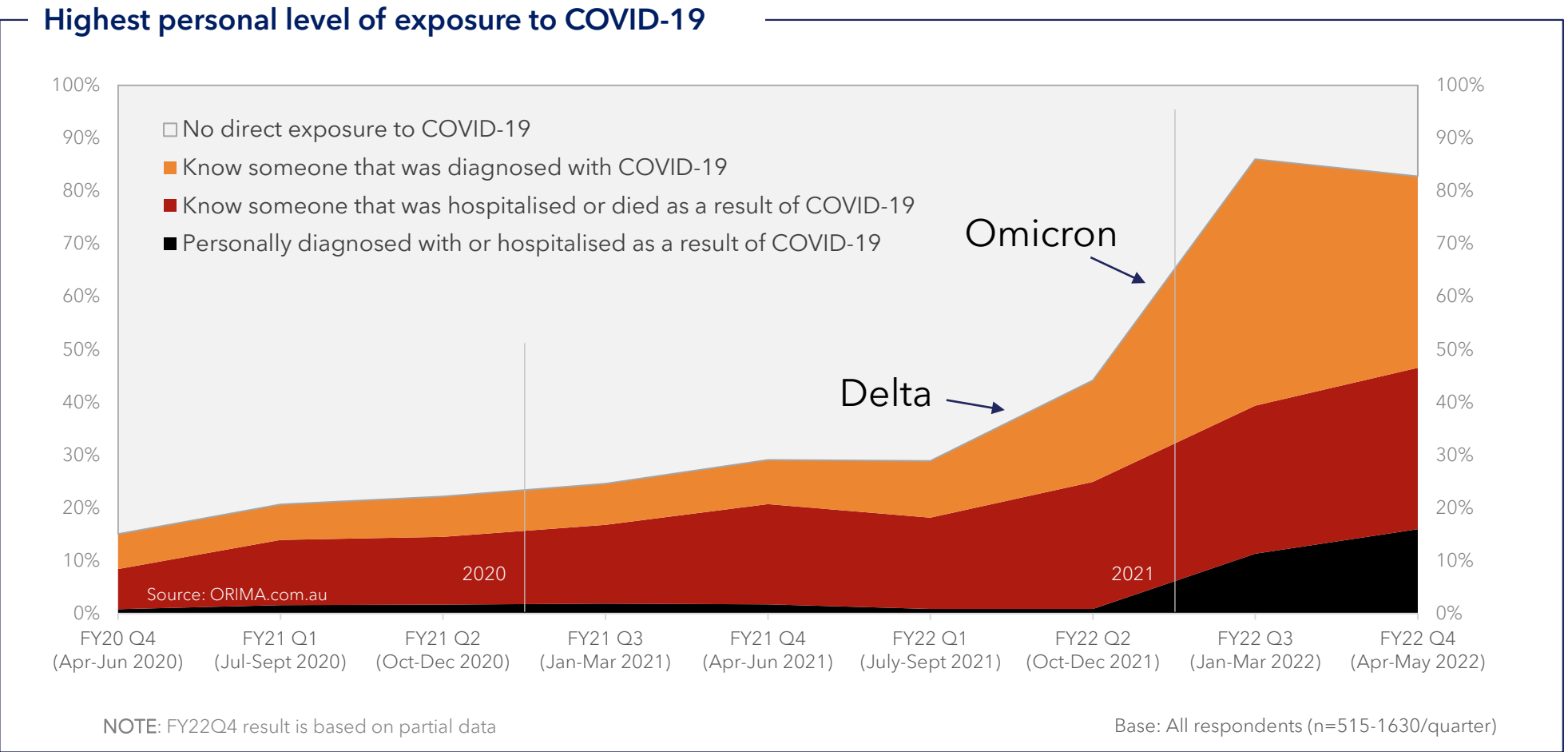
Case numbers & exposure

The CRT has tracked how our community is feeling at each stage of the pandemic - picking up the impact of consecutive lockdowns, rise in vaccinations and associated decline in death rates, and now the rise in cases as we move towards 'living with the virus'.



Personal familiarity with COVID

First Delta, and then Omicron, rapidly took COVID from being a social and economic pandemic to a disease most Australians have now seen first hand. That proximity is important, as we continuously see that when locations or segments of the community are more exposed to COVID, then many impact and mood indicators quickly reflect that. This was seen with people living with disability in late 2020, for women in mid-2021, and in states that were previously isolated in late 2021 and early 2022.



Current results and report archive available at:

[CRT Dashboard \(orima.com.au\)](https://orima.com.au)










Thank you

We would also like to acknowledge and thank all the participants who were involved in the research for their valuable contribution and input.

This project was conducted in accordance with the international quality standard ISO 20252 and the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act 1988.



Specialists in government and social research and evaluation

-  Communication, marketing and community research
-  Organisational, employee, and stakeholder research
-  Client and customer research
-  Consultation and submissions
-  Portals
-  Data analytics and compliance
-  Online surveys and ballots
-  First Nations research
-  Disability services research