

Quantum  
Market  
Research

# Sentiment Towards COVID-19 Vaccine Research

Department of Health

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Report | April 2021 (Wave 7 Part 1)

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# Research methodology



- Online survey conducted via an online research panel



- Questions relating to the COVID-19 vaccine were included in Quantum's AustraliaNOW survey – a weekly survey of 1,000 Australians tracking attitudes and behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic.



- Nationally representative sample by age, gender and location (State)
- Total sample size of n=1,000 per wave

## Fieldwork dates:



- Wave 1: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020
- Wave 2: 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- Wave 3: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- Wave 4: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- Wave 5: 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- Wave 6: 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021
- Wave 7 (Part 1): 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

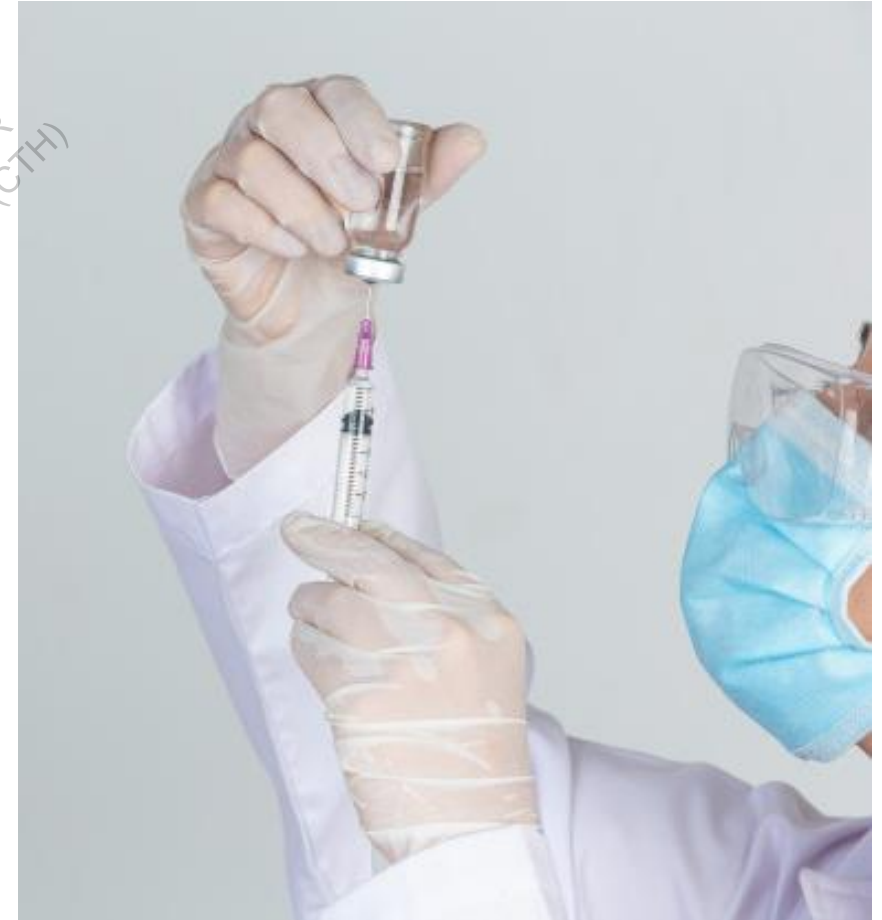
*The project was carried out in line with the Market Research International Standard, AS ISO 20252.*

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# Key take outs

- 1. Overall intention to take up the COVID-19 vaccine has declined for the second consecutive month, with just over two-thirds of Australians (68%) now likely to get vaccinated.** The decrease in vaccination intentions is largely being driven by those aged under 50 years and follows news of Australia's first blood-clotting case linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine.
- 2. The prevalence of concerns about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines has increased in April.** The proportion of Australians that have any concerns about the vaccine increased from 75% in March to 83% in April. Concern is most prominent in relation to potential long-term side effects, however, concerns about the testing process, short-term side effects and the vaccine potentially being unsafe have all increased since March.
- 3. Confidence in the safety of the vaccine is the main form of reassurance required for driving consideration.** Almost three in ten (29%) of those that would be unlikely to be vaccinated against COVID-19 indicate that having confidence in the safety of the vaccine would be the main factor that would encourage them to consider being vaccinated against COVID-19.



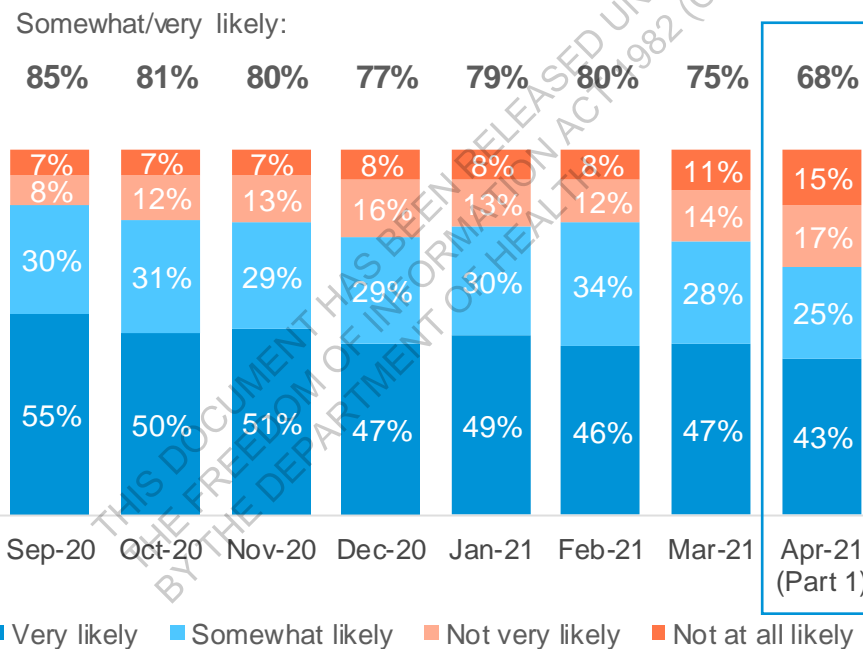
# Findings: Sentiment Towards a COVID-19 Vaccine

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# Intention to take up the COVID-19 vaccine has declined, with just over two-thirds of Australians (68%) now likely to get vaccinated

- The proportion of Australians that indicate that they are unlikely to get vaccinated has grown to 32%.
- This second consecutive month of declining vaccination intentions has coincided with news of Australia’s first blood-clotting case linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine (prior to the latest wave of fieldwork) and the Federal government announcement that Australians under 50 will no longer receive AstraZeneca vaccine (during latest wave of fieldwork).

**Likelihood to take up coronavirus vaccine (By month)**



Note: 'I've already had the COVID-19 vaccine' removed (2.3% in Apr-21 Part 1)

April 2021 (Part 1):

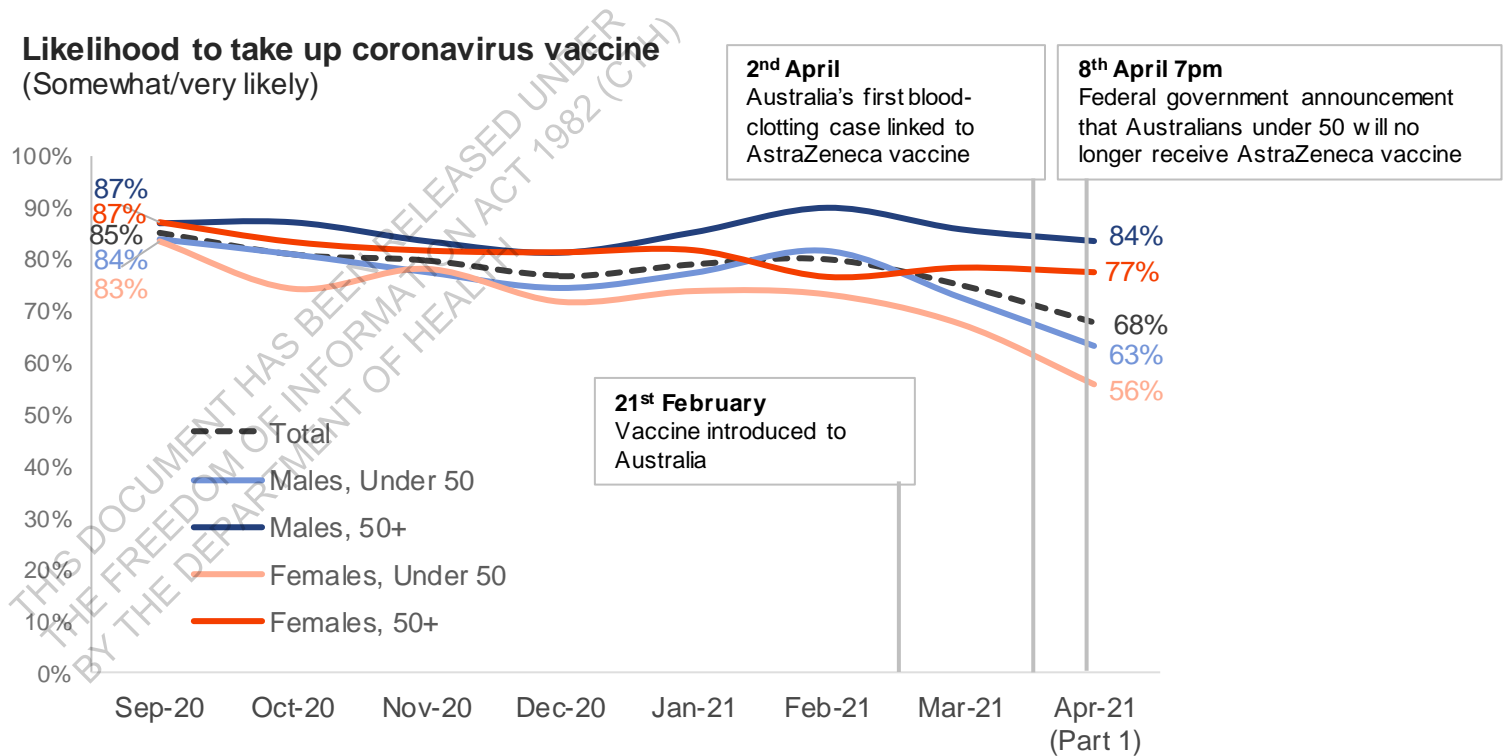
**68%** somewhat/very likely

BY STATE	Monthly change (percentage points)
NSW (69%)	-9
VIC (63%)	-11
QLD (66%)	-7
SA (69%)	+5
WA (76%)	+2
BY REGION	
Metropolitan (68%)	-6
Regional (67%)	-10
BY GENDER	
Male (73%)	-6
Female (63%)	-8
BY AGE	
18-29 (55%)	-13
30-39 (66%)	-6
40-49 (58%)	-11
50-69 (82%)	+2
70+* (78%)	-13
Under 50s (59%)	-11

Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=980 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW). Note: New statement added March 2021 to capture those who have already had the vaccine. \*Note: Small base size below State: NSW n=329; VIC n=250; QLD n=209; SA n=79; WA n=73. Region: Metropolitan n=662; Regional n=318. Gender: Male n=493; Female n=481. Age: 18-29 n=226; 30-39 n=179; 40-49 n=179; 50-69 n=319; 70+ n=77. Q10g. If a government-approved vaccine to prevent or minimise the severity of coronavirus/COVID-19 was available to you right now at no cost, how likely would you be personally to get vaccinated?

# The decline in vaccination intentions is driven largely by those aged under 50 years

- Whilst vaccination intentions among those aged 50 years or over have been upheld, intentions among Australians aged under 50 years have dropped over two consecutive months.
- Vaccination intentions are lower amongst females compared to males, across both age categories.



Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=980 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW). Note: New statement added March 2021 to capture those who have already had the vaccine  
 Males under 50, n=252-306 per wave; Males 50+, n=188-249 per wave; Females under 50, n=258-336 per wave; Females 50+, n=153-247 per wave.

Q10g. If a government-approved vaccine to prevent or minimise the severity of coronavirus/COVID-19 was available to you right now at no cost, how likely would you be personally to get vaccinated?

# Concerns about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines have increased in April

**Any barriers/ concerns:**  
**83%** (+8 p.p. last month)

- The proportion of Australians that have any concerns about the vaccine has increased from 75% in March to 83% in April.
- The most common concern continues to be the potential long-term side effects.
- However, concerns about the testing process, short-term side effects and the vaccine potentially being unsafe have all increased since March.
- There was a higher proportion of those in Queensland (33%) indicating that they don't know enough about the vaccine yet.

## Barriers to (or concerns about) COVID-19 vaccination

Total sample

		Monthly change (percentage points)	2 monthly change (percentage points)
Unsure of long-term side effects	42%	+3	+2
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	29%	<b>+5</b>	+3
Unsure of short-term side effects	27%	<b>+5</b>	+2
Process feels rushed	27%	0	-3
Don't know enough about it yet	25%	-1	-6
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	24%	<b>+7</b>	+5
I would want to wait until others have had it first	23%	0	-6
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	13%	+3	+2
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	10%	+1	+2
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	10%	-1	-2
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	8%	+2	+1
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	5%	+2	+1
Other	3%	-1	+1
None	17%	-8	-1

Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=980 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW).

Q10I. What concerns, if any, do you have about being vaccinated against COVID-19? / Which of the following (if any) are preventing you from considering being vaccinated against COVID-19?

# Concerns are most heightened among those aged under 50 years, decreasing with age

- Whilst the most prominent concerns for under 50s relate to the potential long-term side effects, they are comparatively more concerned than other age groups about potential short-term side effects, the speed of the process, their own knowledge of the vaccine and safety of the vaccine(s).
- Younger Australians are more likely to want to wait until others have had the vaccine first and feel that threat of COVID-19 is low (as is the need for vaccination).

Barriers to (or concerns about) COVID-19 vaccination By age	Under 50 (n=584)	50-69 (n=319)	70+ (n=77)
<b>Any barriers/concerns</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>58%</b>
Unsure of long-term side effects	42%	42%	39%
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	29%	32%	22%
Unsure of short-term side effects in the days just following vaccination	<b>29%</b>	22%	26%
Process feels rushed	<b>29%</b>	23%	24%
Don't know enough about it yet	<b>28%</b>	23%	14%
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	<b>27%</b>	22%	18%
I would want to wait until others have had it first	<b>27%</b>	16%	14%
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	<b>16%</b>	9%	8%
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	<b>14%</b>	5%	7%
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	<b>14%</b>	5%	4%
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	9%	8%	4%
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	<b>6%</b>	3%	2%
Other	2%	3%	4%
None	10%	23%	42%

*Blue text indicates significantly higher than other subgroups*

Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=980 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW).

Q10i. What concerns, if any, do you have about being vaccinated against COVID-19? / Which of the following (if any) are preventing you from considering being vaccinated against COVID-19?



# Females express greater concerns than males about the safety and potential side-effects of the COVID-19 vaccine(s)

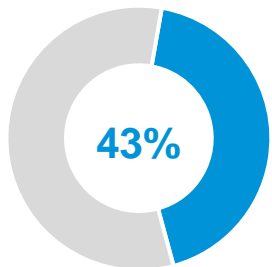
- Females are significantly more likely than males to indicate they are concerned or discouraged by the potential long-term and short-term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine(s).
- They are also more likely to indicate that they would want others to go first (25% compared to 20% of males).

Barriers to (or concerns about) COVID-19 vaccination By age	Males (n=493)	Females (n=481)
<b>Any barriers/concerns</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>87%</b>
Unsure of long-term side effects	35%	<b>49%</b>
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	26%	<b>32%</b>
Unsure of short-term side effects in the days just following vaccination	21%	<b>33%</b>
Process feels rushed	25%	29%
Don't know enough about it yet	23%	27%
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	21%	<b>28%</b>
I would want to wait until others have had it first	20%	<b>25%</b>
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	14%	13%
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	10%	11%
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	11%	10%
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	9%	8%
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	6%	4%
Other	2%	3%
None	20%	13%

*Blue text indicates significantly higher than other subgroups*

Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=980 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW). Note: Sample for 'Gender fluid/diverse/non-binary' too small to show (n=6)  
 Q10l. What concerns, if any, do you have about being vaccinated against COVID-19? / Which of the following (if any) are preventing you from considering being vaccinated against COVID-19?

# Concerns among those that are *very likely* to get vaccinated against COVID-19 have increased



**Very likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19**

(Apr-21 Part 1)

- Among those ‘very likely’ to be vaccinated’ (43% of Australians), the biggest concern continues to be the potential long-term side effects.
- Concerns have increased among this cohort in relation to the potential short-term side effects and the testing process.

**Any concerns:**  
**68%** (+13 p.p. last month)



## Concerns about being vaccinated

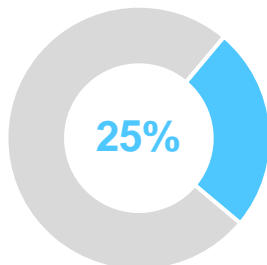
Those very likely to get vaccinated

**Monthly change**  
(percentage points)

Unsure of long-term side effects	33%	+3
Unsure of short-term side effects <sup>^</sup>	19%	<b>+6</b>
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	18%	<b>+6</b>
Don't know enough about it yet	18%	+3
I would want to wait until others have had it first	16%	+3
Process feels rushed	14%	-3
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	9%	+2
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	9%	+4
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	6%	+1
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	5%	+2
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	4%	+2
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	2%	+1
Other	2%	-1
None	32%	-13

Base: Very likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=417 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW). <sup>^</sup>Note: New statement added February 2021 relating to side effects in the days following vaccination. Q10I. What concerns, if any, do you have about being vaccinated against COVID-19?

# Hesitation among those *somewhat likely* to be vaccinated has shifted towards potential short-term side effects



**Somewhat likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19**

(Apr-21 Part 1)

- Within the cohort that are 'somewhat likely' to get vaccinated against COVID-19, there are increasing hesitations relating to short-term side effects, the testing process and in particular, the safety of the vaccine(s).



## Barriers to vaccination consideration

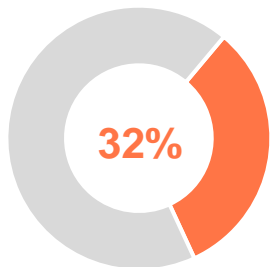
Those somewhat likely to get vaccinated

**Any barriers:**  
93% (+3 p.p. last month)

		Monthly change (percentage points)	3-monthly change (percentage points)
Unsure of long-term side effects	46%	+4	+4
Unsure of short-term side effects <sup>^</sup>	33%	+7	N/A
Don't know enough about it yet	31%	-2	-10
I would want to wait until others have had it first	30%	-6	-4
Process feels rushed	29%	+3	-3
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	29%	+6	-2
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	24%	+8	+7
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	13%	-1	+1
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	10%	0	0
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	9%	+1	+3
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	6%	-2	-1
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	3%	0	-1
Other	3%	-1	0
None	7%	-3	-4

Base: Somewhat likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=246 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW). <sup>^</sup>Note: New statement added February 2021 relating to side effects in the days following vaccination. Q10I. Which of the following (if any) are preventing you from considering being vaccinated against COVID-19?

# An increasing proportion of those *unlikely* to be vaccinated believe the vaccine could be unsafe



**Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19**

(Apr-21 Part 1)

- Among those unlikely to be vaccinated, an increasing proportion believe the vaccine could be unsafe (up 7 percentage points since March).
- Positively, the proportion that indicate they don't know enough about the vaccines has decreased significantly over the past 3 months (since Jan-21).



## Barriers to vaccination consideration

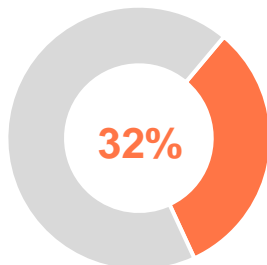
Those not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated

**Any barriers:**  
**96%** (-1 p.p. last month)

		Monthly change (percentage points)	3-monthly change (percentage points)
Unsure of long-term side effects	50%	-3	-5
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	44%	+7	+8
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	44%	-3	-1
Process feels rushed	41%	-5	-7
Unsure of short-term side effects^	32%	-1	N/A
Don't know enough about it yet	30%	-8	-21
I would want to wait until others have had it first	25%	-2	-8
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	23%	0	+2
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	18%	+2	-4
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	16%	-6	-1
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	11%	+4	+3
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	10%	+1	-1
Other	4%	-2	-2
None	4%	+1	+1

Base: Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=317 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW). ^Note: New statement added February 2021 relating to side effects in the days following vaccination. Q10. Which of the following (if any) are preventing you from considering being vaccinated against COVID-19?

# Confidence in the safety of the vaccine is the main form of reassurance required for driving consideration



**Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19**

(Apr-21 Part 1)

- There were no major changes between March and April, with 29% indicating that having confidence in the safety of the vaccine would be the main factor that would encourage them to consider being vaccinated against COVID-19.
- The idea of large numbers of Australians being safety vaccinated has dropped off slightly as a motivator.



## What would encourage you to consider being vaccinated?

Those not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated

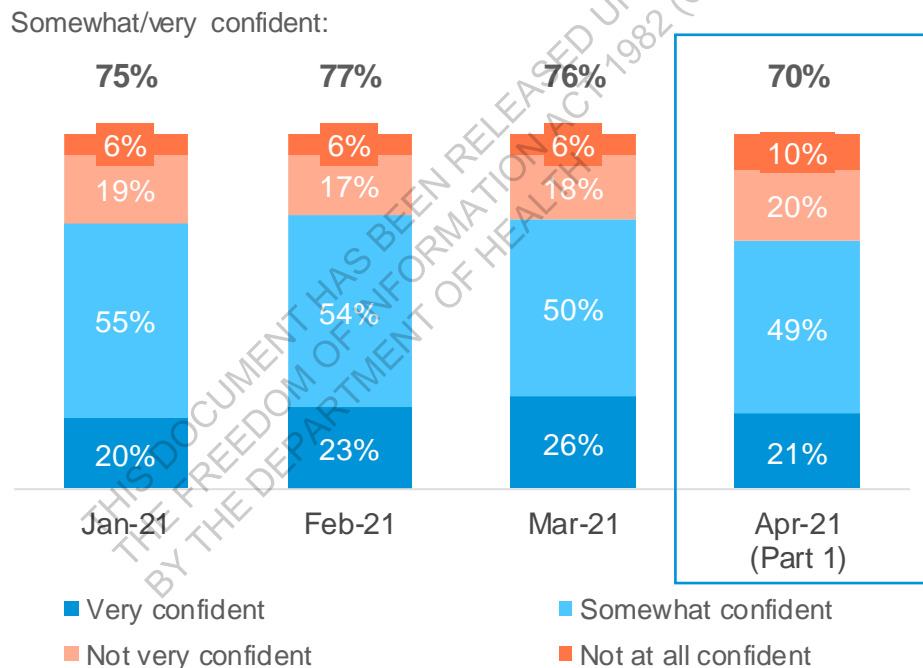
	Mar-21	Monthly change (percentage points)
If I felt confident that it was <b>safe</b> for me to get the vaccine	29%	0
If <b>large numbers of Australians</b> had been safely vaccinated against COVID-19	19%	-6
If <b>large numbers of people around the world</b> had been safely vaccinated against COVID-19	19%	-2
If COVID-19 vaccines were shown to be <b>reducing the number of people getting severe symptoms or dying</b>	18%	-1
If a COVID-19 vaccine was <b>required for overseas travel</b>	17%	0
If there were <b>changes to my health</b> that made me more at risk from COVID-19	14%	+5
If there was <b>community transmission</b> of COVID-19 in my local area	10%	+3
If it gave me <b>more freedom to travel</b> within Australia	9%	-3
If it meant I <b>didn't have to quarantine</b> on arrival or return when travelling interstate or overseas	8%	-5
If vaccination helped us to <b>get back to normal life</b> more quickly	8%	-5
If it meant I <b>didn't have to self-isolate</b> if there was a local outbreak of COVID-19	8%	-1
If <b>many of my family and/or social circle</b> had been vaccinated for COVID-19	8%	+4
If vaccination <b>helped Australia's economy recover</b>	8%	-2
If I was <b>required to interact more in person</b> with the public and/or vulnerable/immuno-compromised people	7%	-2
If my <b>workplace/ employer gave me time off</b> to get vaccinated (and recover if I had side effects)	7%	-1
Other	3%	-1
None	27%	-1

Base: Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=317 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW).  
Q10n. Which of the following (if any) would encourage you to consider being vaccinated against COVID-19?

# Confidence that the COVID-19 vaccines will be effective has softened, with 70% somewhat/very confident

- In April, seven in ten Australians (70%) feel confident that the COVID-19 vaccines that have been developed will be effective. This represents a drop of 6 percentage points since March, and is largely driven by those aged under 50 years.
- Although not a main barrier to vaccine uptake, perceived effectiveness continues to be linked with vaccination intentions, with 85% of those *very* confident in the effectiveness of the vaccines also *very* likely to be vaccinated.

**Confidence that the COVID-19 vaccines will be effective (By month)**



April 2021 (Part 1):

## 70% somewhat/very confident

BY STATE	Monthly change (percentage points)
NSW (70%)	-11
VIC (69%)	-6
QLD (68%)	-4
SA (74%)	+8
WA (70%)	-2
BY REGION	
Metropolitan (70%)	-7
Regional (69%)	-6
BY GENDER	
Male (76%)	-5
Female (64%)	-7
BY AGE	
18-29 (60%)	-8
30-39 (67%)	-11
40-49 (61%)	-10
50-59 (81%)	+6
60+ (80%)	-6

Base: Australians, n=1,002 (April 2021 Part 1 – AustraliaNOW).

State: NSW n=333; VIC n=255; QLD n=214; SA n=80; WA n=77. Region: Metropolitan n=675; Regional n=327. Gender: Male n=503; Female n=493. Age: 18-29 n=230; 30-39 n=184; 40-49 n=181; 50-59 n=161; 60+ n=246. Q10m. How confident are you that the coronavirus/COVID-19 vaccines developed will be effective?

# About the research

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# Respondent profile

Nationally representative sample by age, gender and location.

N=1,000 per wave

Wave same size	N=
April 2021 – Part 1	1,002
March 2021	1,003
February 2021	1,001
January 2021	1,002
December 2020	1,001
November 2020	1,000
October 2020	1,006

## Quotas and weighting

Quotas were applied to ensure a representative spread of responses by gender, age and State. Data has also been weighted by State and gender to achieve a representative profile.

## Sample accuracy

The results are based off a total sample size of n=1,002, yielding a maximum margin of error of +/-3.1% (at the 95% confidence interval). This means that for a result of 50%, we can be 95% confident that the result in the actual population will range between 46.9% and 53.1%.

November 2020	Proportion of sample (weighted %)	Number of respondents (n=)
<b>Total</b>	100%	1,002
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48%	503
Female	51%	493
Gender fluid/diverse/non-binary	1%	6
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 29 years	24%	230
30 – 39 years	18%	184
40 – 49 years	18%	181
50 – 59 years	16%	161
60+ years	24%	246
<b>State</b>		
NSW	32%	333
VIC	26%	255
QLD	20%	214
SA	7%	80
WA	10%	77
Other	5%	43



# Appendix I: Survey questions

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# Survey questions

Survey questions added to AustraliaNOW from 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

If a government-approved vaccine to prevent or minimise the severity of coronavirus/COVID-19 was available to you right now at no cost, how likely would you be personally to get vaccinated?

**[SINGLE RESPONSE]**

Very likely.....	1
Somewhat likely.....	2
Not very likely.....	3
Not at all likely.....	4
I've already had the vaccine.....	5

**ASK IF Q2=1-4**

**[IF Q2=2-4]** Which of the following (if any) are **preventing you** from considering being vaccinated against COVID-19?

**[IF Q2=1]** What concerns, if any, do you have about being vaccinated against COVID-19?

**[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]**

I believe the vaccine could be unsafe.....	1
I feel there is inadequate testing/research.....	2
Unsure of short-term side effects in the days just following vaccination.....	14
Unsure of long-term side effects.....	3
Process feels rushed.....	4
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination.....	5
Don't know enough about it yet.....	6
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines.....	7
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low.....	8
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine.....	9
I would want to wait until others have had it first.....	10
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus.....	11
Other (please specify).....	12
None.....	13

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# Survey questions

Survey questions added to AustraliaNOW from 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**ASK IF Q2=3-4 (NOT AT ALL LIKELY/ NOT VERY LIKELY)**

Which of the following (if any) would encourage you to consider being vaccinated against COVID-19?

**[MULTIPLE RESPONSE, RANDOMISE]**

- If there was community transmission of COVID-19 in my local area ..... 1
- If vaccination helped us to get back to normal life more quickly ..... 2
- If vaccination helped Australia’s economy recover. .... 3
- If I felt confident that it was safe for me to get the vaccine ..... 4
- If large numbers of people around the world had been safely vaccinated against COVID-19..... 5
- If large numbers of Australians had been safely vaccinated against COVID-19..... 6
- If COVID-19 vaccines were shown to be reducing the number of people getting severe symptoms or dying..... 7
- If many of my family and/or social circle had been vaccinated for COVID-19..... 8
- If my workplace/ employer gave me time off to get vaccinated (and recover if I had side effects)..... 9
- If it gave me more freedom to travel within Australia..... 10
- If a COVID-19 vaccine was required for overseas travel ..... 11
- If it meant I didn’t have to quarantine on arrival or return when travelling interstate or overseas ..... 12
- If I was required to interact more in person with the public and/or vulnerable/ immuno-compromised people..... 13
- If it meant I didn’t have to self-isolate if there was a local outbreak of COVID-19 ..... 14
- If there were changes to my health that made me more at risk from COVID-19 ..... 15
- Other (please specify) ..... 16
- None..... 17

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# Survey questions

Survey questions added to AustraliaNOW from 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**ASK ALL**

How confident are you that the coronavirus/COVID-19 vaccines developed will be effective?

**[SINGLE RESPONSE]**

- Very confident..... 1
- Somewhat confident..... 2
- Not that confident..... 3
- Not at all confident ..... 4

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