

Quantum  
Market  
Research

# Sentiment Towards COVID-19 Vaccine Research

Department of Health

Report | May 2021 (Wave 8)

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THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



# 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
- Wave 7 (Part 2): 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021
- Wave 8: 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021

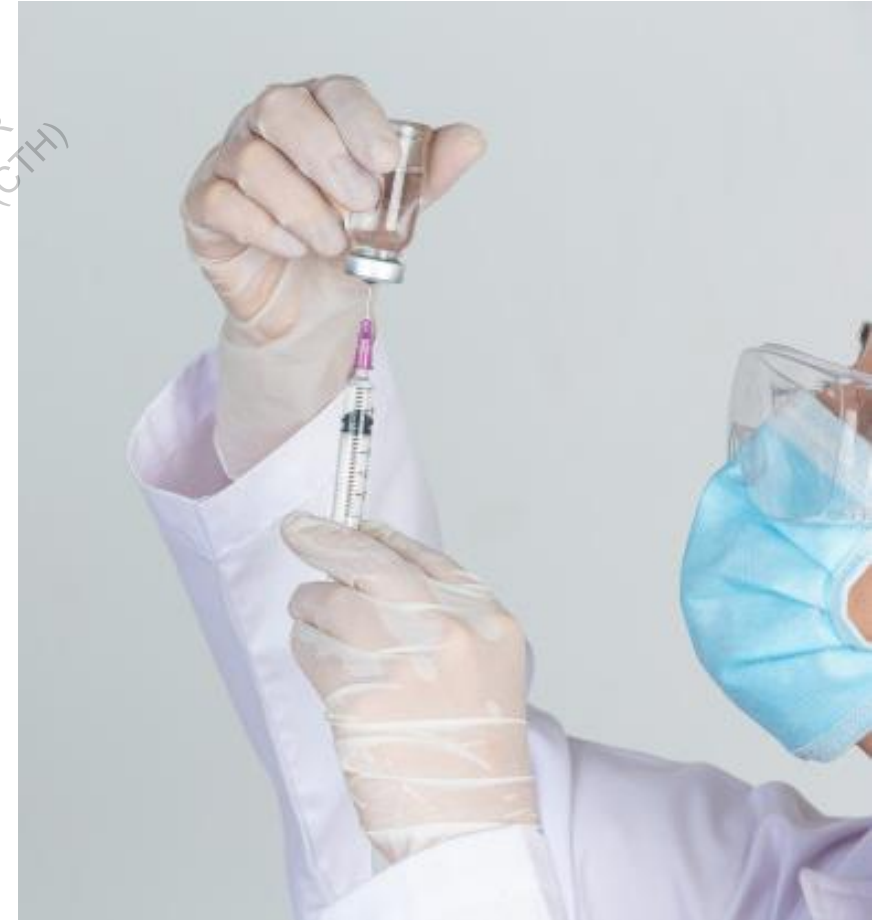
*The project was carried out in line with the Market Research International Standard, AS ISO 20252.*

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# Key take outs

- 1. Intention to take up the COVID-19 vaccine has fallen, with 66% of Australians willing to get vaccinated, or are already vaccinated.** There is a distinct generational divide in terms of COVID-19 vaccination intentions, with only around half (51%) of Australians aged 18-29 likely to be vaccinated, compared to 74% of 50-69 year olds and 86% of 70+ year olds. There is also a significant gap between males and females, with 59% of females intending to be vaccinated compared to 74% of males.
- 2. Concern about the vaccine's potential side-effects, it's safety and the adequacy of the vaccine development and testing process increased this month.** Those aged under 50 are comparatively more likely this month to feel that they lack understanding of the vaccine, suggesting there may be an opportunity to build education/awareness. There has been an increase in concerns among this group about whether the vaccine has been sufficiently tested, and the safety of the vaccine.
- 3. Confidence that the COVID-19 vaccines will be effective has been upheld.** Seven in ten Australians (70%) feel confident that the COVID-19 vaccines that have been developed will be effective.



# Findings: Sentiment Towards a COVID-19 Vaccine

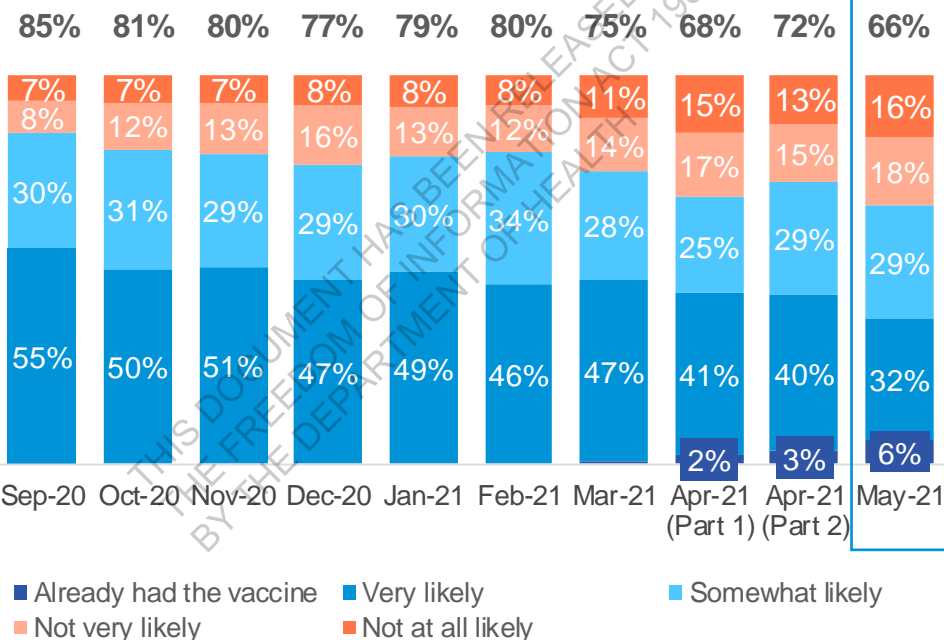
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# Intention to take up the COVID-19 vaccine in Australia has fallen, with 66% willing to get vaccinated, or are already vaccinated

- Vaccine hesitation has increased, with the proportion of Australians indicating they are unlikely to get vaccinated increasing to 34%.
- The month-on-month decrease in vaccination intentions is driven largely by females and those aged under 40.
- While there was a decrease in intention across all states, it was largest among Victorians.
- Meanwhile, vaccination intentions among those aged 70+ years have stabilised (32% of those aged 70+\* claim to have already had the vaccine).

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

Somewhat/very likely / already vaccinated:



May 2021:

	Somewhat/very likely / already vaccinated	Not very / not at all likely	Monthly change in likelihood (percentage points)
<b>STATE</b>			
NSW	67%	33%	-5
VIC	63%	37%	-10
QLD	66%	34%	-6
SA	67%	33%	-3
WA	72%	28%	+3
<b>REGION</b>			
Metropolitan	67%	33%	-7
Regional	65%	35%	-4
<b>GENDER</b>			
Male	74%	26%	0
Female	59%	41%	-12
<b>AGE</b>			
18-29	51%	49%	-14
30-39	58%	42%	-11
40-49	71%	29%	-2
50-69	74%	26%	-4
70+*	86%	14%	+1
Under 50s	59%	41%	-8

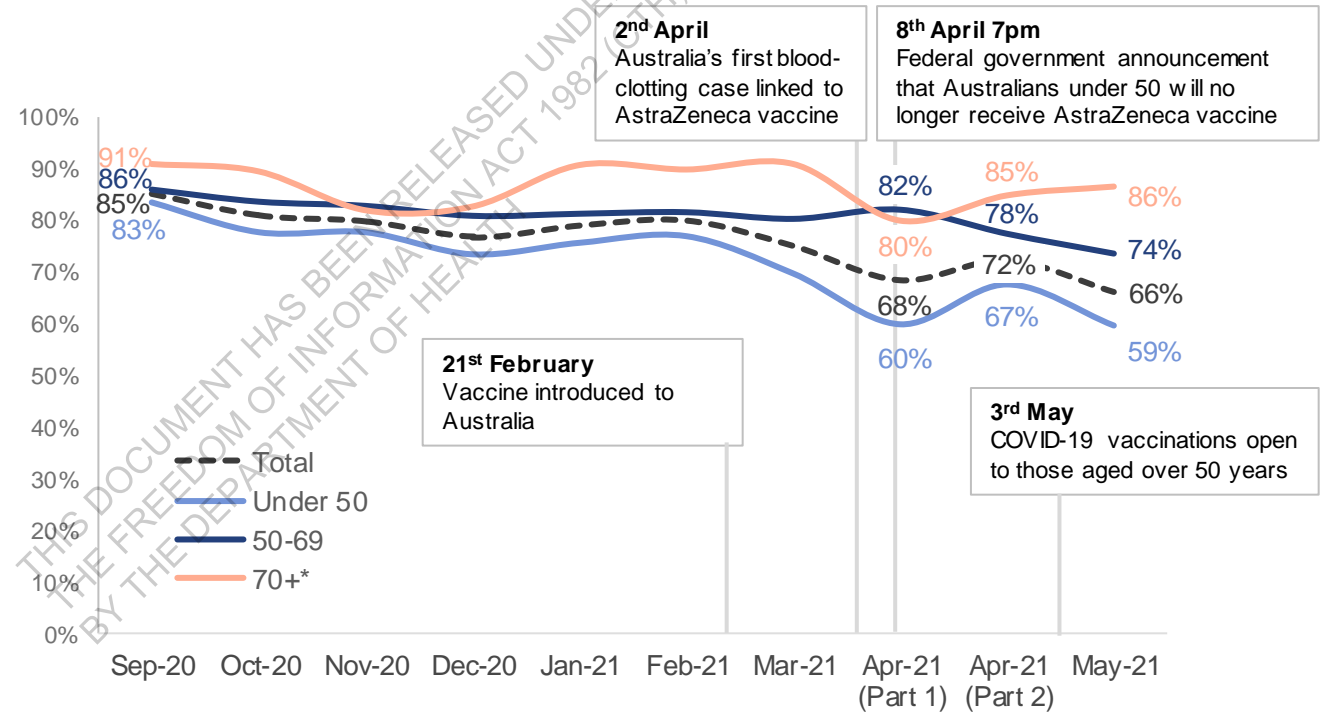
Base: All Australians, n=1,000 (May 2021– AustraliaNOW). \*Note: Small sample size (see below). 'Monthly change' compares May to April – Part 2 for the blue bar. State: NSW n=315; VIC n=251; QLD n=210; SA n=81; WA n=99. Region: Metropolitan n=660; Regional n=340. Gender: Male n=493; Female n=503. Age: 18-29 n=235; 30-39 n=185; 40-49 n=183; 50-69 n=308; 70+ n=89. 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?



# Vaccination intentions have declined among those aged 50-69 years, coinciding with the release of the vaccine to this group

- After a slight increase in the middle of April, vaccination intentions have dropped again for those aged under 50 years and those aged 50-69 years. This drop comes after vaccinations opened to those aged over 50 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May.
- The overall drop in intentions coincides with continued media coverage of the side effects linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine.
- Vaccination intentions have held steady among those aged 70+ years.

**Likelihood to take up coronavirus vaccine**  
(Somewhat/very likely / already vaccinated)



Base: All Australians, n=1,005 (May 2021 – AustraliaNOW). \*Note: Small sample size (see below)

Under 50, n=564-603 per wave; 50-69 years, n=299-333 per wave; 70+ years, n=83-129 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?

# Concern about the vaccine's potential side-effects, it's safety and whether it has been sufficiently tested increased this month

**Any barriers/ concerns:**  
**84%** (+3 p.p. last month)

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

Total sample

		Monthly change (percentage points)	3-monthly change (percentage points)
Unsure of long-term side effects	44%	+5	+4
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	31%	+5	+5
Process feels rushed	29%	+3	-1
Unsure of short-term side effects	29%	+2	+4
Don't know enough about it yet	27%	+3	-4
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	27%	+5	+8
I would want to wait until others have had it first	22%	+3	-7
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	14%	+3	+3
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	11%	+1	-1
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	8%	0	0
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	5%	0	+1
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	5%	-2	+2
Other	3%	0	+1
None	16%	-3	-2

- The proportion of Australians that have any concerns about the vaccine has remained largely on par with last month at 84%.
- The most common concern continues to be the potential long-term side effects (44%) followed by the feeling there has been inadequate testing of the vaccine (31%).
- There has been an increase in those who believe the vaccine is unsafe, of 8 percentage points since February.

Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=940 (May 2021 – AustraliaNOW). Note: 'Monthly change' compares May to April – Part 2. '3-monthly change' compares May to February. 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?

# Those aged under 50 years remain the most likely to express concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine

- Those aged under 50 are comparatively more likely this month to feel that they lack understanding of the vaccine, and believe it won't be effective. They are increasingly concerned about the testing process (+9 p.p. since April – Part 2) and the safety of the vaccine (+7 p.p.).
- Those aged 50-69 are comparatively more concerned about potential long-term and short-term side effects.
- Those aged 70+ hold the least amount of concerns.

Barriers to (or concerns about) COVID-19 vaccination	Under 50 (n=594)	50-69 (n=285)	70+ (n=61)
By age			
<b>Any barriers/concerns</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Unsure of long-term side effects	44%	47%	39%
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	33%	29%	32%
Process feels rushed	31%	27%	22%
Unsure of short-term side effects	28%	32%	29%
Don't know enough about it yet	31%	22%	19%
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	29%	24%	27%
I would want to wait until others have had it first	22%	21%	23%
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	14%	12%	16%
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	13%	7%	7%
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	9%	7%	8%
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	7%	4%	0%
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	6%	3%	7%
Other	3%	3%	6%
None	11%	22%	33%

*Blue text indicates significantly higher than other subgroups*

Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=940 (May 2021 – 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 remain more concerned than males about the adequacy of testing and potential side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine

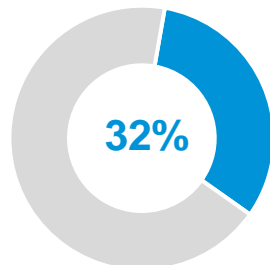
- Females remain significantly more likely than males to be concerned or discouraged by the potential long-term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Females are also more likely to indicate that they don't know enough about the vaccine, that they feel the process has been rushed and there has been inadequate research done.

Barriers to (or concerns about) COVID-19 vaccination	Males (n=457)	Females (n=479)
By age		
<b>Any barriers/concerns</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>88%</b>
Unsure of long-term side effects	40%	48%
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	27%	35%
Process feels rushed	24%	34%
Unsure of short-term side effects	26%	31%
Don't know enough about it yet	22%	32%
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	24%	30%
I would want to wait until others have had it first	20%	23%
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	14%	13%
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	12%	10%
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	9%	7%
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	7%	3%
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	5%	5%
Other	2%	3%
None	20%	12%

Blue text indicates significantly higher than other subgroups

Base: Australians that have not had the COVID-19 vaccine, n=940 (May 2021 – AustraliaNOW). Note: Sample for 'Gender fluid/diverse/non-binary' too small to show (n=4)  
 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?

# Among those that are *very likely* to get vaccinated, the potential side effects are the main concern, consistent with last month



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

(May-21)

- Among those ‘very likely’ to be vaccinated’ (32% of Australians), the biggest concern continues to be the potential long-term and short-term side effects (38% concerned with *any* side effects).
- Concerns remain relatively consistent with last month among this group.



## Concerns about being vaccinated

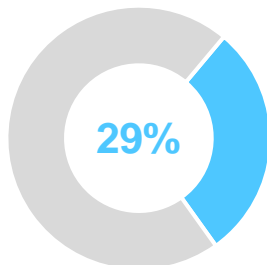
Those very likely to get vaccinated

**Any concerns:**  
**63%** (-1 p.p. last month)

		Monthly change (percentage points)	3-monthly change (percentage points)
Unsure of long-term side effects	32%	0	+1
Unsure of short-term side effects <sup>^</sup>	21%	-3	+2
Don't know enough about it yet	18%	+4	-2
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	15%	-2	0
I would want to wait until others have had it first	14%	+3	<b>-5</b>
Process feels rushed	13%	-4	<b>-6</b>
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	10%	+2	+1
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	9%	-1	-1
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	6%	+2	-1
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	4%	+2	+3
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	3%	+1	-2
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	2%	0	0
Other	3%	0	+2
None	37%	+1	+4

Base: Very likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=316 (May 2021 – 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? Note: ‘Monthly change’ compares May to April – Part 2. ‘3-monthly change’ compares May to February.

# Those *somewhat likely* to be vaccinated are expressing a wider range of concerns this month



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

(May-21)

- Within the cohort that are ‘*somewhat likely*’ to get vaccinated against COVID-19, concerns and hesitations have increased since last month in relation to potential long-term side effects and the testing process behind the vaccine.

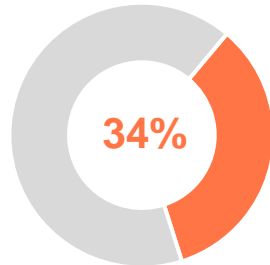
**Any barriers:**  
90% (-1 p.p. last month)

**Barriers to vaccination consideration**  
Those somewhat likely to get vaccinated

		Monthly change (percentage points)	3-monthly change (percentage points)
Unsure of long-term side effects	47%	+9	+7
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	34%	+14	+8
Process feels rushed	31%	+8	-1
Unsure of short-term side effects^	31%	+4	+6
I would want to wait until others have had it first	30%	+2	-7
Don't know enough about it yet	27%	0	-10
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	25%	+5	+7
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	10%	+1	-1
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	6%	-2	-7
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	5%	-3	-3
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	4%	-1	-4
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	4%	0	-1
Other	3%	+1	+1
None	10%	+1	+4

Base: Somewhat likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=288 (April 2021 Part 2 – AustraliaNOW). ^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? Note: ‘Monthly change’ compares May to April – Part 2. ‘3-monthly change’ compares May to February.

# While the nature of concerns among those *unlikely* to be vaccinated remain consistent with last month, concerns have risen slightly



**Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19**  
(May-21)

- Among those *unlikely* to be vaccinated (34% of Australians), consistent with last month there is a higher level of safety concerns compared with other cohorts.
- Concern about the long-term side effects remain the biggest barrier among this group.



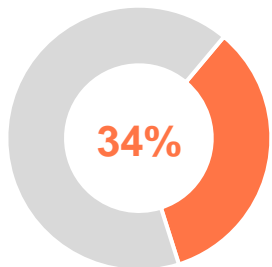
## Barriers to vaccination consideration Those not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated

**Any barriers:**  
**98%** (+2 p.p. last month)

		Monthly change (percentage points)	3-monthly change (percentage points)
Unsure of long-term side effects	53%	+2	-7
I believe the vaccine could be unsafe	46%	+2	+4
I feel there is inadequate testing/research	44%	0	-7
Process feels rushed	43%	+1	-8
Don't know enough about it yet	36%	0	<b>-10</b>
Unsure of short-term side effects^	35%	+2	-6
I would want to wait until others have had it first	23%	+2	<b>-14</b>
I feel the risk/threat from COVID-19 is low	20%	+3	+4
I believe a vaccine won't be effective for this virus	19%	-2	-3
I don't feel the need to get the vaccine	16%	-5	0
Don't believe in vaccinations/anti-vaccination	10%	-1	+2
I am allergic/have had reactions from vaccines	6%	-2	-3
Other	2%	-1	-1
None	2%	-2	-1

Base: Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=336 (May 2021 – AustraliaNOW). ^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? Note: 'Monthly change' compares May to April – Part 2. '3-monthly change' compares May to February.

# Consistently, confidence in the safety of the vaccine remains the most important factor for driving consideration



**Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19**  
(May-21)



- There were no major changes in levers of consideration month-on-month apart from a drop in those that would get vaccinated if their family or friends had been.
- Safety of the vaccine is still a major concern, with 1 in 3 Australians (33%) 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, followed by those who would be encouraged after a large amount of Australians had been vaccinated (21%).

## What would encourage you to consider being vaccinated?

Those not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated

	May-21	Monthly change (percentage points)
If I felt confident that it was <b>safe</b> for me to get the vaccine	33%	+2
If <b>large numbers of Australians</b> had been safely vaccinated against COVID-19	21%	+4
If <b>large numbers of people around the world</b> had been safely vaccinated against COVID-19	18%	-1
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>	15%	+2
If it meant I <b>didn't have to quarantine</b> on arrival or return when travelling interstate or overseas	11%	+1
If there were <b>changes to my health</b> that made me more at risk from COVID-19	11%	-1
If vaccination helped us to <b>get back to normal life</b> more quickly	9%	-1
If there was <b>community transmission</b> of COVID-19 in my local area	8%	+2
If I was <b>required to interact more in person</b> with the public and/or vulnerable/immuno-compromised people	8%	0
If it gave me <b>more freedom to travel</b> within Australia	7%	0
If vaccination <b>helped Australia's economy recover</b>	6%	-1
If it meant I <b>didn't have to self-isolate</b> if there was a local outbreak of COVID-19	6%	-1
If <b>many of my family and/or social circle</b> had been vaccinated for COVID-19	5%	-5
If my <b>workplace/ employer gave me time off</b> to get vaccinated (and recover if I had side effects)	4%	-3
Other	2%	0
None	25%	-3

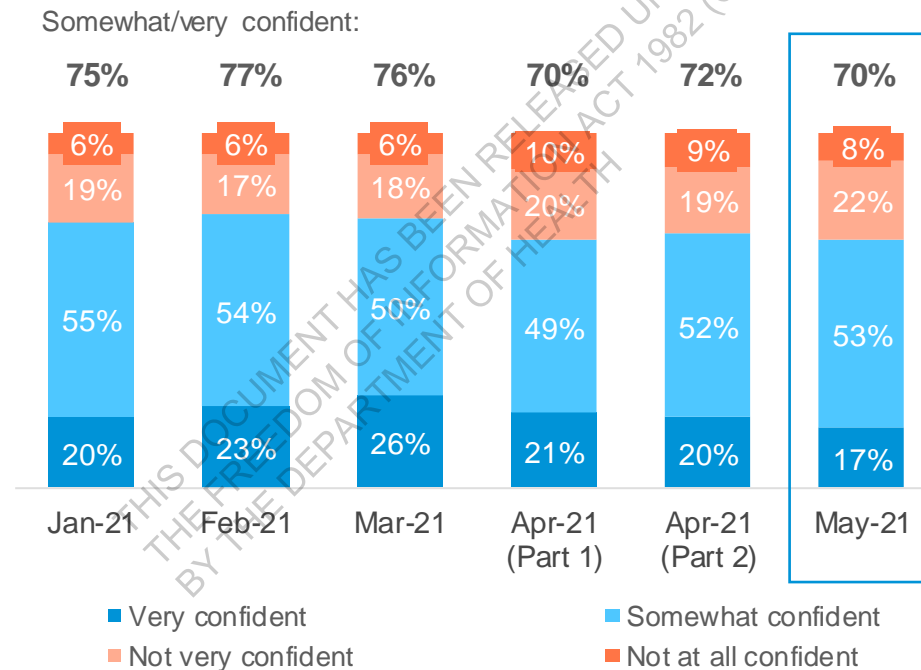
Base: Not very/not at all likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19, n=336 (May 2021– AustraliaNOW).  
Q10n. Which of the following (if any) would encourage you to consider being vaccinated against COVID-19?



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

- Seven in ten Australians (70%) feel confident that the COVID-19 vaccines that have been developed will be effective. This represents a decrease of two percentage points since last month, and remains slightly below results from earlier in the year (75% in January).
- Confidence in the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines has increased among those aged 50 years or over.

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



May 2021:

## 70% somewhat/very confident

STATE	Confidence	Monthly change (percentage points)
NSW	70%	-2
VIC	68%	-7
QLD	71%	-1
SA	76%	+9
WA	67%	-2
REGION		
Metropolitan	70%	-4
Regional	69%	+3
GENDER		
Male	77%	+2
Female	63%	-6
AGE		
18-29	62%	-7
30-39	62%	-5
40-49	71%	0
50-69	75%	+3
70+*	85%	+2
<b>Under 50s</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>-4</b>

Base: Australians, n=1,005 (May 2021– AustraliaNOW). Note: 'Monthly change' compares May to April – Part 2.

State: NSW n=315; VIC n=251; QLD n=210; SA n=81; WA n=99. Region: Metropolitan n=660; Regional n=340. Gender: Male n=493; Female n=503. Age: 18-29 n=235; 30-39 n=185; 40-49 n=183; 50-69 n=308; 70+ n=89. 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 sample size	N=	Wave sample size	N=
May 2021	1,000	January 2021	1,002
April 2021 – Part 2	1,003	December 2020	1,001
April 2021 – Part 1	1,002	November 2020	1,000
March 2021	1,003	October 2020	1,006
February 2021	1,001		

## 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=1,000, 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%	1,000
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	49%	493
Female	51%	503
Gender fluid/diverse/non-binary	0%	4
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 29 years	24%	235
30 – 39 years	19%	185
40 – 49 years	18%	183
50 – 69 years	31%	308
70+ years	9%	89
<b>State</b>		
NSW	32%	315
VIC	26%	251
QLD	20%	210
SA	7%	81
WA	10%	99
Other	5%	44

# Appendix I: Survey questions

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# Survey questions

Survey questions added to AustraliaNOW from 6th – 10th May 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 6th – 10th May 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 6th – 10th May 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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