

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE EMERGING GENERATIONS

MAY 2020

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The Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on the Emerging Generations report is produced by:

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A DEFINING MOMENT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Throughout history there have always been defining moments for different generations. For the Baby Boomers it was the Moon Landing. For Generation X it was the Stock Market Crash and for the Millennials it was September 11. For the emerging generations – Generation Z (born 1995-2009) and Generation Alpha (born since 2010) – it might have been Donald Trump's election or Brexit, until COVID-19 took hold of the world in 2020.

This global pandemic stopped social gatherings, halted the economy and significantly disrupted the normal rhythms of life. It has had an unprecedented impact on a global scale with world leaders putting measures in place, the likes of which have only been seen in response to the World Wars and the Great Depression.

From how we shop, to how we work, engage in community, learn, educate, contribute and lead, COVID-19 and our response is marking a significant societal shift. The impacts of which will be felt even after the virus is kept under control. All of this change is truly unprecedented, especially for the younger generations who have only read about similar responses to a crisis of this scale in history books.

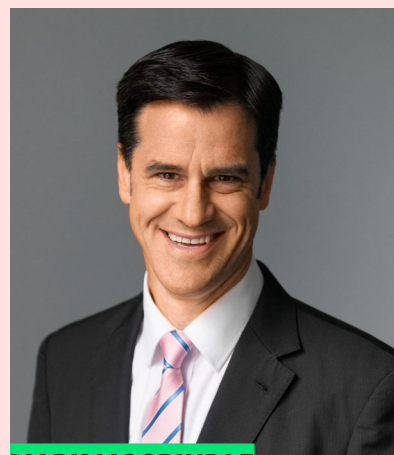
While people of all generations have been impacted by COVID-19, it stands to define those who are coming of age during it, with more than four in five adults we surveyed (84%) agreeing that the COVID-19 pandemic will play a significant role in shaping the children of today. Both the virus itself and the response has already influenced the next generation's sentiment, behaviour and lifestyle. The impacts will continue beyond when it is kept under control and we emerge out of 'iso' (isolation) as many Gen Zeds are calling it. This virus and the world's response to it is set to shape the emerging generations and their future for many years to come.

While these uncertain times can cause justified anxiety and concern, it is also in these times that we see community and human connectedness shining brightly. In challenging times, we see the positive and resilient aspects of the human spirit as we come together to respond to a changing world. This is true of the emerging generations as well, as this once in a century crisis stands to shape them and their future.

This paper is authored by Mark McCrindle and Ashley Fell, two social researchers who are leading authorities on the emerging generations. We believe this complimentary whitepaper will be invaluable for you in navigating and leading through times of change.



84% agree that the COVID-19 pandemic will play a significant role in shaping the children of today.



MARK MCCRINDLE

Mark McCrindle is a demographer and social researcher, best-selling author, TEDx speaker and Principal of McCrindle Research. He is the author of three books on emerging trends and social change. He coined the label: Generation Alpha, and is regarded as an international authority on Generation Alpha.



ASHLEY FELL

Ashley Fell is a social researcher, TEDx speaker and Director of Communications at the internationally recognised McCrindle. As a trends analyst she understands the need to communicate with the emerging generations. She is co-author of the book Generation Alpha and regarded as a leading expert and media commentator on Generation Alpha.



SENTIMENT IN A CHANGING CONTEXT

The response to COVID-19 has been global in its nature and changing almost daily. Because of the uncertainty and wide-spread implications, it is a cause of anxiety and stress for many.

The pace of change on a global scale is causing people to feel uncertain and anxious. This is even truer for the emerging generations. Having never lived through an event like this, Generation Z and Generation Y feel greater uncertainty than their older counterparts. When asked about the future, one in two Gen Zeds (51%) feel extremely or very uncertain, compared to 46% Gen Y, 38% Gen X and 27% Baby Boomers.

While older generations have experienced other life changing events like world wars, measures we are now experiencing is something the emerging generations have only ever read about in history books.

Generation Z are feeling more anxious, frustrated, overwhelmed, confused, and unprepared about the unfolding COVID-19 situation than any other generation.

Younger generations are more likely than their older counterparts to feel extremely/very uncertain about the future (51% Gen Z, 46% Gen Y, 38% Gen X, 27% Baby Boomers, 29% Builders).

TOP 5 EMOTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 BY GENERATION



Gen Z
18 - 25



Gen Y
26 - 40



Gen X
41 - 55



Boomers
56 - 74



Builders
75+

Anxious (49%)

Anxious (45%)

Anxious (47%)

Anxious (40%)

Vulnerable (50%)

Frustrated (44%)

Frustrated (40%)

Frustrated (37%)

Vulnerable (37%)

Anxious (47%)

Overwhelmed (35%)

Scared (33%)

Scared (30%)

Hopeful (34%)

Hopeful (45%)

Confused (34%)

Overwhelmed (28%)

Overwhelmed (28%)

Frustrated (31%)

Resigned (39%)

Unprepared (33%)

Confused (24%)

Vulnerable (25%)

Resigned (28%)

Frustrated (26%)



WHO ARE GEN Y AND Z TURNING TO FOR INFORMATION?

The primary source Generation Z are using for information is social media, with one in two (49%) saying it is the source they use the most for finding out about COVID-19 and how to respond.

This is followed by Government websites (38%), news websites (33%), mainstream broadcasting networks like TV and radio, (33%) and the World Health Organisation website (29%).

Generation Y are turning first to government websites (37%) followed by mainstream broadcasting networks like TV and radio (36%), news websites (36%) and social media (35%).

One of the defining traits of the emerging generations is that they are social. Compared to other generations, Generation Z are more likely to be using social media (49%) and discussing with family and friends (28%) than their older counterparts. While a third of Gen Zeds are turning to mainstream media for information (33%), it is much less than their older counterparts (36% Gen Y, 54% Gen X and 72% Baby Boomers).

Despite their frequent use of social media, only 8% of Gen Zs and 7% of Gen Ys trust social media for information about COVID-19. The two most trusted sources for both generations is the World Health organisation and government/ state government websites.

YOUNGER GENERATIONS HELPING THE VULNERABLE

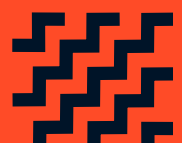
While individuals and households are facing different challenges brought on by COVID-19, there is a strong sentiment that we are all in this together. As all generations seek to do their part to keep themselves and the vulnerable people in their community safe, the emerging generations are no exception.

Those more readily able are also seeking to help the elderly or vulnerable in the community. Two in five Generation Y's (40%) say they would buy goods for those who are more vulnerable.

When it comes to providing help, the emerging generations are the most likely to say they would donate to charities caring for vulnerable people in the community (24% Gen Z compared to 21% Gen Y, 24% Gen X and 18% Baby Boomers).



**TWO IN FIVE (40%)
GENERATION Y'S SAY
THEY WOULD BUY
GOODS FOR THOSE
WHO ARE MORE
VULNERABLE.**



ALMOST HALF OF GEN Z SAY COVID-19 HAS HAD AN EXTREME OR SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON THEIR LIFE

The impacts of COVID-19 have extended into all areas of life, including how we travel, work, shop, socialise and engage with education. While the impacts of COVID-19 and changes in behaviour are being felt across all generations, the impacts are being felt by the emerging generations more so than their older counterparts. Generations Y and Z are the most likely to say COVID-19 has had an extreme or substantial impact on their life so far.

Being in their teens and early twenties, this life stage for Generation Z is normally characterised by education and study, socialising with friends after school or during breaks at university. Weekends are normally filled with sport and shopping, going out or hanging at a friend's place.

Goals and dreams of Generation Z are to do well in exams, spend quality time with friends and work to save up for travel adventures. COVID-19 has changed this. Now, many Generation Z's are being schooled from home or going to zoom lectures. They are cancelling travel plans, social engagements and even opportunities to see family members not living with them.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 are also being felt by younger generations seeking to establish themselves in the workforce. Younger generations are more likely than their older counterparts to have felt the biggest impact financially (33% Gen Z and 37% Gen Y compared to 28% Gen X, 20% Baby Boomers and 12% Builders). The impacts in the job market in the first few months of COVID-19 have been unparalleled since the Great Depression. The ABS found that there were 900,000 who had a job in March 2020 that were unemployed just a month later in April. And twice as many as this, 1.8 million were

stood down or had reduced hours from March to April.¹ These job loss rates are highest for those under 20 with almost one in five (19%) losing their job. For those aged 20 to 29 more than one in ten (12%) have lost their job while just 5% of those aged 30 to 69 have lost their job. This means that those under 20 are almost four times more likely to have lost their job than those 30 and over.²

The generation most likely to feel the impacts of travel restrictions is Generation Y. Our research showed one in four (25%) had to cancel an overseas trip due to COVID-19, with a further 28% saying they had to cancel or postpone a domestic trip – more so than any other generation. Interestingly, Gen Z were the most likely to say that COVID-19 will increase the next generation of children's desire to travel and explore the world (82% Gen Z, 76% Gen Y, 57% Gen X cf. 45% Baby Boomers, 46% Builders).

Being in a very social life stage has meant social isolation and social distancing have changed the behaviour of Generation Z in significant ways. More than two in five Gen Zeds (42%) say an event they were going to attend has been cancelled and 30% say they were unable to visit someone due to self-quarantine, more so than Gen Y (22%), Gen X (22%), Baby Boomers (13%) and Builders (14%).

The suspension of sport and entertainment events is also having a greater impact on the emerging generations. Gen Z and Gen Y are the most likely to say that the cancellation of sport/entertainment due to COVID-19 has had an extreme or substantial impact on them personally (40% Gen Z and 42% Gen Y compared to 29% Gen X and 15% Baby Boomers).

COVID-19 HAS HAD AN EXTREME OR SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON MY LIFE



Gen Z
18 - 25

48%



Gen Y
26 - 40

45%



Gen X
41 - 55

36%



Boomers
56 - 74

18%



Builders
75+

21%



THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

While there have been some unique challenges with social isolation, it has also provided some benefits to Generations Y and Z, which they hope to keep. The main benefit for the emerging generations was in prioritising financial saving, followed by more time with family/household members.

Gen Z were more the most likely to be spending more time on hobbies and creative pursuits, trying out a new exercise routine and spending more time praying/spiritual pursuits. Interestingly, they were also the most likely generation to be enjoying off-screen activities and spending more time in nature.

On the other hand, Gen Y were the most likely to prioritise financial saving, spend more time with family/household members, spend more time cooking and baking, and working from home.

The biggest difference between these two generations is working from home. Two in five (40%) Gen Y enjoyed working from home and want to keep it, compared to 27% Gen Z.

I AM EXPERIENCING IT AND WANT TO KEEP IT



Gen Z
18 - 25



Gen Y
26 - 40



Gen X
41 - 55



Boomers
56 - 74

	Gen Z 18 - 25	Gen Y 26 - 40	Gen X 41 - 55	Boomers 56 - 74
Prioritising financial saving	57%	63%	50%	35%
Spending more time with family/ household members	55%	60%	57%	42%
Spending more time on hobbies and creative pursuits	53%	50%	43%	38%
Spending more time cooking and baking	52%	60%	44%	38%
Trying out a new exercise routine	51%	41%	33%	22%
Enjoying off-screen activities such as reading and board games	47%	38%	38%	33%
Spending more time in nature	47%	38%	35%	28%
Enjoying a slower pace of life	46%	50%	56%	45%
Spending more time with pets	42%	38%	43%	33%
Spending more time praying/ spiritual pursuits	33%	29%	25%	21%
Working from home	27%	40%	25%	12%

THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

While new measures have restructured the normal rhythms of life, the education sector has responded to these and the impact on how people learn. Overall, people are very positive about a shift towards online learning. In fact, nine in ten are positive about an increased use of online learning in vocational training (90%), university (89%), workplaces (90%) and in school (86%).

When we asked those who had participated in online education how they had found the experience, 71% said it was a positive experience for their household. This is largely due to the support provided by the school and the opportunity to spend more time with their child. The greater engagement in their child's learning has also allowed families and parents to develop a greater understanding of their child's skills, abilities and challenges with learning.



"The school has been very supportive, and my children are enjoying the level of online education provided by their teachers and school."



"We have more understanding of what they are learning in school."

Schooling from home has had its challenges, however, with many finding it difficult to motivate their children, keep them focused and juggle their own workload.

Interestingly, the emerging generations are slightly less positive about online learning than the older generations. Six in ten students say they find learning from home more difficult and two thirds find it more productive to study at school rather than at home.

The majority of young Australians understand that this remote learning arrangement is necessary now and believe it's working fine, however 37% don't agree it could be something they could live with on a permanent basis.³ As these generations are in the formal education life stage and most likely to be participating in these online learning environments, it is important to take note of these differences in attitude.

Technology provides great opportunities for online learning, but it isn't without challenges. Traditional, in situ learning is considered to yield greater results among students. While the online learning environment provides accessibility and flexibility, it can also be challenging and in some ways less productive.

Even though online learning has been a blessing for many during COVID-19 and 52% believe education will be delivered more online in the future, the sentiment of many students and teachers is that they are looking forward to going back to school. While Zoom helped connect us during the pandemic, many suffered from 'zoom fatigue' and missed interacting with friends and colleagues in person. This highlights that workplaces and places of education are more than just somewhere we go to learn – they are key pathways to social interaction, connection and belonging.

Although the outbreak of COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of many Australian individuals, businesses and organisations, Australians have faith in their own resilience and have noticed positive aspects of the Australian spirit shining through.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT AN INCREASED USE OF ONLINE LEARNING IN THE FOLLOWING SECTORS?

% who feel positive



Gen Z
18 - 25



Gen Y
26 - 40



Gen X
41 - 55



Boomers
56 - 74

	Gen Z 18 - 25	Gen Y 26 - 40	Gen X 41 - 55	Boomers 56 - 74
School	81%	85%	87%	88%
Vocational training	83%	90%	90%	93%
University	78%	86%	90%	95%
Workplace	82%	89%	91%	93%





THE FUTURE OF WORK

To some, work is simply 'a job' but for many young people, it's a lifeline to social interaction, purpose and a place of belonging.

Social distancing measures have driven many people to work from home, with almost three in five (58%) saying their job allows them to do so. While this poses great change in the immediate term, it also provides opportunities for innovation about the future of work.

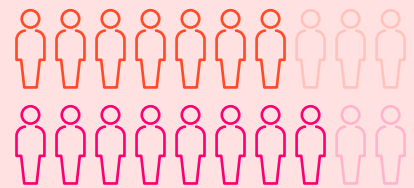
Overall, more than three in four agree that working from home will become the new normal (78%) and would stay longer with their employer if they were offered more remote working or flexible working options (76%). Seven in ten Gen Z believe working from home will become the new normal (70%) compared to eight in ten Gen Y (80%).

It is not without challenges though, with 74% of Gen Z and 66% of Gen Y agreeing that working from home would be challenging with other people at home. Gen Y also agree that the blurring of work and home has been the biggest challenge while working from home (44%), only after the challenge of social isolation (50%).

There is an interesting difference between Generation Z and Generation Y when it comes to working from home. Generation Z are the most likely to say that they are less productive when working from home (33%), while Generation Y are the most excited to be working from home. Gen Z are also more likely to say that they have experienced working from home and do not want it to continue (37%), while Gen Y are more likely to say they are experiencing working from home and they do want it to continue (40%).

These differences can be attributed to the different life stages these generations are in. Generation Z, those aged 11-25 are only just beginning their careers, and even when they are working they are looking for multiple needs met at work – especially social interaction and workplace culture which can be lost when people work remotely. While Gen Z are the least likely to think working from home/remote working will become the new normal, Gen Y and Gen X are the most likely to stay longer if this were offered to them. For Generation Y, work/life balance and flexibility have always been key workplace expectations, and even more so today as they are in the key family forming life stage and juggling multiple and competing priorities.

Remote working has many benefits, but it can also pose challenges for productivity, social connection and opportunities for collaboration. In a study we conducted into teleworking we found that 68% of workers agree that the culture and output is best when everyone is working in one place with a degree of flexibility for remote working.⁴



**70% GEN Z THINK
WORKING FROM
HOME WILL BECOME
THE NEW NORMAL
COMPARED TO
80% GEN Y.**



**68% OF WORKERS
AGREE THAT THE
CULTURE AND
OUTPUT IS BEST
WHEN EVERYONE IS
WORKING IN ONE
PLACE WITH A DEGREE
OF FLEXIBILITY FOR
REMOTE WORKING.**

CHANGING EXPECTATIONS OF WORK

The experience of COVID-19 is having a big impact on where, when and how work is done. It has thrust many organisations who might have had reservations about working from home into adopting this style of working. The impacts of this are shaping the expectations of the emerging generations in particular, who have either seen, heard or experienced this working from home phenomenon during the pandemic.

Flexible working conditions have been developing for some time. Over the past year, employee comments featuring flexible working-related terms have increased by 18%, with terms such as 'WFH' and 'flexible work hours' rising in prevalence. While there was growth across all generations, discussion on flexible working gained the most traction in the younger employee cohorts. Gen Z employees discussed this topic the most, with a 36% increase in comments on this topic. Millennials weren't far behind them with a 34% increase — with growth in this trend two to three times greater than other generations.⁵

Even before COVID-19, the emerging generations were looking to work with more flexibility. Gen Z are the future employees who find importance in work/ life balance, team focus, empowerment, support, flexibility, involvement, creativity, innovation and a global working atmosphere. They are also characterised by multiple jobs, lifelong learning, multiple careers and entrepreneurship.

As a result of COVID-19 it is likely we will see a shift in the expectations of the emerging generations around working from home practises. According to our research, 86% of adults believe children of today will expect more flexible working conditions as a result of COVID-19. More than a 'want', working conditions that enable greater work/life balance will increasingly be an 'expectation' for the emerging generations who saw this working style widely adopted during COVID-19.

Despite the increase in expectation, we must remember that the future is likely to be a hybrid of working from home and more traditional workplaces. It will be characterised by digital and global connectivity, increasing mobility as well as visual engagement and social connection (even while social distancing). Balancing an engaging workplace culture where employees can work, belong and feel a sense of community with flexible working practises will be key to engaging the emerging generations in the future of work.

To remain employable workers will need to develop a habit of refreshing existing skills and adding new ones.

MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

One of the biggest impacts of COVID-19 was on people’s health – not just their physical health but their mental health, wellbeing and resilience.

When asked about the biggest impacts of social isolation, Generation Z were most likely to say that boredom (51%), less physical activity (47%) and increased feelings of loneliness (41%) were impacting them the most, and significantly more so than any other generation. They are also the most likely to see the negative impacts of screen time in their lives (31% Gen Z compared to 25% Gen Y, 14% Gen X and 17% Baby Boomers).

While not as physically vulnerable as their older counterparts, the emerging generations were also more likely to say they experienced increased anxiety and stress. Almost half (49%) of Gen Z said they felt anxious about the unfolding COVID-19 situation, with one in four (25%) saying the biggest negative impact of COVID-19 has been on their mental health (more so than any other generation).

The fact that these generations have never lived through anything like this before is a reason for their increased anxiety. Another is that they were a ‘more anxious’ generation even before COVID-19. Currently, around one in four young people aged 15 to 19 years meet the criteria for having a probable serious mental illness.

Of concern, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of young people meeting this criteria; data shows that it increased by more than 20% in the most recent five-year period. According to global research, mental illness contributes to 45% of the global burden of disease among those aged 10 to 24 years.⁶ This is also reflected in a study in America. The American Psychological Association’s annual Stress in America report concluded in 2019 that Generation Z adults indicated the highest average stress level of any demographic.⁷

Younger generations are also more likley than their older counterparts to believe the COVID-19 experience will have a negative impact on the next generation of children’s mental health (88% Gen Z and 71% Gen Y, compared to 69% Gen X, 50% Baby Boomers and 48% Builders).

Keeping this in mind as we lead, communicate, engage and educate the next generation will be key to helping them thrive and flourish during COVID-19 and into the future.



WHICH AREA OF LIFE HAVE YOU FELT THE BIGGEST NEGATIVE IMPACT?



Gen Z
18 - 25



Gen Y
26 - 40



Gen X
41 - 55



Boomers
56 - 74



Builders
75+

Social (33%)	Financial (37%)	Social (38%)	Social (58%)	Social (70%)
Financial (33%)	Social (27%)	Financial (28%)	Financial (20%)	Physical (14%)
Mental (25%)	Mental (22%)	Mental (17%)	Physical (11%)	Financial (12%)
Physical (10%)	Physical (14%)	Physical (16%)	Mental (11%)	Mental (4%)

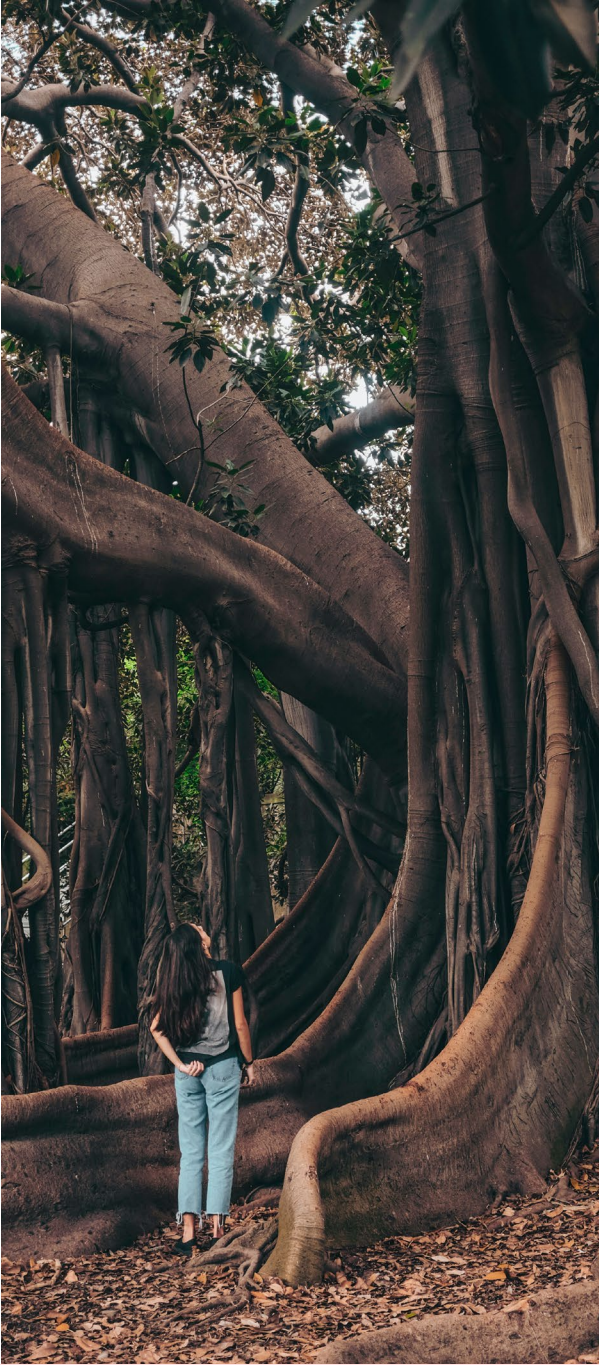


During the pandemic, many people's resilience – the capacity to recover from difficulty – was tested. When it came to financial resilience, Generation Y said they were more financially resilient than other Generations. The most physically resilient generations were Generations Y and X. When it came to emotional resilience, Generation Z and Y were the least emotionally resilient.

When it comes to examples of resilience, Generation Z were most likely to have seen humour shine through (46%). This has been aided by technology and social media platforms like Tik Tok, symbolising a distinct generational response to a global pandemic that is characteristically digital, social, global and visual. From Instagram to Tik Tok or Zoom, these digital integrators are forging new ways of connecting to their peers during this period of social distancing and isolation.

Generation Z have also seen resilience and creative ways of problem solving during the pandemic (31%). For Generation Y, they were most likely to have seen humour (36%) and people coming together in times of need (29%).

Younger generations were more likely than older generations to say they are extremely/very financially and physically resilient. Older generations, however, were more likely to say they are emotionally resilient than the younger generations.



Younger generations are more likely than older generations to say they are extremely/very financially and physically resilient. Older generations, however, are more likely to say they are emotionally resilient.

**RESILIENCE
BY GENERATION**
Extremely/very resilient



Gen Z
18 - 25



Gen Y
26 - 40



Gen X
41 - 55



Boomers
56 - 74



Builders
75+

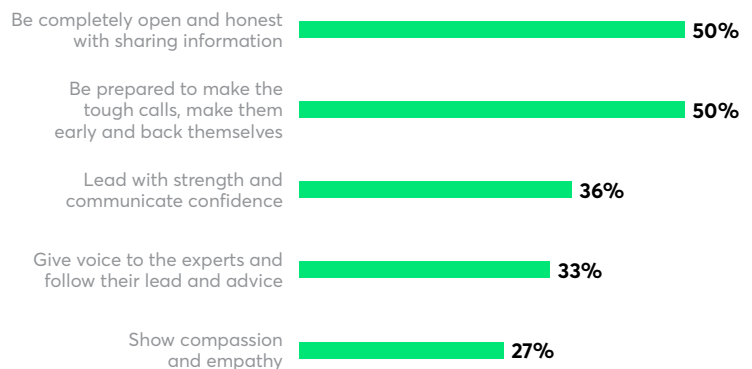
Financially resilient	31%	37%	30%	26%	26%
Physically resilient	39%	43%	43%	39%	25%
Emotionally resilient	44%	42%	50%	56%	49%



The key characteristic of a leader is foresight. The reason they can lead is that they see things not just as they are, but as they will be.

LEADING THE EMERGING GENERATIONS THROUGH A CRISIS

The emerging generations are the most uncertain about the future, having never lived through a crisis of this scale or magnitude before. Therefore, it is important for parents and leaders of the emerging generations to provide context, reassurance and leadership during this crisis. According to our research, the most important qualities of a leader during a crisis are:



This type of leadership is especially important in the areas the emerging generations are most likely to dwell – in a home, work and education context. COVID-19 is significantly impacting Generation Z today and into the future, for they are our students of today and workforce of tomorrow. In 2020, Generation Z (those born between 1995 and 2009) are aged between 11 and 25 and are moving through some of their key education years, while Generation Y comprise a third of the workforce. Ensuring that clear and confident communication is maintained will help these generations to understand the changes around them and be best positioned to respond in the future.

Another way we can lead the next generation is to be aware of the fact they feel less emotionally resilient than older generations. In times of uncertainty and change, it is important for leaders to be checking in with people regularly about their wellbeing. This is even truer for the emerging generations who have indicated they feel less emotionally resilient and more uncertain about the unfolding COVID-19 situation than their older counterparts.

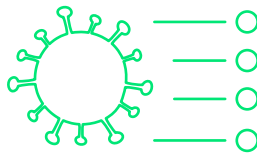
THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON GENERATION ALPHA

There is a generation that comprises more than one in seven people, who are influencing the purchasing power of their household and are key to the future, yet few people have heard of them. Within the next four years they will outnumber the Baby Boomers, and many of them will live to see the 22nd century.

We're talking about Generation Alpha, the current generation of children who began being born in the year 2010. They are the children of the Millennials, and often the younger siblings of Generation Z. We gave them the name Generation Alpha (of the Greek Alphabet) because, being born entirely in the 21st Century, they are not a return to the old but the start of something new.

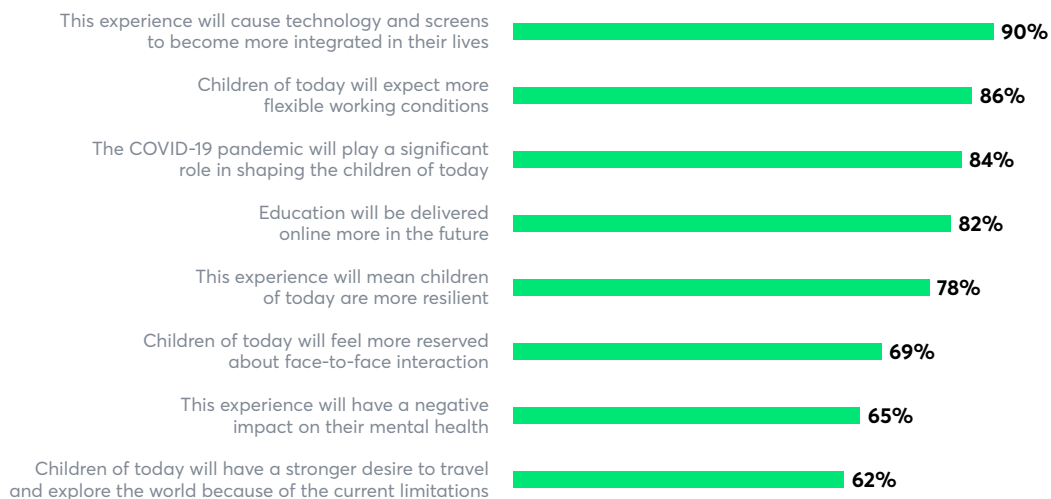
More than four in five adults (84%) believe COVID-19 will play a significant role in shaping the children of today. While it will be some time before we know the full extent of how COVID-19 will impact and shape this generation, the oldest of them turn 10 in 2020, so many of them will remember aspects of this global crisis. Many watched mum or dad work from the kitchen bench while keeping an eye on them as they learnt from a virtual classroom. They might not know why we need to stay 1.5 metres away from other people, but they know that we should. The fact that they can't go to the park or to visit grandma or grandpa is not lost on them.

When we asked people what they believe the biggest impact of COVID-19 will be on the next generation, the results centred on integration of technology into their lives, expectations around working conditions and the online delivery of education.



TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE CHILDREN OF TODAY?

% of Australians who agree



HERE ARE SOME AREAS AND WAYS COVID-19 IS IMPACTING GENERATION ALPHA NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.

EDUCATION

COVID-19 has enhanced the intersection of technology and learning in some ways, but also shown the importance of face-to-face and tactile learning. Like many other sectors, the education sector has had to adapt in response to social distancing restrictions. While it posed challenges, 71% of parents who kept children home said it was a mostly positive experience, and 82% of adults generally agree that education will be delivered online more in the future.

Nonetheless, schools have been missed – not just by busy parents having to juggle their own work with monitoring their child's learning, but because schools are key to community (within the school) as well as being a place of connection within communities.

For Generation Alpha, a generation that was already impacted and shaped by technology, COVID-19 has further entrenched digital into their lives, while also highlighting the importance of the tactile. Generation Alpha will be used to using Zoom and engaging in a virtual world as a result of COVID-19. We may also see them pushing to engage with and use technology in more creative ways as a result.

FAMILY

Immediate family time has been enhanced with social isolation restricting people to stay at home. This is having a big impact on the next generation of children. Parents who are used to travelling have been grounded and working from home has provided new flexible ways of structuring time. This has been one of the most positive experiences of COVID-19, with 52% indicating spending more time with family/household members has been a positive experience and want this to continue. This unique family time is one positive to have come out of COVID-19, and may mark a shift in some families' priorities and time allocation into the future.

FRIENDSHIP

Social interaction and friendships are very significant to Generation Alpha as they are in their key socialising years where behaviours are learnt subconsciously. While Zoom and virtual dinner parties have enabled much needed social interaction, in many ways it cannot replace the face to face interaction that is crucial to child development and socialisation. Remembering this and finding new and creative ways of participating and engaging in community will be key to their development, even while from a distance.

RESILIENCE

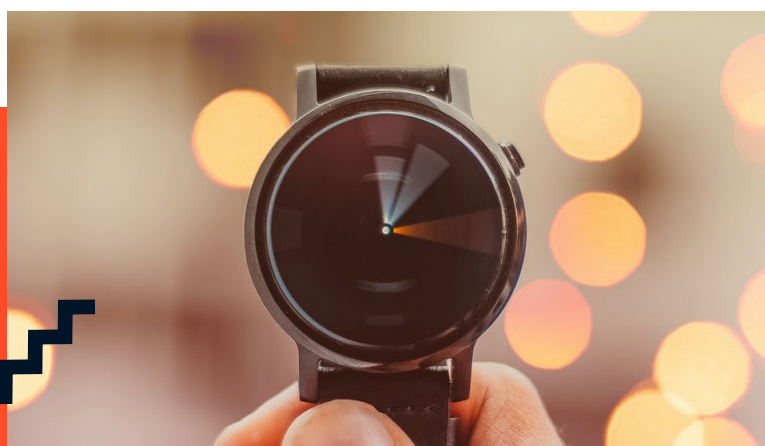
"Most young kids will remember how their family home felt during Coronavirus panic more than anything specific about the virus. Our kids are watching us and learning how to respond to stress and uncertainty. Let's wire our kids for resilience, not panic."

– BrainPower Neurodevelopment Centre LLC

While there have been some unique challenges for Generation Alpha during COVID-19, it has also exposed them to witnessing different elements of resilience and responding to challenging times in positive ways. More than three in four adults (78%) agree that this experience will mean children of today are more resilient. It is a key role of parents, leaders and teachers to teach and model positive and resilient behaviours where possible. It is also important to ensure that, even amidst change and uncertainty, stable environments are created for the next generation as much as possible to enable them to thrive now and into the future.

The pace of change has never been this fast and it will never be this slow again.

– Justin Trudeau, World Economic Forum



METHODOLOGY

COVID-19 SURVEY 1

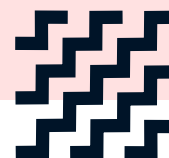
This research was conducted by McCrindle in conjunction with our panel partner Cint. The report is based on an online survey deployed to a nationally representative sample of 1,015 Australians. Data was collected between 19 and 23 March 2020.

COVID-19 SURVEY 2

This research was conducted by McCrindle in conjunction with our panel partner Cint. The report is based on an online survey deployed to a nationally representative sample of 1,004 Australians. Data was collected between 08 and 13 May 2020.

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