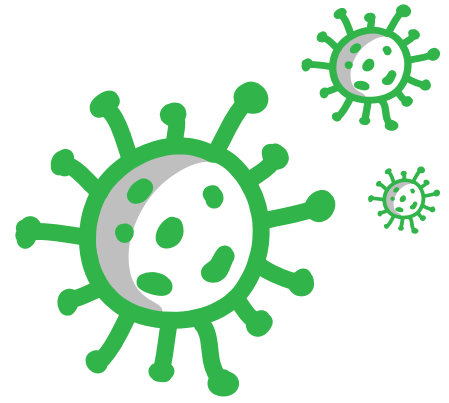


# How COVID-19 impacted our community



## Community Survey Snapshot

In November 2020 we invited community to tell us how the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted them. 857 people from across the Mildura Rural City Council area responded. Thank you to everyone who shared their story. Hearing your voices helps us understand the affects COVID-19 has had on our community and it will also help guide how we rebuild with relief and recovery.

View the full report at [www.mildura.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

## The Social Impacts



### Mental Health and Wellbeing

#### Mental Health

**42% Mental health impacted**  
**32% Want mental health support**

People told us that changes to their mental health have mainly come from isolation and anxiety. Females and young people were more commonly experiencing mental health impacts.

#### Child Wellbeing

**39% Child wellbeing impacted**

The main child wellbeing impacts were linked to isolation and home-schooling. Children missed their friends, family, and being able to play sports.



### General Social Impacts

#### Housing

**6% Housing impacted**  
**12% Can't pay rent / mortgage**

The most common housing challenges people told us about were finding rental properties and being able to afford the mortgage / rent.

#### Safety

**32% Less satisfied with how safe they feel**

**13% Want crisis support**

Feelings of safety have reduced during COVID-19, with many worried about getting sick from COVID-19 when in public (40%). There were also some who noticed more anger and violence in the community (11%) and/or at home (family violence, 5%).

# The Social Impacts



## Community Connection

### Connections

**55% Less satisfied with feeling part of the community**

The sense of community connection declined during COVID-19, with 32% talking to their neighbours less. However, some did notice improvements in our sense of community, with people supporting each other when in need (14%).

### Volunteering

**31% Volunteering less**

**17% Want volunteer opportunities**

Volunteering declined during COVID-19 because of restrictions and only half the people who reduced their volunteering said they want opportunities to volunteer to help them recover.



## Physical Health and Wellbeing

### Physical Health

**48% Less satisfied with health**

**40% Worried about getting COVID-19**

Many (44%) reduced how much they were exercising during COVID-19 restrictions. 33% also said they were having trouble accessing medical services. Travel restrictions (SA border and Melbourne) as well as long wait times were the main reasons for this.

### Food

**15% Access to food impacted**

**14% Want healthy eating advice**

As well as some people having trouble finding food due to panic buying and shortages, 24% said they were eating less healthy food. This was more commonly a problem for young people, those with children and renters.

### Exercise and Sport

**44% Exercising less**

**35% Want exercise opportunities**

Restrictions resulted in less exercise for many. More exercise opportunities was one of the key things the community wants moving forward. Children were particularly struggling with not being able to play sport, and it was also a stand-out impact for males.

# The Economic Impacts



## Economic and Community Impacts

### Employment

**28% Employment impacted**

**15% On JobSeeker/JobKeeper**

Young people were particularly impacted around employment as well as renters, those living in Mildura and those with children at home. The main impacts were reduced workload (including losing their job, 10%) and working from home (3%).

### Businesses and the Community

**25% Want support for business**

More people were switching to online purchasing (39%), buying from local businesses less (22%), and spending less money in general (29%); all which could have impacted on local businesses. There was a lot of support for a 'Buy local' campaign to help businesses get back up and running.

### Business Owners

**50% said they had noticed a reduction in revenue / decreased sales**

117 business owners responded to the survey, many said they had changed their method of service delivery (34%) to adapt, and mental health challenges were raised frequently as an impact of COVID-19 (38%)

### Tourism and Events

**7% Fewer events is a negative impact**

**50% Want community events**

Events were one of the main suggestions for ways to help the community build back better. Some also mentioned the importance of promoting the region to encourage tourism (2%).



# The Economic Impacts



## Economic and Household Impacts

### Financial Vulnerability

**15% Spending savings**

**19% Want financial assistance**

Young people, those with children, and renters showed higher instances of financial vulnerability than other sectors of our community.

### Financial Supports

**19% Want financial assistance for individuals**

**16% Want financial assistance for businesses**

Many said that financial support would help them or their family through recovery. Those who were facing financial issues also showed higher levels of wanting financial assistance, particularly those who speak a language other than English (33%), those with a disability (32%), and renters (29%).

### Households below the poverty line

**27% of people who answered this survey were living below the poverty line.**

This group often reported a reduction in a satisfaction with their standard of living (46%) and what they had achieved in life during the pandemic (53%) and more often faced challenges with employment (16% became unemployed) and household expenses (26%)



# The Sectors

## Gender Equity

**30% of women are less satisfied with their health.**

Only 33% of women said that their satisfaction with life as a whole hasn't changed. Females are disproportionately experiencing mental health challenges (45%) and more often are showing concern for child wellbeing (25%).

## Young People

**53% of 14-24 year olds surveyed have personally experienced an impact related to mental health.**

This group showed higher instances of becoming unemployed (21%) and financial stresses like affording food (17%). They also showed higher instances of exercising less (58%) and eating less healthy food (38%).

## Middle Years (25-44 years)

**32% of people in this age group personally experienced an impact related to their employment situation.**

51% of people in this age group experienced an impact to their mental health. They more often faced challenges relating to managing children and many wanted community events (61%) and more information about what services are available (40%).

## Older People (65+ years)

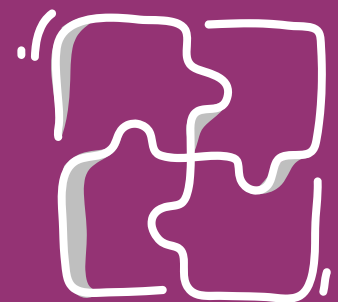
**48% of older people report no changes to their lives.**

This is mostly due to them not relying on employment for their income, and having fewer ongoing expenses (mortgage/rent). Most reported no changes to healthy eating, talking to neighbours or buying local. As a result fewer needing support.

## Aboriginal Community

Although this was a small sample size (25 people), statistical analysis shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more commonly experiencing mental health concerns (64%) and housing impacts (16%), in particular feelings of isolation and loneliness (24%) and trouble affording household expenses (40%).

A third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents said they want help finding employment and housing support.



## Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

**39% of CALD community members have personally experienced an impact related to an employment situation.**

102 people who identified as speaking a language other than English responded to the survey.

Overall there was higher instances of an increase in satisfaction with wellbeing which is a positive. However there were higher proportions of CALD people who said they were talking to neighbours less (43%) and being worried about getting COVID-19 in public (57%). 16% of CALD people said they were having difficulty paying rent / mortgage and household expenses (25%). This segment is more focussed on following of COVID rules, and finding employment is an important topic to help them recover. In general, this group is more commonly receptive to the range of recovery activities put forth in the survey.

## Disability Community

**47% of people with a disability experienced changes in access to medical services.**

53 respondents to this survey identified as having a disability, with 45% of people with a disability reporting they are less satisfied with how safe they feel. People with a disability are less commonly receiving JobSeeker or JobKeeper (4%) and are more commonly experiencing financial difficulties regarding affording food (15%), and household expenses (26%). Almost a third said financial assistance for individuals would assist them or their family (32%).



## The Positives

We find ourselves in a very unusual and difficult time, but through adversity positives can emerge. Some of the positive impacts mentioned were:

**40% of people said that they have been able to find more time for family and hobbies.**

**29% of people are spending less money in general.**

**20% of people are spending less money on transport.**

## Recovery Focus Areas

The survey asked about the type of community supports people thought were needed to build back better as a community and asked for future recovery ideas. This is a summary of those recommendations

**50% of people want to see more community events.**

**35% of people want more exercise opportunities.**

**33% want more awareness of the services that are available.**

**32% want more mental health support.**

**25% want to see more support for businesses to get back up and running / new business.**