

Wednesday, 27 January 2021

## Willingness to take a COVID-19 vaccine increases

**Now 79% of Australians say they would be willing to be vaccinated when a new COVID-19 vaccine becomes publicly available. This is up 2% since mid-January according to a special Roy Morgan survey about the COVID-19 vaccine – part of the Roy Morgan COVID-19 programme of research monitoring Australians' responses to COVID-19 related issues during the global pandemic.**

The increase in Australians willing to take the vaccine is good news as the Federal Government gets set to begin rolling out vaccinations to more vulnerable sectors of the Australian community from mid-February in only a few weeks.

Although willingness to get a COVID-19 vaccine has increased it is still well below the support expressed by Australians early in the pandemic. In March/April 2020 a high 87% of Australians agreed they would be willing to be vaccinated.

The survey was conducted with an Australia-wide cross-section of 1,648 Australians aged 18+ on Wednesday January 20 – Thursday January 21, 2021.

### **Men (85%) are increasingly more likely than women (73%) to say they'll be vaccinated when a Coronavirus vaccine is publicly available**

Now 85% (up 4% points from a week ago) of Australian men say they'll be vaccinated when a Coronavirus vaccine becomes available while an unchanged 73% of women are also willing to be vaccinated.

The increase in willingness to take the vaccine comes from ALP supporters (up 5% to 82%) and Greens supporters (up 1% to 82%) with fewer L-NP supporters willing to be vaccinated (down 1% to 77%).

Willingness to be vaccinated is highest amongst older Australians with 90% (up 10%) of people aged 65+ saying they would be willing to be vaccinated compared to 81% (up 2%) of 50-64 year olds, 78% (up 1%) of those under 35 and 69% (down 3%) of 35-49 year olds.

The only age group to decline in willingness to be vaccinated over the last week is those people aged 35-49 who are most likely to have young families with younger children at pre-school or primary school.

Respondents who answered whether they would be willing to take, or not take, the Coronavirus vaccine were then asked why they had that view.

### **The concerns of Australians who aren't willing to get a COVID-19 vaccine mostly revolve around the worry that untested vaccines rushed through the approvals process will be unsafe and potentially put their health in danger – whether personally or more generally**

For those who said they would not be willing to take the vaccine the issue of the vaccines being rushed came up repeatedly as well as questions about the lack of testing and lack of research into potential side-effects. These concerns coalesced around whether the vaccines would actually be safe and in particular for those with a special case risk factor that would add to the danger

Some respondents referred to already cited side-effects while some aren't afraid of catching COVID-19 and say they'd be more willing to catch COVID-19 than take an unproven vaccine to prevent it. There are also a few respondents who raised the issue of the vaccine not actually stopping the spread of the virus – merely the severity of the infection.

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A leading concern that came through in people's own words is that these new COVID-19 vaccines are untested and have been rushed through the approvals process

*'The COVID-19 vaccines are unproven to be effective and lack a history of safety.'*

*'The vaccine was produced way too quickly, no way it has had sufficient testing.'*

*'It takes four years for a proper series of trials. How long has it been?'*

*'No long-term studies have been conducted and I feel it's been rushed through.'*

*'Because it takes years to develop a vaccine and to make sure it's safe and they have rushed this one.'*

*'Not enough testing.'*

*'It hasn't been tested long enough to be truly deemed safe.'*

*'Because it hasn't been proven safe long-term. It's too rushed.'*

*'Vaccines need to be researched for decades before releasing to the public. Too high of a risk.'*

*'The amount of research and trials that have been put into this vaccine compared to others is very minimal and we are yet to know the long-term side-effects or if it will be effective on mutated versions.'*

*'It hasn't been tested long enough and it's unethical to distribute the vaccine yet.'*

*'I will not be injected with strands of a genetic code that is experimental tech and not fully tested.'*

*'I have concerns around the safety of a vaccine that was developed so quickly.'*

Closely related to the lack of testing and speedy approvals process are concerns many people have about their own personal safety due to an extra medical issue or something specific to their personal health profile at this time – including being pregnant.

*'I react to flu vaccine so would be nervous.'*

*'I'm not convinced of its safety for older persons.'*

*'I'm pregnant and don't want to risk it.'*

*'Because I have allergies, such as anaphylaxis, and no one knows the long-term effects of the vaccine.'*

*'I have a medical condition for which the vaccine may have contraindications. If I were reassured there were NO contraindications I would readily take it. There is not enough information available.'*

*'I do not put poison in my body.'*

*'I'm immune compromised and I don't feel there's enough known about the vaccine to safely take it yet.'*

There are many people worried about the unknown side-effects of the vaccines in a more general sense and whether the vaccine is in fact safe for most people to be taking. Some respondents mentioned alleged problems overseas for people who have taken one or other of the vaccines.

*'Too many unknown side-effects and its already been proven to be dangerous/deadly.'*

*'I'm scared of the side effects.'*

*'There are unknown long-term side-effects.'*

*'I would give it more time to see side-effects and the effectiveness.'*

*'To see if there are any reactions first, get some data behind the vaccination performance.'*

*'I want to see the effects on others.'*

*'I'm afraid of the unknown side-effects and question the efficacy of the vaccine.'*

*'I'm cautious of the side-effects.'*

*'There has already been news of vaccine side-effects and I will wait a bit before getting vaccinated.'*

*'I don't think the vaccine has been proven safe at this point.'*



*'I'm unsure of the long and short-term side-effects and I'll wait for more data.'*

*'I need it to be proven safe first.'*

*'Because I would need more information first on the efficacy and safety.'*

*'I have safety concerns. A high rate of adverse effects including death have been reported in the USA.'*

*'I don't want to get a vaccine that would alter human genes.'*

*'Because I'm not convinced it's safe yet.'*

*'Its safety has not been proven.'*

*'It's proving to not be safe and has too many side-effects. It's not a vaccine, it's medication to suppress symptoms only.'*

*'It's not safe yet, you only have to look at the issues they are having with it in Canada.'*

*'I want to see if there are any adverse reactions before I decide to be vaccinated.'*

*'If it's not tested to Australian standards I wouldn't take it. Especially after scares overseas.'*

There were also a smaller group who were not concerned about catching COVID-19 itself believing they are healthy enough or young enough not to worry about catching the virus.

*'Because I could care less if I got COVID.'*

*'I believe in natural selection.'*

*'Because I am strong, fit and health and I believe that I'm in an excellent position to overcome the virus.'*

*'I don't need it. I'm not going overseas and the government can't make it compulsory.'*

*'I'm young. I can do without it. More people need it more urgently than I do.'*

*'Because I am needle phobic. I also don't know what the side effects are.'*

*'I'm perfectly healthy. I don't need it.'*

A handful of respondents questioned the theory behind being vaccinated when it's been announced by medical authorities that taking the vaccine won't stop the spread of the virus anyway, so what's the point?

*'Because sheeple are scared of the flu, no liability for side-effects on the makers and it doesn't stop contraction nor the spread of infection – so what's the point.'*

*'The vaccine only stops symptoms, it doesn't stop people picking up the virus or stop them from spreading the virus.'*

*'There is no evidence of the vaccines stopping transmission only questionable evidence of lesser symptoms which can only lead to more spread as recipient will not know they have the condition.'*

**Those willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine generally want personal protection from the virus, to improve the broader public health and build herd immunity and help eliminate the virus once and for all**

A large majority of 79% of Australians are willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available and the reasons generally given are to increase personal safety as well as build herd immunity for the broader public, contribute to better public health outcomes generally and speed up a return to normality. Others mentioned eliminating the virus entirely and many mentioned increasing the ability to travel.

Those wanting personal protection from the virus said things like they wanted to be immune or protected from the virus and they wanted to help protect themselves as well as their family members:

*'It reduces my chances of getting sick and helps to eradicate the virus so things can get back to normal.'*

*'To get immunity from COVID-19.'*



*'To lessen the risk of COVID.'*

*'To be protected.'*

*'To be immune.'*

*'I want protection from the virus.'*

*'To protect myself, restore travel and end government tyranny.'*

*'I would rather have some protection than none at all.'*

*'To protect myself and my family.'*

*'To protect self, family, and others around me.'*

*'I wish to do the right thing by society as well as protect myself and my family.'*

Many people mentioned the necessity of getting the COVID-19 vaccine as part of a broader public health response to build herd immunity and ensure the whole community is protected from the virus:

*'Everyone should get it.'*

*'We need herd immunity to get back to normal.'*

*'It's worth trying to help build herd immunity.'*

*'To care for the health of the public.'*

*'For public health.'*

*'It is a public responsibility and the right thing to do for yourself and others.'*

*'Vaccines help people.'*

*'To help stop the pandemic.'*

*'It's the easiest and quickest way to eliminate COVID from the community.'*

*'It's the only option for potential immunity.'*

*'Because vaccination is good.'*

*'It's the socially responsible thing to do.'*

*'Vaccinations are a highly effective medical intervention, are very safe, and to get vaccinated helps others.'*

*'Because I think everybody should be vaccinated.'*

*'Because vaccination provides protection against a virus for whole communities.'*

*'It's important that we reach high vaccination levels for everybody's safety.'*

*'I want this virus gone asap.'*

*'It's the only way we can reduce the impact and spread of the virus.'*

*'I believe we all need to be vaccinated to keep society safe.'*

*'Community protection for all.'*

*'It's my duty to the community to help prevent the spread of the virus.'*

*'Vaccinations are beneficial to individuals and help build up herd immunity in the community.'*

*'We need to gain herd immunity to minimise spread.'*

*'Vaccines protect the whole community through herd immunity.'*

A third segment of responses highlighted the importance of returning to 'normality' and being able to travel internationally without restriction again as a key driver of getting the COVID-19 vaccine:

*'We need to work towards herd immunity and it would give some peace of mind. We need to get back to normality.'*



*'It will help me get closer to returning to my normal life.'*

*'To get the country back on its feet again.'*

*'To try to stop COVID-19 so we could get back to normal.'*

*'Because I want a return to normal.'*

*'If getting vaccinated allows me to have freedom of movement to travel domestically and internationally without so many restrictions then I'm willing to get it.'*

*'Because I'm not a farking idiot.'*

*'For public safety and to open up international travel.'*

*'To get world travel back to normal.'*

*'For international travel.'*

*'I want to travel overseas and I miss my family.'*

*'My family live in the UK so I need the vaccine so I can visit.'*

*'Because I want to travel and not be dictated by the Government making up ridiculous rules.'*

*'Ultimately I'd like to travel overseas again.'*

*'I plan to travel overseas soon so want to be safe when I do.'*

*'Because I want to travel again.'*

*'I trust it is safe for someone my age and I want to travel overseas again.'*

**Michele Levine, CEO Roy Morgan, says the 79% of Australians who are willing to get a COVID-19 vaccine cite their own health as well as the broader public good and a wish to return to normality and be able to travel again as key drivers to get vaccinated:**

*"A growing majority of 79% of Australians (up 2% points from mid-January) say they would be willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available – likely in the next few months as the vaccine rollout program is due to begin in Australia in mid-late February.*

*"Willingness to get the COVID-19 vaccine is noticeably higher amongst men (85% say they are willing to get the vaccine) compared to 73% of women. In terms of age it is the parents of school-age children aged 35-49 who are clearly the least enthusiastic with only 69% saying they are willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine.*

*"People who say they would be willing to get the vaccine tend to fall into two groups. There are people who would get the vaccine for their own health and to protect the health of their family members and friends, as well as be able to travel widely again and visit friends and family.*

*"There are also many that consider getting the COVID-19 as a civic duty to uphold public health and return society more broadly back to a sense of normality. There is a wide cross over between the two groups but these two distinct themes dominate the responses.*

*"For people who say they would not be willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine the issues surround potential safety issues with vaccines that have been created in record time. Many of these respondents claim there is insufficient testing of the vaccines and the approvals have been rushed through for other than purely medical reasons. Many people with their own personal medical concerns fall into this group.*

*"There are also some who claim they don't need a COVID-19 vaccine as they have nothing to worry about from the virus themselves given their health and vitality and a small number who note that the vaccine isn't designed to stop the spread of the virus – only the severity of the sickness.*

*"All-in-all the clear majority of Australians are willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes publicly available however for the 21% of Australians that say they won't get the vaccine these results provide a clear roadmap for what concerns they have that need to be placated."*



Australians surveyed were each asked the following questions to determine their attitudes taking a COVID-19 vaccine and why they hold that view.

- **Question 1:** "If a new Coronavirus vaccine became publicly available, would you be willing to be vaccinated?" Yes 79% cf. No 21%.
- **Question 2:** "And why do you say that?"

This special Roy Morgan Snap SMS survey was conducted with an Australia-wide cross-section of 1,648 Australians aged 18+ on Wednesday January 20 – Thursday January 21, 2021.

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**Question 1: If a new Coronavirus vaccine became publicly available, would you be willing to be vaccinated?**

**By Gender & Age**

	Jan 14-15, 2021	Jan 20-21, 2021	Gender		Age			
			Men	Women	Under 35	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	77	79	85	73	78	69	81	90
No	23	21	15	27	22	31	19	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**If a new Coronavirus vaccine became publicly available, would you be willing to be vaccinated?**

**By States & City/Country**

	Australians 18+	Areas		States					
		Capital Cities	Country Regions	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	79	79	79	78	77	79	79	79	84
No	21	21	21	22	23	21	21	21	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

**If a new Coronavirus vaccine became publicly available, would you be willing to be vaccinated?**

**By Party Vote (Federal)**

	Electors	Party Vote				
		L-NP	ALP	Greens	Ind/Others	Can't say
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	79	77	82	82	72	76
No	21	23	18	18	28	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



This question was previously asked as part of an international survey in conjunction with Gallup International using a five point scale in March 2020, April 2020 and again in November 2020: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't know.

**Question 5: If a new Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine became publicly available, I would be willing to be vaccinated**

	Australians 18+		
	Mar 28-29, 2020	Apr 4-5, 2020	Nov 12-17, 2020
	%	%	%
<b>TOTAL Agree</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>77</b>
Strongly agree	56	56	41
Agree	30	31	36
Disagree	4	3	6
Strongly disagree	3	4	6
<b>TOTAL Disagree</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>
Don't know	7	6	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

For more details on this survey please view the release here:

<https://www.roymorgan.com/findings/8604-gallup-international-survey-covid-19-opinion-questions-november-2020-202012211153>

#### About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 78 years' experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

#### Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
1,000	±3.0	±2.7	±1.9	±1.3