

Australian Unity Wellbeing Index

Survey 3

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Report 3.1

Wellbeing in Australia and the aftermath of September 11

Robert A. Cummins
School of Psychology, Deakin University

Richard Eckersley
National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health
Australian National University

Julie Pallant
School of Mathematical Sciences, Swinburne University

Melanie Davern
Doctoral Student, Deakin University

**Australian Centre on Quality of Life,
Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway,
Melbourne, Victoria 3125, Australia**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wellbeing in Australia has risen over the past year. People's average level of satisfaction with their own personal lives has risen 1.7 percentage points from 73.5% to 75.2%, while their satisfaction with life in Australia has increased 3.6 percentage points from 57.1% to 60.7%.

These are the key trend findings of the third survey for the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, based on telephone interviews with more than 2,000 adult Australians in March 2002. The first survey was conducted in April/May last year, and the second in late September. The Index consists of two values: the Personal Wellbeing Index, which is the average level of satisfaction with seven aspects of people's personal lives; and the National Wellbeing Index, the average level of satisfaction with six aspects of national life. The values are expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible score.

With personal life, the biggest increases were with standard of living (from 74.7% to 77.7%), future security (69.2% to 71.0%), and community connectedness (68.9% to 70.7%). The other aspects of health, achievements in life, personal relationships, and safety also showed increases, but these were not statistically significant. With national life, five of the six aspects showed significant increases. For the original three areas, used in all three surveys, the increases were: the economic situation (53.8% to 64.0%), the state of the environment (58.1% to 60.9%), and social conditions (59.4% to 62.8%). For the additional three areas used in the second and third surveys, two showed rises: business (55.6% to 59.9%) and national security (57.5% to 63.3%). The striking exception to the overall trend of improving satisfaction was the remaining aspect of national life, how Australia is governed, which fell by 6.2% from 59.0% to 52.8%.

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index surveys include questions on satisfaction with personal 'life as a whole' and life in Australia (these are not part of the Index). These scores also increased: from 75.4% to 78.1% for personal life and from 69.8% to 84.8% for national life. The surveys have other questions about recent happy or sad life events in people's lives and their impact. They also include questions about more specific aspects of life and life events.

The second survey, conducted shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks on America, included questions about the impact of the attacks. These were retained in the third survey to assess how long lasting the impact was. The second survey found that 90% of the Australians surveyed had felt sadder as a result of the attacks, with the great majority rating their distress at a very high level. This impact coincided, and was probably associated, with a jump in the numbers of people reporting a sad personal event (from 24% to 35%).

At the same time, Australians recorded a significant rise in both personal and national life satisfaction. The survey findings do not establish a causal link between the terrorist attacks and the lift in life satisfaction. However, the findings are consistent with both overseas surveys and expert opinion. Disasters, and the saturation media coverage given to them, can lead to increased psychological disturbance, but also to a national rallying and a greater sense of community and comradeship, which are good for wellbeing. The attacks may have boosted both personal and national wellbeing by triggering a surge of patriotism and community spirit, and jolting people out of the rut of everyday life while, at the same time, making them sadder.

The third survey found the proportion reporting a sad personal event in their lives had dropped to 25%, close to the first survey level. And while the proportion of people affected by the September 11 attacks had also fallen, almost two thirds (63%) claimed to be still saddened by the events. Furthermore, for these people their level of distress had not diminished in the six months since the attacks.

In the second survey, young men were less likely to say they were affected (80%) than elderly men (90%) and women of all ages (92-94%). By the time of the third survey, the gender and age gaps had widened, especially among the youngest age group. Only 34% of young men said they were still saddened, compared to 66% of elderly men and 59-80% of women.

The continued improvement in personal and national wellbeing recorded in this latest survey could be due to a combination of several factors: the continuing effect of September 11 and its aftermath in rallying people and making them appreciate life and what they have; the weakening counter effect of the anxiety and sadness the terrorist attacks provoked; and relief that there have not been more attacks and that the anticipated global recession the attacks were expected to trigger has not eventuated. The Australian economy, in particular, has continued to perform well.

What also seems clear from this survey is that the Federal Government, whose stocks rose after the events of September 11, is no longer getting any credit for the current situation. It may be that the fall in satisfaction with government represents a return to earlier levels (the question about government was not included in the first survey, so we don't know this). Or it is possible that recent events have pushed it to especially low levels. That satisfaction with government has fallen when satisfaction with other areas of national life has risen, and satisfaction with life in Australia has soared, suggests issues directly and specifically concerned with government have soured people's perceptions.

The third survey also explored personal relationship issues in some detail. These issues, and the demographic patterns associated with them, will be analysed in the next report.

1.1 Introduction

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is a new barometer of Australians' satisfaction with their lives and life in Australia. Unlike most official indicators of quality of life and wellbeing, it is subjective – it measures how Australians feel about life, and incorporates both personal and national perspectives. The Index shows how satisfaction with various aspects of life – both personal and national – affects overall life satisfaction.

The Wellbeing Index is an alternative measure of population wellbeing to such economic indicators as Gross Domestic Product and other objective indicators such as population health, literacy and crime statistics. The Wellbeing Index measures quality of life as experienced by the average Australian.

The Index comprises two numbers. The Personal Wellbeing Index is the average level of satisfaction across seven aspects of personal life – health, personal relationships, safety, standard of living, achievements, community connectedness, and future security. The National Wellbeing Index is the average satisfaction score across six aspects of national life – the economy, the environment, social conditions, governance, business, and national security.

A considerable body of research has demonstrated that most people are satisfied with their own life. In Western nations, the average value for population samples is about 75%, with a normal range from 70% to 80%. We thus expect the Personal Wellbeing Index to fall within this range. However, satisfaction with aspects of national life are normally lower, falling in the range 55 to 65% in Australia.

The results of the first index survey of 2,000 adults from all parts of Australia, conducted in April/May 2001, produced a Personal Wellbeing Index of 73.5% and a National Wellbeing Index of 57.1%. The second survey, conducted in late September 2001, found a significant increase in the Personal Wellbeing Index to 74.7% and a National Wellbeing Index of 58.9% (with an expanded set of domains). The details of the two surveys are contained in Reports 1 and 2.1. Report 2.2 concentrated on data derived from the second survey pertaining specifically to the effects of income and geographic location on personal and national wellbeing.

This report concentrates on data derived from the third survey, conducted over the period 28th February – 30th March.

1.2 Other Australian indexes

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has published, *Measuring Australia's Progress*, which reports on national performance according to about 15 headline indicators and a range of background indicators. This research, however, is confined to objective indicators.

The Australia Institute constructs the *Genuine Progress Indicator* (GPI) for Australia. This composite index adjusts GDP for a range of economic, social and environmental factors which GDP either ignores or treats inappropriately.

The Centre for Independent Studies publishes a biennial *State of the Nation* report, covering a wide range of statistical indicators of Australia's wellbeing. Again, however, this effort is focused on objective indicators – things that can be measured in material terms.

The Evatt Foundation and the Public Sector Research Centre at the University of NSW produce an annual *The State of the States 2001* report, which assesses the States on 15

indicators of social, environmental and economic policy. Various market research companies include life satisfaction questions in regular surveys, but do not compile a comprehensive and systematic index of wellbeing.

1.3 Theoretical considerations

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is based on a model, or theory, derived from past research. This Theory of Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis proposes that internal psychological mechanisms act automatically to maintain a sense of personal wellbeing. An analogy can be drawn with the homeostatic maintenance of blood pressure and body temperature. Here, however, homeostasis refers to the automatic maintenance of a psychological state of wellbeing. The model predicts that:

- personal life satisfaction with ‘Life as a whole’ will be high and remain relatively stable.
- satisfaction with broad aspects of life (life domains) will be more responsive to changing circumstances, and so be more variable.
- national satisfaction will be lower than personal satisfaction and also more variable.

The Index was conceived by Professor Robert A. Cummins, from the School of Psychology at Deakin University, and Richard Eckersley, a social analyst at the Australian National University. The Index was developed and implemented with the help of an expert team, including Dr Julie Pallant, from Swinburne University, Jackie Van Vugt, from Australian Unity, Dr Julia Shelley, at the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Professor Michael Pusey, at the University of NSW, and two doctoral students at Deakin University, RoseAnne Misajon and Melanie Davern.

The Index is based on twice yearly surveys. The same core index questions are asked in each survey, as are two questions asking about satisfaction with personal ‘life as a whole’ and with life in Australia. Most surveys will also include two ‘trend’ questions about whether personal life and national life are getting better or worse. Each survey also includes additional questions to allow specific aspects of life – either personal or national – to be explored in finer detail, or to examine other issues. These questions change from survey to survey.

The Index has been adopted by the International Wellbeing Group, convened by Professor Cummins. This Group is a consortium of some 40 researchers in the area of subjective wellbeing representing 19 countries. The aim of the Group is to investigate the performance of the Index (generic title ‘International Wellbeing Index’) in the context of different cultures. The resulting data will then be used to progressively modify the Index in order to create an internationally valid index of subjective wellbeing. A description of the Group and their progress to date can be found at acqol.deakin.edu.au

1.4 Method

A geographically representative national sample of 2,110 people, aged 18 years or over and fluent in English, were surveyed by telephone over the period 28th of February to 30th of March 2002. Interviewers asked to speak to the person in the house who had the most recent birthday and was at least 18 years old to assist the collection of a wide sample of ages and gender. A total of 15,398 calls were made. Of these, 6,781 connected with a respondent, 2110 agreed to complete the survey and, of these, 2,048 completed the entire survey with 66 respondents withdrawing during the telephone interview. The response rate for those who agreed to

complete the entire survey was 30%. An additional 223 people had agreed to be called back at a later date when they would have been invited to complete the survey but time limitations prevented completion of the call backs. This nominated call back procedure was implemented when the target respondent was unavailable or had been contacted at an inconvenient time. If this occurred, an interviewer called back at a later nominated time and date to invite survey participation.

All responses are made on a 0 to 10 scale. The satisfaction responses are anchored by 0 (very dissatisfied) and 10 (very satisfied). The trend questions are anchored by 0 (much worse) and 10 (much better). The questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.

Initial data screening was completed before data analysis. Of the original 2,066 respondents, 19 cases (1.0%) were removed where respondents scored the maximum of 10 on all personal wellbeing domains and 3 cases removed where respondents scored 10 (0.2%) on all national wellbeing domains. In addition, 18 (0.9%) terminated interviews were removed leaving a total number of 2030 respondents in the sample.

2. Overview of Survey 3

Table 2.1: Means and standard deviations of the third survey

Question	Mean	SD	% Change from October 2001	t-test p value
Personal Wellbeing				
Life as a whole	78.14	17.86	+0.90	N.S.
Personal domains				
1. Standard of living	77.65	18.17	+0.13	N.S.
2. Health	75.35	20.98	-0.05	N.S.
3. Achievements in life	74.83	18.17	+0.33	N.S.
4. Personal relationships	79.22	21.69	-0.11	N.S.
5. How safe you feel	76.82	19.66	+0.80	N.S.
6. Community connect	70.68	19.72	-0.22	N.S.
7. Future security	71.00	20.20	+2.08	.001
PERSONAL WELLBEING INDEX	75.19	12.52	+0.54	N.S.
Specific personal Issues				
- Spiritual/religious beliefs	73.39	24.21	new item	-
- Relationship with partner/spouse	85.71	19.03	new item	-
- Relationship with family	86.07	17.27	new item	-
- Relationship with friends	84.25	15.22	new item	-
- Financial security	69.11	22.14	new item	-
National Wellbeing				
Life in Australia	84.79	17.29	+10.64	.000
National domains				
1. Economic situation	64.01	19.61	+5.86	.000
2. State of the environment	60.91	19.15	+0.74	N.S.
3. Social conditions	62.76	18.77	-0.12	N.S.
4. How Australia is governed	52.80	25.04	-6.17	.000
5. Business	59.88	19.23	+4.19	.000
6. National security	63.33	20.16	+5.78	.000
NATIONAL WELLBEING INDEX	60.72	15.45	+1.82	.000
Specific national issues				
- Government family support	58.59	23.36	new item	-
- Employers family support	56.26	21.45	new item	-

Overview

The overall picture that emerges from these data is of an increasing trend in population wellbeing over the past twelve months. In April 2001 the Personal Wellbeing Index was 73.5 and then in September it rose to 74.7 (an increase of 1.2 percentage points). Now it stands at 75.2 (a further increase of 0.5 percentage points).

The rise in National Wellbeing over this period has been more marked. In the First Survey, the National Wellbeing Index comprised only the first three items listed in Table 1.1 (economic situation, state of the environment, and social conditions). In April 2001 these averaged 57.1. In September this rose to 60.4 (up 3.3 percentage points) and now it stands at 62.6 (up a further 2.2 percentage points). The new six-item National Wellbeing Index shows the same trend, rising from 58.9 in September to 60.7 now (up 1.9 percentage points). Thus the overall picture is one of the increasing population wellbeing.

The stark exception to these trends is the National Index domain of “How Australia is governed”. In September 2001 this stood at 59.0 and now stands at 52.8. This fall of 6.2 percentage points is the largest change for any National or Personal domain, and also the only one to show a significant decrease from the previous year. While the question did not specify which level of government, recent political circumstances suggest respondents had the Federal sphere in mind.

The fall in satisfaction with Government was fairly consistent across the Australian States as follows: Victoria (-5.77), New South Wales (-4.45), Queensland (-5.58), South Australia (-6.01), and Western Australia (-7.41). The number of respondents in the ACT, Tasmania and Northern Territory are too small to yield reliable statistics.

Appendix Table A1 provides a statistical overview of data comparisons from surveys 1 – 3.

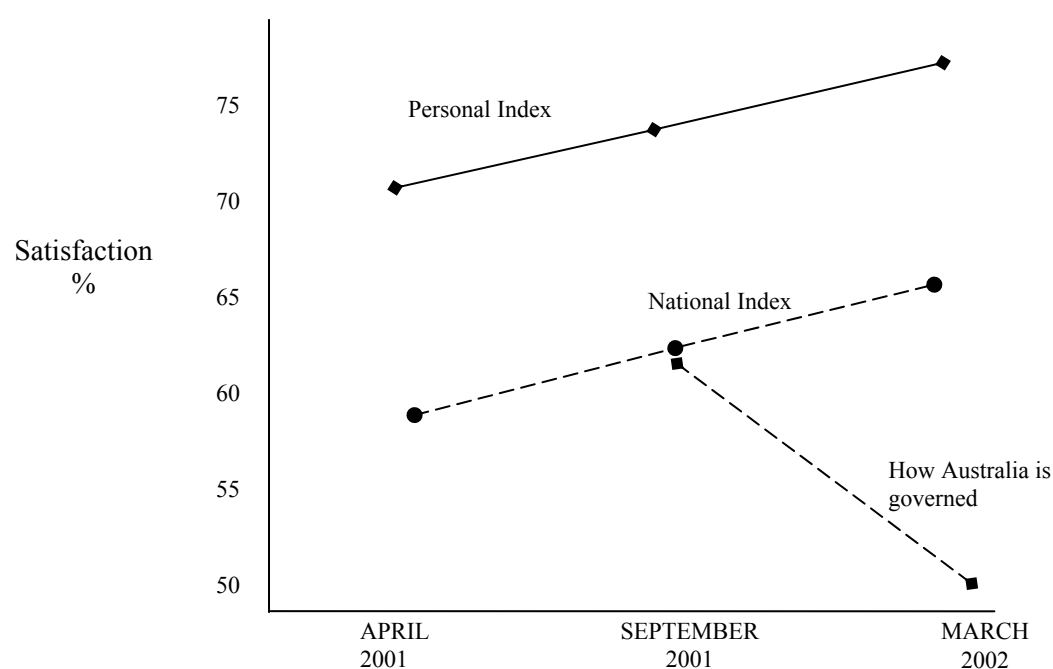


Figure 2.1: Overview

In order to determine whether satisfaction with How Australia is Governed was predicted by the other national variables, Appendix Tables A2 and A3 have been prepared. These show a strong overall prediction, with the variables together being able to explain 58% of the variance in How Australia is Governed. The strongest predictor was Government Support to Families, which contributed 7.6% unique variance. However, it is possible that the strength of this relationship may be due to the shared word 'Government'. Apart from this, the strongest predictors are Economic Situation and Business. The only national domain to make a non-significant contribution was National Security.

The three personal domains that made the strongest prediction were Future Security, Standard of Living, and Community Connectedness (Appendix Tables A4 and A5). It is notable that these same three domains were the ones that showed a significant increase from Survey 1 to Survey 2 (Table A1). Thus, these domains appear to be sensitive indicators of change in perceptions of wellbeing over the past 6 months.

An analysis of gender differences revealed only one point of divergence. Social Conditions predicted How Australia is Governed for Males but not for Females.

Conclusions

- 1. Australians have progressively increased both their Personal and National wellbeing over the past year.*
- 2. Australians are much less satisfied with how Australia is governed than they were six months ago.*
- 3. These changes in satisfaction with governance are quite strongly predicted by the National Index domains of Economic Situation and Business in Australia. They are also predicted by the Personal Index domains of Future Security, Standard of Living, and Community Connectedness.*

Personal Wellbeing

The Personal Wellbeing Index increased significantly from April 2001 to September 2001. This increase has been maintained, with a small further rise of 0.54 percentage points. Specific points of interest are as follows:

1. Even though the Index has risen since April 2001, the relative rankings of domain satisfaction have remained remarkably stable as shown below.

Table 2.2: Progressive ranking of personal domains

Domain	April 2001	September 2001	March 2002
Standard of living	3	2	2
Health	4	4	4
Achievements in life	5	5	5
Personal relationships	1	1	1
How safe you feel	2	3	3
Community connect	7	6	7
Future security	6	7	6

People generally feel most satisfied with their Personal Relationships and least satisfied with their Community Connectedness. This is consistent with a large literature showing that personal relationships are central to the subjective wellbeing of most people. It is also interesting to see that the domains maintain their relative ranking in respect of one another so consistently, even though the index is changing. This indicates a considerable degree of interconnectedness between the domains. Such stability is excellent evidence of measurement reliability.

2. In the September 2001 survey, the only domain to show a decrease in satisfaction was Future Security. Six months later this domain has recovered as shown below.

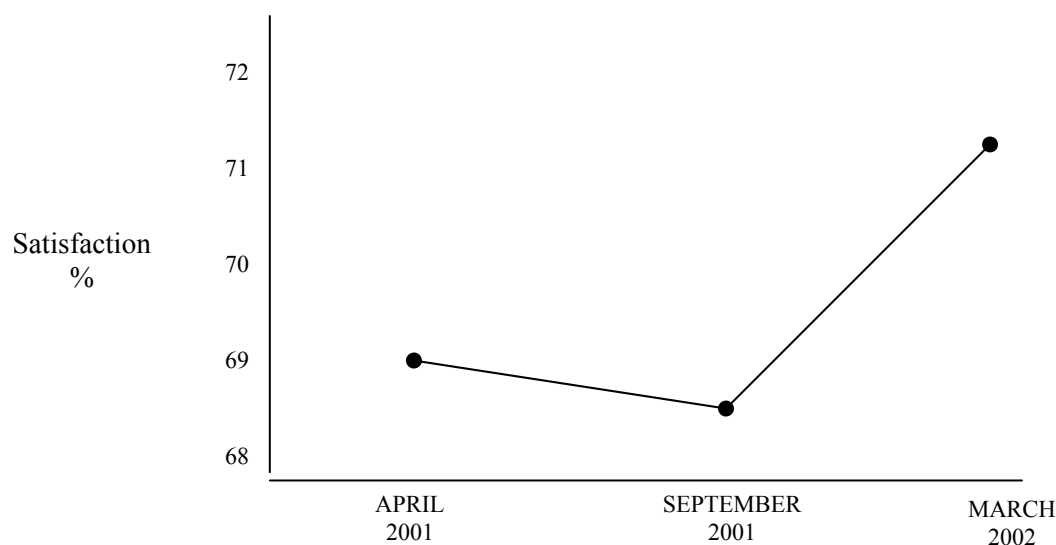


Figure 2.2: Future Security

3. In our earlier comparison of Surveys 1 and 2, it was found that the Personal Wellbeing Index rose by 1.2% following the September 11 attacks, and that this was mainly due to rises in the satisfaction with Community Connectedness (up 1.9%) and Standard of Living (up 2.7%). In this third survey both domains have held these gains as shown in Figure 1.3.

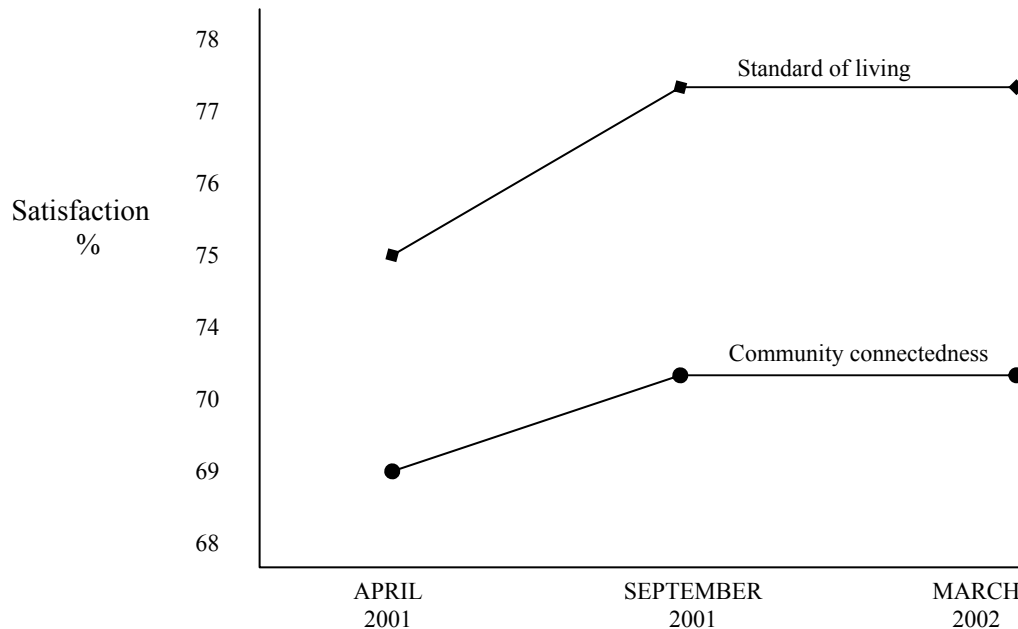


Figure 2.3: Standard of Living and Community Connectedness

Conclusions

1. *The gains in satisfaction with the personal wellbeing domains recorded in September have been maintained.*
2. *The personal wellbeing domains show a high level of stability relative to one another.*

National Wellbeing

As has been indicated, the National Wellbeing Index has shown a marked rise over the past year, demonstrating greater volatility than the Personal Wellbeing Index. Specific points of interest, other than the fall in satisfaction with governance, are as follows:

1. The relative ranking of domains in terms of their satisfaction within each survey are presented below.

Table 2.3: Progressive ranking of national domains

Domain	April 2001	September 2001	March 2002
Economic Situation	3	4	1
State of environment	2	2	4
Social conditions	1	1	3
How Australia is governed	not used	3	6
Business	not used	6	5
National security	not used	5	2

This indicates that over the period April 2001 to September 2001, the three domains that then formed the National Wellbeing Index pretty much maintained their ranking relative to one another. This has changed quite dramatically, however, in the most recent survey, with marked relative gains in satisfaction with Economic Situation and National Security. Satisfaction with Economic Situation has risen from 4th to 1st rank, while satisfaction with National Security has risen from 5th to 2nd rank.

This volatility of the National domains in relation to one another is in sharp contrast to the Personal domains, which remain much more consistently ordered. This is evidence that the National domains are less strongly linked to one another than the Personal domains, and so more free to separately reflect change. Such findings are consistent with Homeostatic theory.

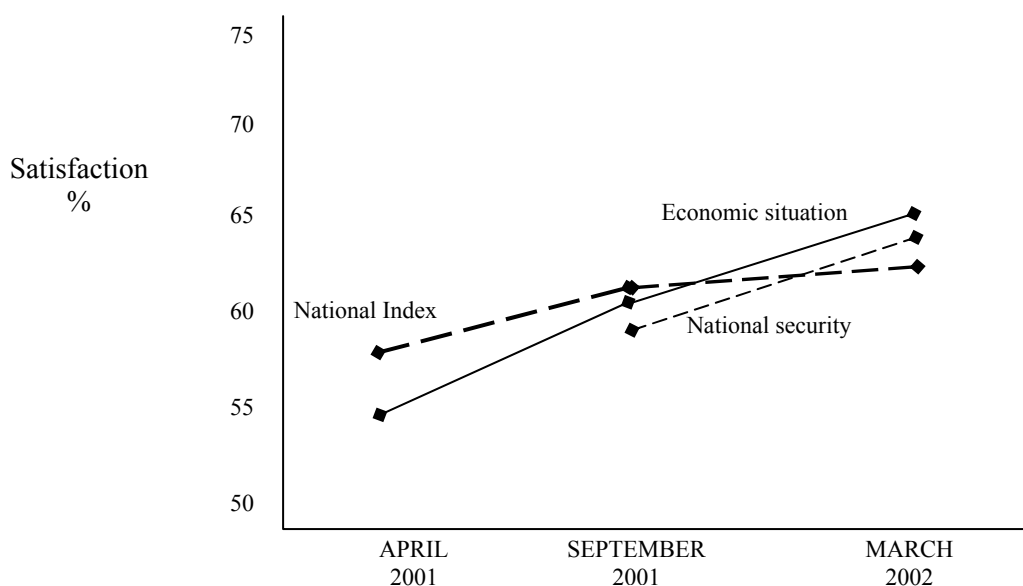


Figure 2.4: National Wellbeing Index and the domains of Economic Situation and National Security

2. The domains of Economic Situation and National Security also showed the greatest percentage increase in satisfaction over the past six months. They have increased by 5.9 percentage points and 5.8 percentage points respectively. These gains are shown in Figure 1.4. The domain of National Security was only added to the Index in the second survey.
3. Two of the other domains, State of Environment and Social Conditions, rose significantly between April 2001 and September 2001. Neither has increased further since that time, but both have held their significant gains since the first survey.
4. The final domain, Business in Australia, was only introduced in the second survey. It has shown a significant 4.2 percentage point rise over the past six months.
5. Satisfaction with Life in Australia was 84.8, a huge increase of 10.6 percentage points since September last year. The magnitude of the change is unprecedented within our previous survey data.

In order to shed light on this increase in satisfaction with Life in Australia, Appendix Table A6 has been prepared which presents the frequency distribution for this item over the three surveys. This reveals a pattern of frequency change that is consistent with a valid shift in population opinion, with the frequencies changing systematically both towards and away from the mean score. We conclude that these response changes are valid. It can also be seen from this Table that the largest increase has been in the highest response category. Remarkably, almost 20% of our sample rated their satisfaction with life in Australia as 10/10.

In order to further investigate what might be causing this increase, a statistical analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the national domains are able to explain the level of satisfaction with Life in Australia. These analyses are detailed in Appendix Tables A7 and A8.

It was found that the National domains are only weak predictors of Life in Australia, with the strongest predictor (Economic Situation) only predicting 2.7% of unique variance. It is thus apparent that Life in Australia is only weakly predicted by the national domains. Thus, Life in Australia is largely independent of the National Wellbeing Index. This finding is consistent with other research that suggests perceptions of life in Australia may reflect historical, cultural, geographical dimensions that are not captured by the domains. Regardless of domain events, Australians think Australia is the best place in the world to live.

In order to determine whether these predictions differed between the genders, separate analyses were conducted for males and females (Appendix Table A8). Two domains stood out as being gender specific. State of the Environment predicted satisfaction for life in Australia for females, but not for males. Government Support to Families made a weak but significant prediction for males, but not for females.

Conclusions

1. *Marked increases in satisfaction with Life in Australia, the economy, national security and business have occurred over the past six months. This has been offset in terms of the National Wellbeing Index by a sharp fall in satisfaction with how Australia is governed.*

2. *The gains in satisfaction with the national domains following September 11 have been retained, or even increased.*
3. *The National domains appear to be more volatile than the Personal domains, which is consistent with theory.*
4. *Almost 20% of our sample rated their satisfaction with Life in Australia as 10/10.*
5. *Satisfaction with Life in Australia appears to be a highly sensitive measure of population wellbeing at a national level. It is not predicted by satisfaction with governance.*

3. Influence of Personal Life Events

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index survey contains a question that asks whether anything had happened recently that had made the respondent feel sadder or happier than normal. If people state that such an event has happened, they are then asked to rate the strength of this influence from 0 to 10. Table 3.1 presents the percentage of people saying that they had experienced such an event, and the strength of its felt influence. In the second and third surveys, these questions were followed by two specific questions asking people if they had been affected by the September 11 terrorist attacks on America, and how strong this effect had been.

This section discusses the findings of the questions about personal life events. The next section covers the impact of September 11, six months after the attacks.

Table 3.1: Recent personal life events

Recent life event occurrence	Survey 1 (N=1999)	Survey 2 (N=2004)	Survey 3 (N=2023)
% Yes, happier	25.4	19.8	21.1
% Yes, sadder	23.7	35.3	25.4
% No	50.9	45.0	53.6
Influence of the SAD event (%)	(N=473)	(N=707)	(N=507)
0	2.1	1.7	0.4
1	1.1	0.8	0.8
2	4.4	3.1	3.6
3	6.6	6.2	3.2
4	8.0	5.7	6.9
5	15.6	12.7	11.6
6	7.4	8.3	6.3
7	13.5	13.4	14.0
8	14.4	16.3	22.5
9	12.1	12.6	11.8
10	14.8	19.1	18.9
Mean	65.1	69.1	71.5
SD	25.9	25.3	23.3
Influence of the Happy event (%)	(N=508)	(N=396)	(N=426)
0	0.4	0.3	0.7
1	1.0	0.5	0.2
2	1.4	1.5	0.5
3	5.3	1.5	0.2
4	10.0	6.6	1.9
5	18.9	6.3	4.3
6	24.2	19.4	7.6
7	14.0	22.5	16.0
8	24.8	16.4	27.1
9	0.4	25.0	16.9
10	1.0	0.3	24.5
Mean	79.6	79.6	80.3
SD	16.8	17.8	17.7

As can be seen from Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1, the September 11 attacks appeared to increase the percentage of people who answered ‘yes - sadder’ to the question “Has anything happened to you recently causing you to feel happier or sadder than normal”. It is interesting to note that, even though the question is clearly framed to refer to the respondent’s own life, and no prior mention had been made of the September 11 attacks, the proportion of people who reported a sad event in their lives increased by 67% from the April 2001 Survey.

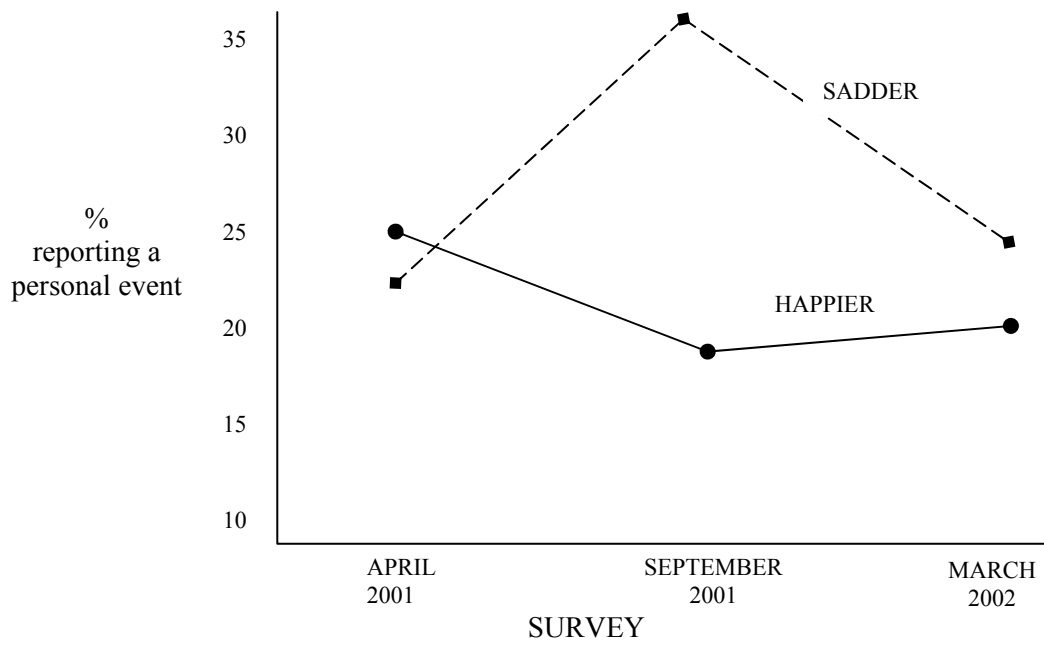


Figure 3.1 Percentage of people reporting they feel happier or sadder than usual due to a personal life event

Table 3.1 also lists the strength of influence people felt in relation to the negative event. It can be seen that the strength of influence of a happy event did not change across the three surveys (79.6, 79.6, 80.3), but the strength of influence exerted by a negative event has increased over this period.

Appendix Table A9 breaks these data down by gender. In terms of the incidence of life events, a Chi-square analysis revealed no gender differences in the frequency of reporting a happy or sad event. Figure 3.2 below shows the levels of sadness felt by males and females to the recent negative events in their lives.

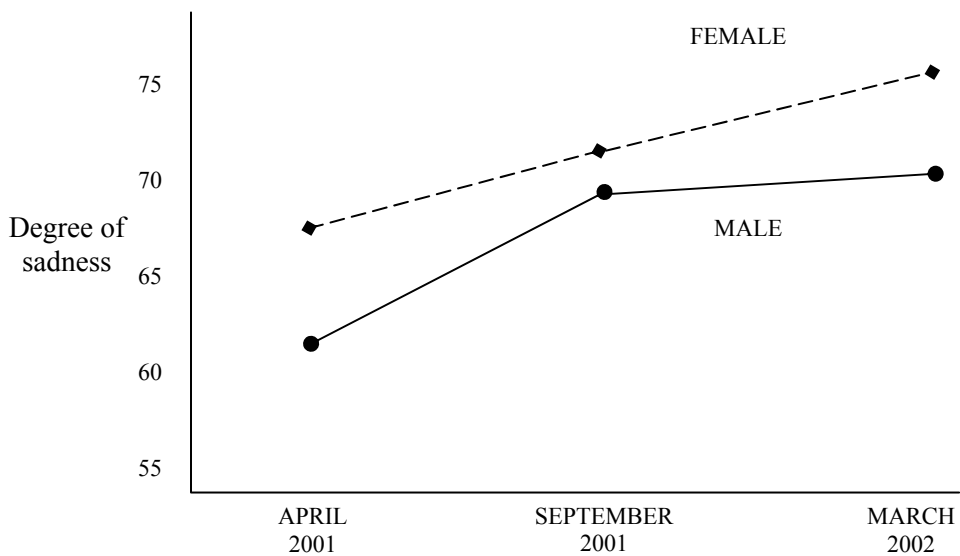


Figure 3.2 Degree of sadness experienced to a negative personal event

Females ($F(2,1109) = 5.82, p < .005$) but not Males ($F(2,572) = 2.21, N.S.$) exhibited an increased strength of influence from negative events following September 11. This difference is not significant between the first two surveys, but is significant between Survey 1 and Survey 3.

There seems to be two possible explanations. Either people regarded the September 11 event as a personally relevant event, or the September 11 event sensitized them to negative events in their own lives.

There is some evidence that both explanations may be relevant, but perhaps on different timelines.

It appears that immediately following September 11 people either regarded the attacks as something that they felt was a personally relevant event, or they became more sensitive to recognising other negative events in their lives. In either case the number of people reporting a negative event increased, but the degree of sadness they felt in relation to such events remained stable.

This situation changed over the next six months. By March 2002 the number of people reporting the occurrence of a negative event in their lives had returned to pre September 11 levels. This was not so, however, for the degree of sadness felt in relation to such events, at least for females. While males recorded no significant change in the degree of sadness induced by these personal life events, females recorded a significant increase. In other words, while the number of females recording a negative personal event in their lives had returned to pre September levels six months after the attack, those females who experienced a negative event also felt the influence of the negative event more strongly. This is consistent with them being sensitised to feeling more sad in relation to the negative personal events in their lives by the September 11 attacks.

Conclusions

- 1. While the percentage of people reporting a negative personal event increased in the September 2001 survey, this percentage has now returned to normal.*
- 2. Females, but not males, are experiencing a greater degree of sadness at the negative events that happen in their lives. This is consistent with them having been sensitised by September 11 to be more emotionally reactive to negative personal events.*
- 3. While the percentage of people reporting a negative personal event increased in the September 2001 survey, this percentage has now returned to normal.*

4. Influence of September 11 Terrorist Attacks in America

The second survey conducted over the period 19th – 30th September, included questions about the impact of the US terrorist attacks on Australians. People were asked “What about the September 11 terrorist attack in America? Does this make you feel sadder than usual now? (If ‘yes’) How strong would you rate this influence?”

These questions showed 90% of the Australians surveyed had felt sadder as a result of the attacks, with almost 70% of these ranking the effect at 7-10 on a 0-10 scale (about 20% scored the effect a 10). Young men were less likely to say they were affected (80%) than either elderly men (90%) or women of all ages (92-94%).

At the same time, however, the National Wellbeing Index rose 3.3 percentage points to 60.4, while the Personal Wellbeing Index rose 1.2 percentage points to 74.7. Increases were also recorded in two personal domains of Standard of Living and Community Connectedness, and in all three original national domains. Despite the recent corporate collapses, notably of HIH and Ansett, and the talk of a global recession, people's satisfaction with their standard of living and the national economic situation had increased.

At the same time, Australians recorded more sad events in their lives, as has been discussed. The survey findings did not establish a causal link between the terrorist attacks and the lift in life satisfaction. While any association may seem strange, the findings were consistent with both overseas surveys and expert opinion. Since the attacks, one US poll found high levels of depression and related feelings, but another recorded a sharp increase in Americans' satisfaction with the way things are going in the US.

Psychiatrists and psychologists have also noted that disasters, and the saturation media coverage given to them, can lead to increased psychological disturbance, but also to a national rallying and a greater sense of community and comradeship, which are good for wellbeing. It seems, then, that the attacks may have boosted both personal and national wellbeing by triggering a surge of patriotism and community spirit, and jolting people out of the rut of everyday life - making them more aware of what they have and the preciousness of life – while, at the same time, making people sadder.

The March survey repeated the September 11 questions to determine if the events were still impacting on Australians' wellbeing.

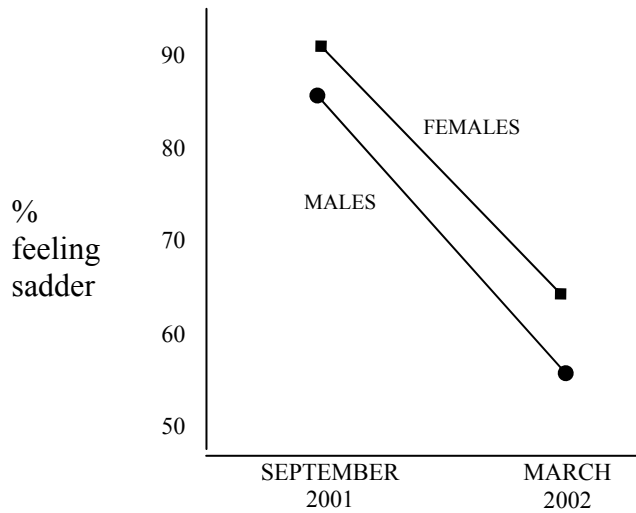


Figure 4.1: Gender differences in the percentage of people feeling sadder than usual as a consequence of the September 11 attacks

Not surprisingly, the results of the third survey show that the proportion of people stating that the September 11 attacks made them currently feel sadder than usual fell from 90.4% in September 2001, to 62.8% in March 2002. However, it is interesting that, some six months after the attack, almost two thirds of people sample remain personally affected by this event.

While it can be seen from Figure 4.1 that the percentage of both males and females feeling sadder fell proportionately, the incidence among females remains higher (see Table A10) but is influenced by age (Figure 4.2 below, and also Tables A11 and A12).

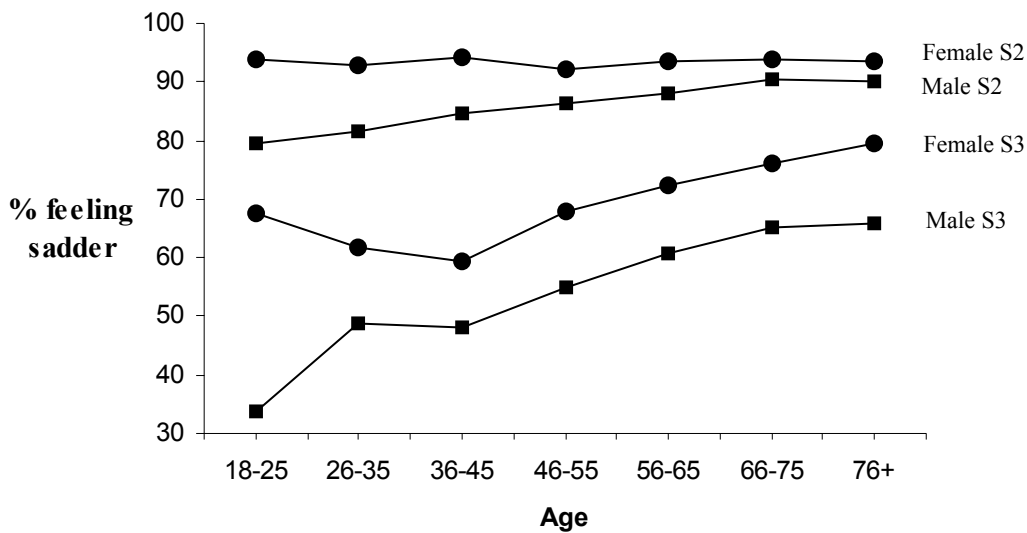


Figure 4.2: Gender and age differences in the percentage of people feeling sadder than usual as a consequence of the September 11 attacks

The trend lines in this Figure show a number of changes as follows:

1. The gap between male and females has widened. Whereas in the September (S2) survey an average 8.3% more females than males felt sadder than usual due to the attacks, in March (S3) the difference was 13.7%.

2. The general pattern of group differences in Figure 4.2 reflects the age trends in Personal Wellbeing that we presented in Report 2.2, and which we can confirm are also present in the current survey. That is, Personal Wellbeing Index values increase with age. Thus, both Personal Wellbeing and the percentage of people feeling sadder as a consequence of the attacks, increases with age and is higher in females.

This may seem anomalous, that groups feeling more satisfied with their lives also contain the greatest proportion of people still feeling sadder than usual due to the September 11 attacks. There are two possible explanations. One is that the groups that score high on sadness contain a higher proportion of people who are more able or willing to express emotion. Thus, such groups score higher on both sadness and satisfaction with life. The alternative explanation is that the experience of sadness in relation to a non-personal event enhances personal wellbeing.

3. The youngest males have generated the biggest group differences. Within this group only 33.8% state the attacks still make them feel more unhappy than usual. This is a drop of 45.8% from the September survey, is 33.8% less than for same-age females, and 33.2% less than for older males.

Dual influence of September 11 and personal life events

Table 4.2 below separates the respondents from each survey into four groups. The first division is into those who did, or did not, feel the September 11 attacks made them feel sadder than usual. The second division is into those who had recently experienced a sad or a happy personal event in their lives.

Table 4.2: The dual experience of personal life events and September 11

Recent life event	Survey 2		Survey 3	
	No, USA attack did not make me feel sadder than usual	Yes, USA attack made me feel sadder than usual	No, USA attack did not make me feel sadder than usual	Yes, USA attack made me feel sadder than usual
% happy event	16.7	20.1	17.6	23.0
% sad event	14.6	37.5	22.8	26.9
N =	192	1812	746	1255
Influence of the sad personal event				
N =	28	679	170	337
0 (very weak)	0	1.8	0	0.6
1	3.6	0.7	0.6	0.6
2	7.1	2.9	3.6	3.6
3	14.3	5.9	3.6	3.0
4	7.1	5.6	8.4	6.0
5	14.3	12.7	10.8	12.3
6	14.3	8.1	6.0	6.6
7	10.7	13.5	13.8	14.4
8	10.7	16.5	26.3	21.0
9	7.1	15.8	10.8	12.6
10 (very strong)	10.7	19.4	16.2	19.5
Mean (SD)	57.86 (26.16)	69.51 (25.17)	70.78 (22.60)	71.77 (23.31)
Influence of the happy event				
N =	32	364	131	287
0 (very weak)	3.1	0	0	1.0
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	.5	0	1.4
3	3.1	1.4	0	1.7
4	3.1	1.4	3.1	3.1
5	9.4	6.3	3.9	7.7
6	9.4	6.0	8.5	15.0
7	9.4	20.3	20.2	29.3
8	6.3	23.9	21.7	58.5
9	18.8	16.2	19.4	74.6
10 (very strong)	37.5	23.9	22.5	100.0
Mean (SD)	78.44 (25.41)	79.70 (17.03)	79.77 (16.98)	80.66 (17.70)

Table 4.2 indicates that in September 2001 (Survey 2), of the 1,812 people who said ‘Yes’ the US attack made them feel sadder than usual, 37.5% had personally experienced a sad recent event and 20.1% had experience a recent happy event.

This situation had greatly changed six months later (Survey 3) in relation to the ‘Yes: sad event’ group. Of the people who felt the attacks still made them feel sadder than normal, 26.9% had experienced a recent sad personal event. This proportion is not notably different from the 22.8% who had experienced a recent sad event and stated the attacks did not make them feel sadder than normal. In other words, reporting that the attacks did, or did not, make them feel sadder than normal, had no obvious connection, at the time of Survey 3, to the possibility of people experiencing a recent negative personal event.

These changes are shown in Figure 4.3 below. The pre-September 11 incidence of people reporting happy and sad events, drawn from Survey #1, are shown by arrows on the vertical axis.

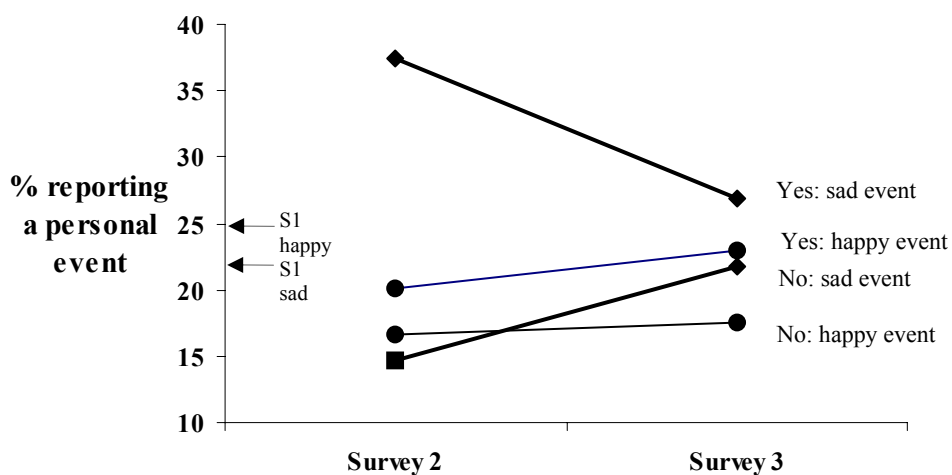


Figure 4.3 The influence of September 11 on the incidence of personal life events

In relation to the recent experience of a positive personal event, the September 11 experience seems to have exerted little influence. In September 2001, of those who said the attack had made them feel sadder than normal, 20.1% had experienced a recent happy personal event. In March 2002 this remained virtually unchanged on 22.9%, and also differed little from those who were uninfluenced by the attack (17.6%).

In summary, while immediately after the attacks there was a higher tendency for people influenced by the attacks to report negative personal events, this effect has now dissipated.

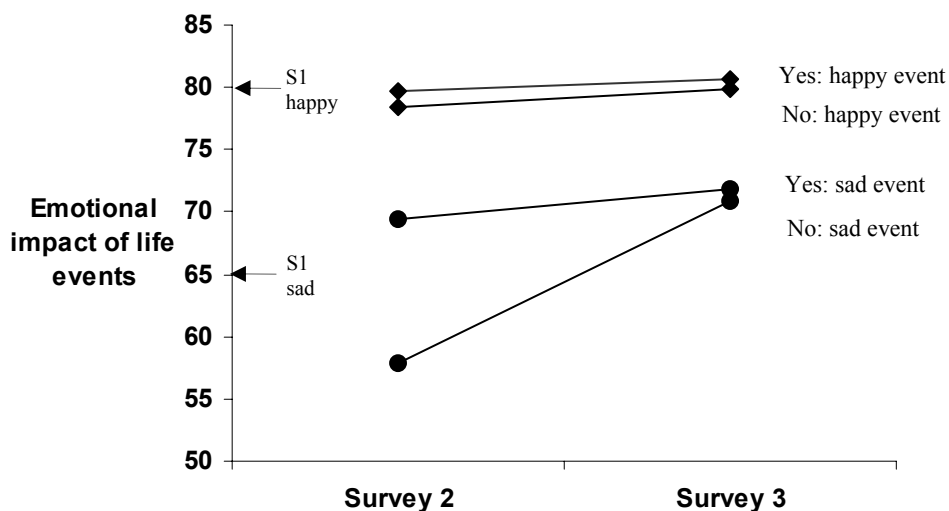


Figure 4.4: The influence of September 11 on the emotional impact of life events

The data relating to the emotional impact of personal life events, taken from Table 4.2, are graphically depicted in Figure 4.4. The following observations can be made:

1. People are generally more emotionally responsive to happy than to sad events in their lives.
2. The emotional impact derived from positive personal events has changed little across the three surveys. However, in line with Figure 3.2 presented earlier, there has been a general rise in the emotional impact of negative personal events.
3. The group that has changed from Survey 2 to Survey 3 comprises those people who remained uninfluenced by the US attacks and who experienced a sad personal event ('No: sad event' group in Figure 4.4). This group contained only 28 people in Survey #2 (1.4% of the total sample). For these people, the emotional impact of the positive event was very low in September 2001 (57.9 percentage points of emotional influence), but six months later had risen to 70.8. This is a significant increase ($t(193)=2.74, p<.01$) and the new level is no different from people who had been influenced by September 11.

This might be explained by personal denial. That shortly after the attacks these people would not admit to themselves that the attacks had impacted on them. One consequence of this active emotional suppression was to diminish the experience of sad events in their lives. This need for denial has receded six months later when it is more normatively reasonable to feel unaffected by the attacks. Thus, their experience of sad events has returned to normal strength.

Conclusions

1. *Around two thirds of the Australian population continue to feel personally affected by the September 11 attacks.*
2. *A higher proportion of females remain feeling sadder than usual as a result of the attacks.*

3. *Six months after the attacks, the group least affected by the attacks are young males.*
4. *Immediately following September 11, at the time of Survey 2, there was an increase in the incidence of people reporting the recent experience of a personal negative life event. However, this only occurred for the majority of people who felt sadder than usual due to the attacks. Among the people who denied feeling sadder than usual due to the attacks, fewer people reported the recent experience of a personal negative life event. Six months later the number of people reporting recent negative life event has returned to normal for both groups.*
5. *Following September 11, the emotional impact of personal negative life events had been reduced for people who denied feeling sadder than usual. These people now experience an increased emotional intensity in relation to the negative events in their lives, compared with their pre-September 11 levels.*

5. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF A PARADOX

The main findings from this report can be summarized as follows:

1. The wellbeing of the Australian population increased following the September 11 attacks in the USA (Report #2.1). Six months later the Personal Wellbeing Index has held these gains while the National Wellbeing Index has risen even further.
2. The exception to this general increase is the level of satisfaction with how Australia is governed. This has shown a marked decrease over the past six months.
3. About two thirds of the Australian population continue to feel sadder than usual due to the September 11 attacks.
4. Immediately following the September 11 attacks, more people reported that they had recently experienced a negative personal event in their lives. This was particularly marked for people who said they felt sadder than usual because of the attacks. This incidence has now returned to pre-September 11 levels.
5. The degree of sadness people experience in relation to the negative events in their lives showed a non-significant increase immediately following September 11. Six months later these trends have been maintained, and have reached significance for females. Thus, females are now experiencing greater degrees of sadness in relation to the negative events in their lives than they did prior to September 11.

A paradox and a hypothesis

In the story summarized above there is a paradox. On average, people feel both sadder and more satisfied following September 11. They feel sadder than usual as a consequence of the attacks, and they feel more satisfied generally with their lives.

These apparently conflicting emotions may be resolved through the following line of thought, which begins with an examination of the questions that gave rise to such data. In relation to the sadness emotion people were asked “What about the September 11 terrorist attack in America last year? Does this make you feel sadder than usual now?”

It can be seen that this is a leading question that is biased to the elicitation of agreement. As such, people may agree for one of two reasons. They may simply acquiesce to the response situation, and thus agree that they remain saddened. This, however, seems unlikely to have occurred to the extent we have recorded. There is considerable previous research on this issue. While it is probable that a few people would have agreed for this reason, simple acquiescent responding in general population samples normally involves only a small percentage of people.

In this particular situation, however, the tendency to acquiesce is combined with an expectation of conformity to the social norms of grieving. There is an added social obligation to register sadness at such an horrific event. It is thus possible that this combined influence is strong enough to cause people to register sadness even though they do not, actually, feel personally sad. They are engaged in responding to a social obligation rather than registering their own level of sadness. If this is so, there should be no necessary link between expressed sadness at the attacks and personal wellbeing. This, however, is not so. Table A15 records a consistent positive link between sadness at the attacks and personal wellbeing. Higher sadness is linked to higher wellbeing.

The resolution of this apparent contradiction requires the consideration of a third factor. This is the extent to which people are willing or able to express their emotions. People differ greatly in this regard and, in general, females are more emotionally expressive than males. It is also a reasonable hypothesis that the people who are most responsive to the social obligation of grieving are also the most emotionally expressive. If so, this provides an explanation for the positive correlations in Table A15. Those people who are most responsive to the social obligations of grieving are also most able or willing to express satisfaction with their lives. It is also notable in this context that the questions of satisfaction are also leading questions. “How satisfied are you with-----?”

A number of tentative conclusions can be drawn from this argument as follows:

- (a) The ‘sadness’ that people express at the terrorist attacks is a measure of responsiveness to the social obligation of grieving, rather than being a measure of personal sadness.
- (b) The people most able or willing to meet this social obligation are generally more responsive to questions involving emotional states. Thus, they also express more satisfaction.
- (c) If this is correct, then some population groups are more sensitive barometers of wellbeing in Australia than others. In this regard, females are likely to be more sensitive indicators of personal and national wellbeing than men.

6. Appendix A

The analyses in this Table have been computed using either analysis of variance with post-hoc Tukey tests, or t-tests where only two surveys are involved.

Table A1: Comparison between Survey 1, Survey 2 and Survey 3

Question	Survey 1 (N=1999)		Survey 2 (N=2004)		Survey 3 (N=2030)		p
	Mean (%)	SD (%)	Mean (%)	SD (%)	Mean (%)	SD (%)	
Personal Wellbeing							
Life as a whole	75.48	19.67	77.24	19.42	78.14	17.86	.000
	<i>*S2 > S1 p = .010</i>		<i>S3 > S1 p = .000</i>				
Aspects of life							
- standard of living	74.78	19.50	77.52	18.58	77.65	18.17	.000
	<i>*S2 > S1 p = .000</i>		<i>S3 > S1 p = .000</i>				
- health	73.97	21.38	75.40	20.57	75.35	20.98	N.S.
- achievements in life	73.48	18.51	74.50	18.74	74.83	18.17	N.S.
- personal relationships	78.44	21.22	79.33	21.98	79.22	21.69	N.S.
- how safe you feel	75.40	20.25	76.02	20.12	76.82	19.66	N.S.
- community connectedness	68.98	20.84	70.90	21.22	70.68	19.72	.006
	<i>*S2 > S1 p = .009</i>						
- future security	69.29	21.24	68.92	20.87	71.00	20.20	.003
			<i>*S3 > S2 p = .004</i>				
PERSONAL WELLBEING INDEX	73.48	13.57	74.65	13.30	75.19	12.52	N.S.
Happiness	78.86	18.78	79.95	18.83	-	-	N.S.
Spiritual/religious beliefs	-	-	-	-	73.39	24.21	-
Relationship with partner/spouse	-	-	-	-	85.71	19.03	-
Relationship with family	-	-	-	-	86.07	17.27	-
Relationship with friends	-	-	-	-	84.25	15.22	-
Financial security	-	-	-	-	69.11	22.14	-
National Wellbeing							
Life in Australia	69.79	21.02	74.16	20.09	84.79	17.29	.000
	<i>*S3 > S2 p = .000</i>		<i>S3 > S1 p = .000</i>		<i>S2 > S1 p = .000</i>		

*n.b. Significant post hoc analyses included under each domain where applicable

Question	Survey 1 (N=1999)		Survey 2 (N=2004)		Survey 3 (N=2030)		p
	Mean (%)	SD (%)	Mean (%)	SD (%)	Mean (%)	SD (%)	
Aspects of life							
- economic situation	53.80	20.36	58.15	18.91	64.01	19.61	.000
	<i>*S3 > S2 p = .000 S3 > S1 p = .000 S2 > S1 p = .000</i>						
- state of the environment	58.17	19.56	60.17	19.34	60.91	19.15	.000
	<i>*S3 > S1 p = .000 S2 > S1 p = .000</i>						
- social conditions	59.44	20.03	62.88	18.19	62.76	18.77	.000
	<i>*S3 > S1 p = .000 S2 > S1 p = .000</i>						
NATIONAL WELLBEING INDEX (early version)	57.14	16.52	60.40	15.09	62.52	15.75	.000
	<i>*S3 > S2 p = .000 S3 > S1 p = .000 S2 > S1 p = .000</i>						
- how Australia is governed	-	-	58.97	23.79	52.80	25.04	.000
- business	-	-	55.69	19.03	59.88	19.23	.000
- national security	-	-	57.55	20.43	63.33	20.16	.000
NATIONAL WELLBEING INDEX	-	-	58.90	14.63	60.72	15.45	.000
Specific Issues							
- wealth / income distribution	48.07	23.00	49.68	22.55	-	-	N.S.
- health services	58.10	23.23	57.61	23.27	-	-	N.S.
- family support	59.32	20.38	60.77	19.56	-	-	N.S.
- economic stability	-	-	58.33	17.47	-	-	N.S.
- trust in people	56.84	20.50	56.74	21.15	-	-	N.S.
- Government family support	-	-	-	-	58.59	23.36	-
- Employers family support	-	-	-	-	56.26	21.45	-

*n.b. Significant post hoc analyses included under each domain where applicable

Question	Survey 1 (N=1999)		Survey 2 (N=2004)		Survey 3 (N=2030)		p
	Mean (%)	SD (%)	Mean (%)	SD (%)	Mean (%)	SD (%)	
Trends							
- own life changing for the better	64.00	19.34	63.79	19.82	-	-	N.S.
- Australia changing for the better	53.02	19.95	53.86	19.41	-	-	N.S.

Table A2: Standard multiple regression predicting satisfaction with how Australia is governed using the national variables (Total sample)

Variable	β	p =	Zero order r	% unique variance
Economic situation	.21	.000	.61	2.4
State of environment	.10	.000	.50	0.6
Social conditions	.07	.000	.51	0.3
Business	.19	.000	.59	1.8
National security	-.03	.196	.39	0.0
Government Family Support	.38	.000	.67	7.6
Emp. Family Support	.02	.305	.48	0.0

R = .760, Adjusted R² = .575

Table A3: Standard multiple regression predicting satisfaction with how Australia is governed using the national variables (Males and Females)

Variable	β		p =		Zero order r		% unique variance	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Economic situation	.20	.22	.000	.000	.62	.60	2.0	2.8
State of environment	.08	.11	.018	.000	.50	.49	0.4	0.7
Social conditions	.10	.05	.003	.066	.54	.48	0.6	0.1
Business	.20	.18	.000	.000	.61	.57	2.0	1.8
National security	-.01	-.04	.786	.105	.40	.38	0.0	-0.1
Government Family Support	.39	.37	.000	.000	.69	.66	7.8	7.5
Emp. Family Support	-.01	.04	.694	.110	.48	.47	0.0	0.1

Male: R = .772, Adjusted R² = .591

Female: R = .751, Adjusted R² = .561

Table A4: Standard multiple regression predicting satisfaction with Government by the Personal Index domains (Total sample)

Variable	β	p =	Zero order r	% unique variance
Standard of living	.17	.000	.30	1.8
Health	.01	.594	.15	0.0
Achievements in life	.02	.402	.20	0.0
Relationships	.02	.422	.16	0.0
How safe you feel	.01	.626	.18	0.0
Comm. Connectedness	.10	.000	.22	0.7
Future security	.17	.000	.31	1.9

R = 3.7, Adjusted R² = .134

Table A5: Standard multiple regression predicting satisfaction with Government by the Personal Index domains (Males and Females)

Variable	β		p =		Zero order r		% unique variance	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Standard of living	.17	.16	.000	.000	.35	.26	1.7	1.8
Health	.00	.02	.982	.533	.18	.13	0.0	0.0
Achievements in life	.00	.02	.983	.481	.25	.16	0.0	0.0
Relationships	.03	.01	.485	.642	.18	.13	0.1	0.0
How safe you feel	.02	.01	.677	.649	.23	.15	0.0	0.0
Comm. Connectedness	.09	.10	.021	.001	.23	.20	0.6	0.9
Future security	.25	.13	.000	.000	.38	.26	3.6	1.0

Male: R = .428, Adjusted R² = .175

Female: R = .325, Adjusted R² = .101

Table A6: Life in Australia: Frequency distribution (%)

Rank	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	S2 – S1	S3 – S2
0	1.4	0.5	0.5	-0.9	0.0
1	0.7	0.5	0.2	-0.2	0.3
2	1.4	1.0	0.5	-0.4	0.5
3	2.8	2.1	0.6	-0.7	1.5
4	4.3	3.7	1.3	-0.6	-2.4
5	11.8	9.4	3.6	-2.4	-5.8
6	12.8	9.5	4.0	-3.3	-5.5
7	21.8	19.7	10.1	-2.1	-9.6
8	20.4	22.6	21.7	+2.2	-0.9
9	10.2	13.2	21.1	+3.0	+7.9
10	12.6	17.6	36.3	+5.0	+18.7
Mean	69.79	74.16	84.79		
SD	21.02	20.09	17.29		

Table A7: Standard multiple regression predicting Life in Australia from other national measures of wellbeing (Total sample)

Variable	β	p =	Zero order r	% unique variance
Economic situation	.23	.000	.41	2.7
State of environment	.04	.150	.31	0.1
Social Conditions	.13	.000	.36	1.0
How Australia Governed	-0.4	.253	.32	-0.1
Business	.11	.001	.37	.06
National Security	.00	.935	.26	.00
Government Family Support	.07	.022	.33	.02
Emp. Family Support	.04	.113	.29	.01

R = .466, Adjusted R² = .214

Table A8: Standard multiple regression predicting Life in Australia from other national measures of wellbeing (Males and Females)

Variable	β		p =		Zero order r		% unique variance	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Economic situation	.29	.19	-.000	.000	.44	.39	4.0	1.9
State of environment	-.03	.08	.538	.019	.27	.32	0.0	0.4
Social Conditions	.21	.08	.000	.020	.39	.33	2.5	0.4
How Australia Governed	-.08	-.03	.160	.549	.32	.31	-0.2	0.0
Business	.10	.12	.046	.002	.37	.37	0.5	0.7
National Security	-.06	.04	.192	.205	.22	.28	-0.2	0.1
Government Family Support	.11	.05	.041	.200	.35	.32	0.5	0.1
Emp. Family Support	.01	.05	.512?	.123	.28	.29	0.0	0.2
TOTAL							7.9	3.8

Male: R = .492, Adjusted R² = .233

Female: R = .456, Adjusted R² = .202

Table A9: Recent personal life events (gender differences)

Recent life event	Survey 1		Survey 2		Survey 3	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
% Yes, happier	26.3	24.8	21.6	18.7	21.3	20.9
% Yes, sadder	20.9	25.6	31.2	37.7	23.2	26.6
% No	52.8	49.6	47.2	43.7	55.5	52.5
Influence of SAD event (%)	(N=176)	(N=297)	(N=229)	(N=478)	(N=330)	(N=608)
0	2.3	2.0	2.6	1.3	0.9	0.5
1	0.6	1.3	0.4	1.0	1.2	0.2
2	5.1	4.0	4.8	2.3	2.4	2.0
3	8.5	5.4	9.6	4.6	2.1	1.6
4	9.7	7.1	7.0	5.0	7.0	3.3
5	18.2	14.1	10.9	13.6	11.5	6.9
6	5.7	8.4	7.4	8.8	7.6	6.4
7	16.5	11.8	12.7	13.8	17.3	14.0
8	14.2	14.5	16.2	16.3	23.0	25.2
9	9.1	13.8	12.2	12.8	12.4	14.8
10	10.2	17.5	16.2	20.5	14.5	25.2
Mean	61.31	67.27	66.55	70.73	66.71	73.89
(SD)	(25.14)	(26.18)	(26.94)	(24.32)	(23.68)	(22.70)
Influence of Happy event (%)	(N=221)	(N=297)	(N=159)	(N=237)	(N=154)	(N=266)
0	.9		0.6		1.3	0.4
1	2.3		0		.6	0
2	1.4		0.6	.4	.6	0.4
3	5.9		1.3	1.7	.6	0
4	12.7	1.4	2.5	.8	3.2	1.1
5	18.6	4.9	7.5	5.9	7.8	2.3
6	25.8	8.0	6.9	5.9	9.1	6.8
7	13.6	19.2	23.3	16.9	16.2	15.8
8	19.0	23.0	20.1	24.1	29.9	25.6
9	.9	14.3	18.9	14.8	15.6	17.7
10	2.3	29.3	18.2	29.5	14.9	30.1
Mean	76.77	81.74	77.04	81.31	75.26	83.20
(SD)	(17.71)	(15.70)	(18.40)	(15.23)	(19.61)	(15.73)

Table A10: Percent males/females who felt sadder than usual due to USA attack

Gender	Survey 2		Survey 3	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Male	85.2	14.8	54.1	45.9
Female	93.5	6.5	67.8	32.2

Table A11: Percent within age groups who felt sadder than usual due to USA attack

Age	Survey 2		Survey 3	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No(%)
18-25	87.4	12.6	53.3	46.7
26-35	89.0	11.0	57.5	42.5
36-45	90.7	9.3	54.9	43.5
46-55	90.2	9.8	65.0	35.0
56-65	91.6	8.4	68.2	31.8
66-75	92.9	7.1	71.9	28.1
76+	92.5	7.5	74.2	25.8

Total Numbers Within Each Age Category who felt sadder than usual due to USA attack

Age	Survey 2		Survey 3	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
18-25	215	31	97	85
26-35	275	34	138	102
36-45	370	38	207	164
46-55	370	40	260	140
56-65	250	23	232	108
66-75	208	16	179	70
76+	124	10	95	33

Table A12: Percent within age/gender groups who felt sadder than usual due to USA attack

Age	Survey 2 (%)				Survey 3 (%)			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
18-25	79.6	20.4	94.0	6.0	33.8	66.2	67.6	32.4
26-35	81.5	18.5	93.0	7.0	48.8	51.3	61.9	38.1
36-45	84.6	15.4	94.2	5.8	48.2	51.2	59.3	40.7
46-55	86.8	13.2	92.3	7.7	59.9	40.1	67.8	32.2
56-65	88.0	12.0	93.6	6.4	60.7	39.3	72.5	27.5
66-75	90.5	9.5	94.0	6.0	65.3	34.7	76.0	24.0
76+	90.0	10.0	93.6	6.4	66.0	34.0	79.5	20.5

Table A13: Correlation matrix for Personal Index domains and other variables

Domains	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Standard of Living								
2. Health	.33							
3. Achievements	.40	.32						
4. Relationships	.32	.20	.38					
5. Safety	.31	.28	.25	.22				
6. Connectedness	.26	.19	.30	.30	.28			
7. Future Security	.49	.31	.41	.25	.41	.33		
8. PERSONAL INDEX	.68	.59	.67	.61	.61	.58	.72	
9. NATIONAL INDEX	.41	.25	.28	.24	.30	.29	.43	.48

Note: All are significant at .001

Table A14: Correlation matrix for National Index domains and other variables

Domains	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Economic						
2. Environment	.49					
3. Social	.49	.54				
4. Governed	.61	.50	.51			
5. Business	.58	.46	.53	.59		
6. Security	.43	.37	.42	.39	.49	
7. PERSONAL INDEX	.79	.73	.76	.82	.79	.68
8. NATIONAL INDEX	.43	.36	.37	.33	.40	.30

Note: All are significant at .001

Table A15: Bi-variate correlations between degree of sadness attributed to the USA attack and other variables (omits respondents unaffected by the attacks)

Survey 2		
	r	p
N = 1812		
Question	Influence of attack on America	
Social conditions	.087	.000
National wellbeing index (original)	.056	N.S.
How Australia is governed	.066	.005
National wellbeing index (new)	.051	N.S.
Life in Australia	.047	N.S.
Survey 3		
N = 1249		
Question		
Life as a whole	.119	.000
Standard of living	.116	.000
Health	.038	.185
Achievements in life	.072	.011
How safe you feel	.071	.012
Personal relationships	.040	.157
Community connectedness	.091	.001
Future Security	.052	.068
Personal wellbeing index	.095	.001
Spiritual/religious beliefs	.049	.122
Relationship with partner/spouse	.066	.042
Relationships with family	.108	.000
Relationship with friends	.130	.000
Financial security	.066	.021
Life in Australia	.153	.000
Economic situation	.063	.028
State of the environment	.134	.000
Social conditions	.119	.000
How Australia is governed	.088	.002
Business	.130	.000
National security	.063	.030
National wellbeing index	.137	.000
Government family support	.103	.000
Employers family support	.085	.005

7. Appendix B: Questionnaire

Survey #3

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index– February 2002

“Hello, my name isI’m from Deakin University’s Australian Centre on Quality of Life and your telephone number has been obtained from the White Pages. We are doing a survey on how people feel about life in Australia.”

“Can I please speak to the person in your house who had the most recent birthday, and who is at least 18 years old.”

Instructions: If the person who answers is that person then continue. If the person is available repeat opening paragraph. If the person is not available, ask when they will be available and organise a call back time.

“The survey will only take about 10 minutes. Do you have the time to help us?”

“Thank you.”

“I am going to ask how satisfied you feel, on a scale of Zero – 10.”

“Zero means you feel very dissatisfied. 10 means you feel very satisfied. And the middle of the scale is 5, which means you feel neutral.”

“Would you like me to go over this again for you?”

“In that case I will start by asking how satisfied you are with life. So,-----“

(Personal wellbeing)
(Personal - Abstract)

1. Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

“Turning now to various areas of your life, -----“

(Personal Domains)

How satisfied are you with...?

2. your standard of living?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. your health?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. what you achieve in life?

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
5. your personal relationships?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----
6. how safe you feel?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----
7. feeling part of your community?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----
8. your future security?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----
9. your religious or spiritual beliefs?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

[\[tick this box if the question does not apply to the respondent\]](#)
10. your relationship with your partner or spouse?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

[\[tick this box if the question does not apply to the respondent\]](#)
11. your relationship with your family?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----
12. your relationship with your friends?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----
13. your financial security?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

(National wellbeing)

(National – Abstract)

“Turning now to life in Australia-----“

14. how satisfied are you with life in Australia?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

(National Domains)

How satisfied are you with-----

15. the economic situation in Australia?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----
16. the state of the natural environment in Australia?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

17. the social conditions in Australia?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
18. Government in Australia?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
19. business in Australia?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
20. national security in Australia?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(National Sub-Domains)

How satisfied are you.....?

21. with how well Government supports families in Australia?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
22. with how well Employers support families in Australia?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Recent Life Events)

23. Has anything happened to you recently causing you to feel happier or sadder than normal?

- Yes, happier
 Yes, sadder
 No

If 'yes', how strong would you rate this influence?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Very Weak Very Strong

24. What about the September 11 terrorist attack in America last year? Does this make you feel sadder than usual now?

If 'yes', how strong would you rate this influence?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Very Weak Very Strong

Now, just a couple more questions about yourself.

25. Interviewer – record the sex of the respondent
 Male Female

26. Can you tell me your age? *Interviewer type in age.*

27. Can you please give me an idea of your household income over the past year?
< \$15,000
\$15,000 - <\$30,000
\$30,000 - <\$60,000
\$60,000 - <\$90,000
\$90,000+

28. What is your marital status now?
Never married
De facto or living together
Married
Separated but not divorced
Divorced
Widowed

29. What is the structure of your household?
You live alone
Live with a partner
Live with a partner plus other (child or adult)
Live with non-partner(s)

30. We are going to carry out another survey like this in 6 months' time. Would you be willing to help us again?
 Yes No

(If YES) Thank You. Can you please tell me your name? You will not be identified in any report, but we need to record your name in order to contact you again.

Interviewer type in name.

(If NO, or YES) Thank you for helping us with this survey.