



Australian Healthcare Index: Majority of Australians support COVID-19 vaccination for kids

Report by Healthengine & the Australian Patients Association provides survey learnings on how patients feel about the public and private healthcare ecosystem

- **Views on the vaccine:** the majority of Australians surveyed are in favour of COVID-19 vaccinations for kids
- People who don't want to get vaccinated say their top two reasons are they don't think it's safe & they are afraid of side effects
- People rate **Australian healthcare 7.6/10** and reveal the **top 3 health issues** facing Australia
- 66% of people who have experienced a decline in mental health since the pandemic blame COVID-19
- Elective surgery wait times are on the rise

Embargoed until 00:01 Thursday 7th October

Australia - 7 Oct 2021 – Healthengine and the Australian Patients Association (APA) launched the latest [Australian Healthcare Index](#) report today, showing that a majority of surveyed Australians support COVID-19 vaccination for kids. The report provides a pulse check on Australian healthcare based on patient perspectives and experiences from across the country.

Key findings also identified views from the unvaccinated, the impact of the pandemic on mental health, potentially life threatening delays in elective surgeries, continued challenges for private health insurance (PHI) and more.

“The Australian Healthcare Index covers a broad range of topics across the public and private healthcare systems, and we hope that it inspires more exploration, conversation and opportunities to focus on patient-centred care and support people’s healthcare journeys,” said Dr Marcus Tan, Healthengine CEO, co-founder and medical director. “The impact of the pandemic is very present in this report’s results, and we hope to elevate people’s voices and experiences to the greater healthcare community.”

Views on the Vax & COVID-19’s toll on mental health

For people who hadn't received the COVID-19 vaccination 24% said they didn't want to be vaccinated or were undecided and 34% were waiting for other vaccines to be available. (*Survey was conducted prior to the availability of Moderna and the availability of Pfizer among some age groups.*) For those not wanting to get vaccinated, top reasons chosen include safety (76%), fear of side effects (47%), and 21% felt healthy enough to not need it.

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Australian Healthcare Index Report

COVID-19 vaccination is underway for kids aged 12-15 and research continues for younger cohorts. 57% said they are in favour of jabbing children including 14% for kids 6 months and older, 13% for 5 years or older and 30% for 12-15s. Only 12% said no and 31% were undecided.

Of the 30% of Australians who say their mental health is worse since the beginning of the pandemic, 66% say it's related to COVID-19, with locked down states NSW (76%) and VIC (68%) being the highest. The 18-34 year old age group was also more likely to identify mental health concerns compared to other age groups.

Australians happy with the healthcare system

Based on results, Australians appear to be pleased with how the system is performing, giving Australian healthcare a 7.6/10 average score. Top reasons for positive scoring include good access and availability, the private hospital experience and overall quality of care. The top three issues they identified to address include private health insurance costs (55%), the COVID-19 vaccination program (49%) and emergency department wait times (42%).

Elective surgery lag times

While only 8% were waiting to have elective surgery at the time of the survey, 44% of those people had been waiting more than 90 days. More alarming for people facing a Category 1 surgery which should be done within 30 days, 18% said they've been waiting between 31-90 days and 30% have been waiting more than 90 days. For Category 2, 55% have been waiting more than 90 days for a surgery that should be undertaken within 90 days.

Nearly 1 in 4 visit Emergency Department (ED)

In the past six months, 24% said they've been in an ED (92% public and 8% private). Private EDs earned higher satisfaction ratings (79%) whereas 27% of people were dissatisfied with the public ED experience. For dissatisfied ED visitors overall, 70% noted long wait times were the driving factor.

Public Health Insurance (PHI)

Private Health Insurance earned a 2 Net Promoter Score® (NPS) in the survey when people were asked if they would recommend their PHI to someone. (GPs earned a 50 NPS and Dentists a 52 NPS for comparison.) People who are positive about their PHI provided their top 3 reasons: good hospital coverage, good extra coverage and good customer service. For detractors, poor value for money, affordability and poor extras coverage were the top three reasons for not recommending their insurance. The 65+ age group were more likely to recommend PHI with a higher 20 NPS, followed by 18-34 year olds with a 6 NPS.

"We know there are hidden costs of a pandemic and that's what we're seeing with delays in elective surgery and mental health battles," said Stephen Mason, CEO of the Australian Patients Association. "The report helps us understand the patient's perspective and we hope it will inform policy discussions that lead to positive change."

"Listening to the patient's voice can help us work towards making Australians the healthiest in the world."

Learn more about the Australian Healthcare Index

The full report is available for download at www.AustralianHealthcareIndex.com.au, along with an interactive dashboard to look at survey results by state, gender and age group. To register for an upcoming webinar on 12th October to learn more about the findings, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3uXoYV3>.

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Australian Healthcare Index Report

Available for interview:

Dr. Marcus Tan, CEO, co-founder & medical director, Healthengine
Stephen Mason, CEO, Australian Patients Association

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About Healthengine

Healthengine is Australia's largest consumer healthcare platform developed to help people navigate the complex world of healthcare. Healthengine is on a mission to transform humanity's health, one care experience at a time. Healthengine's platform brings together a leading range of healthcare practices, healthcare specialities and health ecosystem partners in a suite of integrated offerings to help consumers get a better experience across each step of their healthcare journey.

Founded in 2006, Healthengine now has more than 3.6m users connecting with over 7,400 Australian healthcare providers across the spectrum of GPs, dentists, allied health practitioners, medical specialists and pharmacies nationwide. Over Healthengine's history, more than 10.4 million Australians have made more than 54 million bookings on the platform. To find the right care, connect with healthcare providers and manage healthcare, all in one place, visit healthengine.com.au or download the Healthengine App for Android or iOS. For healthcare providers, please visit practices.healthengine.com.au to learn more and join Australia's largest network of patients.

About the Australian Patients Association

The Australian Patients Association (APA) is an independent not-for-profit organisation dedicated to championing and protecting the rights and interests of patients, improving the patient experience and their health outcomes. Our main roles are providing patient advocacy, information and support.

The APA's "Core Patient Values" define and drive our mission. The APA listens to and acts for Australian patients. It strives to be the definitive "first stop", "signpost" organisation to represent, inform and assist Australian patients. To that extent the APA develops strategic alliances with organisations involved in Australian healthcare for mutual interest and benefit.

Rather than replicating existing resources, the APA collates and refers patients to the leading, authoritative source in their area of patient need. The APA primarily provides patient support services through its publications, help line and website, patients.org.au.