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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been nationwide, deep and profound. The Maroondah community, along with the rest of metropolitan Melbourne, has been particularly impacted by an extended series of staged restrictions in response to the number of active positive cases.

To ensure that the needs of the Maroondah community are understood and effectively supported, Council is undertaking a comprehensive and ongoing relief and recovery planning process with a three-stage community engagement process at its centre.

This report details the methodology and outcomes of Stage 1 of the community engagement process.

1.2 Objectives

The key objectives for Stage 1 of the community engagement process were:

- › To gather information from a wide range of community members to help inform the development of the key recovery priorities and community needs
- › To gather information from a wide range of key stakeholders and agencies to help inform the evidence base regarding local impacts of COVID-19

2. Methods

2.1 Stakeholders

Consultation with stakeholders was undertaken between March and May 2020.

Engagement Methods	Outcomes
Phone calls to community services and organisations	50+ completed
Phone calls to education institutions	17 completed
Phone calls to Maroondah businesses	300+ contacted
Survey via Melbourne East Regional Economic Development Group	823 responses
Total:	1190+

2.2 Community Members

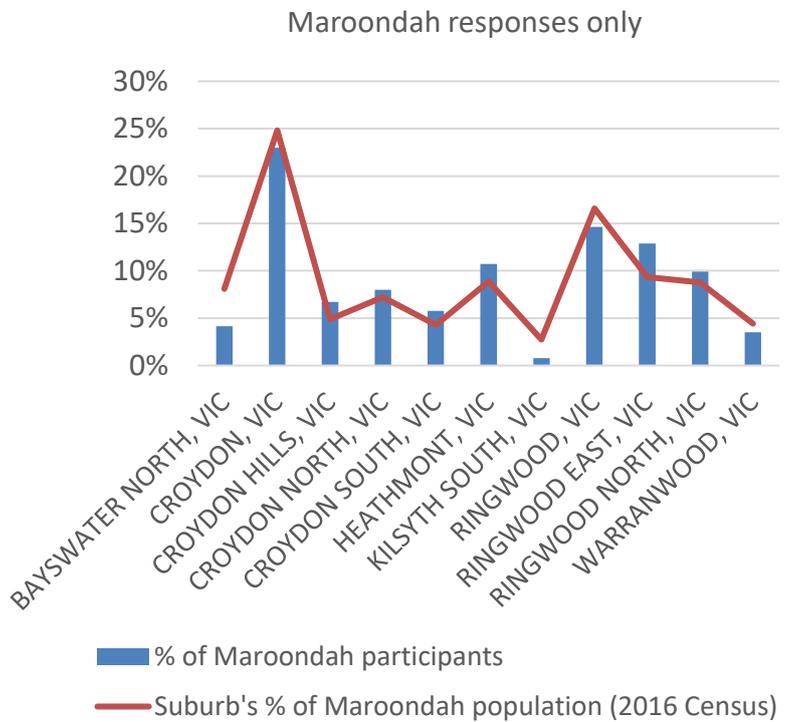
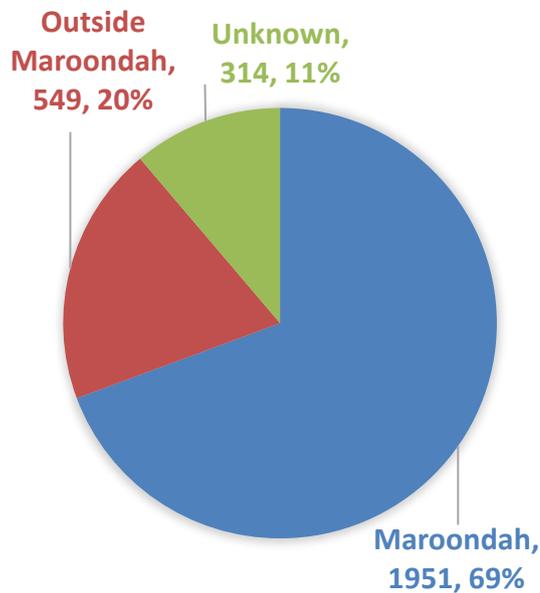
Consultation with community members was undertaken between July and October 2020. Please note that staged restrictions during this time limited the availability of some traditional engagement methods.

Engagement Methods	Outcomes
Online Maroondah COVID-19 Community Survey on Your Say	2382 responses
Hard copy survey <ul style="list-style-type: none">Distributed to vulnerable people, including Aged and Disability Services clients and residents receiving support from Eastern Volunteers (700+ distributed)Mailed on request	90 responses
Translated surveys for CALD communities (9 languages)	208 responses
Zoom focus group with Karen community members in partnership with Migrant Information Centre (14 of which also completed a survey - deducted from total)	29 participants
Outreach telephone survey to vulnerable residents who had not completed the online survey	88 completed
Adapted surveys with primary school aged children via schools	20 responses
In-person surveys with vulnerable residents at community meals programs	11 conducted
Total:	2814

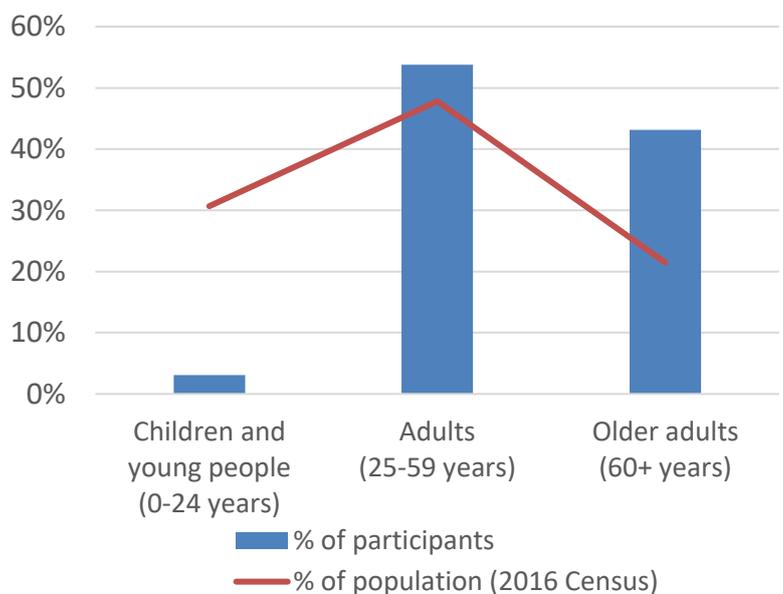
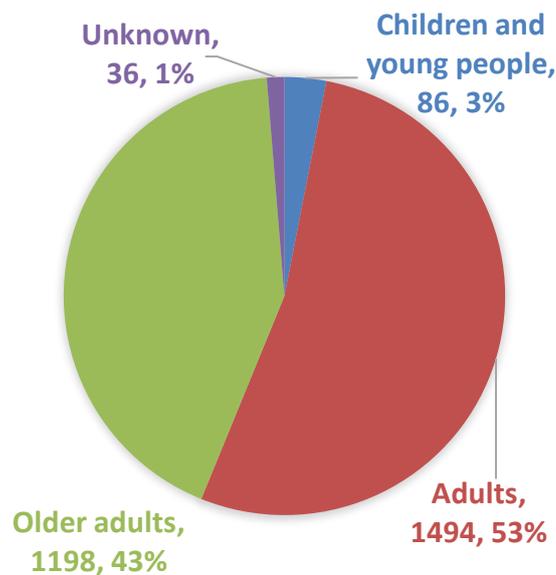
3. Participants

3.1 Suburb

What is your suburb?



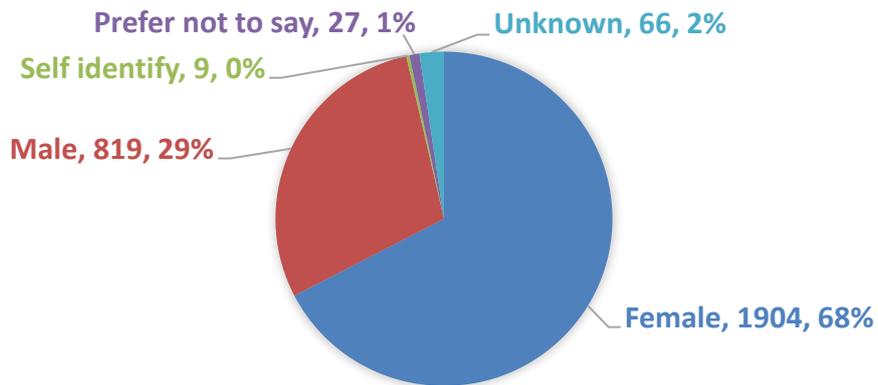
3.2 Age



The small sample sizes for participants aged 0-24 years have been supplemented by results from two large-scale youth surveys relating to COVID-19 that were undertaken by other organisations (page 19).

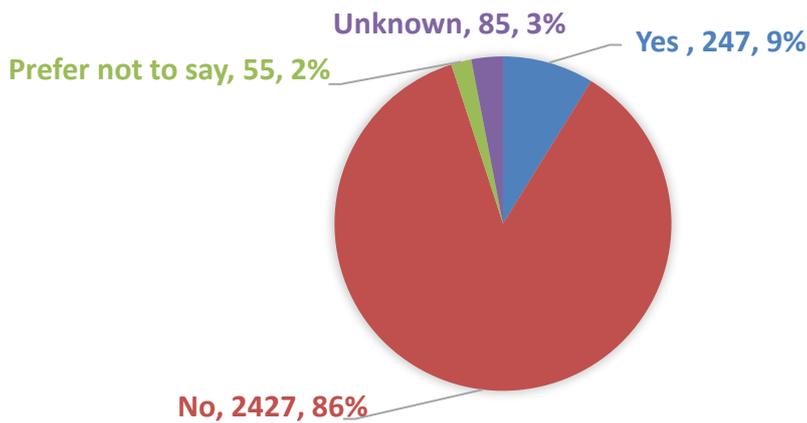
3.3 Gender

What is your gender?



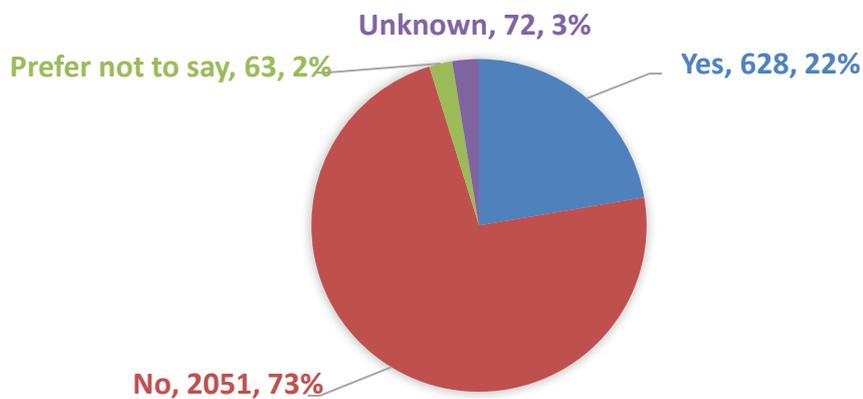
3.4 People with disabilities

Are you a person living with a disability?



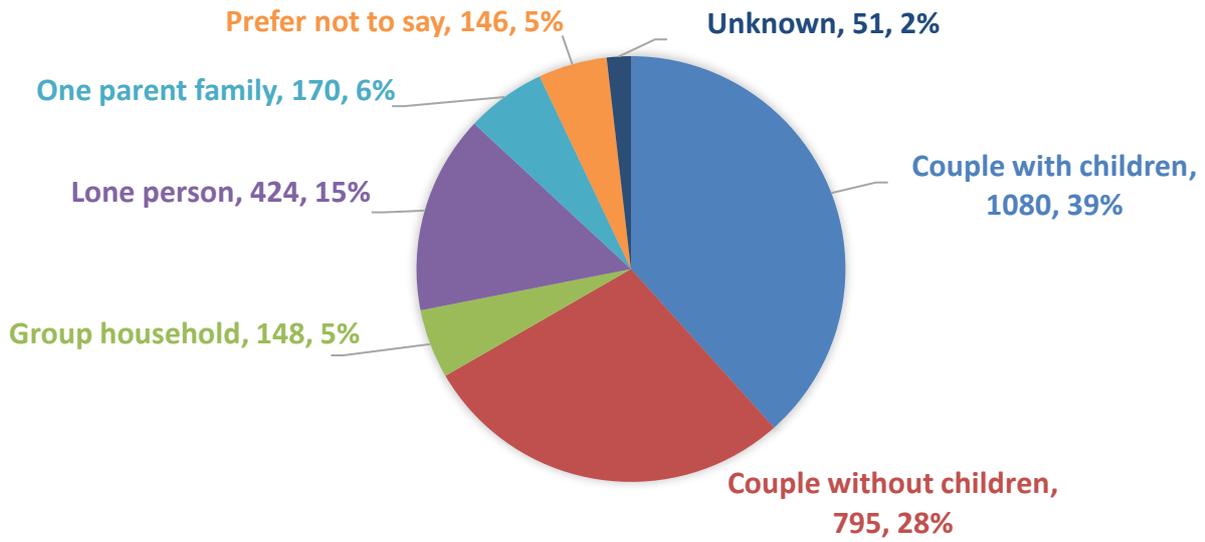
3.5 Carers

Are you a carer for a family member, partner or friend?



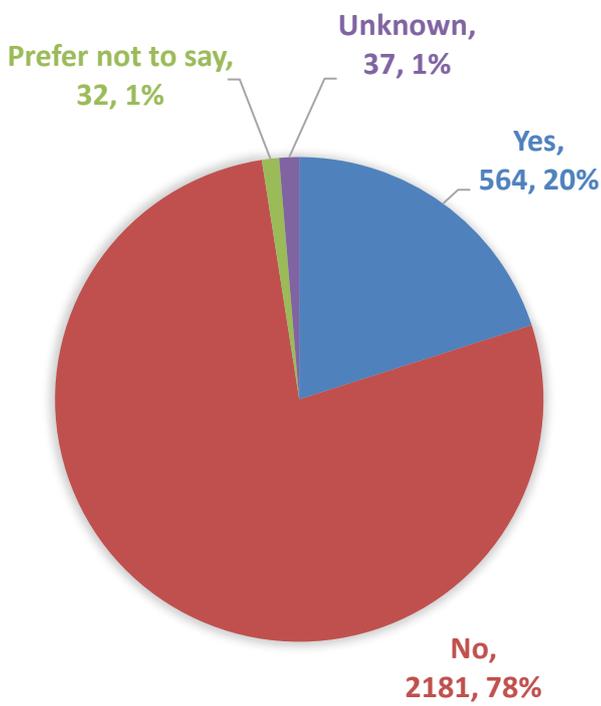
3.6 Household composition

What is your household composition?

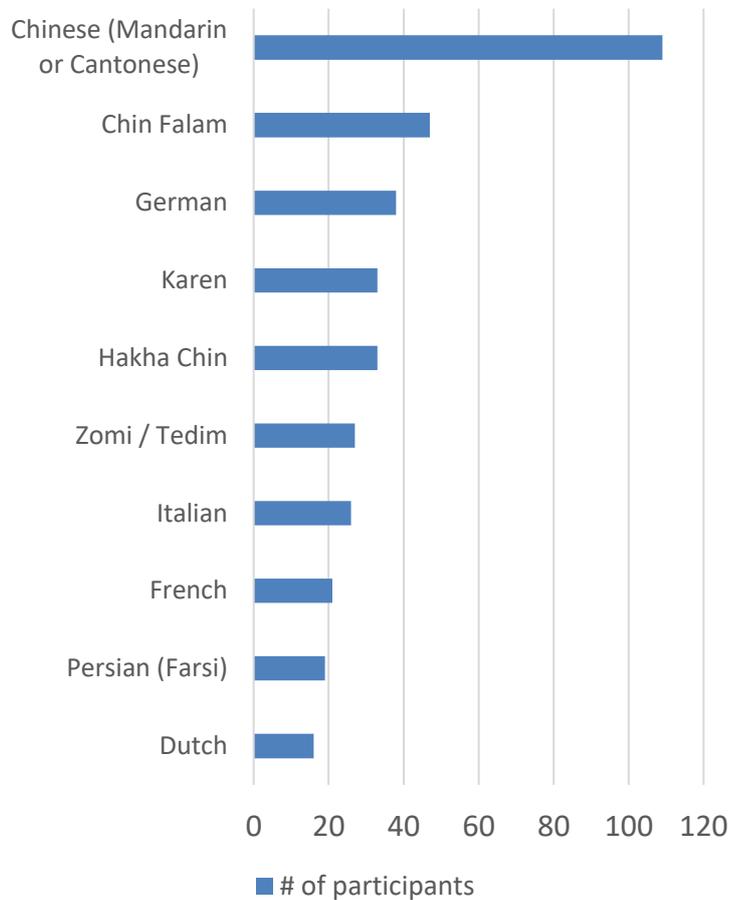


3.7 Languages

Do you speak a language other than English?



Top 10 languages other than English



4. Overall Results

4.1 Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

On the community:

Top impacts on the community:	
Main Positive Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling part of the community• Family, parenting or carer responsibilities• Work / employment status• Overall health and wellbeing• Recreation, hobbies and interests	Main Negative Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recreation, hobbies and interests• Mental health• Overall health and wellbeing• Family, parenting or carer responsibilities• Feeling part of the community• Feelings of safety• Availability of food and groceries• Work / employment status• Access to support• Ability to afford food <p>*Bold = over 1000 responses</p>

On businesses:

Top impacts on businesses:	
<p>95% of businesses reported that they have been, or will be, affected by COVID-19.</p> <p>60% of businesses reported that they will be unviable after 6 months if negatively impacted.</p>	Main Impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revenue loss• Customer loss• Increase in costs• Reduced staff• Supply chain impacts

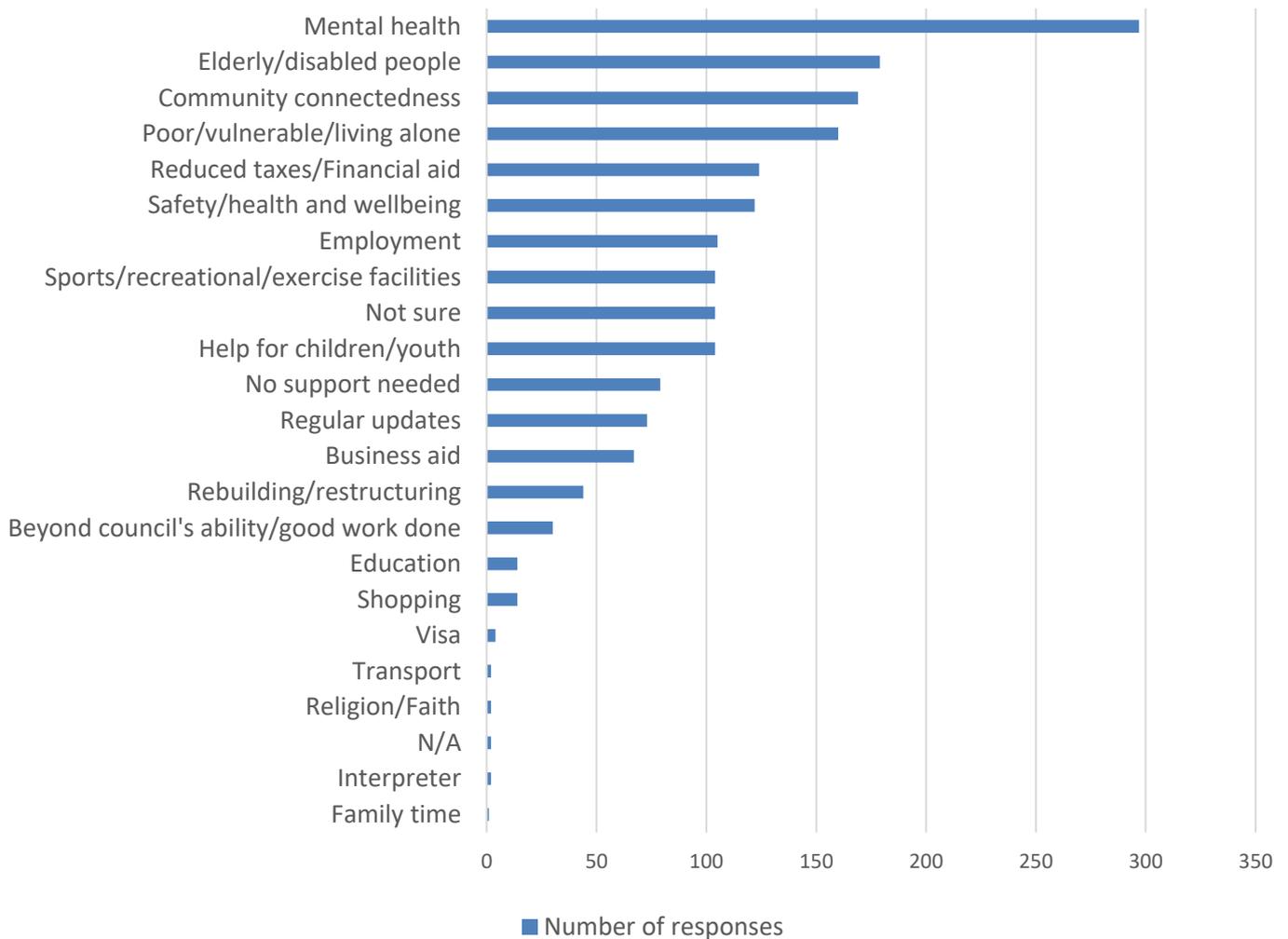
4.2 Support needed

By the community:

Top supports needed by the community:

 <p>Mental health support</p>	 <p>Support for older people and people with a disability</p>	 <p>Community connectedness</p>
 <p>Support for people who are vulnerable or living alone</p>	 <p>Financial support</p>	 <p>Safety, health and wellbeing</p>

All responses:



Quotes:

Your Say survey: Where do you think support is most needed in Maroondah??

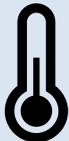
- › "Top priority has to be those people who are struggling financially and socially isolated."
- › "There is probably plenty of support but my stressed/depressed/anxious children/young adults do not want to seek assistance despite my encouragement."
- › "You ask about jobs. Nobody has even mentioned self funded retirees, there is no help for us, if COVID 19 stays with us for too long we could be in trouble."
- › "Building community. People working together for a common goal, people coming together for shared interests. Supporting the community to accept and include everyone."

Translated survey: What do you and your family or friends need help with during COVID-19?

- › "I do not have any need for help to mention at the moment."
- › "Our electric, gas and water bills are higher because we have been staying at home mostly. It will be great if we don't have to pay for any utility bills."
- › "Hope to have more seminars on how to fight the pandemic."
- › "Help with shopping and other things that require going out."

By businesses:

Top supports needed by businesses:

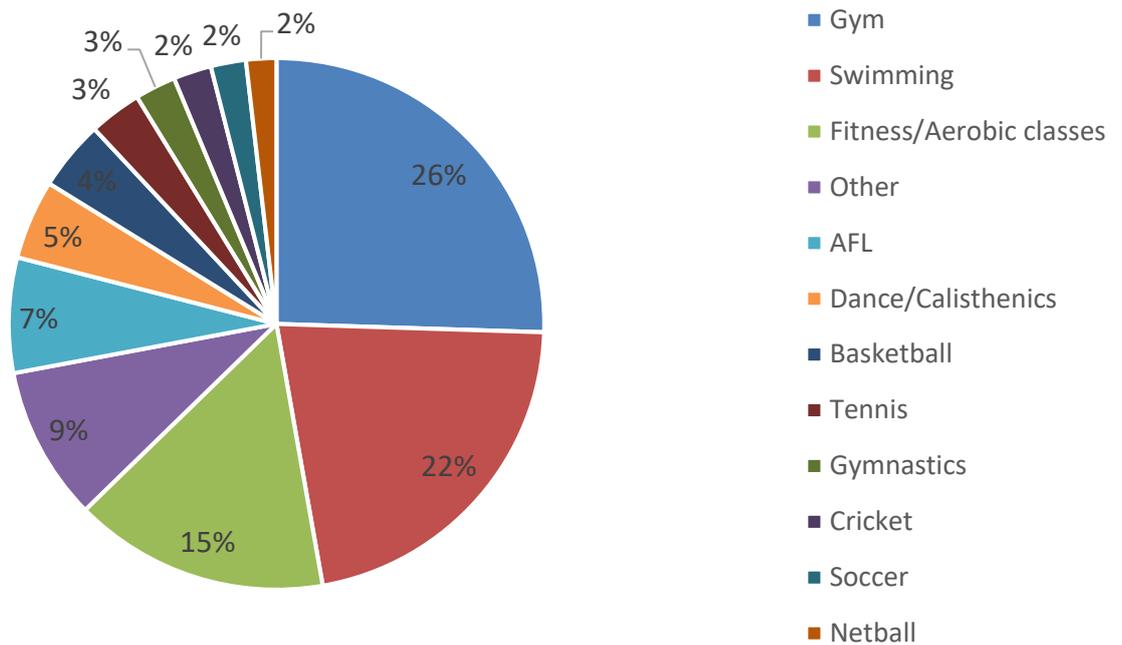
 Financial support	 Financial guidance	 Information
 Assistance with adapting, including going online	 Assistance with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	 Mental health and wellbeing support

4.3 Behaviours and activities

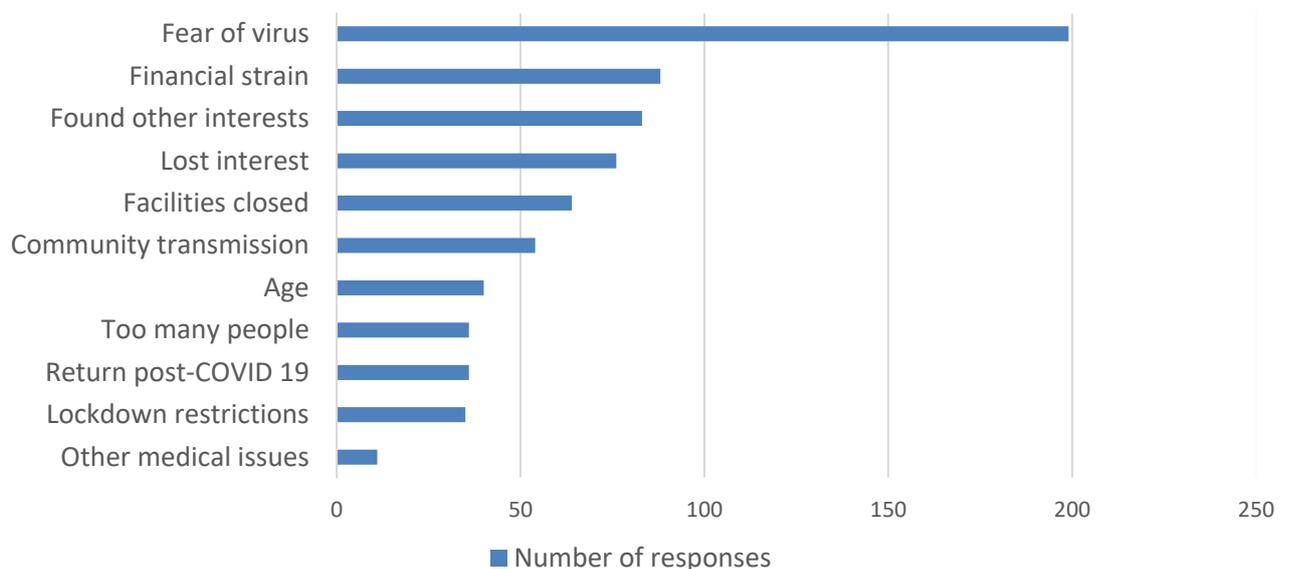
Since COVID-19 started, what have you been doing more or less of?

Doing more:	Doing less:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling anxious, worried or experiencing other mental health concerns• Spending time with family• Helping others• Drinking alcohol• Talking to neighbours• Exercising• Eating healthy food• Spending time looking after myself• Volunteering• Gambling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spending time with friends• Spending time with family• Exercise / sports / games• Spending time looking after myself• Volunteering• Talking to neighbours• Helping others• Eating healthy food• Drinking alcohol• Gambling <p style="text-align: right;">*Bold = over 1000 responses</p>

Are there any sporting activities that you participated in before COVID-19 restrictions, that you may not return to once restrictions are lifted?



Reason/s why you may not return to this activity?



Quotes:

- > *"Fear of contact with virus, unless there's zero case in country"*
- > *"Won't be able to afford it any longer, or the fees would have increased due to the impact it would have on the sporting clubs."*
- > *"Once I have got out of the habit of doing something, I find it hard to get back into it. I have also replaced swimming with walking with my husband, and that is good for us both, mentally, physically and for our relationship."*
- > *"Realised it was not enjoyable for my son and it became exhausting running to games and training every week."*

4.4 Coping strategies

Top 10 coping strategies used during COVID-19:

1. Family and friends
2. Exercise
3. Positive thoughts or activities
4. Plan and be busy
5. Personal projects or hobbies
6. Prayer, meditation or yoga
7. Stay indoors
8. *No strategy*
9. Personal hygiene
10. Follow government advice

Quotes:

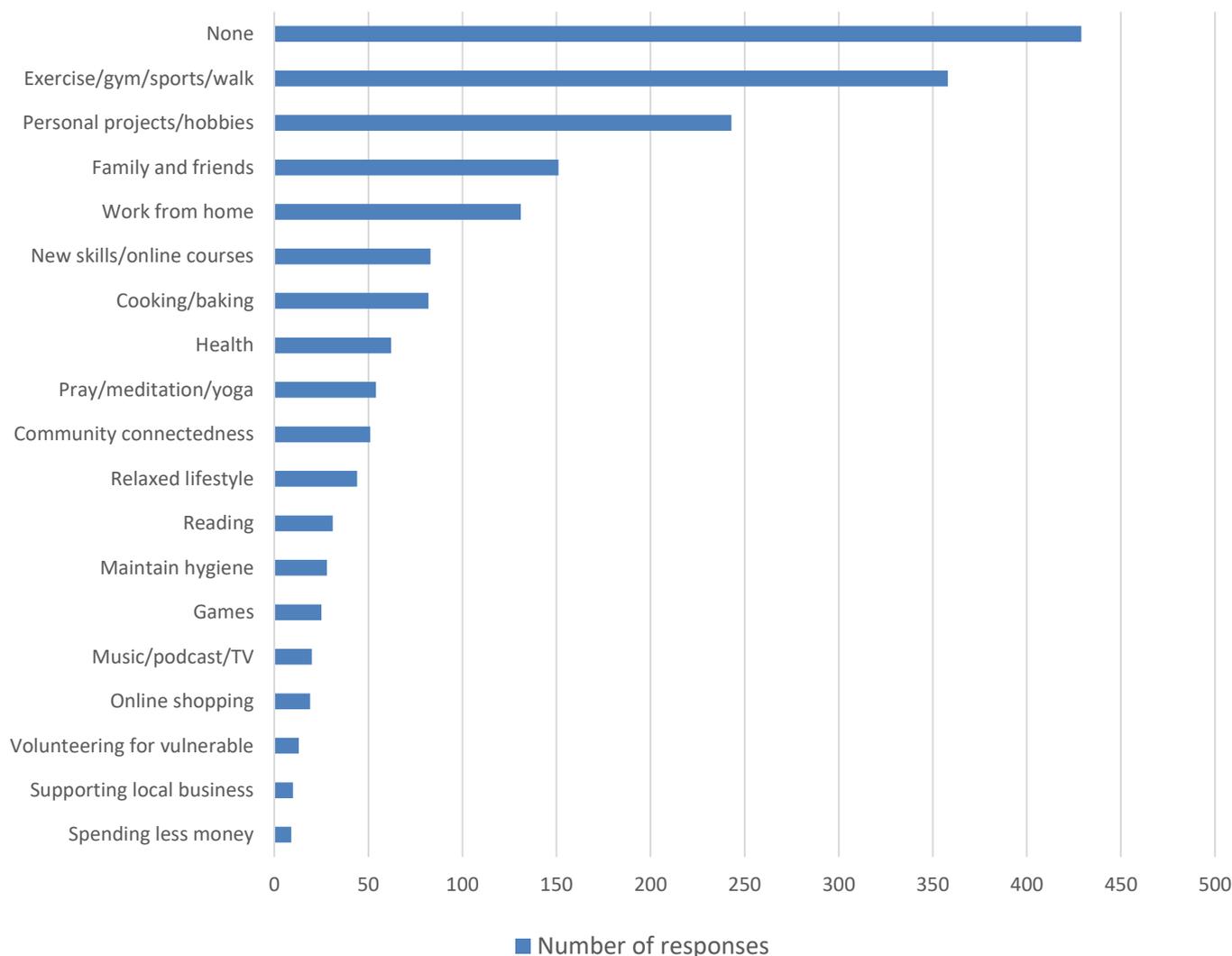
Your Say survey: What strategies do you use to cope with the impacts of COVID-19?

- › *“I love spending lots of time with my family and COVID has really helped that so I just like to talk everything out with them!”*
- › *“Daily hour long exercise programme. Acknowledging that in World War 2 thousands of Australians had to face bigger challenges, e.g. prisoners of war.”*
- › *“Mindfulness, being thankful about small things, being grateful for family and good health, playing lots of games, appreciating nature, sticking to my values, caring for neighbours”*
- › *“List the things I was always going to do around the home and now acting upon them. Ensure I have some lone time to read or garden.”*

Translated survey: What have you been doing to take care of yourself during COVID-19?

- › *“Washing hands thoroughly as soon as I arrived at home from outside and before eating food. Not visiting others. Not going to shop for non-essential things. Praying to God.”*
- › *“Not going out from home, drink plenty of water, practice personal hygiene.”*
- › *“I usually take physical exercise indoors or outside near my house. I drink plenty of hot water and keep my body clean.”*
- › *“I try to follow as best as I can the rules and guidelines by the government and those in authority.”*

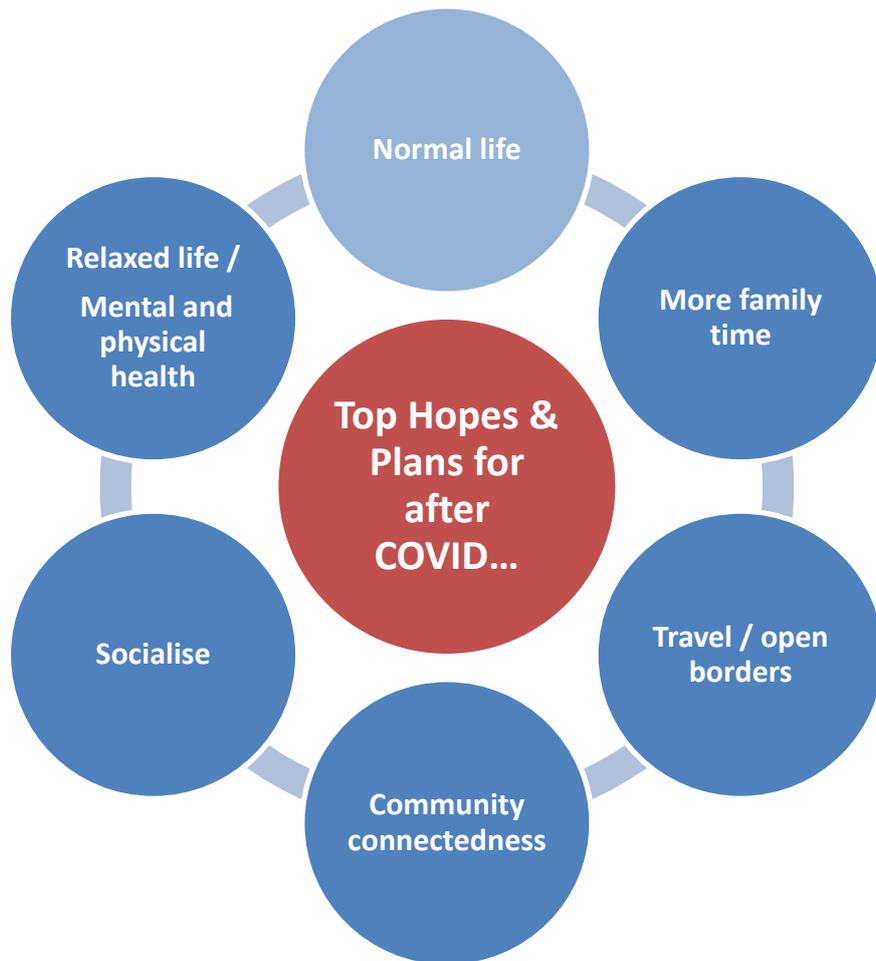
Is there anything you have started to do during this pandemic that you want to continue?



Quotes:

- › *“No, life has become a lot worse for me. The last 6 years I have been in recovery of mental health issues that kept me home for 3 years and I was in recovery for 3 years. Ready to return to work just before the crisis started and now, I’m back staying home again. It will take me a long time to redo my exposure therapy and gain independence again”*
- › *“Long walks on the weekend with my sister; improved diet; not keen to return to the busy life pre-lockdown such as kids basketball and other after school and weekend activities. Slower pace of life is nice.”*
- › *“I want to continue with the gardening while I am able, and streamline my garden so that there will be less work in the future.”*
- › *“Spending lots of quality family time together and not rushing around from activity to activity each day.”*

4.5 Hopes and plans for after COVID-19



Quotes:

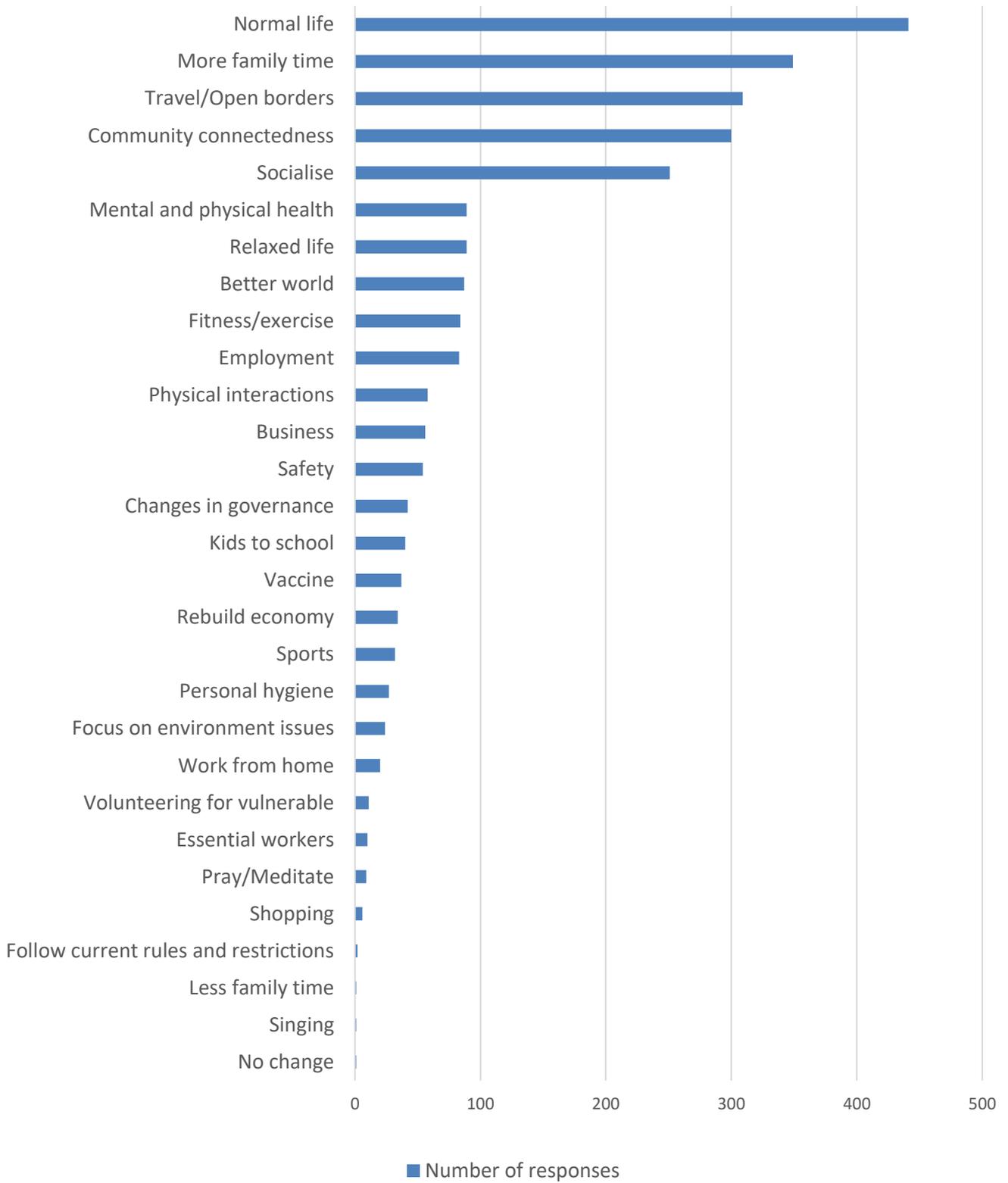
Your Say survey: *In a few words, what do you hope for once the pandemic passes?*

- › "A return to as much of a normal lifestyle as possible. Travel and camping. return to normal Club activities and closer contact with family."
- › "For it to be safe to take my family out and about, to use parks and playgrounds and to eat out and see wider family."
- › "That we may have learned to care for one another more and not live such self centred lives as we have become accustomed to."
- › "Go to Yarra Valley, go to the pool, ride the bicycle, play tennis, go to the local cafe, go to the library. Also work from home 1-2 days a week."

Translated survey: *What do you hope for in the future after the COVID-19 restrictions are over?*

- › "Firstly, to visit nearby shopping centre, secondly, to meet with old friends, thirdly, to travel with my daughter."
- › "Hope to be able to play and swim with my granddaughter again, go to art gallery and chat with friends again."
- › "I hope for children to go back to school, attending Sunday School and Church Services as normal."
- › "I wish pandemic like this will never happen again."

All responses:

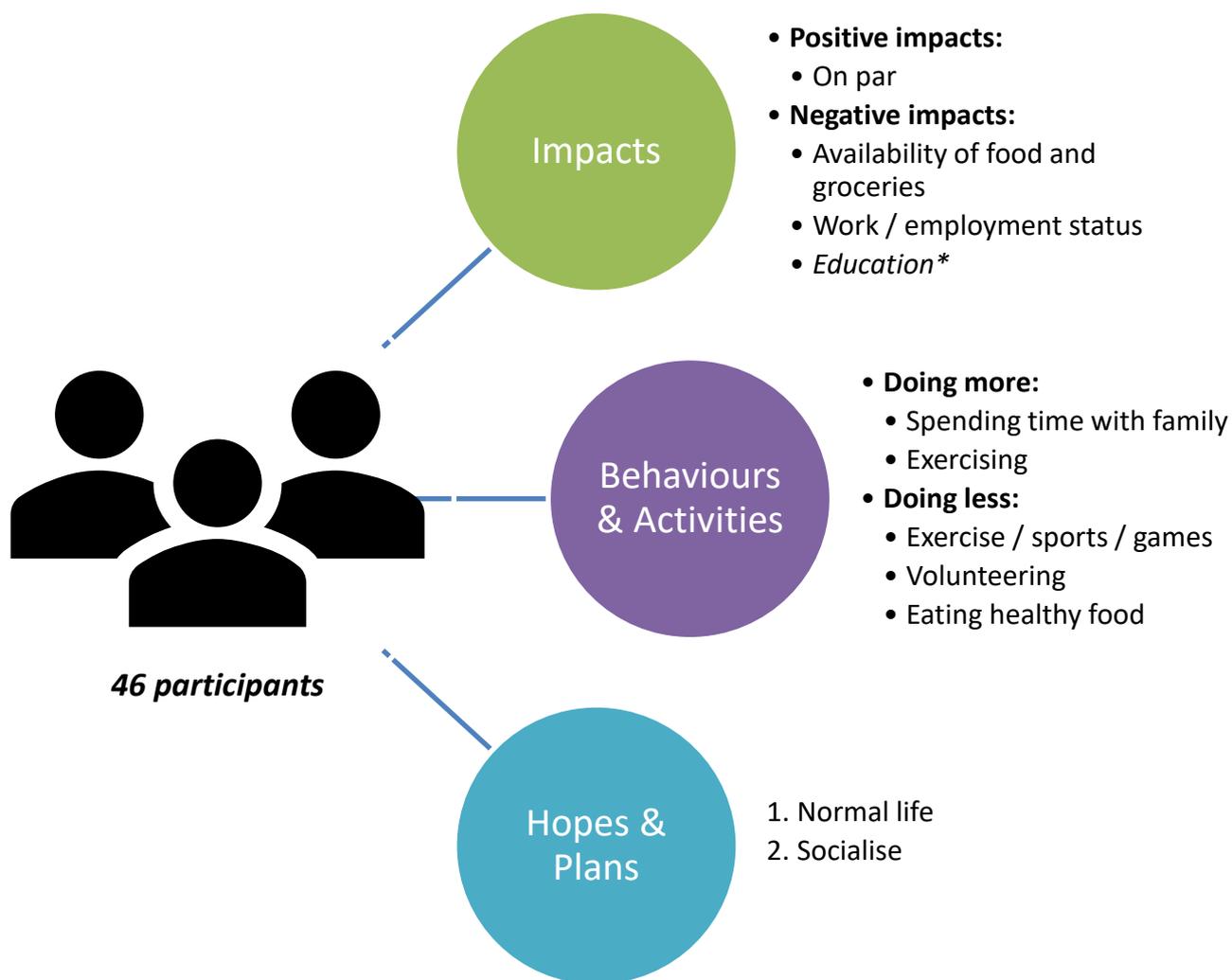


5. Results by Age Group

5.1 Children and young people (0-24 years)

Children and young people (under 18 years)

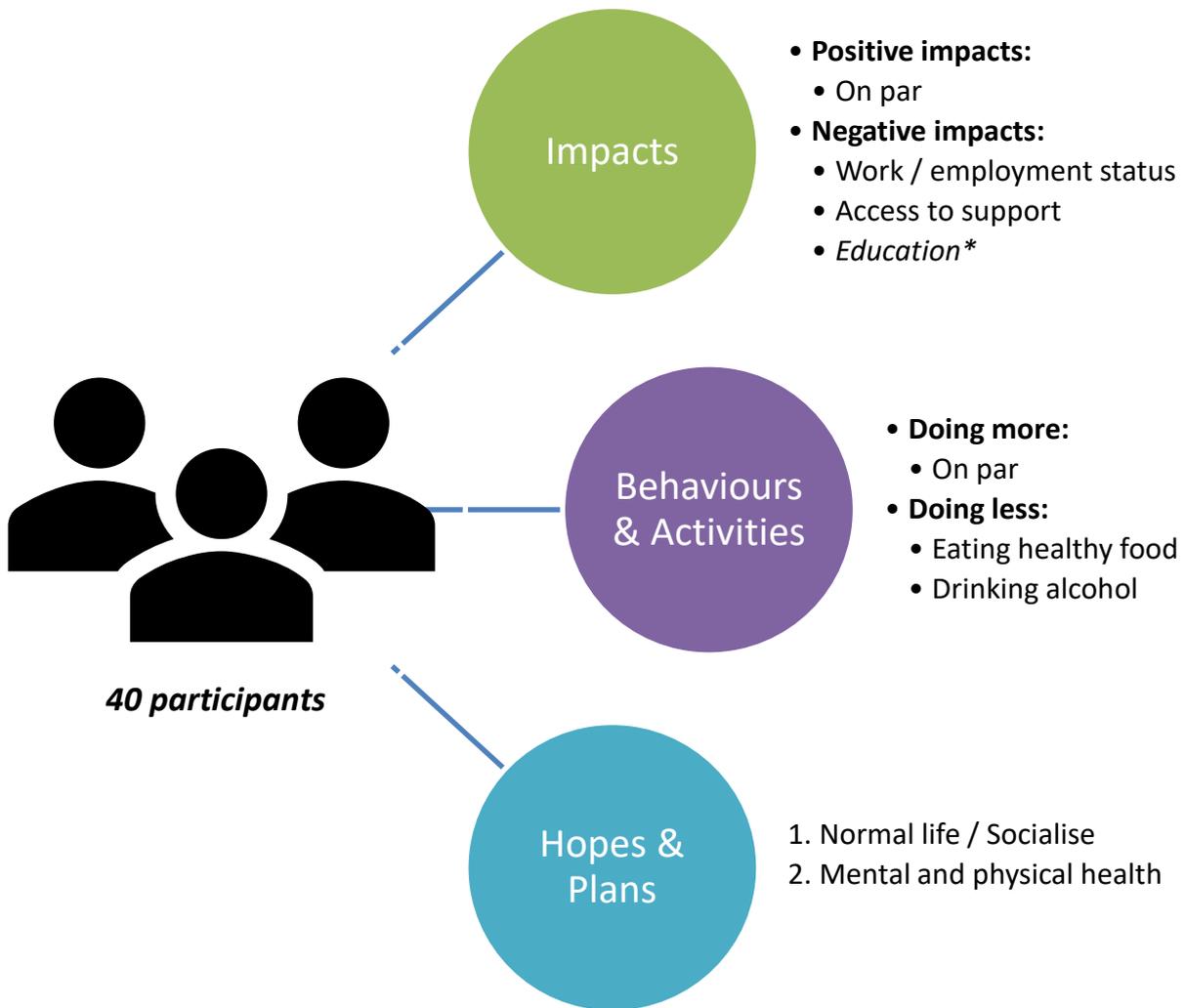
Areas of difference from the overall results:



**Italics = also informed by other data*

Young adults (18-24 years)

Areas of difference from the overall results:



**Italics = also informed by other data*

Results from other youth surveys

To supplement the small sample sizes for participants aged 0-24 years, results from two large-scale youth surveys relating to COVID-19 that were undertaken by other organisations are included below.

Mission Australia Youth Survey (Apr-Aug 2020)

In 2020, the top 3 biggest personal issues experienced by young people aged 15-19 across Australia were:

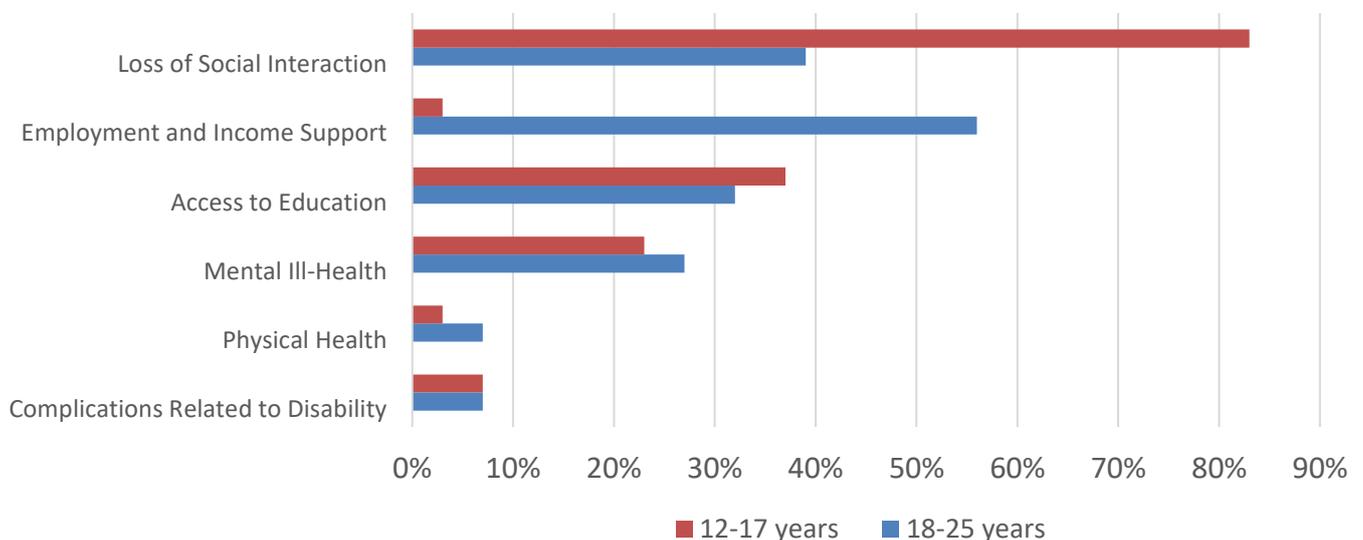
- 1. Education (34%)**
- 2. Mental Health (17%)**
- 3. COVID-19 (9%)**

Of the 9% who felt COVID-19 was their biggest personal issue:



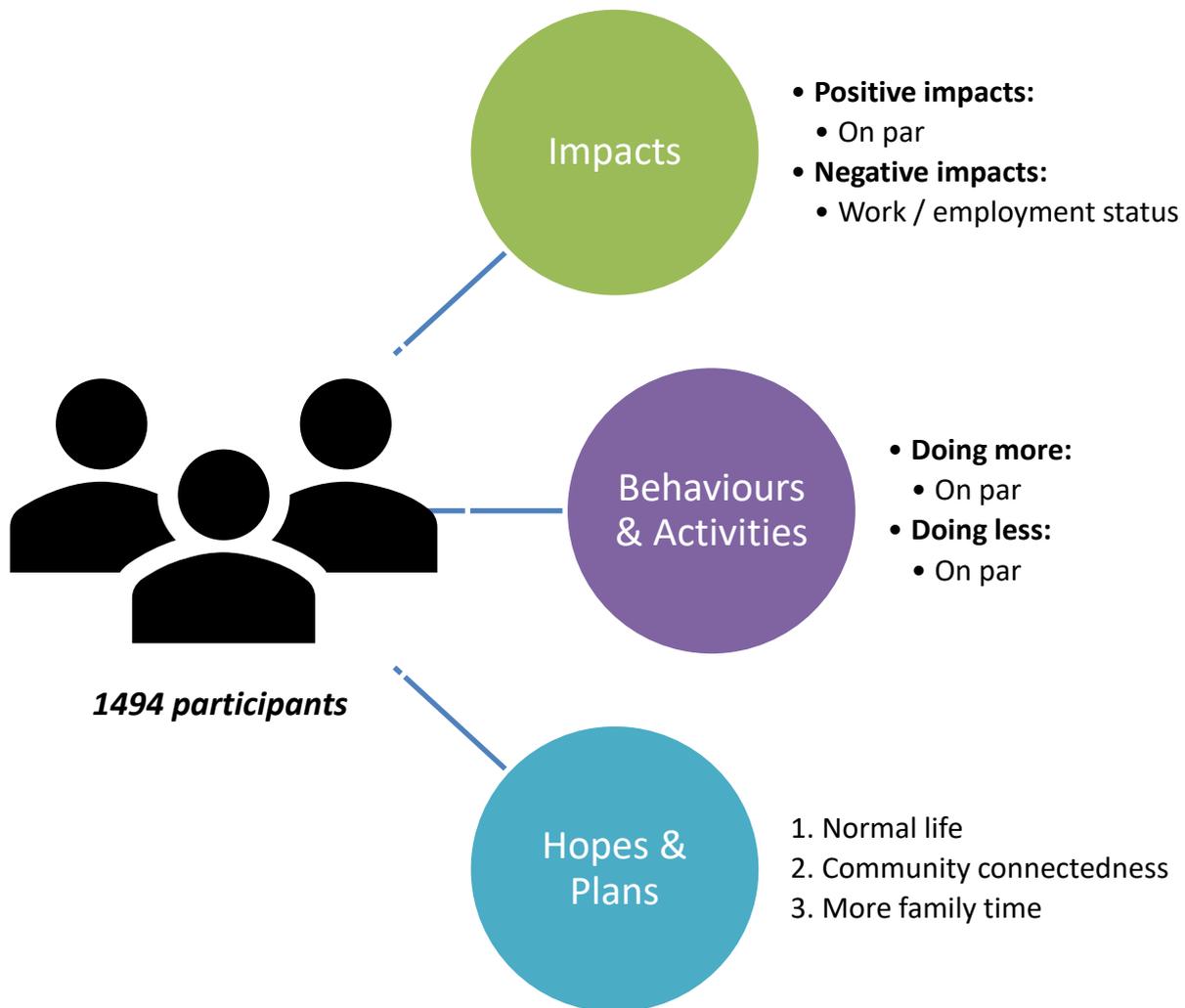
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria COVID-19 Youth Survey (Mar-Apr 2020)

Impact of COVID-19 for Victorian Young People by Age



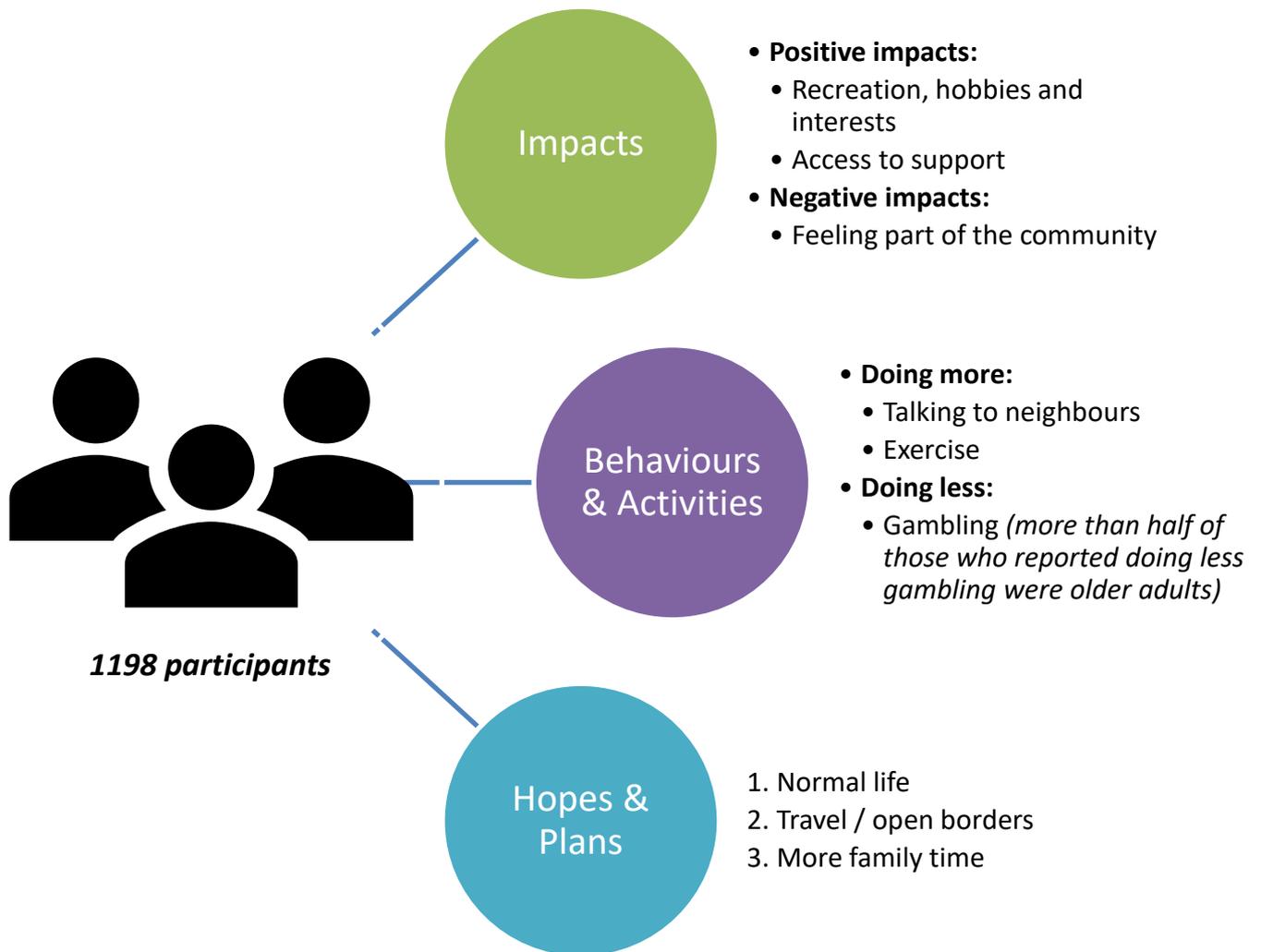
5.2 Adults (25-59 years)

Areas of difference from the overall results:



5.3 Older adults (60+ years)

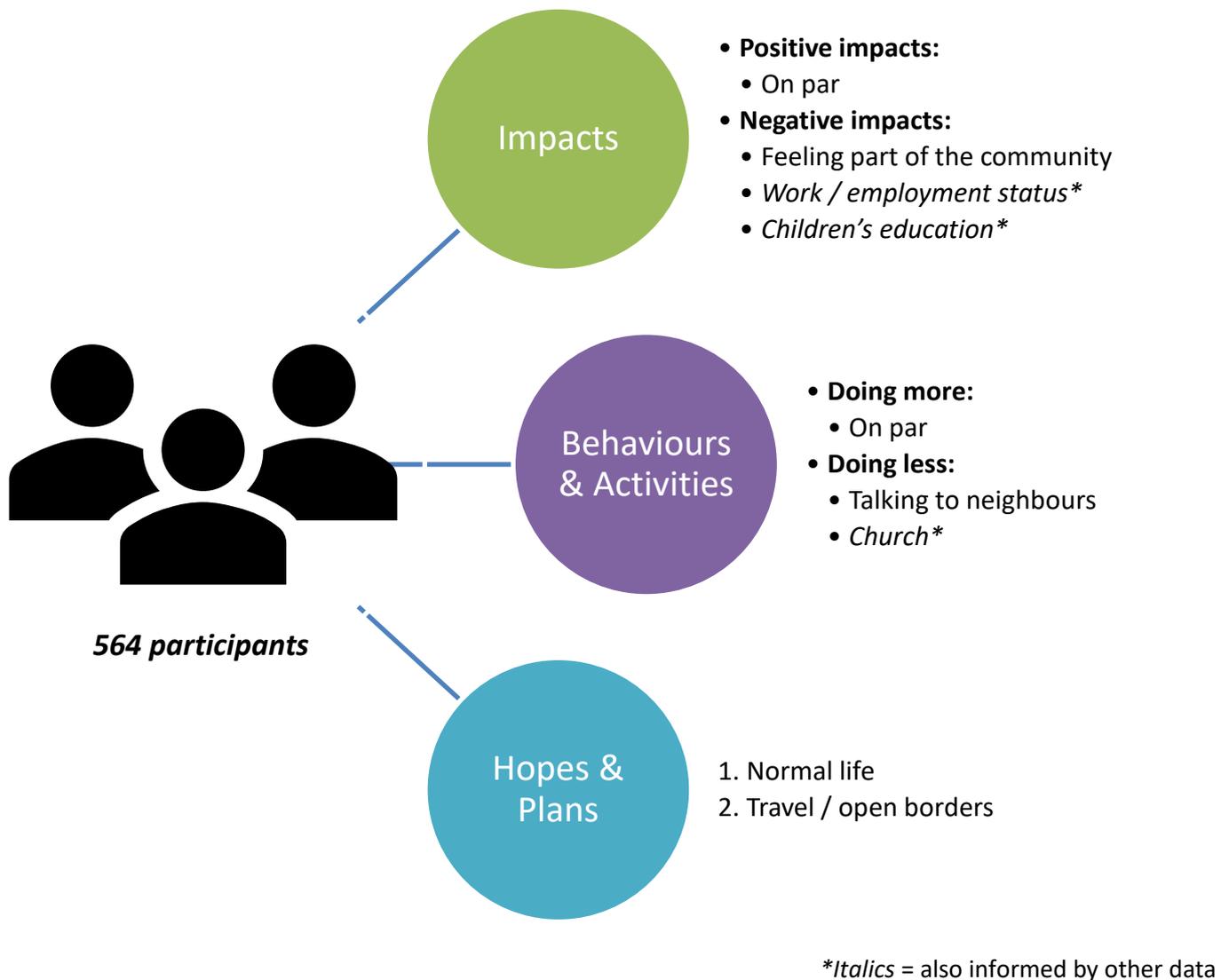
Areas of difference from the overall results:



6. Results by Population Group

6.1 Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

Areas of difference from the overall results:

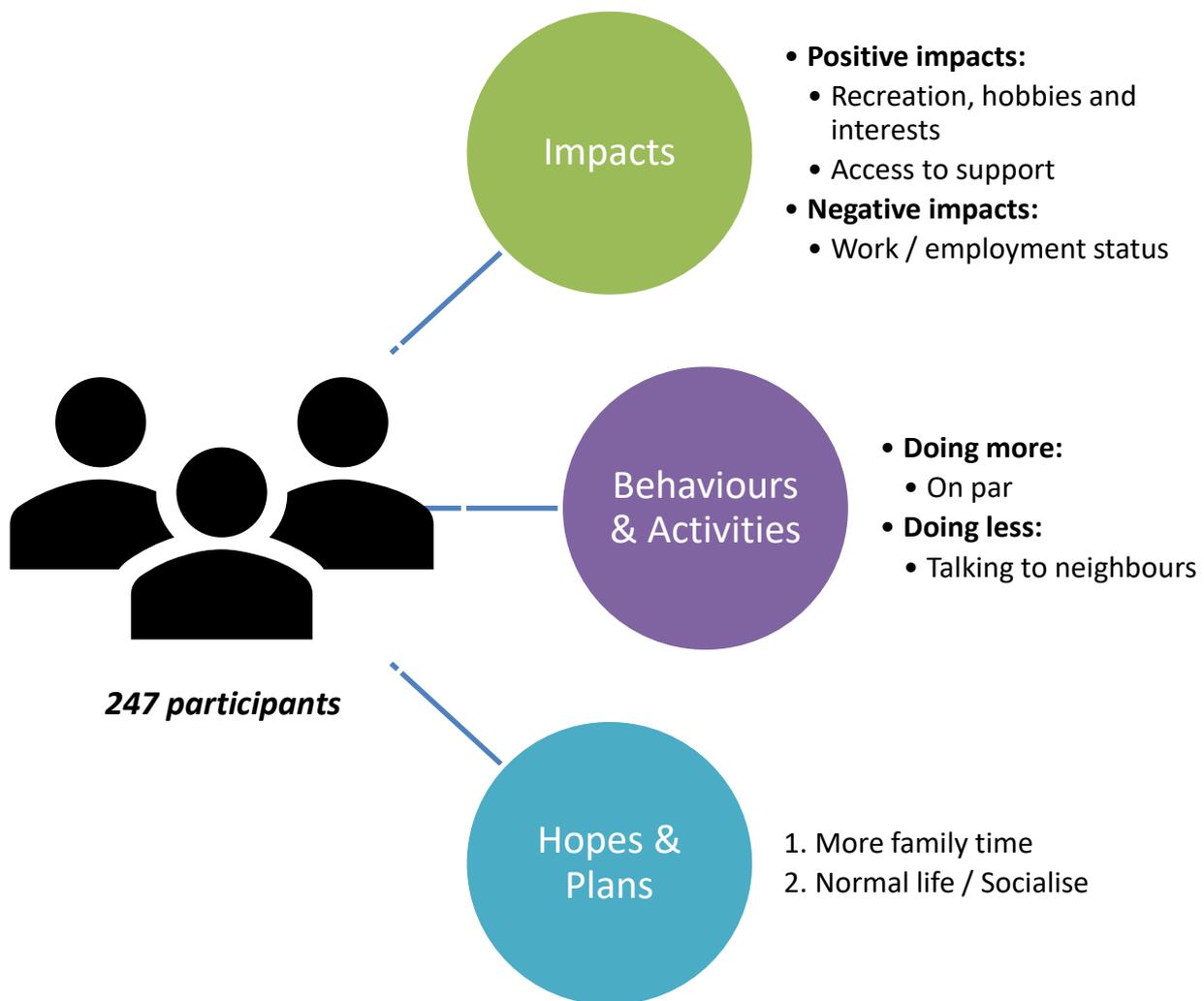


Translated surveys: *What do you and your family or friends need help with during COVID-19?*

1. No support needed
2. Financial support / reduced taxes
3. Regular updates / information
4. Shopping

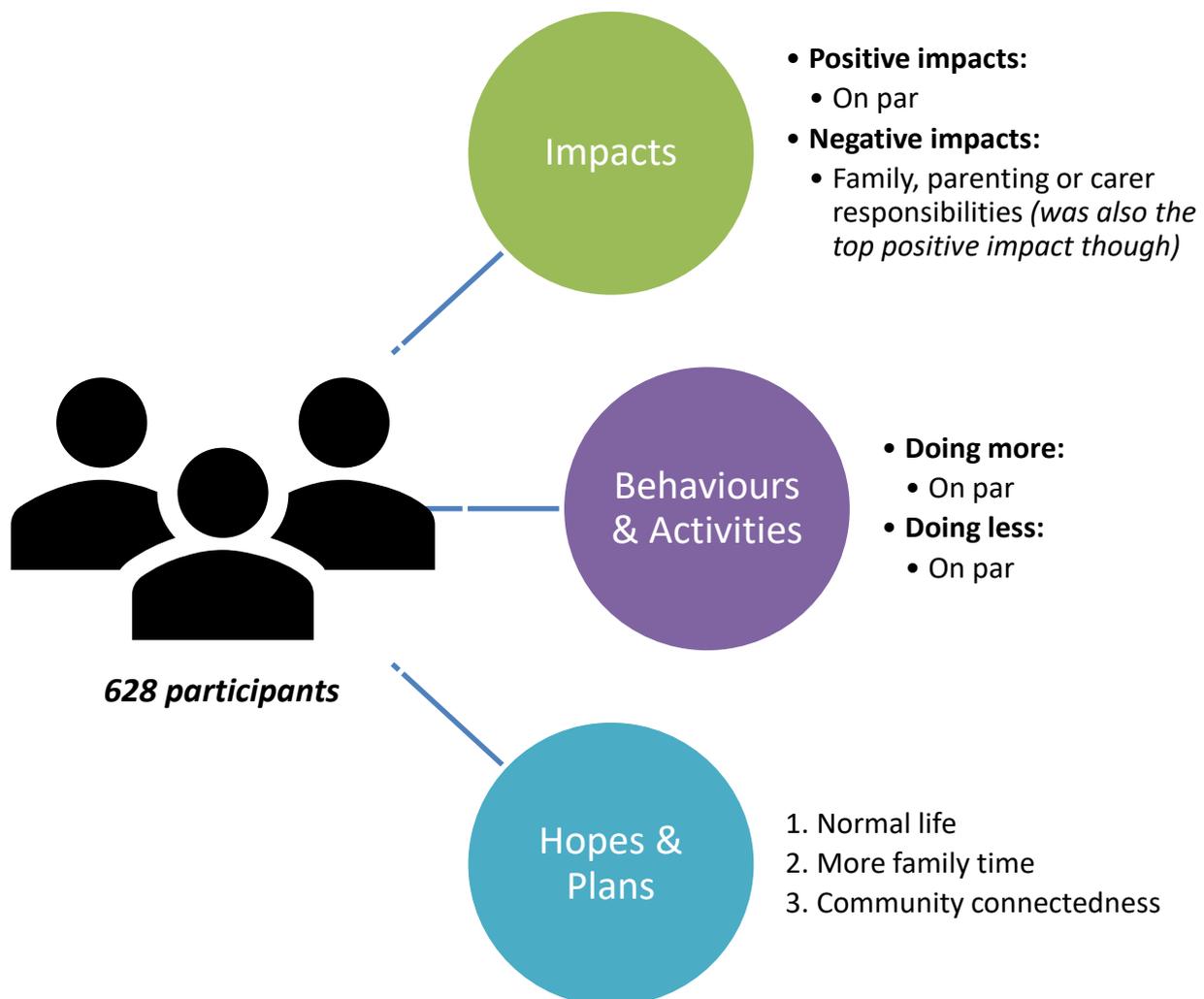
6.2 People with disabilities

Areas of difference from the overall results:



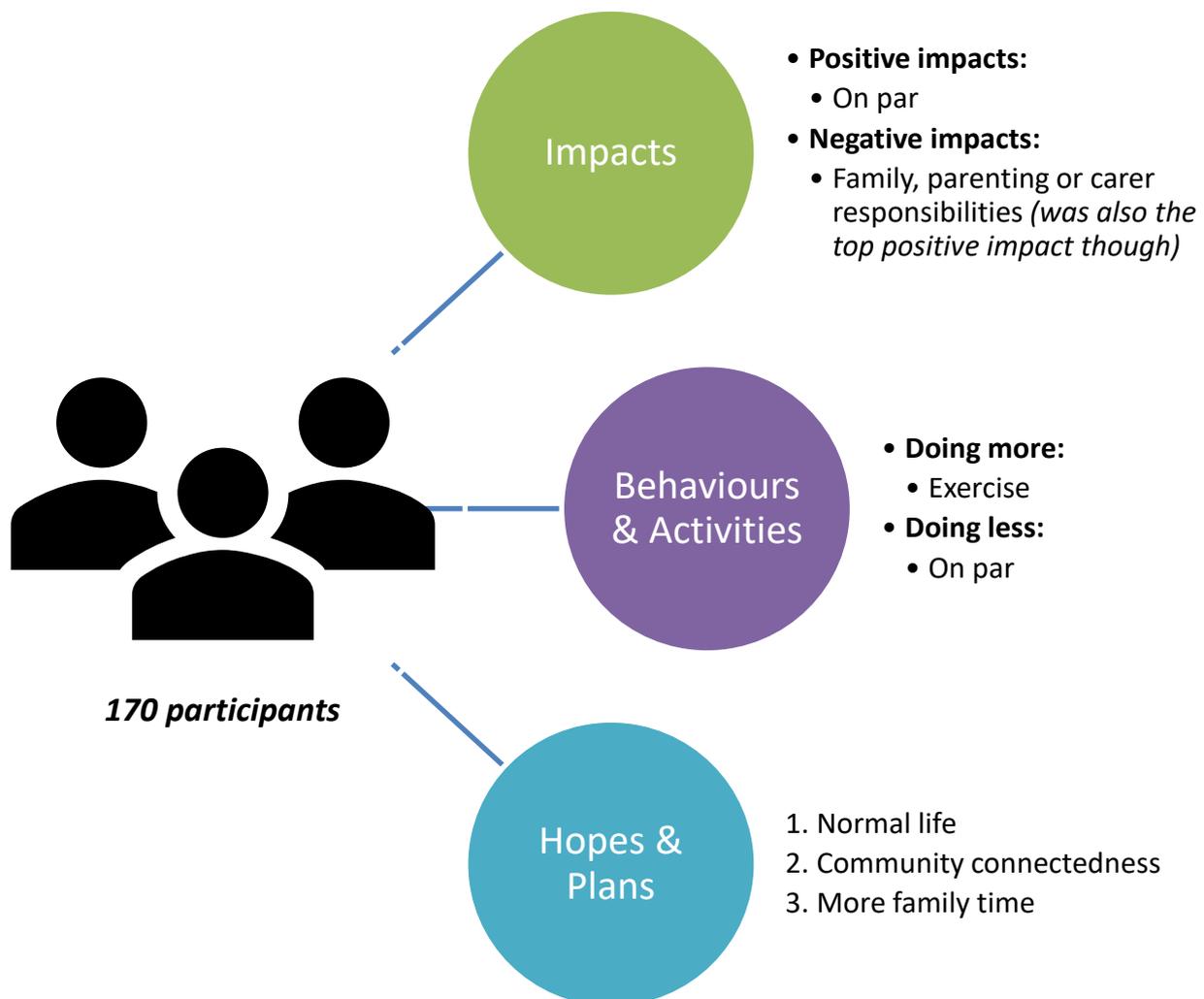
6.3 Carers

Areas of difference from the overall results:



6.4 One parent households

Areas of difference from the overall results:



6.5 Lone person households

Areas of difference from the overall results:

