



Indi Budget Survey Results

November 2020



Helen
Haines **MP**

INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MEMBER FOR INDI

Foreword



On October 6th 2020, the Federal Government handed down the annual Budget for the 2020-21 year.

Given the pandemic and the resulting economic recession, this Budget was the most important in decades.

The policies announced in this Budget will determine what type of recovery our country has – it affects how much tax you pay, the quality of the healthcare and education you and your family can access, and whether our region will be creating jobs into the future.

In order to understand the impact of the Budget on the people of Indi, I ran a survey over two weeks asking for people’s perspectives. 1231 responded to that call.

This report contains the results of that survey.

The results show that overwhelmingly, people in Indi believe the Government should be doing much more to invest in critical services like aged care, mental health and childcare.

While people generally give the Government credit for schemes like JobKeeper, many people feel the Budget does not do enough to support the economic recovery – especially in the regions.

I will be using the results of this survey to inform my work in Parliament over the coming months – how I vote on Bills, the policies I advocate for, the proposals I take to Ministers for funding.

As a community Independent, I am able to directly represent the perspectives of my constituents.

The decisions we make now will affect what type of community we live in for many years to come. And I am determined to ensure that Indi bounces back from the challenges of 2020 stronger than ever.

Helen Haines MP

Independent Federal Member for Indi

Top 10 Issues

What issues are most important to you?



1. Income Tax Cuts

The Government is bringing forward income tax cuts to begin this year. How much you will receive depends on how much you earn:

- If you earn \$35,000 a year, you will receive \$255 this year
- If you earn \$100,000 a year, you will receive \$1530 this year

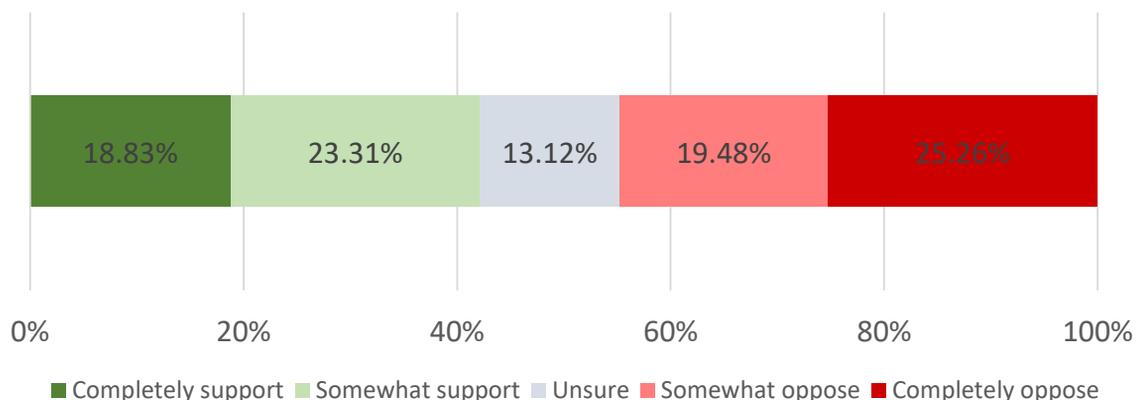
Key Points:

- 42% of people support the Government's income tax cuts
- 45% of people oppose the Government's income tax cuts

What are your views on the Government's tax cuts?

- "The tax free threshold should be raised higher to allow lower income earners to benefit more than the higher income earners" – Respondent 10
- "All through this pandemic, there has been extra support for many, but regular pensioners have been left behind - and yet we've still had to deal with increased costs". – Respondent 56
- "I don't want a tax cut. I want Medicare, affordable universities for all. TAFE. Fire fighting aeroplanes. Registered nurses in aged care". – Respondent 130

Do you support the Government's proposed income tax cuts?



2. Small Business Support

The Government has announced two key measures to support small business:

- Allowing businesses to instantly write-off new investments
- Enabling businesses to write off losses on tax paid in previous years

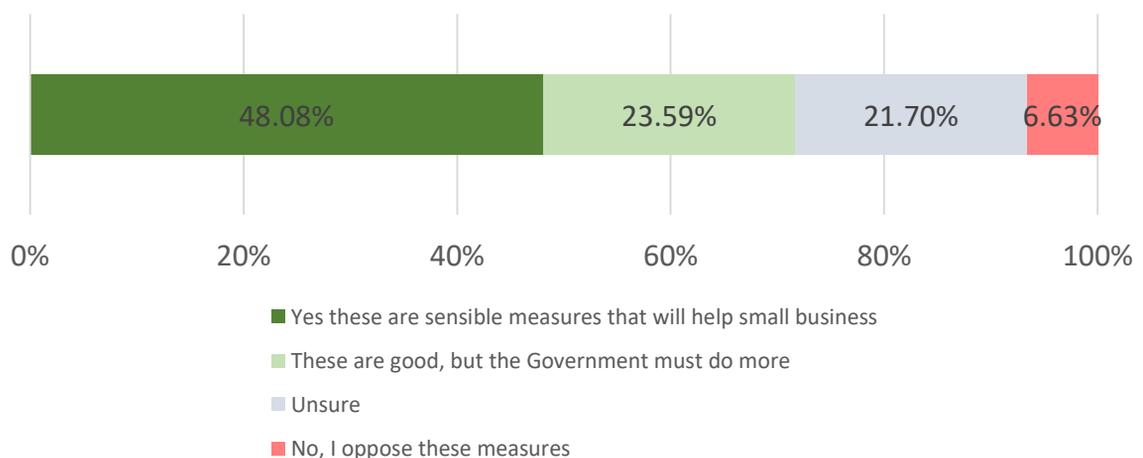
Key Points:

- 72% of people support the Government's measures for small business
- 24% of people believe the Government should do more to support small business

What are your views on the Government's small business supports?

- "I own a restaurant in Bright. Our biggest issue is hiring staff for the summer months. The lack of accommodation in the region makes it almost impossible to get quality employees. Spend more money developing affordable housing". – Respondent 34
- "For fledgling businesses where we don't have profit for several years there is nothing to write off expenses against - so this doesn't actually help us". – Respondent 95
- "I'm a small business owner and this will not benefit me as I can't afford to buy new equipment. It really benefits bigger business as they are more likely in a position to buy big purchases." – Respondent 277

Do you support these measures aimed at small business?



3. JobKeeper

The Government has cut the rate of JobKeeper from \$1500 a fortnight to \$1200 a fortnight for full-time workers and \$750 for part-time workers. JobKeeper is set to end on March 28 of next year.

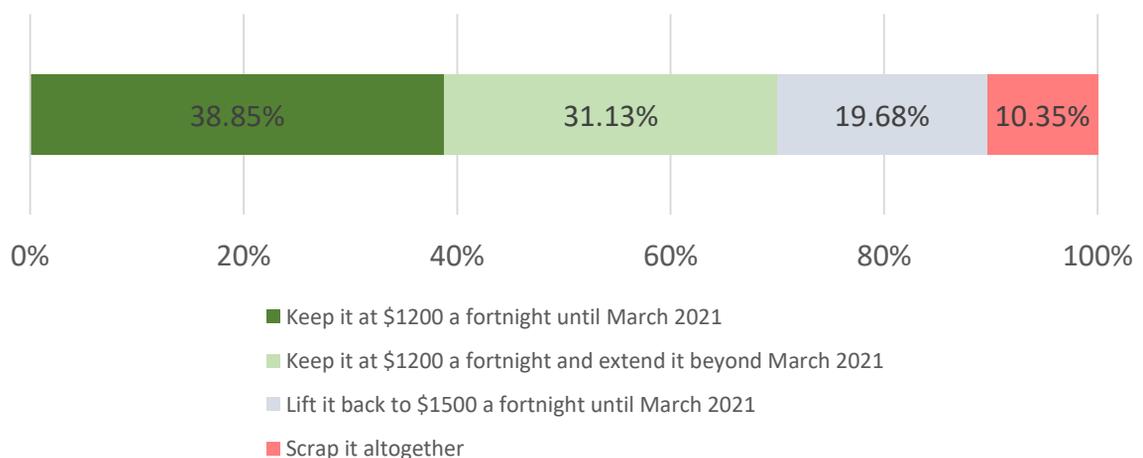
Key Points:

- 70% of people believe that the JobKeeper rate should be kept at the current rate
- 20% of people believe that the JobKeeper rate should return to \$1500 a fortnight

What are your views on the JobKeeper scheme?

- “I am employed in the tertiary sector at La Trobe University and am disappointed to say I have not been able to access the scheme” – Respondent 4
- “I did not receive any JobKeeper payment despite losing my job but as I had only been working at my current job for 11 months I did not qualify. I have been a member of the workforce since I was 16.” – Respondent 341
- “I received JobKeeper, but as a childcare educator, was kicked off in July, despite a huge drop in wages” – Respondent 387

What do you think the Government should do with JobKeeper?



4. JobSeeker

The Government has cut the rate of JobSeeker from \$1115 a fortnight down to \$815 fortnight. On 31 December, the rate is scheduled to be cut again by \$250, down to the old rate of \$565 a fortnight. As a result of the pandemic, the number of people on JobSeeker in Indi has jumped 67%.

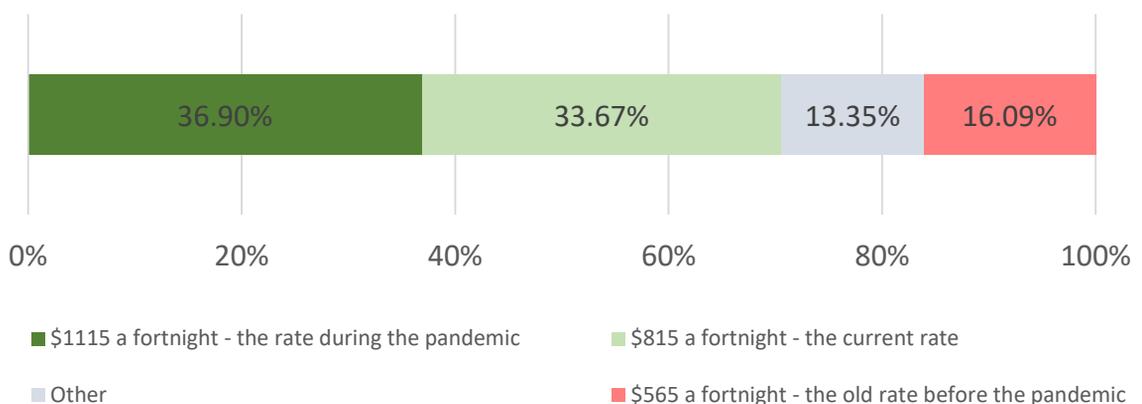
Key Points:

- 71% of people think that the JobSeeker rate should either stay the same or increase
- 16% of people think that the JobSeeker rate should return to the old Newstart rate

What are your views on the JobSeeker payment?

- “I lost two jobs during COVID, and my husband has not been able to find work either - without this support we would not have been able to pay our bills, pay our mortgage or afford the allied health that our child needs.” – Respondent 17
- “I've been on jobseeker for 7 years and can't get an interview let alone a job! I'm a highly skilled Community Health Nurse of over 40 years”. – Respondent 192
- “This is a tricky subject - I get asked to do jobs all the time from businesses that say they just cant find reliable staff that WANT to work. I have never been on any welfare”. – Respondent 299

What rate do you think JobSeeker should be?



5. JobMaker Credit

The Government has announced a new wage subsidy to encourage businesses to hire eligible young people coming off welfare payments:

- \$200 a week for each new employee aged 16-29
- \$100 a week for each new employee aged 30-35

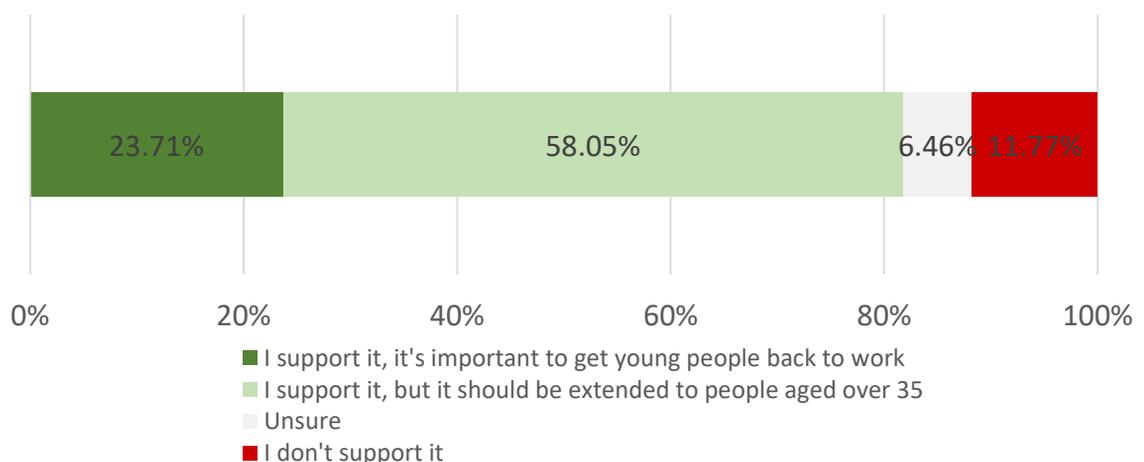
Key Points:

- 58% of people believe that the JobMaker Credit should extend to people above 35
- 24% of people support the JobMaker Credit in its current form only for under 35s

What are your views on the JobMaker credit scheme?

- “The fact that over 35-year olds appear forgotten is worrying. Retirement is a long way off for 35 year olds that have no job and no superannuation”. – Respondent 161
- “Young people who are not eligible for Youth Allowance will be further disadvantaged under the JobMaker Credit scheme as businesses are incentivised to employ people who are on benefits” – Respondent 302
- “Two of our children were once employed by similar trainee schemes, and then dismissed as soon as the subsidy expired. The money would be far better spent in lasting infrastructure such as renewable energy” – Respondent 324

Do you support the JobMaker Credit Scheme?



6. Gas-Led Recovery

The Government has announced a gas-led recovery. This means they are using public money to increase gas extraction, subsidising a new gas-fired power station, and building new gas pipelines.

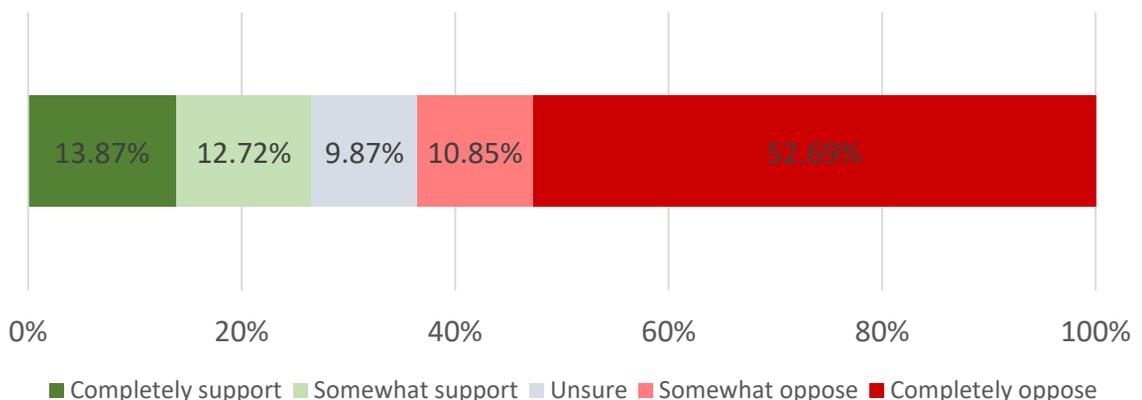
Key Points:

- 64% of people oppose the Government’s plans for a gas-led recovery
- 27% of people support the Government’s plans for a gas-led recovery

What should the Government be doing to make electricity cheaper and cleaner?

- “Invest heavily into non-carbon emitting options. Proactively support workers in coal and other carbon-heavy sectors to transit into other work options” – Respondent 57
- “There needs to be much greater use of renewable energy sources but equally needs to be balanced with traditional gas methods” – Respondent 495
- “This budget has intentionally ignored the deployment of cheapest forms of generation by renewable energy to subsidise an expensive and backward looking technology in gas”. – Respondent 763

Do you support the Government’s plans for a gas-led recovery?



7. Local Power Plan

In September, I released my Local Power Plan which would invest \$483 million over 10 years to support the development of locally-owned renewable energy.

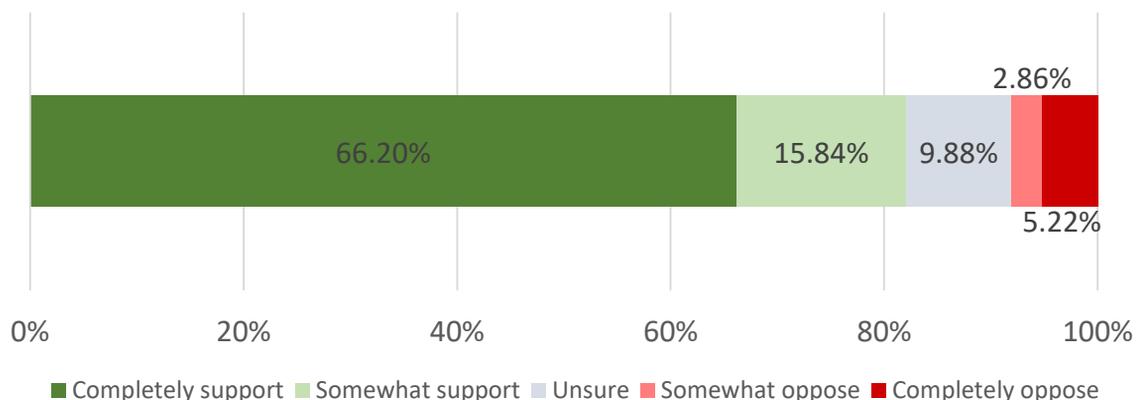
Key Points:

- 82% of people support my Local Power Plan
- 8% of people oppose my Local Power Plan

What should the Government be doing to make electricity cheaper and cleaner?

- “Set out a vision for transition to renewables and investing to enable it through investing in transmission infrastructure and great initiatives like your Local Power Plan” – Respondent 191
- “Produce policy and the budget to move from fossil fuels to renewable energy while setting up community-owned local power plants” – Respondent 290
- “Support small-scale initiatives like the Indi Local Power plan, as well as the renewable energy sector which common sense says is the way of the future” – Respondent 715

Do you support my Local Power Plan?



8. Childcare

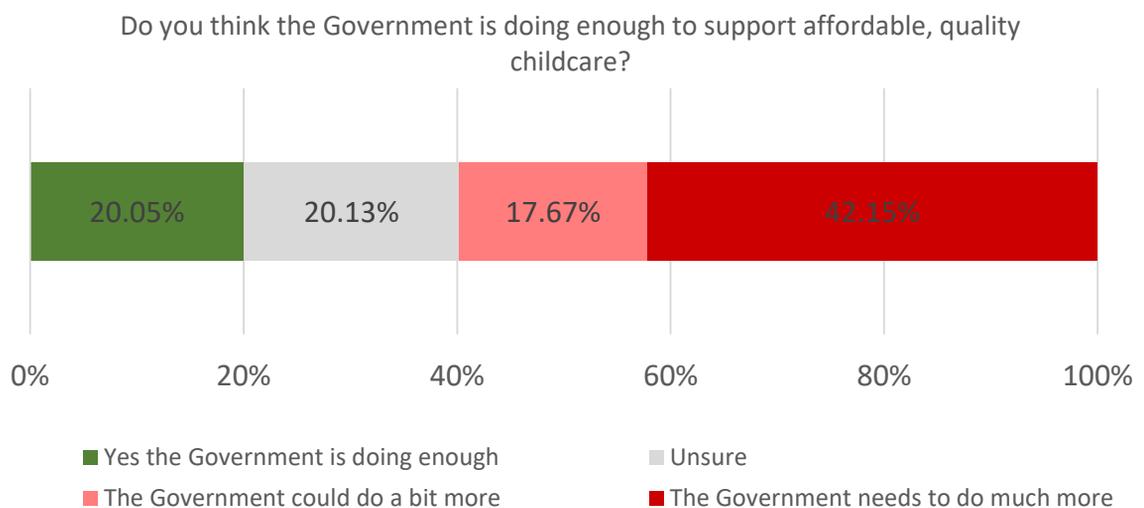
In regional areas, access to affordable, quality childcare is often difficult. However this Budget provided no new funding for childcare, and no substantial reforms to simplify the system for parents and childcare providers.

Key Points:

- 60% of people believe the Government should do more on childcare
- 20% of people believe the Government is doing enough on childcare

What should the Government be doing on childcare?

- “Getting places is hard. The different tiers and hard cut offs definitely impacts upon how much additional work mothers take on.” – *Respondent 163*
- “I believe child care has become too expensive making young parents consider whether it is worth going back to work”. – *Respondent 216*
- “I’ve been lucky to not need to use childcare for my 3 kids, but others struggle. Childcare should be paid for by government to allow parents back into the workforce. The benefit to the economy of returning those parents to work would far outweigh the cost of subsidised or free childcare”. – *Respondent 286*



9. Mental Health

Access to mental healthcare is hard in the regions. The Budget announced:

- An increase in the number of Medicare-funded visits from 10 to 20
- \$102 million to support the mental health of veterans
- Investment in suicide prevention through Beyond Blue and headspace

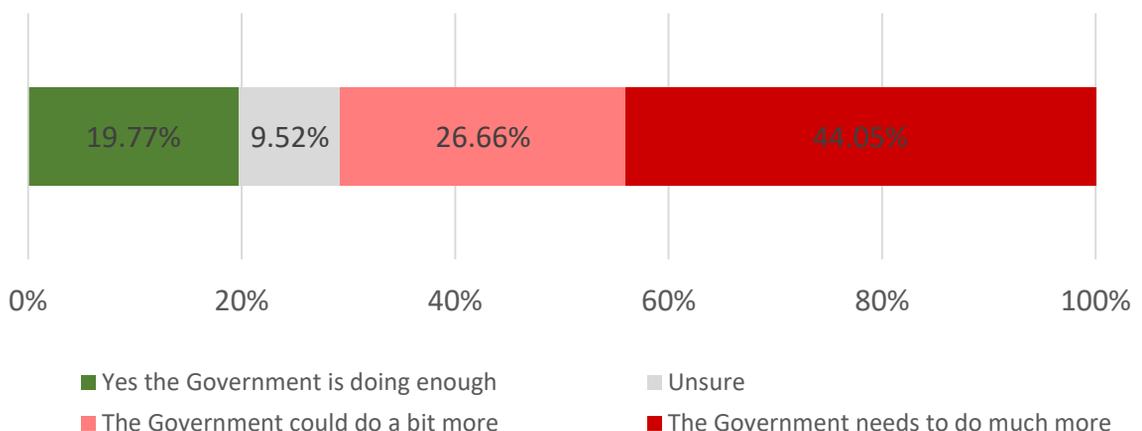
Key Points:

- 71% of people believe the Government should do more on mental health
- 20% of people believe the Government is doing enough on mental health

What should the Government be doing on mental health?

- “We desperately need additional mental health nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists in Albury-Wodonga. As a psychologist, I am sending suicidal clients home rather than have them experience being triaged at ED”. – *Respondent 12*
- “The issue is the gap fee, better off having 10 visits and no cost than not being able to do 20 visits due to the gap cost” – *Respondent 27*
- “DV, drug use, PTSD, depression and anxiety are huge problems in Benalla. The proper support and care is not there at all. People do need urgent care here and it does not exist. It's heartbreaking and no one is really listening”. – *Respondent 42*

Do you think the Government is doing enough on mental health?



10. Aged Care

In the Budget, the Government announced 23,000 more Home Care Packages, and a range of smaller measures on residential aged care. The Government has indicated it is waiting until the final report of the Aged Care Royal Commission before making more substantial reform.

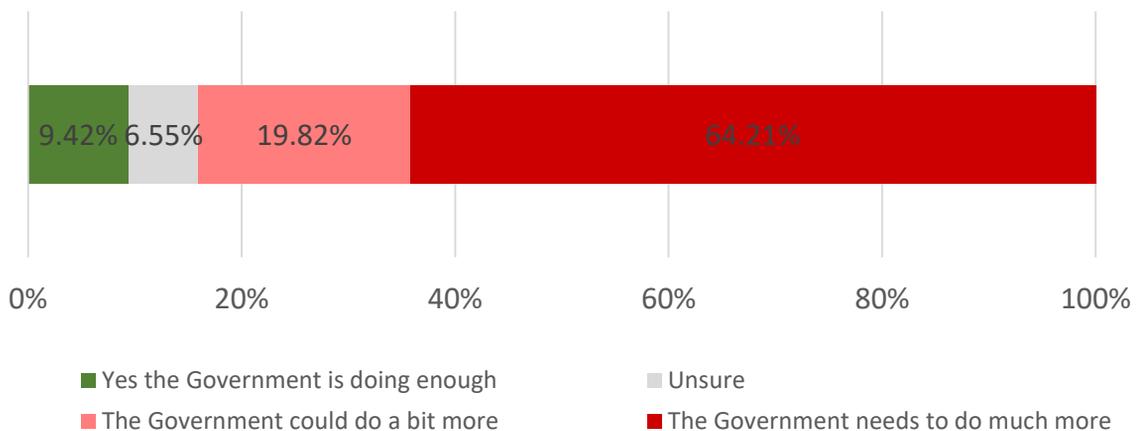
Key Points:

- 84% of people believe the Government should do more on aged care
- 9% of people believe the Government is doing enough on aged care

What should the Government be doing on mental health?

- “My mother died waiting for a level 4 package (she was on level 1). My cousin and I had to put her into a nursing home for the last week of her life”. – Respondent 14
- “My mother waited almost 2 years to receive her package. The money came through when she was 91.” – Respondent 112
- “My mother was an RN in aged care facilities. I see incredibly dedicated people doing a very difficult job. They are underpaid and under appreciated”. – Respondent 164

Do you think the Government is doing enough on aged care?





Indi's Response to Federal Budget 2020-21

Survey Results
October 2020



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