

Australian Normality Index Week 4

Forethought: A Pulse on Australian Consumer Normality

Fielded 16 – 20th April

Forethought thanks our partner, PureProfile for their support in conducting this weekly research.

Key takeouts

Australians are shaken

Our base levels of emotion have been consistently positive YOY for the last 5 years. The rise and fall of Malcolm Turnbull, significant political instability, the mixed community response to legalisation of same sex marriage, historic levels of mistrust in our highest institutions and crippling bushfires have barely shifted our positivity.

It took a pandemic to significantly dislodge our emotional status quo, with significant reductions in all positive emotions and significant lifts in all negative emotions, particularly Anxiety.

Brands have gone quiet

Against the backdrop of emotional distress and significant abnormality, many brands and marketers have pulled their activity. Previously laid plans have been rendered tone deaf or inappropriate given the current environment.

And the million dollar question that keeps getting asked is – when will it be right to start talking to the market again?

The answer is now

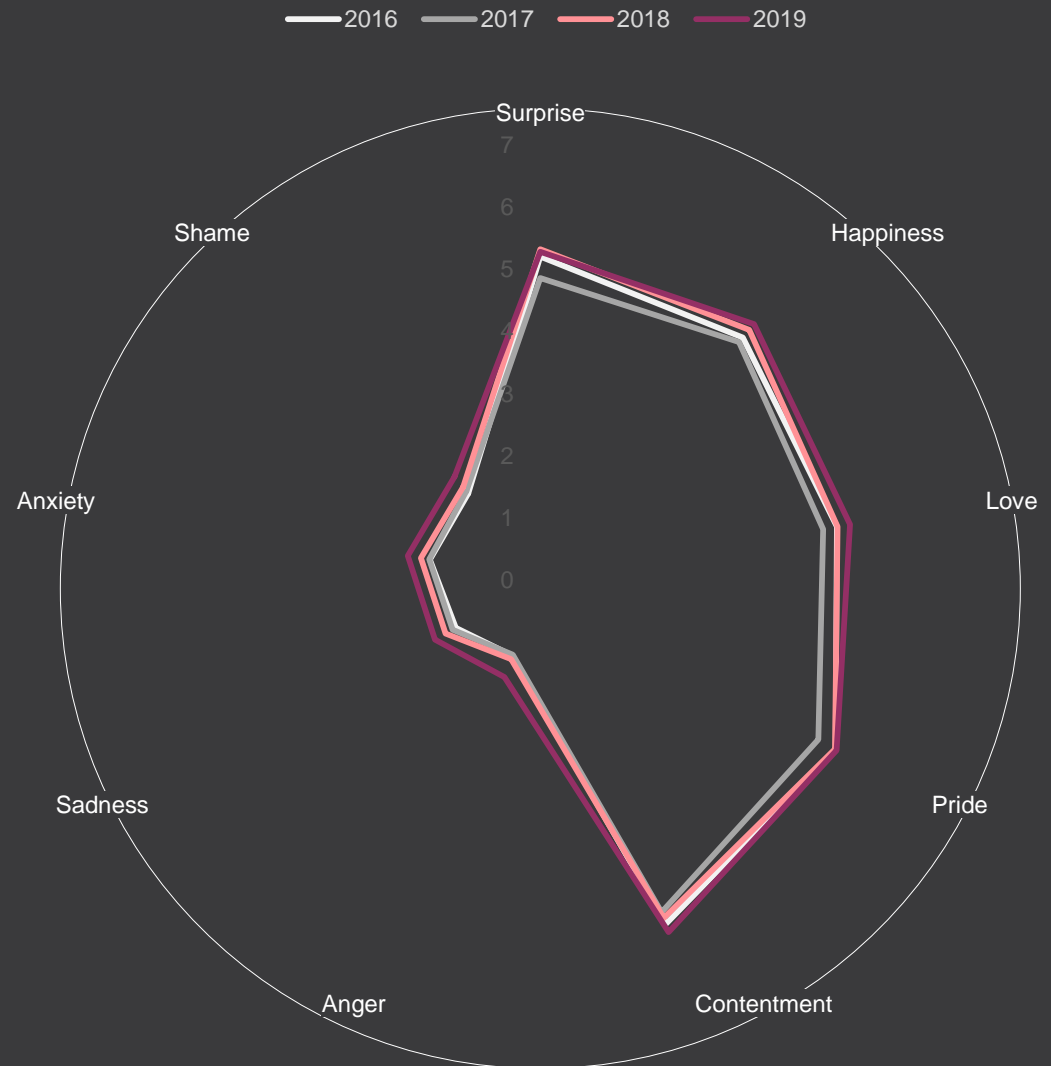
Certain brands have managed to not just salvage but strengthen loyalty and advocacy to their brands. Consumer sentiment is currently stronger in these categories than they were pre-pandemic, and arguably, these results have been achieved in a shorter timeframe and with less resources than in pre-pandemic times.

It appears that brands that are waiting for life to return to normal are going to be waiting at least a further 6 months; in the meantime, our emotional baseline is resetting and consumers are reassessing their relationships with brands who are acting now.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Aussies are proven to be a positive bunch

Looking at the past five years of data, our base emotional state skewed largely towards the positive and remained extremely consistent year on year – through a period of significant political instability, the legalisation of same sex marriage, historic levels of mistrust in our highest institutions and crippling bushfires to name a few.

Resting emotional state by year

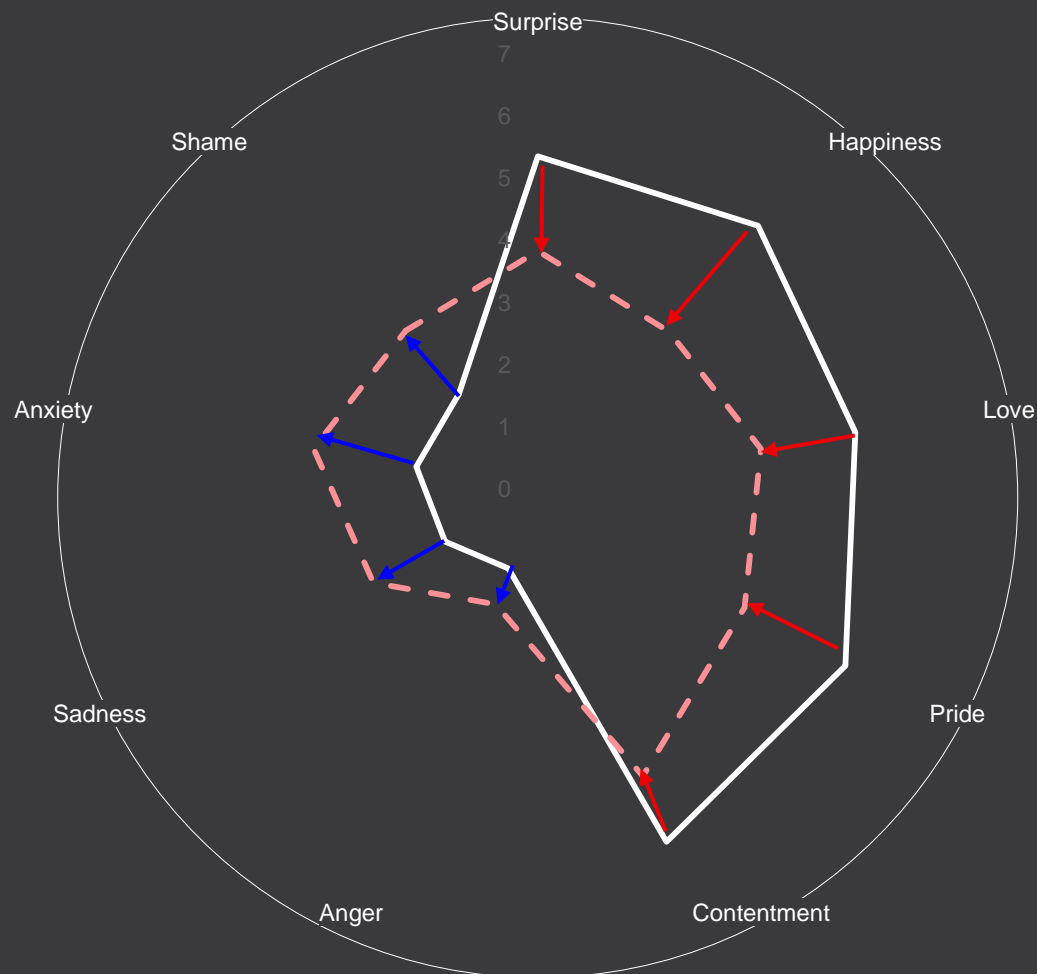


The COVID 19 pandemic – and its corrective measures – have significantly shaken the persistently positive Aussie spirit

The largest shifts have been on decreasing Happiness, and increasing Anxiety and Shame

Resting emotional state
Pre vs. during Covid-19

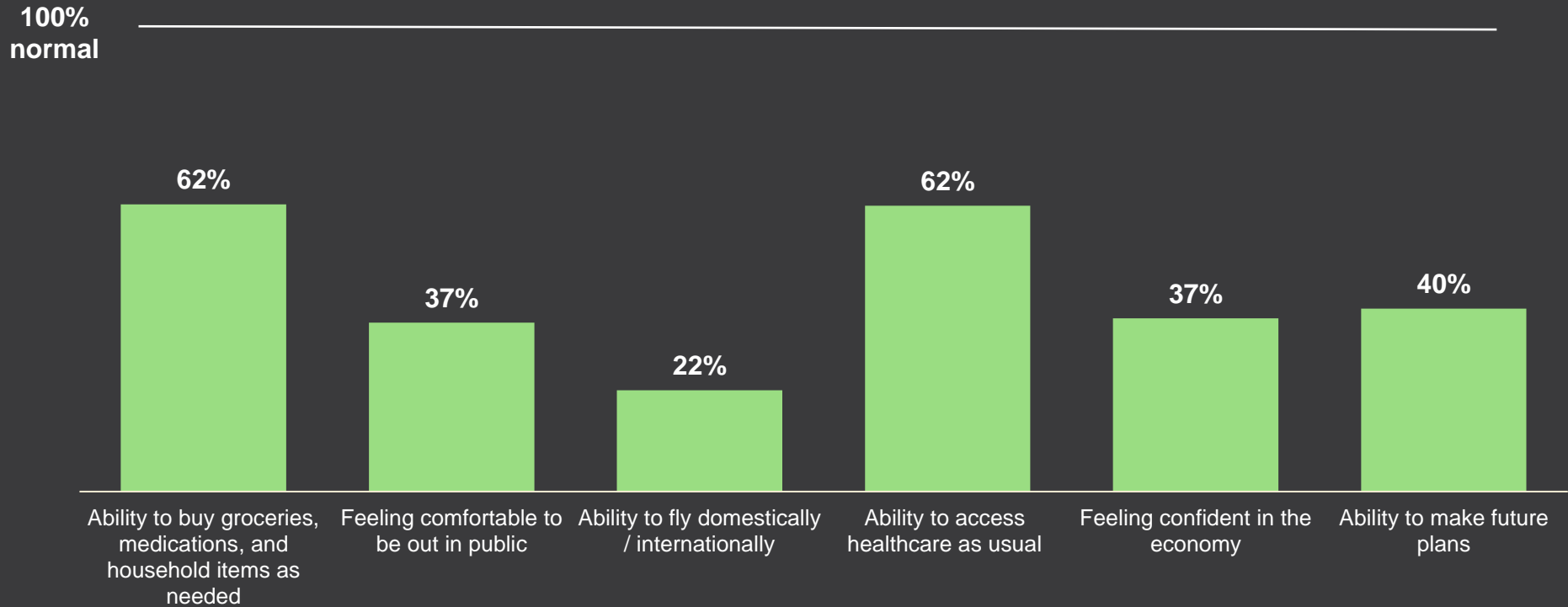
— 2020 (Pre-Covid) - - Resting emotional state - Week 1 (March 29)



Note: Significance testing was conducted between 2020 (Pre-Covid) and Resting emotional state – Week 1 at the 5% level of significance. **Blue** indicates the Resting emotional state – Week 1 result was significantly higher than the 2020 (Pre-Covid) result. **Red** indicates the Resting emotional state – Week 1 result was significantly lower.

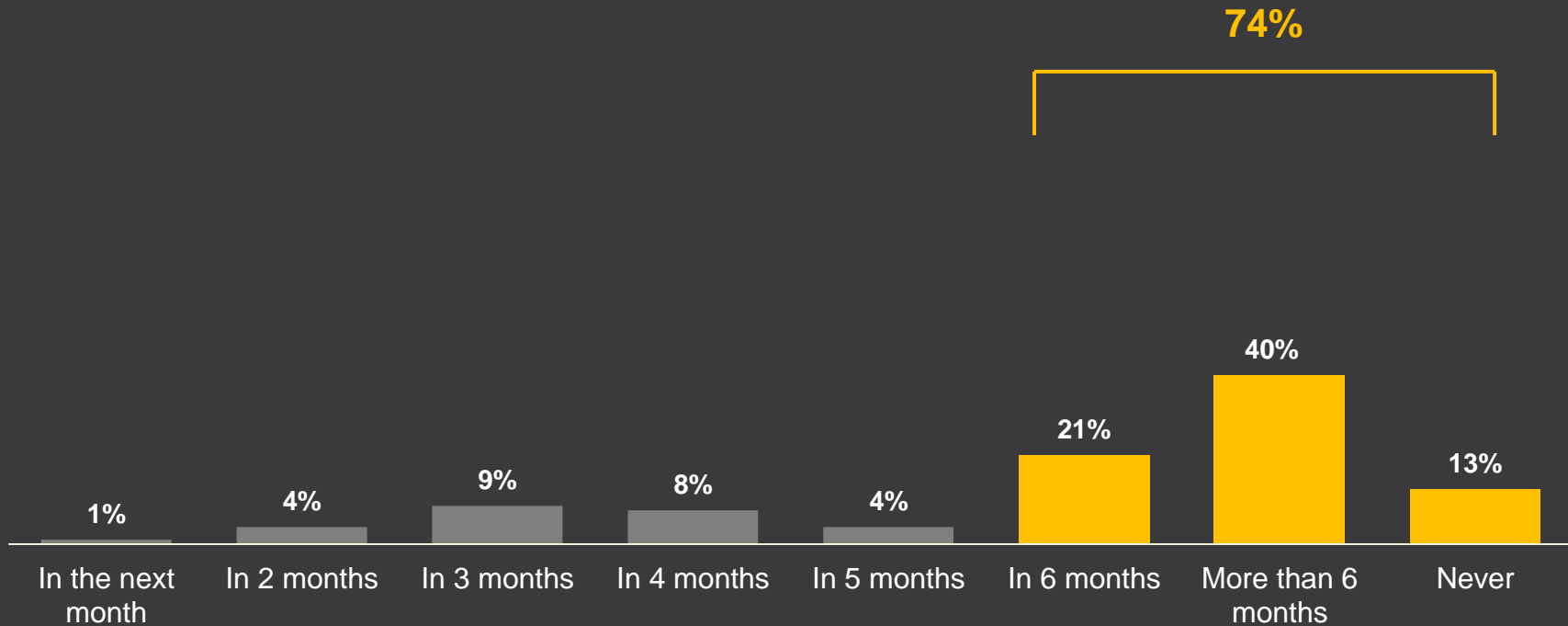
With our sense of normality at all time lows, amidst medical and economic fears, most brand activity has been reduced

Thinking about life at present (including wider society), how normal do you feel the following aspects are?



Aussies expect things to remain abnormal for at least 6 months

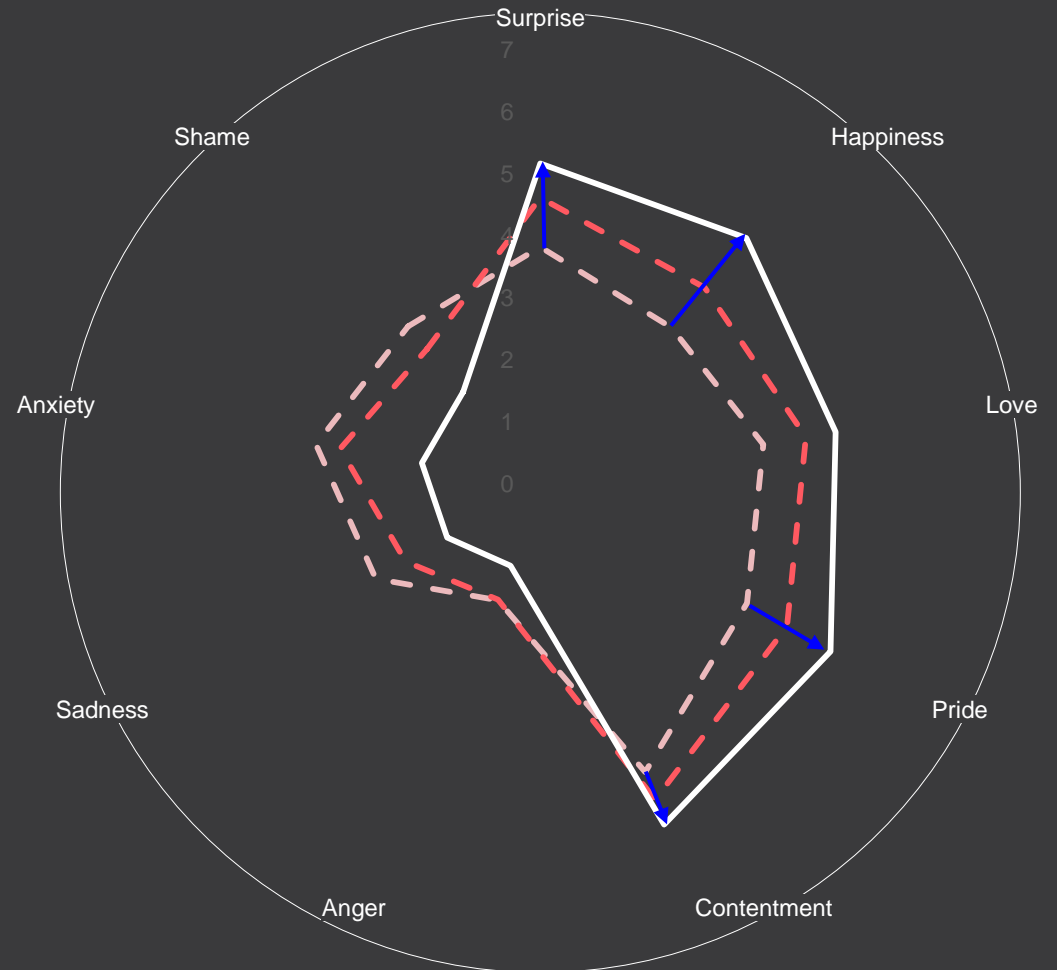
When do you think life (including wider society) will return to normal?



**But we're
adapting
(With positive
emotions in
particular
rebounding
quickly)**

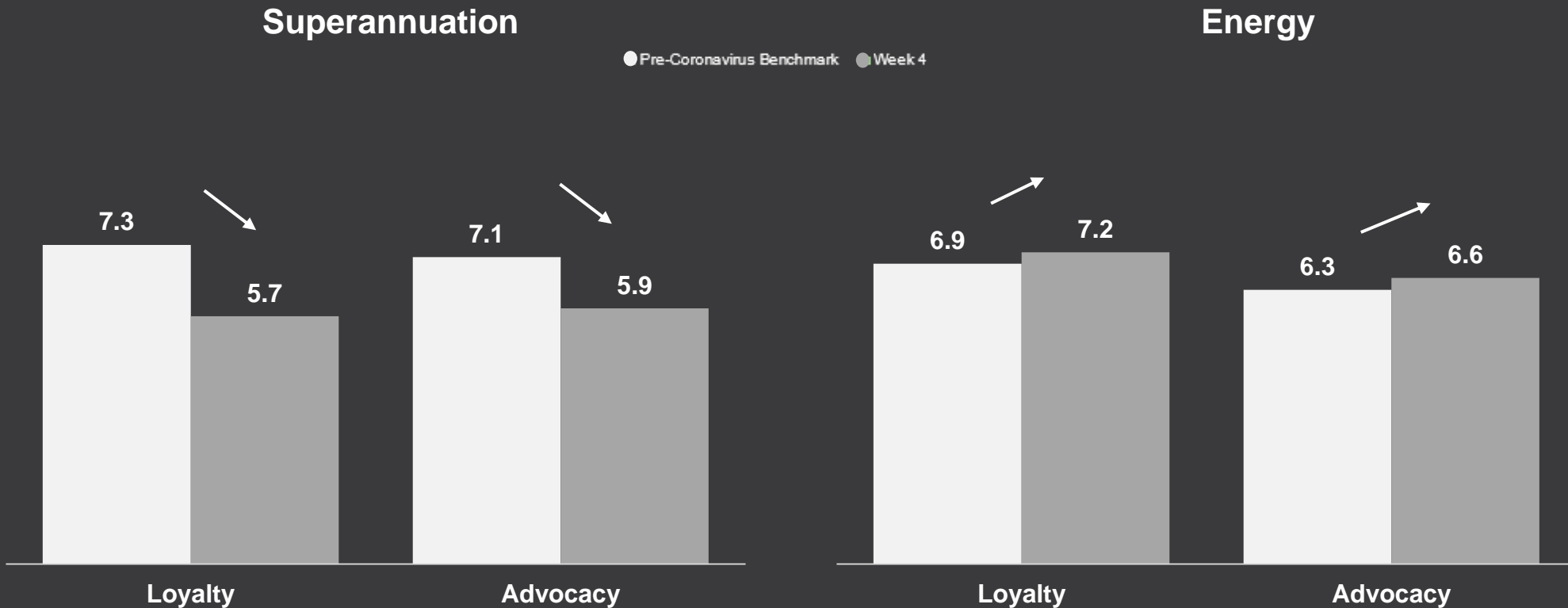
Resting emotional state by year

- - - Resting emotional state - Week 1 - - - Resting emotional state - Week 4
— Pre-Covid Benchmark (2016-2020 combined)



Note: Significance testing was conducted between Resting emotional state – Week 1 and Resting emotional state – Week 4 at the 5% level of significance. **Blue** indicates the Resting emotional state – Week 4 result was significantly higher than the Resting emotional state – Week 1 result.

Not only is it possible to brand build through these times; brands who get it right can emerge stronger than pre-pandemic



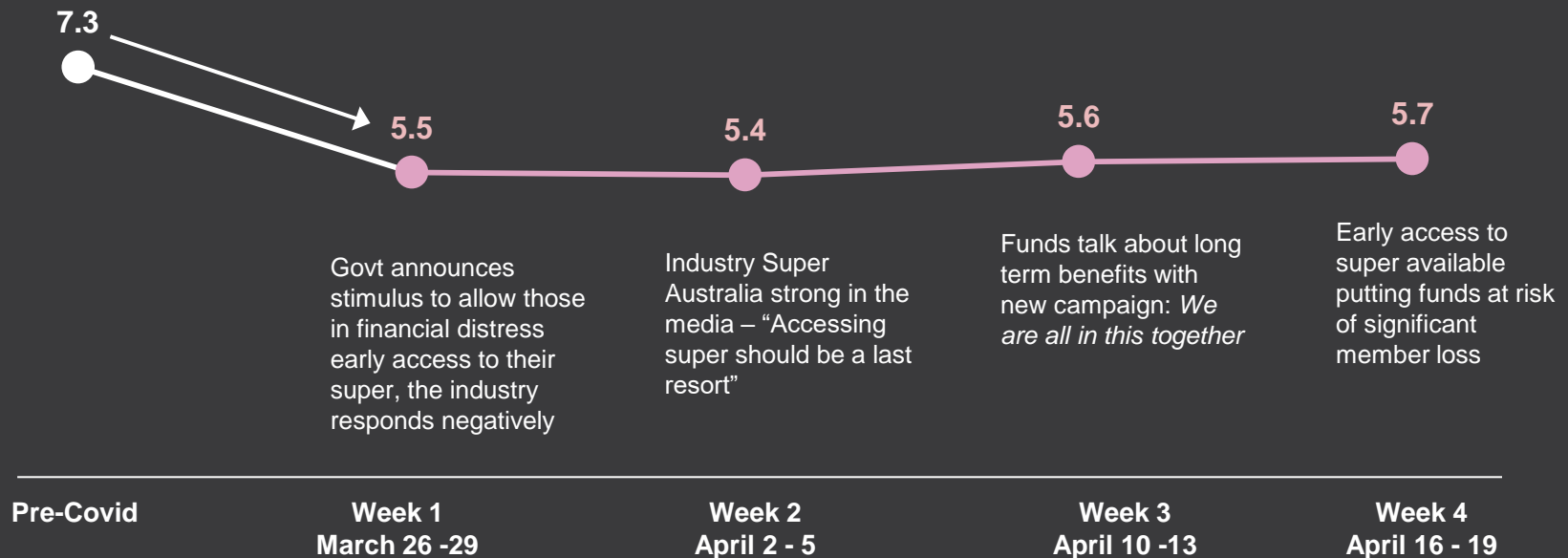
LOYALTY (BOCL) Suppose for a moment there was nothing at all to stop you from changing providers tomorrow, how likely would you be to continue to choose your main provider?

ADVOCACY How likely would you be to recommend your main provider to a family member, friend, or colleague?

E.G. Some Superannuation brand's have delivered a subpar response to supporting members in hardship; this is now reflected in new lows in consumer sentiment for the sector

Loyalty to Superannuation

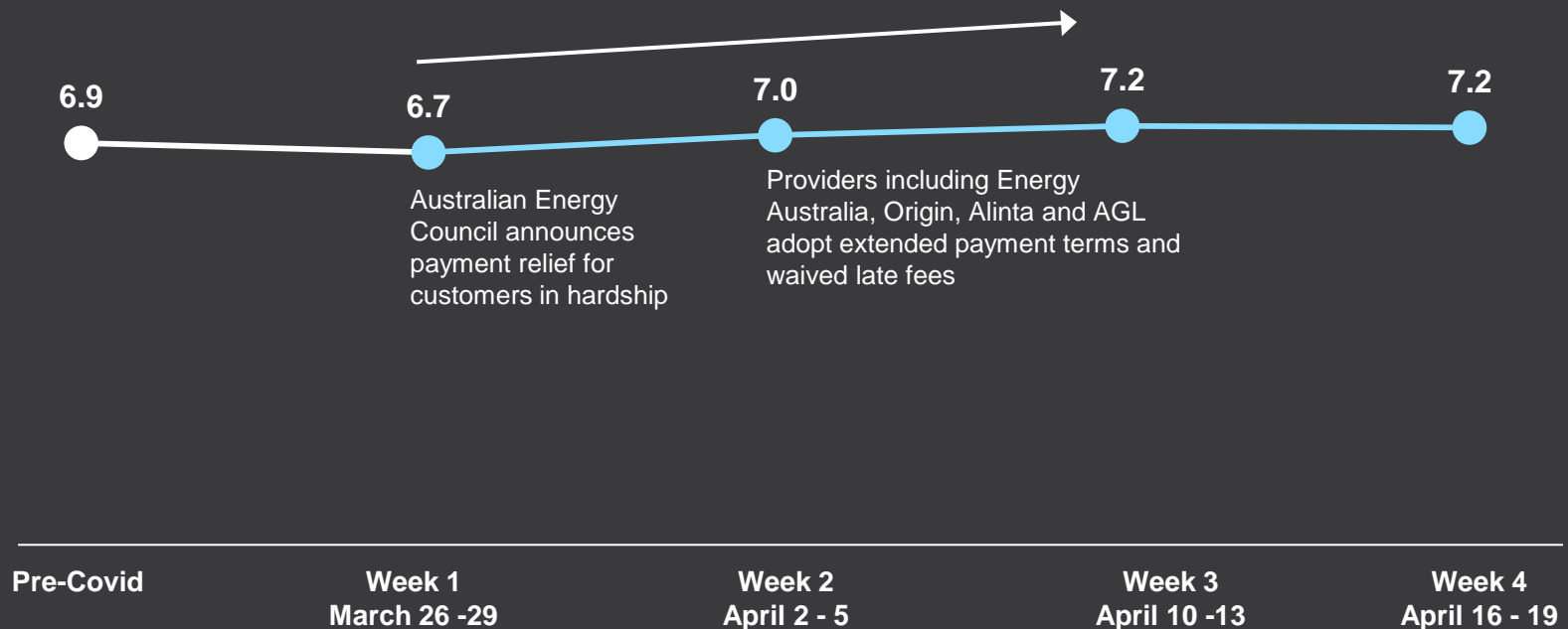
Suppose for a moment there was nothing at all to stop you from changing superannuation providers tomorrow, how likely would you be to continue to choose your main super provider?



While loyalty to energy providers is improving week on week after the immediate introduction of hardship support for customers

Loyalty to Energy providers

How likely would you be to choose to continue to use your main energy provider in the next 6 months?



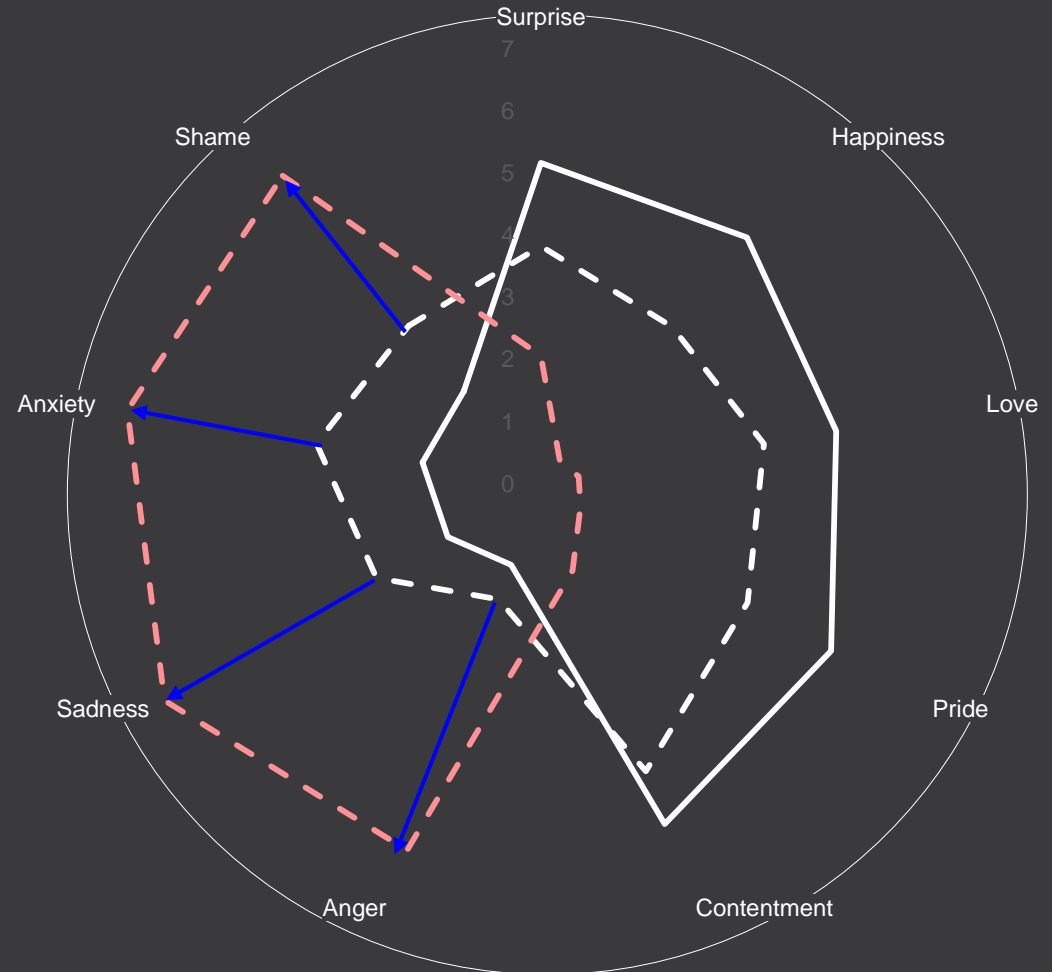
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Additional thought starters

Emotional state Resting vs. Covid-19 prompt

— Pre-Covid Benchmark - - Resting emotional state - Week 1
 - - Covid prompt - Week 1

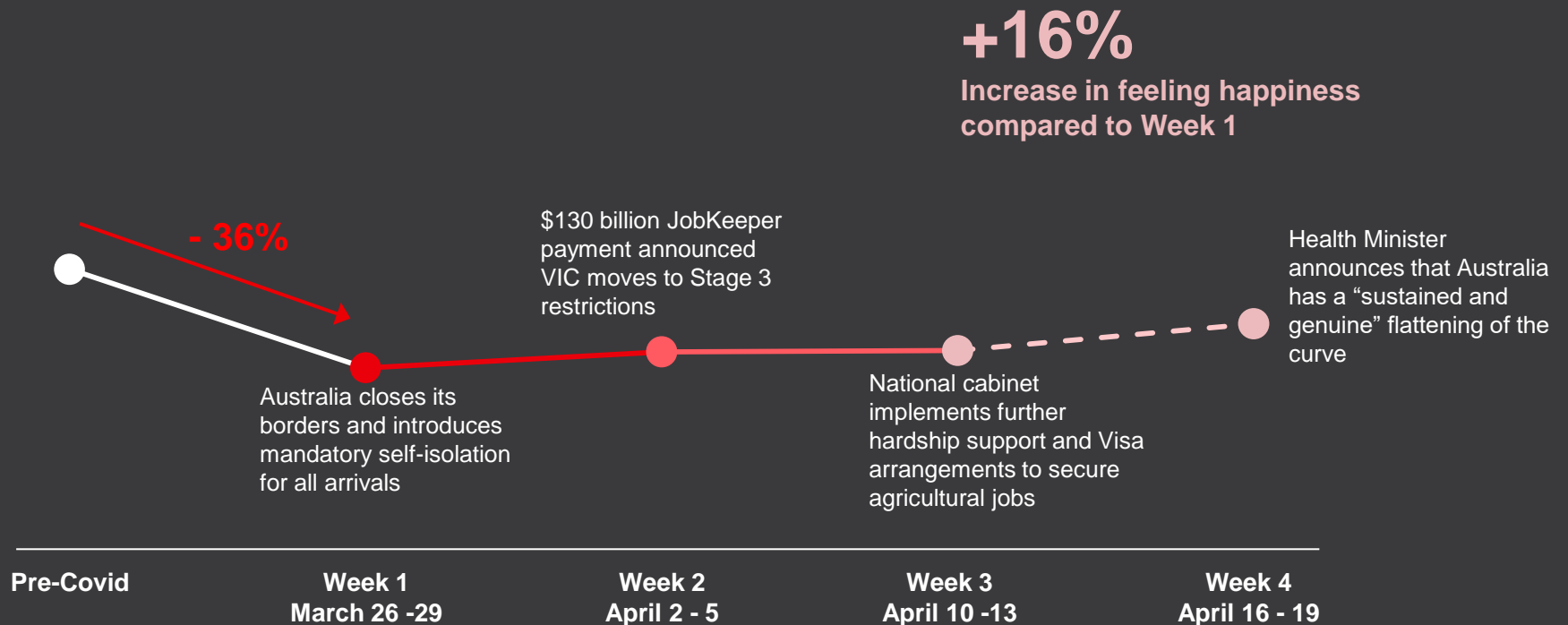
It is vital to avoid talking about coronavirus in customer or market comms. But you cant be tone deaf either.



Note: Significance testing was conducted between Resting emotional state – Week 1 and Covid prompt – Week 1 at the 5% level of significance. Blue indicates the Covid prompt – Week 1 result was significantly higher than the Resting emotional state – Week 1 result.

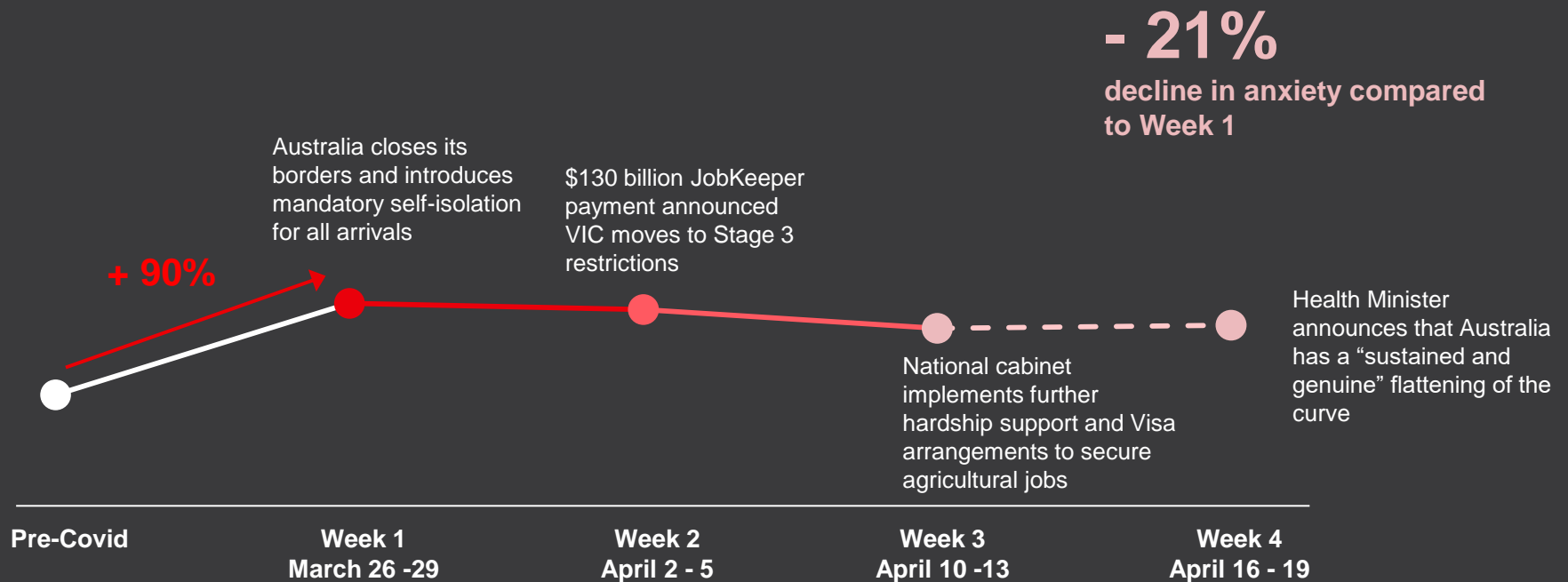
Happiness – How has our happiness been impacted?

Feelings of Happiness



Anxiety – How anxious have we become?

Feelings of Anxiety



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