



## **This is how it is**

**A real-life look at how the housebuilding industry's  
holding up**



**'Life is like a box of chocolates...'**

Forrest Gump was spot on with his box of chocolates words of wisdom. None of us know what's going to happen over the coming weeks and months, and if or when everything will get back to 'normal.'

Right now, questions are outweighing the answers, many of which we've been asked many times over by directors, business owners, managers and employees in the housebuilding industry since the COVID-19 crisis started.

We recently decided to take the main questions and asked the housebuilding world to answer them anonymously. We received just under 2,000 responses from clients and candidates - you'll find the key takeaways over the next few pages.

# 23 questions. 10 days. 2000 respondents.

This is what the housebuilding world's thinking right now...

## Topic 1: Construction site closures



- Yes, 67.16%
- No, 11.19%
- Some but not all, 18.91%
- Unsure, 2.74%



- Yes, 69.90%
- No, 17.16%
- Unsure, 12.94%

The fact most employees are happy for all sites to be closed is a strong indicator that work and job security aren't the only key priorities right now.

## How some employees' job roles have changed:

'My time has been almost entirely dedicated to reducing site numbers to safe levels and assessing/implementing very detailed arrangements to keep the reduced workforce safe through social distancing, hygiene measures, travel flexibility etc.'

'As a sales advisor, my role has clearly changed quite a bit as I'm unable to meet customers or conduct viewings.'

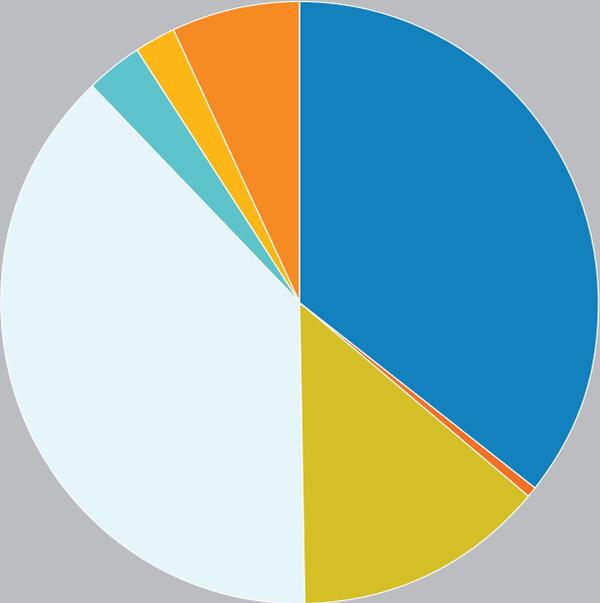
'As a manager, I have had to pick up the duties of the sales advisers remotely, as they have been put on furlough.'

'My role has become involved in strictly policing social distancing to help make sure our workplace is kept sanitised and is a safe place to work.'

'As the head of HR, my role has become one where I'm seen as the go-to person for all pandemic answers for the business. I've implemented changes quickly without any support or direction from higher up.'

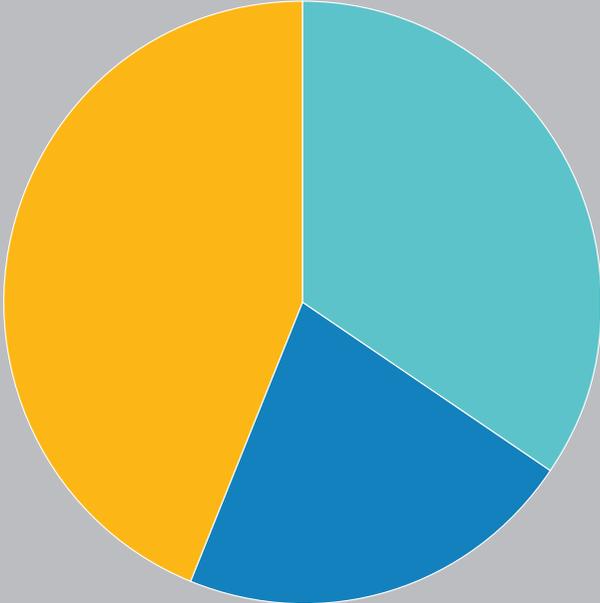
# Topic 2: Employment status

Q. What is your current employment status?



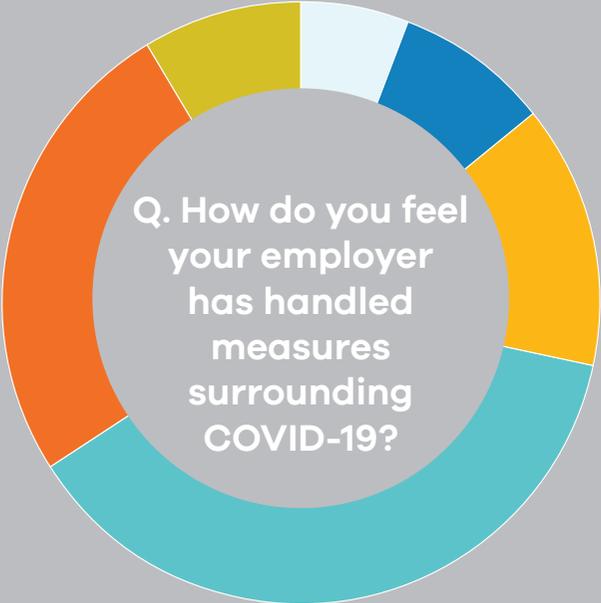
- Retained your job without any change, 35.82%
- Retained your job with a role change, 0.50%
- Retained your job but had a salary decrease, 13.43%
- Been placed into furlough, 38.06%
- Been made redundant, 3.23%
- Unemployed prior to the pandemic, 2.24%
- Self employed, 6.72%

Q. Has your job role (duties, staff reports, hours etc.) changed since lockdown?



- Yes, 34.58%
- No, 21.64%
- Somewhat, 43.78%

# Topic 3: Employers' responses to the pandemic



- Very poor, 5.97%
- Poor, 8.46%
- Unsure, 13.93%
- Very well, 37.56%
- Excellent, 25.62%
- No opinion, 8.46%

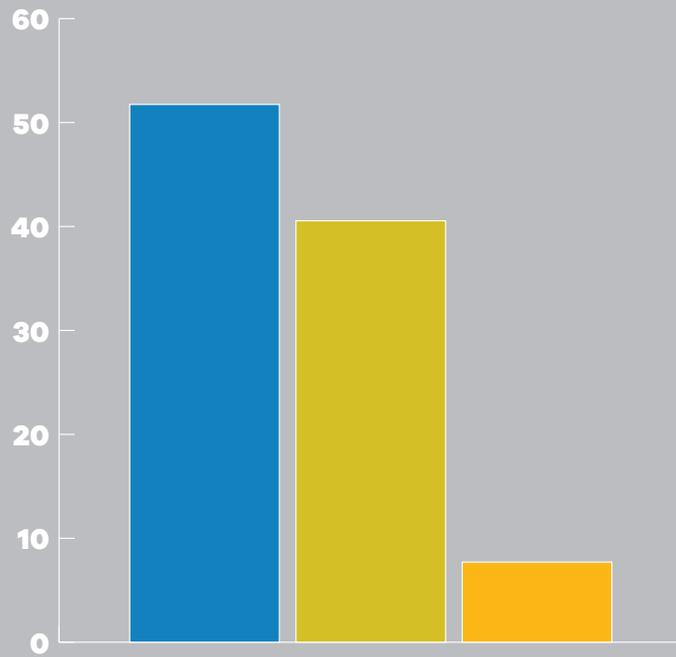


- Retained all staff (either unchanged or furloughed), 70.90%
- Retained some staff (either unchanged or furloughed), 19.65%
- Made redundancies, 3.23%
- Become insolvent, 0.75%
- N/A self employed 5.47%

**Our thoughts:**

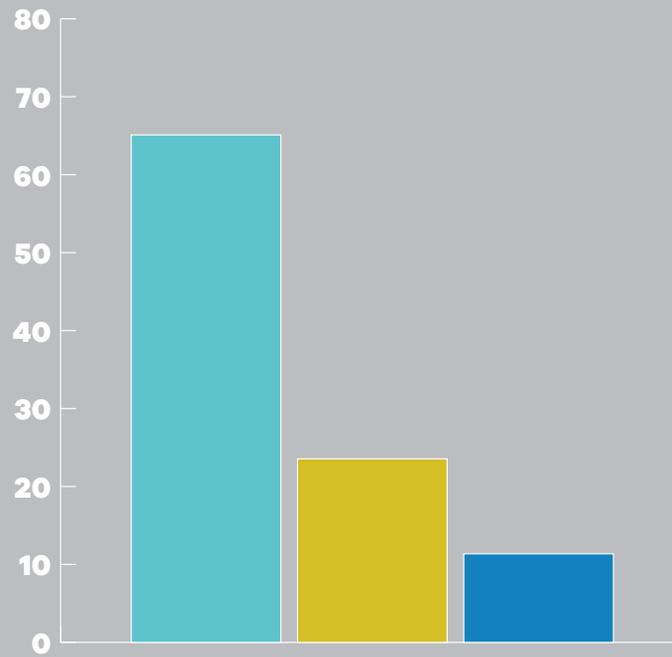
It's amazing that the vast majority of housebuilders have stood by their employees and kept them in jobs, when the easiest thing to do would have been to make them redundant.

## Topic 4: Working from home



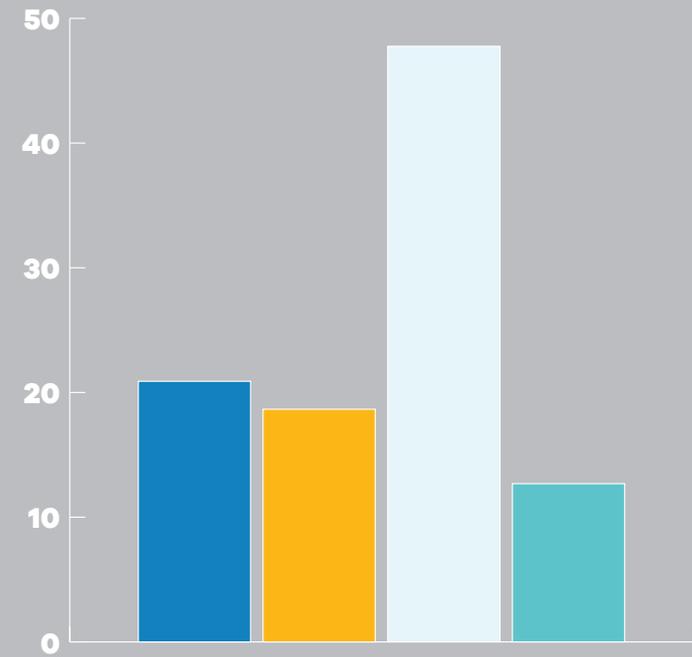
Q. Are you currently working from home?

- Yes, 51.74%
- No, 40.55%
- N/A, 7.71%



Q. If you're able to work from home, do you feel able and well-equipped to do so?

- Yes, 65.10%
- Somewhat, 23.55%
- No, 11.36%

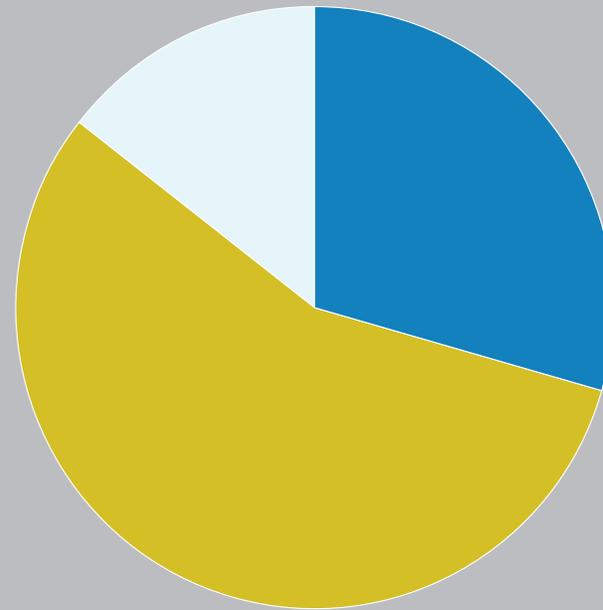


Q. Post-pandemic, will you be asking to work from home on a more regular basis?

- Yes, 20.90%
- Somewhat, 18.66%
- No, 47.76%
- N/A, 12.69%

It's interesting to see most people aren't planning to ask to work from home more once the pandemic's over.

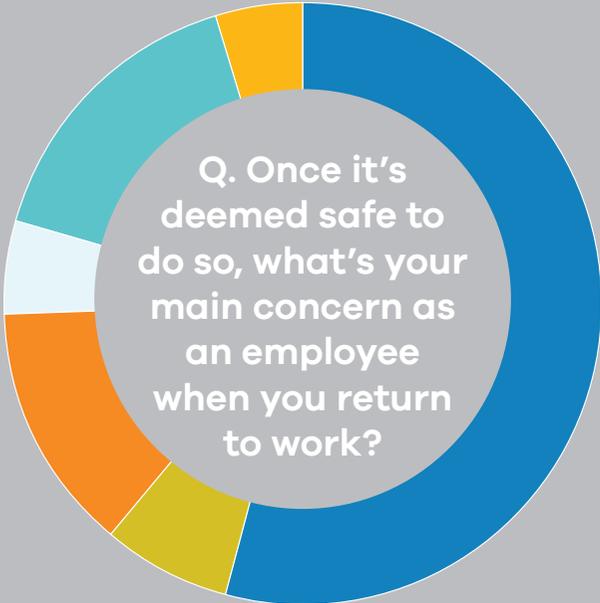
Q. Do you feel that post-pandemic there'll have to be a massive industry-wide rethink of type and style of housing provided as more people start working from home?



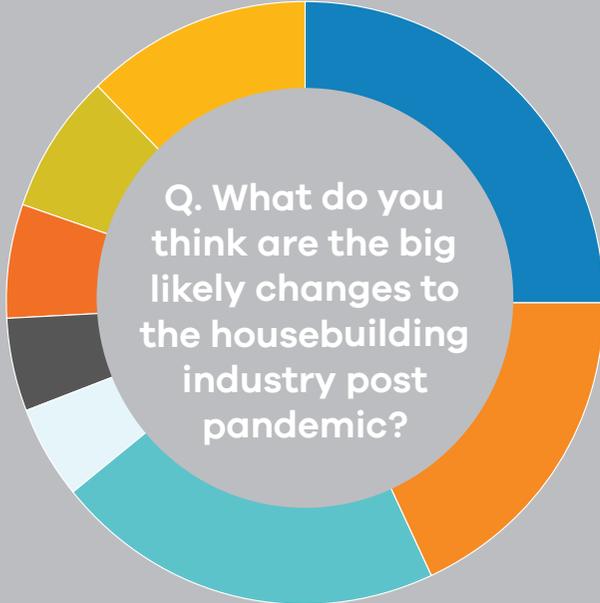
- Yes, 29.60%
- No, 56.22%
- Somewhat, 14.18%

Online sales purchasing and reservations becoming more commonplace is a big deal for the sector, as the way we buy houses has remained largely the same for the last 30 to 40 years.

# Topic 5: Returning to work/post-pandemic impact



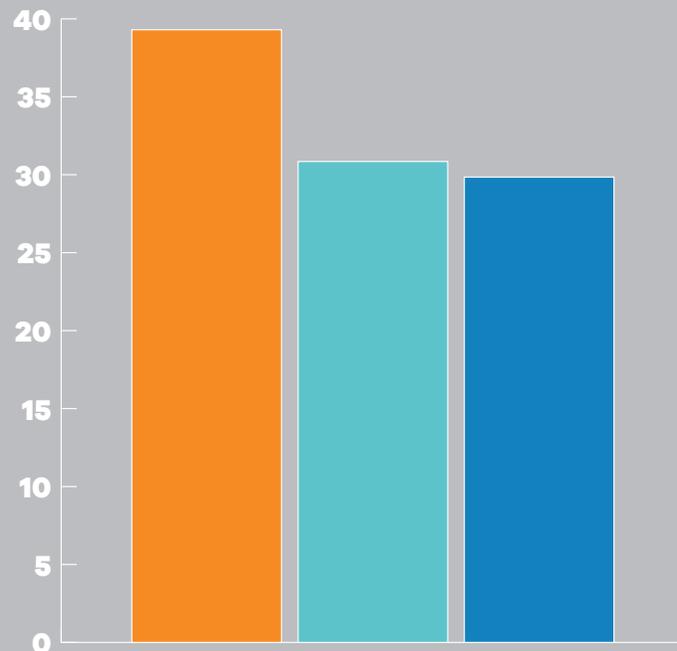
- Job security, 54.23%
- Change in daily operations/ job role, 6.97%
- Health and safety, 13.43%
- Mental health, 4.98%
- None, 15.67%
- Unsure, 4.73%



- Working from home more common, 33.83%
- Decrease in salaries, 24.06%
- Online sales purchase and reservation become more common place, 28.32%
- Change in the type of houses that are built, 6.77%
- Power of the top 10 PIC's house builders will be less, 6.52%
- Change in construction methodology i.e. MMC, 8.27%
- None of the above, 10.28%
- Unsure, 16.04%

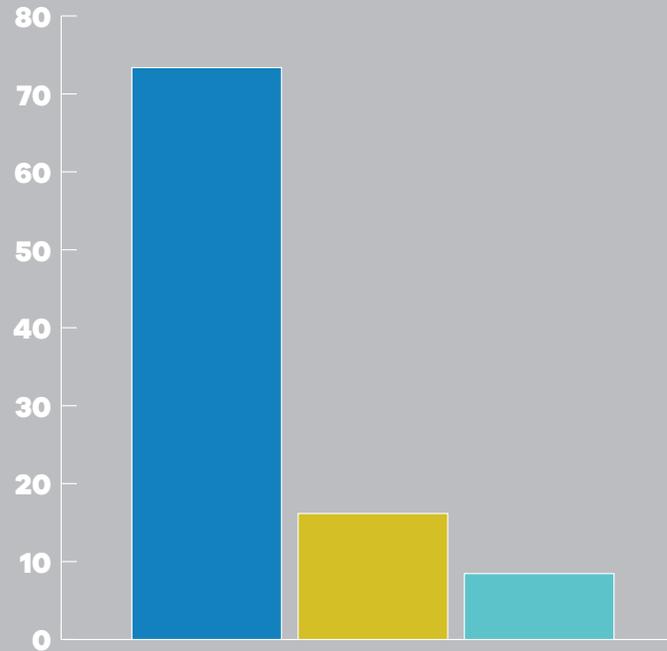
## Topic 6: Government response & support

Q. Do you think the Government will step in with specific measures to support the housebuilding industry?



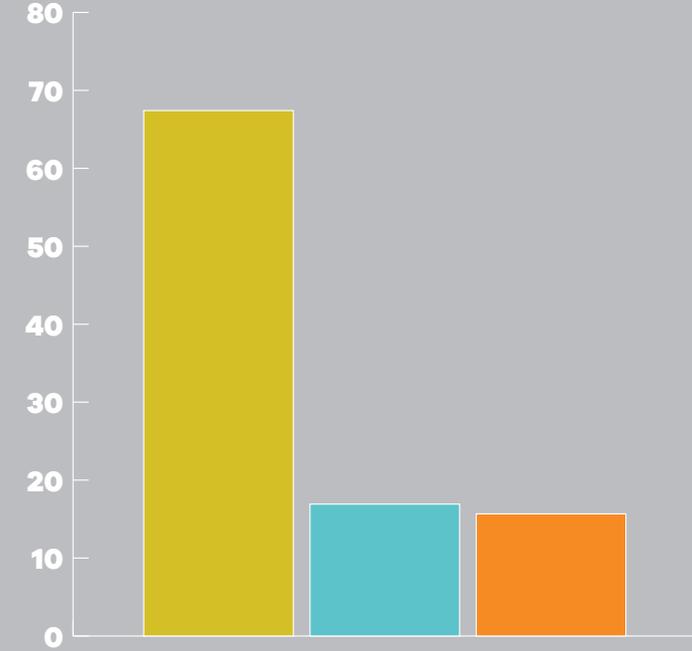
Yes, 39.30%  
No, 30.85%  
Unsure, 29.85%

Q. Do you think the government has given enough support to workers in general with initiatives i.e. furlough scheme?



Yes, 75.37%  
Somewhat, 16.17%  
Unsure, 8.46%

Q. Do you think the government has given enough support to companies/employers in general with its initiatives?



Yes, 67.41%  
Somewhat, 16.92%  
Unsure, 15.67%



## Thank you

Thanks to everybody who took the time to complete our survey, we couldn't have created this ebook without you.

For those of you who've taken the time to download and read it, we hope you've found the feedback useful.

While we may not necessarily have been able to answer the questions that are on your mind, we hope you see this ebook as a comforting reminder that we're all in this together and there is light at the end of the tunnel, regardless of how long that tunnel may be. In the meantime, stay safe and stay positive.

