A ROBOT TOOK MY JOB

WHY AUSTRALIANS BACK A JOBS GUARANTEE

Unions NSW

YouGov
What the world thinks

UNIONS NSW COMMISSIONED YOUGOV TO CONDUCT A SURVEY OF AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS TOWARDS AUTOMATION. THIS RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES A DEEP ANXIETY ABOUT AUTOMATION, AND A HUNGER FOR GOVERNMENTS TO INTERVENE AND HELP.

Unions NSW YouGov What the world thinks

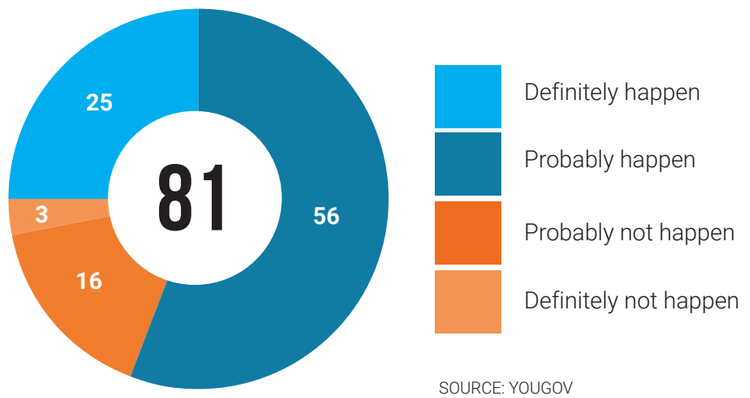
METHODOLOGY

n=1,075 Australian Residents 18 years or older surveyed online
Fieldwork dates: 3 – 7 October 2019
Survey was representative of the Australian population with a combination of quotas and weighting by age x gender, region and education to ensure the sample matches ABS statistics
The margin of error on a 50% figure at 95% confidence is ±3.0

THE CHALLENGE:
WHAT JOBS WILL BE LEFT WHEN ROBOTS TAKE OVER MUCH OF THE WORK HUMANS DO?

An overwhelming majority of Australians are worried about the future of their working life and job prospects. They worry that robots and automation will decimate jobs and livelihoods. However, many believe their own job is the exception. This disparity raises the questions: are we really grasping the challenges of automation?

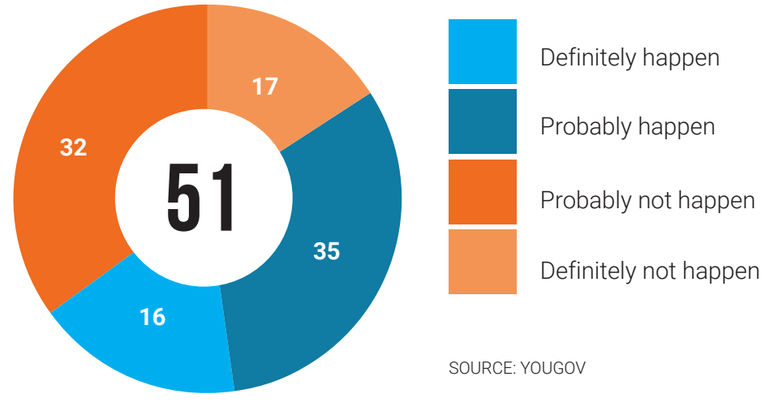
81% of Australians think robots and computers will replace human work.



SOURCE: YOUGOV

Q: How likely do you think it is that in 30 years robots and computers will do much of the work currently done by humans?

Only 51% of Australians think it will happen to them.



SOURCE: YOUGOV

Q: Within the next 30 years how likely do you think it is that the type of work done by you will be done by robots or computers?"

CASE STUDY

Australian Banks are cutting thousands of jobs and replacing them with computers and algorithms. For example, in 2017 NAB announced 6,000 jobs would be cut[1] and in April this year it was reported Commonwealth bank was looking at cutting 10,000 jobs[2]. At the same time, Australian banks are making big investment in technology and automation. NAB said in 2017 that it had increased its spending on technology by 50 per cent. Australian banks have multi-million digitisation programs with professional services firms. Mobile app-only banks with no branches now compete with the major banks. Online crypto-currency and block-chain technologies now compete with traditional methods. And while the job losses are large, new jobs are also being created by technology, albeit in smaller numbers. NAB said that in 1999 it employed two cyber-security staff. Now it has a team of more than 200.

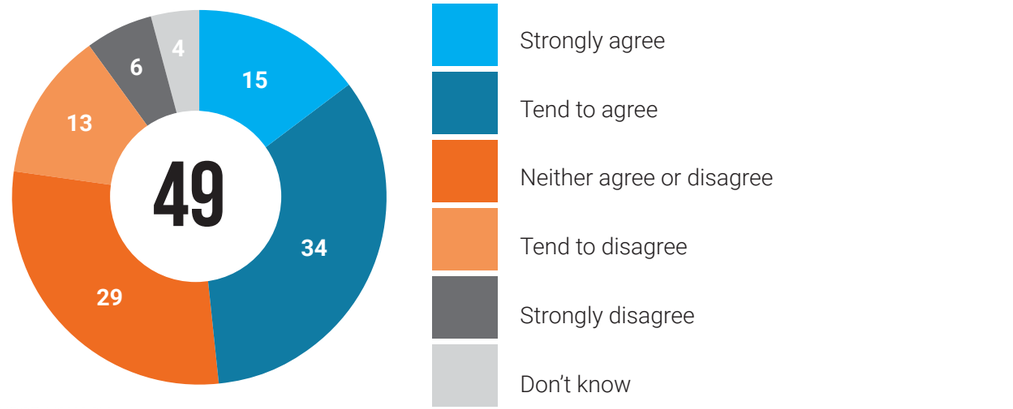
76% of Australians are worried about the impact of automation on the Australian economy over the next 10 years, including more than 70% people across all age groups, education and income levels.

		GENDER		GENERATION				HOUSEHOLD INCOME				EDUCATION		
	All	**Male**	**Female**	**Gen Z**	**Millenials**	**Gen X**	**Baby Boomer**	**<$50K**	**$50K-$99K**	**$100K-149K**	**$150K+**	**Non-tertiary**	**Trade/TAFE**	**University**
NOT AT ALL WORRIED	18%	22%	14%	13%	18%	15%	23%	19%	16%	18%	31%	12%	20%	21%
DON'T KNOW	6%	4%	8%	15%	8%	7%	1%	5%	5%	4%	0%	9%	6%	5%
TOTAL WORRIED	76%	73%	78%	72%	74%	79%	76%	76%	79%	78%	69%	79%	75%	78%

AUSTRALIA IS FAILING TO ANSWER THE AUTOMATION CHALLENGE

Australians do not think the Government is doing enough to protect their livelihoods from automation. Instead, nearly half of Australians say they are taking individual steps to prepare themselves.

49% of Australians are preparing for automation.



SOURCE: YOUGOV

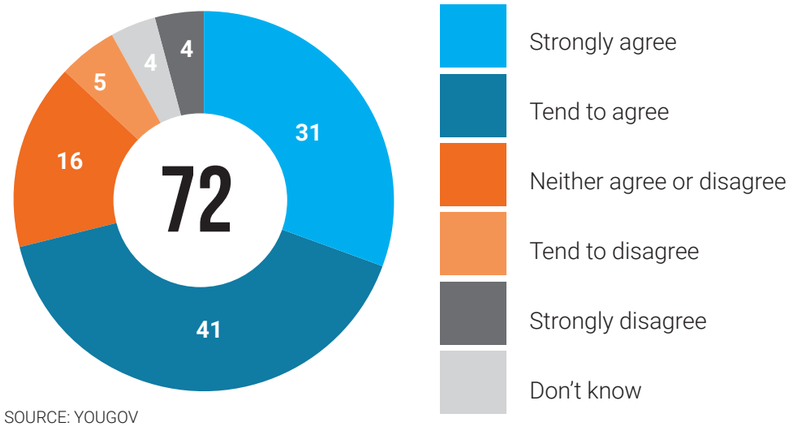
Q: Are you taking steps to be more prepared for the changing world of work resulting from new technologies?

Q: Who isn't doing enough to prepare for automation?

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS?

Australians don't want to have to work more hours to compete with robots. In fact, the vast majority want a ban on unpaid overtime. There is also some popular support for a Universal Basic Income – a fixed payment made available to all individuals that allows people meet basic needs.

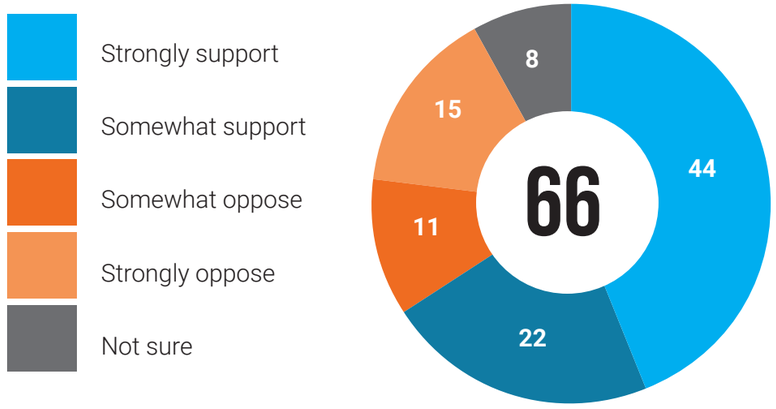
72% think companies are making you work longer to avoid hiring staff.



SOURCE: YOUGOV

Q: Do you think companies are expecting employers to work longer hours to avoid having to hire more staff?

66% support a ban on unpaid overtime up to $100,000 income.



SOURCE: YOUGOV

Q: Do you think it should be illegal for employers to make employees work unpaid overtime for jobs under $100K?

HALF OF ALL AUSTRALIANS SUPPORT A FORM OF GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME TO ALL CITIZENS. HOWEVER, AUSTRALIANS WITHOUT A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION ARE LESS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT A UBI.

SOURCE: YOUGOV

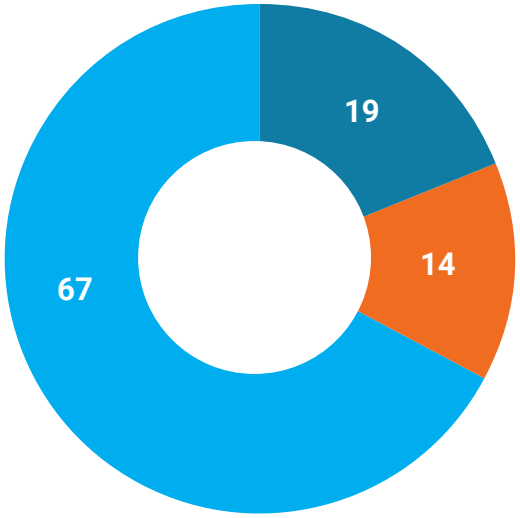
CASE STUDY

Supermarkets are cutting jobs and embracing new automation technologies like self-service checkouts. In June, Coles announced it was cutting $1 billion in staff costs through the better use of automation[3]. With the rise of self-service checkouts, employment in the supermarket and grocery industry went down for the first time in 2015-16[4]. Many of these jobs are entry-level jobs that provide opportunities for young people to gain a workplace experience. Will this make it harder for new jobseekers to gain a foothold in the jobs market?

[1] https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-11-03/nab-bank-job-losses-automation/9112658
[2] https://www.consultancy.com.au/news/814/commonwealth-bank-working-with-mckinsey-on-massive-job-cutstec
[3] https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/coles-to-cut-1b-in-costs-with-tech-upgrades-fewer-head-office-staff-20190618-p51ypy.html
[4] https://theconversation.com/the-economics-of-self-service-checkouts-78593

A NEW POLICY WITH SWEEPING POPULAR SUPPORT: A JOBS GUARANTEE

Australians overwhelming support a Government guarantee of a minimum wage job to everyone who wants to work and banning unpaid overtime. Yet this idea has barely rated a mention in the public debate. While there are massive benefits to be gained from automation through increased productivity and economic output, there is no guarantee that new jobs will be created for those who lose their job. This provides that guarantee. A jobs guarantee will make it a central role of Government to ensure people have jobs and do not get overworked in race to the bottom competition with robots.



67% support the job guarantee

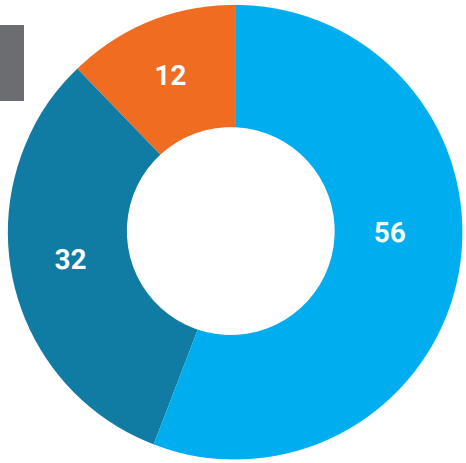
- Good idea
- Bad idea
- Don't know

Q: Do you think a jobs guarantee is a good idea or bad idea?

SOURCE: YOUGOV

56% prefer a jobs guarantee to a UBI, while only 32% prefer the UBI.

- A job guarantee for every adult
- Providing a universal basic income to every Australian adult
- Don't know



Q: If you had to make a choice, which would you say would be preferable in Australia?

SOURCE: YOUGOV