

It's really not that bad

REBECCA WHITFIELD-BAKER

THERE are signs Aussies are starting to shake off the pandemic blues with a new survey showing more of us are feeling positive today than we did 12 months ago with one in five also excited to see how AI/robots might free up our time, by helping with domestic tasks.

But the research by national firm McCrindle reveals four in five Australians are anxious about the rising cost of living.

"Whether we enter a technical recession this year, from a consumer perspective, it already feels like one," social

Aussies shaking off the pandemic blues

researcher Ashley Fell said. "(A significant) 79 per cent are saying they are 'extremely/very concerned' about the rising cost of living, while 60 per cent are concerned about global uncertainty and 59 per cent (fear) a global recession.

"A similar 57 per cent are 'extremely/very concerned' about rising interest rates, with this increasing to 73 per cent among Gen Z, those aged 18 to 28."

But on the upside, more

than a third (36 per cent) of the 1000 Australians surveyed reported feeling "much/somewhat more positive" about this year than last.

"This compares to 19 per cent who say they feel less positive," Ms Fell said.

McCrindle's director of advisory said the shift of Artificial Intelligence into the hands of consumers through developments such as ChatGPT had raised interest in AI.

"One in five Australians (20

per cent) say they are excited to see how AI/robots will save them time on domestic tasks in the next year ... among Generation Z, this increases to 64 per cent," she said.

But many Australians still hold concerns around the technology with three in four (74 per cent) admitting they felt nervous AI would replace human jobs.

"While 84 per cent think it is important that people disclose if they have used AI

when writing an article, and 92 per cent of Australians say they prefer talking to a human than engaging with an AI chat bot," Ms Fell said.

When asked about their "ideal working situation", 44 per cent said their preference was to be an employee only while 56 per cent said they'd like to work in something they had started "in some capacity".

However, among Generation Z, just 21 per cent said

they would like to only work as an employee, while 79 per cent said they would like to work in something they have started on the side in some capacity.

"In a world where side hustles are ripe and people are holding down multiple jobs, organisations will need to pay a premium if they want undivided attention from their employees ... we can expect to see a leadership shift away from monitoring to mentoring and doubling down on culture to attract and retain great talent," she said.

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Guitarist Kathleen Halloran gets ready for the Melbourne Guitar Show. Picture: Jake Nowakowski

CITY'S GUITARISTS ARE RIFF AND READY FOR FESTIVAL

WILL KEECH
MELBOURNE, get ready to turn it up to 11. The Melbourne Guitar show is set to return to Caulfield Racecourse on March 5 and 6, for a weekend headlined by some of the finest guitarists from the city and beyond.

Along with live performances, the event boasts guitar lessons, and 60 exhibitors showing off new, rare and handmade gear.

Kathleen Halloran is a session musician who has worked with an array of musicians including Kate Ceberano. Halloran will be performing at the event.

"I'm playing my own show with my own band; it will be a bit unexpected," she said. "It's really pushing me out of my comfort zone."

Holloran named Ian Moss (Cold Chisel), Mark Knopfler (Dire Straits) and session guitarist Michael Landale as her three biggest influences. "It's a special weekend because I get to catch all of my guitar heroes," she added.

Cop shooting 'terrorist-related'

LONDON: Northern Ireland police say the attempted murder of a senior off-duty officer was "terrorist-related", accusing the New IRA republican splinter group of the shooting.

Two men opened fire on Detective Chief Inspector John Caldwell while he coached children, including his son, in football in the town of Omagh in County Tyrone this week.

"John remains in hospital,

where he is critically ill and heavily sedated," PSNI Chief Constable Simon Byrne told journalists.

"I can confirm that we are now treating it as terrorist-related and our primary line of inquiry is the New IRA," added Assistant Chief Constable Mark McEwan with the investigation focusing on the splinter group of the Irish Republican Army.

A fourth man aged 22 years

was arrested on Saturday after three aged 38, 45 and 47 were taken into police custody the previous day.

Police in Northern Ireland are the target of sporadic attacks that were once common in the region, which was plagued by decades of sectarian violence before the signing of 1998 peace accords.

The New IRA has admitted responsibility for two attacks in recent years.

PUZZLES

GREAT PUZZLES AND CROSSWORDS

INSIDE ESCAPE

Brazil flood toll rising

SÃO PAULO: The death toll from floods and landslides in Brazil has risen to 54 people, as Pope Francis sent a message of condolences.

"So many of you are missing, so many have suffered ... I send you my closeness, the assurance of my prayer. May God bless you," the pontiff said in a video broadcast.

About 30 people are still missing after more than an entire month's worth of rain

fell in 24 hours on the beach resort town of Sao Sebastiao and surrounding areas.

Authorities said the largest daily rainfall ever registered in Brazil triggered violent floods and landslides that tore through precariously built hillside communities.

An estimated 9.5 million of Brazil's 215 million people live in areas at high risk of flooding or landslides - mainly poor favela neighbourhoods.