

UNIVERSAL M E D I A C O

APRIL 2020 HOME PROJECT POLL

In March 2020, Universal Media Co asked everyday Australians with home project plans if they expected to continue with their plans once Coronavirus had hit.

The answer – a resounding YES.

Insight #1: Consumers With the Money Still Want to Spend It

It seems that consumers who are investing in home projects have the money and feel relatively unperturbed by the headlines.

Early indicators that the property market was holding up reinforced this mindset.

Many were working on projects of real significance – such as major renovations or new-home builds with two-year completion times. This category was particularly emphatic about continuing with home plans of a lifetime.

Some, in fact, were diverting funds that would have been spent on travel towards new kitchens, bathrooms, or other long-awaited home projects.

These findings in no way diminish the fact that we are in an era-defining recession, with thousands unemployed. It just means that people who aren't in this situation are proceeding with their plans regardless. Businesses in the home space must double-down on reaching these consumers if they are going to survive.

These findings in no way diminish the new difficulties of protecting personnel and customers while doing site inspections, measure-up and delivery of jobs. Businesses in the home space must adapt to these restrictions as the new normal. They must find new ways to communicate *“Concerned about Coronavirus? No worries – we’ve got this”*.

Insight #2: Home Spenders in 2020 Look Much Like Home Spenders in 2019

Established, suburban, family-orientated – not the fantasy young couple but certainly spending, and certainly a worthwhile market. The only market worth developing, in fact.

Almost without exception they are mature (aged 45+) and have made the most of advantageous years in better markets by investing in property and super.

They are in established households – they have occupied their residence for 10+ years and have mature multi-gen families.

They are in steady jobs – 10+ years with the current employer. They either own businesses or are seniors within them. They might be working in government, health, aged care, food production or education.

Insight #3: Available Time – the Main Driver of the new Renovation Boom

Despite the difficulty of managing the necessary protections, an increasingly home-based workforce is 'getting around' to those long-overdue jobs.

Employed Australians, now armed with a billion extra hours, have to use them on something. Ask any working person and it's usually the time, more than the money, that stops things from happening.

In Australia we live in a 'renovation culture'. According to the ABS, 2019 was a renovation boom year. The desires that drove that live on into 2020 for those who have the financial foundation.

Insight #4: Preparing for Multi-Gen Living

With an eye on what's to come, these Gen X and Boomer renovators are preparing space for returning children, for parents to move into, or for whatever else arises in this strange new world.

The desire to de-stress family living is something that came up again and again in the precursor discussions that led to this poll. Extra bathrooms, living areas, attics and kitchen spaces were perceived as essential to cope with family living. Parents are facilitating the studies of adult students as much as acquiring space for their own projects.

As Local councils are increasingly allowing duplex living, more families are taking up the chance to have more than one generation live on the same block of land, or to make money from the second dwelling. The desire expressed is to “live in one and live off the other”.

Insight #5: Budgets are Modest, Locations are Suburban

The spenders are in suburban locations and, somewhat surprisingly, around regional centres. They are expanding families or tree-changers moving to areas where space is more affordable.

The language of spending is restrained. We are generalising, but this is a community that wants “to finally have a good family entertaining space with quality fittings – but does not want to go over the top”. Eyes are on property values to the left and family needs on the right.

Projects Planned in 2020 – Are the Headlines Affecting Your Decision?

Here’s how the polls looked:

<i>Question: If you have a home renovation planned, are the current headlines affecting your decision?</i>				
Media Communication Channel	Database	Project Type	Yes my plans have changed	No my plans have not changed
Home Design Channel	Upmarket consumers researching design ideas for impending home projects	Interior decoration, renovation or new-home build projects	11%	89%
Outdoor Living Channel	Upmarket consumers researching large-scale residential outdoor projects	Structural landscape projects incorporating pergolas, courtyards, pools, kitchens or cabanas	9%	91%
Outdoor Design Channel	Upmarket consumers researching large-scale residential outdoor projects	Structural landscape projects incorporating pergolas, courtyards, pools, kitchens or cabanas	7%	93%
Backyard Channel	Aspirational Australian families with backyard projects	The full range of DIFM backyard makeover projects	17%	83%
Poolside Channel	Aspirational Australian families with pool projects	The full range of pool and poolscape installations	26%	74%
Build Home Channel	Australian families researching new homes	New-home build projects	18%	82%
Kitchens & Bathrooms Channel	Australian consumers researching new kitchen or bathroom projects	The full range of DIFM kitchen or bathroom makeovers including appliances	31%	69%

Background to the Universal Media Co Home Project Poll

The Universal Media Co Home Project Polls ran via social and digital media in March and April 2020, receiving responses from 1321 people with home projects. Results were merged and deduped to reach the final figure. No incentive for answering was given. This poll followed face-to-face discussions that occurred at the Sydney Home Show in March 2020.

Universal Media Co commissioned research firm McNair Ingenuity to do a similar poll in 2009 and got a similar result – 77% of respondents saying they would continue with their projects regardless of the headlines, which at the time were about the Global Financial Crisis.

About Universal Media Co Home Group

Universal Media Co Home Group collects name and address data for consumers with home projects, and on-sells access to this audience. These databases are nurtured by media/communication products including 11 home magazines, 14 social media pages, 12 eNewsletters, the CompleteHome.com.au Digital Network and the SpecifierSource.com.au Digital Network.