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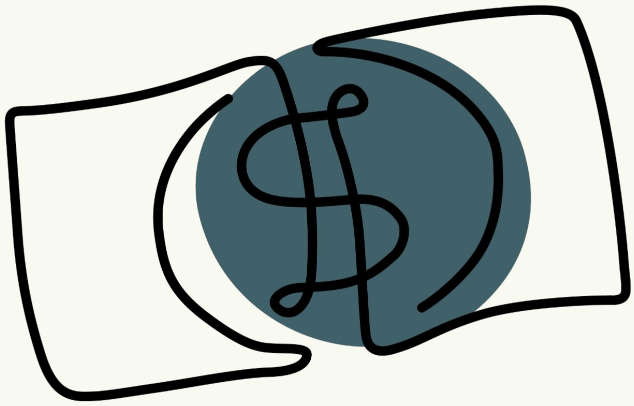
Top 3 things you need to know:

#1 Personal finances remain a relative bright spot, with personal optimism (42%) holding up far better than broader economic confidence despite cost of living troubling 82% of Aussies.
#2 Financial capability varies drastically across the market, as 59% of households sit in the struggling or managing tiers with very different needs compared to the secure.
#3 Daily cost pressures are actively opening up switching windows, with 3 in 4 Australians relying on workarounds and 7 in 10 reviewing current plans due to bill shock.



Almost half of Aussies feel worse off compared to a year ago

48%
Feel worse off
+4ppts since June 2025

32%
Feel the same
-4ppts vs June 2025%

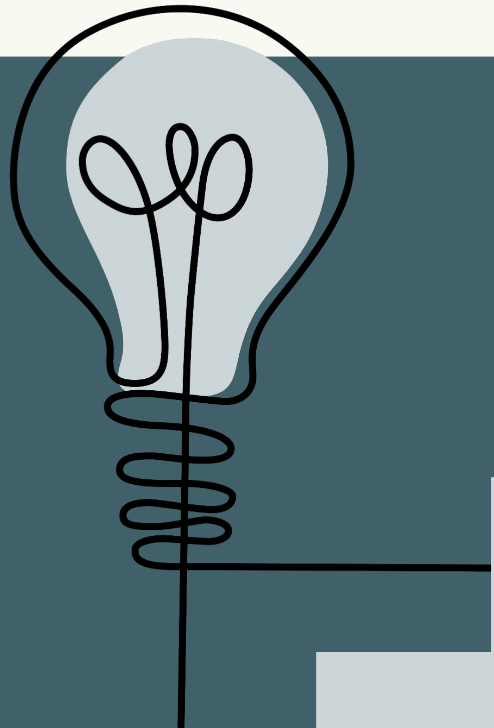
19%
Feel better off
Even since June 2025

Yet they feel more confident about their personal finances than they do about the economy, the housing market and the wider world.

When asked about how they feel about their ‘personal finances’ as an area in there life, currently 42% of Australians hold a positive outlook, compared to just 25% for the economy, 23% for housing, and 21% for world affairs when asked the same question about their society. Despite dipping 6 points since January, personal finance continues to significantly outpace all macro-economic indicators.

The top social issues they care about...

- **82%** Cost of living and household budgets
- **71%** Healthcare and access to medical services
- **68%** Utility prices and regulation
- **63%** Community safety and crime levels
- **62%** The economy and Australia’s financial stability
- **61%** The housing situation (eg. affordability, availability)



What this means for Finance

- Money concerns dominate Australia's social agenda, led by cost of living, utility prices, overall economic stability, and housing affordability. This ongoing pressure reinforces the heightened demand for clear value, transparency, and financial reassurance.

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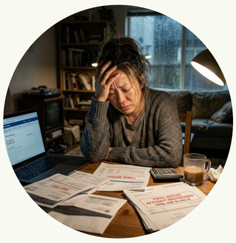
Finance Category Behaviours: over half reign it in

> 51 % **Have spent more cautiously on non-essentials**
Over half of Australians say over the last month they have spent more cautiously when it comes to non-essentials.

> 32 % **Have spent normal amounts on non-essentials**
For 1 in 3, they have continued to spend around the same amount in the last month on non-essentials.

> 17 % **Have spent more freely on non-essentials**
Less than 1 in 5 have spent more than usual on non-essential items in the last month.

59% of Aussies sit within the struggling or managing financial health mindsets



29%
Struggling
Households falling behind on essential costs or unable to save.

30%
Managing
Getting by and covering the essentials, but with little left over.

41%
Secure
The most resilient group, able to save for major purchases and live comfortably.

Capability determines how best to engage these mindsets:

How Australians handle money varies sharply across each tier. Struggling households lack safety nets (49% find management their personal finances hard). Managing groups cover essentials with ability to understand the basics of personal finance (41%), while Secure households manage shocks with high confidence (59%). To connect effectively, marketers must provide direct relief for Struggling households, practical budget guidance for Managing groups, and growth-focused value for Secure consumers.

Top financial goals by mindset

Struggling: Focused on immediate survival, led by following a strict budget to cut spending (48%) and managing BNPL debt (23%).
Managing: Centered on building stability, with building an emergency savings fund ranking as their primary goal (39%).
Secure: Driven by future growth, uniquely prioritizing major purchases (30%) and investing in shares/stocks (25%).

Where this shows up in behavior in what people are reading

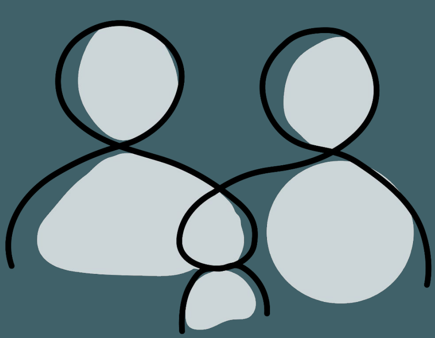
Wealth building and alternative income
The amount of Aussie readers consuming content around wealth building and alternative income articles has risen by 7.1% from FY 2025 - FY 2026.

Top impacts on household financial decisions:

60% Cost of living and wage growth (66% for females)
40% Energy costs and reliability (51% for boomers)
23% Housing situation (affordable/available) (29% gen Z)
21% Interest rates
21% Australia's economic and financial stability

Commercial Implication

Consumer choices are anchored in immediate baseline costs rather than general economic shifts. Successful brand positioning must pivot away from broad value claims and explicitly show how products alleviate strain on core living expenses.



Meeting market challenges

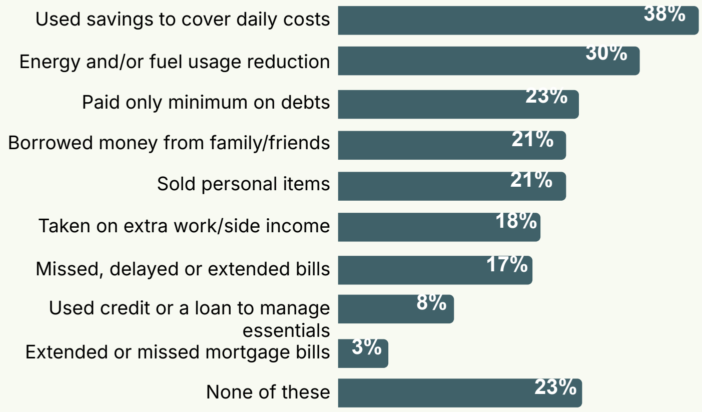
In stretched households, experimentation is a risk.

Growth comes from:

- Assistance and guidance
- A very clear perceived value of service
- A tailored approach based on mindset

More than 3 in 4 Australians are using financial workarounds to get by

In the past month, have you done any of the following financial workarounds to help you get by?



We looked at how Australians are navigating three key financial areas:

Superannuation

Low proactivity: Only 18% actively monitor super, while just 13% make extra contributions.

Complexity gap: 53% of Struggling consumers find super complicated, whereas 68% of Secure consumers feel confident deciding on their fund.

Owned channels rule: 53% engage via fund apps/websites and 32% via statements, outpacing advisers (17%).

Investing

Ownership & risk-aversion: 43% of Australians hold non-super or property investments, but building cash savings (34%) beats buying new investments (22%).

Aussie share bias: Australian equities dominate trading, ranking as the most bought asset (46%) and the most sold (32%).

Mixed outlook: 34% expect markets to improve vs 30% expecting them to worsen, with high confidence limited to large portfolios ($500k+).

Switching

High review intent: 7 in 10 Australians are actively reviewing household plans, driven by bill shock (35%), with insurance and everyday banking the most likely to be reviewed.

Pricing & simplicity win: Deciding factors are led by pricing with no hidden fees (38%), competitive rates (35%), and easy comparison (25%).

Word of mouth: When comparing providers, consumers rely most on family and friends (44%) and personal experience (43%), ahead of comparison sites (37%).

Where financial brands and institutions can unlock growth

Remove friction, and enable action.

In cautious households, complexity prevents action.

- Guaranteed clarity and transparency
- Step-by-step guidance
- Reduced anxiety

Match messaging to mindset perceptions.

One size fits none. Brands must adapt messaging to financial capability:

- Direct relief & simplicity for Struggling Aussies
- Practical budgeting tools for Managing Aussies
- Wealth-building pathways for Secure Aussies

Activate lifestyle and switching moments.

Bill shock and major goals trigger active brand evaluation, creating key switching windows.

- Provide direct, simplified digital experiences.
- Offer transparent free product comparisons
- Share personal proof and trusted peer recs.

Source: The Lighthouse: Finance Category Update (June 2026)