

MONEY'S TOO TIGHT TO MENTION: TWO THIRDS OF AUSSIES SAY MONEY IS THE BIGGEST AREA OF CONFLICT IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP

- Two thirds (58%) of Australian couples claim finances are a major cause of conflict within their relationship
- One in five (20%) Australian couples still keep their finances separate, potentially helping to pave the way for 14% of those who are hiding secret credit cards, bank accounts and debts from their loved ones
- When it comes to dating profiles, eharmony found that more than half of women send their first message to men on higher incomes, but only a quarter of men follow suit

While more than half (54%) of Australians believe that money is an important part of a relationship, are they really willing to bank on love when it comes to their finances?

Research commissioned by [eharmony](#) shows there's no question money can cause issues between partners, with nearly two thirds (58%) of Australian couples claiming finances are a major cause of conflict within their relationship.

Perhaps then, it's not surprising that one in five (20%) Aussies still keep their bank balances separate for financial freedom. What's more, one in ten (14%) admit to hiding finances from their partners, including credit cards, bank accounts or other personal debts.

With money making up such a huge part of couples' long-term security, serious considerations should be given to how money is handled within a relationship. Financial expert Victoria Devine from She's on the Money, believes the way we behave with our money does indeed have a significant impact on relationship quality.

"The pandemic saw money behaviours change in many. There was a strong focus on reducing debts and solidifying personal financial positions in the time of crisis. The uncertainty also created enormous fiscal stress for both singles and couples alike.

"There is no one size fits all when it comes to the best way to manage finances within a relationship. My partner and I pay our way 50-50, but this isn't ideal for everyone. Whether it is paying back debt, supporting young children or even working how to split the grocery bill, couples need to work out what's the best strategy for them.

"It's so important to have those uncomfortable money conversations early in your relationship. My advice is to be upfront, because the more you hide, the more it can impact you in the future. I've worked with clients who have been in six figures of debt and haven't told their partners. It's a shock to the relationship to say the least and it can be really difficult to work through."

Research also indicates that one in three (33%) singles wouldn't trust a potential partner to be as responsible as they are with their money. While one in five (20%) feels a partner would judge them on their spending, which may explain the top-secret banking behaviour once they couple up.

When asked what they felt was an acceptable level of debt* for a potential partner to have, more than half of singles (55%) cited a limit of \$20k. While over a third (35%) of singles took the hard line and stated there should be no debt at all.

What's more, eharmony data suggests men and women are still slightly old fashioned when it comes to their ideal salary in a potential partner. According to the preferences stated in 9,500 anonymised dating profiles, more than half of women (60%) are more likely to send their first message to men who earn more, while only a quarter of men (24%) follow suit. Alternatively, more than half of men (53%) prefer to open a conversation with a female match on a lower income, and a quarter (24%) go for someone on the same income.

eharmony relationship expert Sharon Draper concludes that money can really impact matters of the heart.

“Regardless of income levels, financial stress can have a major impact on relationship satisfaction. If there isn’t a foundation of trust when it comes to money, it can lead down a dangerous route. A couple ideally needs to agree in their approach, whether they choose to merge bank accounts or keep things separate. And if they’re struggling to see eye to eye, I’d really recommend seeking financial advice together.

“At eharmony we measure people’s core values and personality traits to match them with like-minded people. We therefore not only measure how important money is to them, but how well they score on traits intrinsically linked to finance, such as the desire for security, structure, and domesticity. We do this because we know that attitudes to spending can make or break a relationship over time.”

*This does not include mortgage in the debt being considered.

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About eharmony.com.au

eharmony launched in 2000 with a clear vision: to create more lasting love in the world. The experts at eharmony use an intelligent Compatibility Matching System (CMS) to match singles, according to 32 bespoke dimensions of compatibility. These are powerful indicators of relationship satisfaction. On average, every 14 minutes someone finds love on eharmony. www.eharmony.com.au/tour