



COST OF CLUTTER: HALF OF AUSSIES ARE STRUGGLING TO MAINTAIN A CLEAN HOME

New research reveals Aussies believe their homes are more cluttered than before

SYDNEY, March 2024 – Clutter is on the rise, with one in four (25%) Aussies revealing that their homes are more cluttered than five years ago, a growing issue that is having a flow on effect from their mental health to their hip pockets.

According to new research commissioned by Choosi, in partnership with consumer research group MyMavins, over half (50%) of Aussie households report that they experience clutter or disorganisation at least once a month. General odds and ends (46%), clothing and footwear (34%) and paper, including magazines, special offers and receipts (28%) were listed as the top three things cluttering homes.

The *Choosi Clutter 2.0 Report* surveyed over 1,200 Aussies aged 18 years or older, shedding light on their habits and attitudes toward household and digital clutter while revealing the barriers that are holding them back from kicking it to the curb. The research also delves into the impact clutter can have on mental wellbeing, while also uncovering the myriad on benefits experienced from conquering the clutter.

Clutter is a confronting reality with one in two (50%) households reporting they experience clutter or disorganisation at least once a month, likely due to the increase of it over the past few years.

The study also found that around three in five (62%) find it challenging to find time to declutter and clean. Among those who find it challenging, the most common reasons cited were a lack of motivation (46%), limited free time (40%) and a lack of storage space (39%).

Younger Aussies are more affected than others, with Gen Z (39%) and Gen Y (35%), experiencing clutter at least once a week compared to Baby Boomers (17%). The divide is also being felt across men and women, with half of men reporting they don't mind the clutter (50%) compared to less than two in five women (38%).

To help declutter, respondents recommended donating or selling unused items (51%), starting small (45%) and avoiding impulse buys (43%).

Professional organiser and owner of The Happy Organiser, Edel Beattie, commented: "Impulse purchasing is one reason we accumulate too much stuff and many of us are unaware we are doing it. Although consumerism and advertising play a role in this behaviour, we can build our own awareness to help us make better decisions."

"As the research shows, many Australians feel that clutter and disorganisation builds up over the month. Many find it difficult to give time to decluttering and cleaning due to busy schedules. Dedicating time to both decluttering and cleaning is important, so scheduling the time into your calendar helps. Regular resets and short twenty-minute power tidies can really help keep the clutter at bay."

When it comes to the cost of keeping homes clean and tidy, nearly one in two (49%) cited the rising cost of living as a leading pressure on their ability to maintain a clean home. This has seen many cut back on cleaning supplies (21%) and home organisation systems (17%) to help relieve some of the financial pressure.

With Aussies feeling the pinch, more are increasingly turning to second hand marketplaces to turn clutter into cash (45 per cent in 2017; 61 per cent in 2024). For those looking to

offload excess clutter, Meta's Facebook was the top online marketplace (67%), followed by Gumtree (43%) and eBay (38%).

However, this does not come without risk as over one in four (28%) reported that they had experienced a scam attempt online, highlighting the need to be vigilant when navigating online marketplaces.

The financial impacts of clutter can also lead to increased spending, with almost three in five (57%) admitting that household clutter leads them to make unnecessary purchases. Clothing and accessories (37%) were named the most common redundant buys.

The thought of decluttering the home has even deterred two in five (43%) from moving or selling homes, highlighting the unexpected ways in which clutter is affecting Aussies' lives.

Edel Beattie commented: "Moving home can be overwhelming however it can also be viewed as an opportunity to finally clear out a lot of clutter. Even if you have no imminent plans to sell or move, start decluttering now and focus on one room or small area – a slow and consistent approach feels much less overwhelming."

According to the data, the mental health impacts of clutter are on the rise too. More Aussies say that it has an impact on their life, increasing from 47% in 2017 to 71% in 2023. Nearly three in five (57%) acknowledged that clutter causes them stress or anxiety.

Unsurprisingly, a clutter-free home has been associated with mental clarity (80%) and health benefits (78%) for four in five people. Post-decluttering, the report found that around three in four (74%) experience mood improvements, with over nine in ten (94%) feeling positive emotions such as satisfaction (48%) and relief (43%).

Emotional connection can be one of the biggest challenges to overcome when trying to part ways with an item, with nearly two in five people (39%) reporting nostalgia as a key barrier to addressing clutter. In addition to this, around one in three (33%) Aussies find the other biggest barriers to throwing away clutter to be the perceived usefulness of an item (33%), financial value (32%), and difficulty making decisions (31%).

Despite a love of travel, the study also found that half of Aussies are spending more time decluttering their homes than on holiday each year, logging 3.6 hours a week to clear the clutter (187 hours each year). This time is more often being lost on weekends, with two in three (65%) believing that a Saturday (34%) or Sunday (31%) is the most convenient time for decluttering.

"In the beginning of any big decluttering task, it can take more time to see the impact and build momentum. However longer term, the goal is to have less clutter coming into our homes meaning we will eventually spend less time decluttering and tidying up," commented Edel Beattie.

Further key findings

- The primary motivations for decluttering are to avoid wasting money (88%), desire for simplified living (87%), and the fear of running out of space (84%).
- Over one in three (37%) cite insufficient storage as the top reason for clutter, with accumulation exceeding culling (31%) and a lack of time to declutter (31%) also contributing significantly.
- The garage or shed were the most likely space to be cluttered (19%), followed by spare rooms (15%), and communal spaces (13%).



- To avoid digital clutter, Australians listed deleting unused apps and software (41%), regularly removing unnecessary files (39%), and unsubscribing from unneeded email newsletters (38%) as the top ways to manage. Additionally, one in three (34%) avoid unnecessary downloads, and a similar proportion (33%) regularly review and delete old photos.
- The top satisfaction of clearing our digital clutter came from having no unread emails (43%), having an empty recycle bin (36%), and no unnecessary apps (33%).
- The thought of decluttering deters more than two in five (43%) from moving or selling their homes, with nearly one in five (18%) greatly put off and a further one in four (25%) somewhat deterred.
- Social media or influencers are considered pressure factors for a clutter-free home by only one in three (37%).
- A clutter-free home is associated with mental clarity and health benefits for four in five people (80% and 78%, respectively).

Further insights from the research can be found on the Choosi website here.

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About the Choosi Clutter 2.0 Report

The *Choosi Clutter 2.0 Report* is a part of the Choosi Research Series. This most recent study explores the impact of clutter on Aussies, including the barriers to reducing clutter.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Choosi and conducted by MyMavins between the 6th December and 13th December 2023. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 1,209 responses from Aussies over the age of 18 years old.

About Choosi

Choosi's free comparison service lets you compare the benefits and prices of a range of popular insurance products, online and over the phone, so you can confidently choose cover that suits your needs, budget and lifestyle. Choosi does not compare the whole market.

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