

Is the dress worth the stress?

Aussies are having to choose between their heart and their head as they weigh up whether they spend big on their wedding day or buy their first home

Tying the knot is an exciting time, and the majority (70.8%) still see marriage as the ultimate form of commitment to a significant other. However, the big day can come at a cost. The culmination of stress, pressures and financial strain is taking its toll and raising one question: are weddings still worth it for Aussie couples?

Despite the perception that marriage is the ultimate form of commitment, loved-up couples are weighing up their financial priorities and what's best for them in the long run. In fact, a large majority (79.3%) would prefer to invest their joint savings in buying a property together as opposed to a wedding (4.5%).

The *Choosi Cost of Love Report* is the ninth instalment in a national research series that explores the key barriers and drivers behind financial and social behaviours in today's modern society. This chapter explores the influence of societal factors and stresses associated with planning a wedding.

Stress and emotional strain are seemingly unavoidable in the leadup to the big day with more than a third of married Aussies saying that the wedding planning process places a strain on themselves (38.7%) and their partner (38.3%). A further two in five (39.5%) say they were stressed when preparing for their nuptials and, of these, nearly a third (30.8%) cite sticking to the budget as the most stressful part.

In a bid to keep costs down and combat budget stress, Aussies are becoming savvier than ever and turning to 'wedding hacks'. Top of the list includes hosting smaller, more intimate ceremonies, buying the dress or suit off the rack rather than getting them custom made and even trying their hand in the kitchen to make their own wedding cake.

Finances aside, a quarter (25.7%) of married couples identified managing their parents and families as a wedding day stressor, with a similar proportion (21.9%) saying it was not being able to invite everyone they wanted to. The stress around guest lists is often intensified with added pressure from parents and in-laws who want to invite distant relatives or connections, a scenario encountered by close to two-fifths (36.9%) of married couples.

Choosi spokesperson Katrina Foster said: "There's no denying that planning a wedding is an incredibly exciting time for newlyweds-to-be but, equally, it can be very stressful when multiple factors come to a head.

"Those looking to marry are not only juggling the general stress of wedding planning; there is also the influence of family members to factor in. With all these elements at play, It's essential that those planning to marry are putting their own health and happiness first.

"Our research also shows that Aussies are taking stock of their finances and weighing up their priorities. For some, that may be their wedding, and for others it may be putting their money towards a property. In the end, it's not one size fits all as both elements are crucial pieces in the commitment puzzle."



Thanks to Australia's snap-happy culture, social media is unsurprisingly adding to wedding stress. The vast majority believe that the pressure to have an 'Insta-perfect' wedding not only increases the cost (86.8%), but also puts unnecessary stress on couples (84.0%). Despite this, there is an increasing trend in finding wedding inspiration online.

Dorothy Polka, Founder of Polka Dot Bride said: "It's fair to say that the rise of social media is a beneficial tool in wedding planning as it allows those involved to draw inspiration from all over. On the other hand, the onset of stress as a result of comparison and the desire to deliver the 'perfect' wedding is understandable.

"With this in mind, it's crucial for couples who are planning their wedding to remember that the most important priority of the day is themselves and the memories they'll create, rather than how Instagram worthy their wedding will be."

Dorothy Polka concluded: "The planning phase is a stressful and time-consuming part of a wedding, but Aussies are aware of this and are striving to balance what they want with the expectations of others, particularly relatives, so everyone can celebrate this happy occasion.

"Ultimately, couples should always do what's best for them, whether that's saying 'I do', committing to a mortgage or making other financial investments."

Despite the stress, pressure and financial output involved with marriage, close to half of married respondents say they wouldn't change a thing.

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About the Choosi Cost of Love Report

In order to explore the stress behind wedding planning and the social influence on weddings in Australian society, CoreData surveyed 1,000 typical Australians across the nation in July 2018.

The sample collection employed soft quotas to monitor representativeness of the Australian population. Hard quotas by state were also engaged to ensure all the main states were represented with sufficiently robust samples (NSW = 200, VIC = 200, QLD = 200, WA = 200, Remaining states/territories = 200).