



THE COST OF LOVE IN COVID-19 ERA: THE SPEND ON WEDDINGS IS DOWN, WHILE LOVE PREVAILS

New research from Choosi explores the costs, pressures and stresses of planning a wedding and how the pandemic has shaped new mindsets for relationships and weddings of 2021, and beyond.

SYDNEY, July 2021 – The challenging events of 2020 have seen a significant shift in how couples, both recently married and those planning to get married prepare for the big day. COVID-19 had no remorse for those who tied the knot, as Choosi research found the majority (87.0%) of recently married couples felt the pandemic had an impact on wedding plans resulting in loved up couples having to pivot and get creative to bring their big day to life.

Released today, *The Choosi Cost of Love 2021* survey follows on from the first iteration in 2018 and forms part of the Choosi Research Series. In its latest instalment, Choosi surveyed over 5,000 Australians*, exploring the costs, pressures, and stresses of planning a wedding. It also investigates the impact in which the COVID-19 pandemic had on weddings and relationships.

COVID-19 brought on an extra level of planning and pivoting, but many couples were able to weather the storm, finding silver linings through the process. Interestingly, majority (97.2%) of couples also acknowledged vendors were able to provide support and flexibility. The restrictions meant less pressure to invite a large number of guests (45.0%) and allowed some couples to get back to more intimate and meaningful gatherings (43.0%).

Furthermore, the research also saw one-third (34.9%) of recently married couples use the money they saved on the wedding and spent it in other important life decisions such as home improvements, paying off a mortgage or saving for a holiday.

Sydney based Relationships Expert and Psychologist, David Fox commented on the research, noting that the findings mirrored his experience through the couples he counselled over the last year.

“The research certainly confirms what we as relationship counsellors have experienced in our practice around the increased stress and pressure put on couples during Covid-19.

“It is interesting to note that although COVID-19 caused a lot of delayed plans and feelings of missing out, couples reinvested in other meaningful ways. This speaks to the incredible amount of expectations that we have in our society about how we should live our lives. This shift in priorities shows how we as Australians have adjusted in our thinking.”

The report also revealed the hard costs of weddings, with recently married couples reporting they spent approximately on average \$17,525 on the big day, which is significantly lower when compared to the 2018 average of \$28,381. More than three in four (79.2%) recently married couples applied at least one “get around” to their wedding plans, with the most common cited as “getting brutal” when cutting the guest list to only their nearest and dearest (49.5%). Some couples opted for a lower budget venue (36.6%) while some found alternative sources and “adaptable” ideas for flowers and décor (28.9%).



Looking at the two iterations of research more closely, Choosi found that Australians think a wedding in 2021 costs approximately an average of \$29,645, almost \$5,000 higher than what was reported in the company's 2018 research. Looking to the future, couples planning to say "I do" are looking to set aside around \$17,184 and will implement similar tactics to those who have recently married.

Therese Waters, Head of Communications, Research and Content at Choosi says:

"We conducted this research to better understand how Australians adapted following the year that was 2020, and how these weddings will shape the future of the wedding industry.

COVID-19 is still shaping the mindsets of those looking to tie the knot. One in four (26.9%) will consider having a small wedding due to COVID-19 restrictions, and a large amount feel that big weddings are not important (68.1%). With less guests comes some financial relief, and couples are looking at investing this money in other major life moments."

Although the research indicates that the cost of weddings has dropped, the stress and anxiety around planning the wedding increased for couples (65.2%). Stresses shifted from décor and colour schemes to whether close friends and family would be able to attend, or if restrictions would prohibit the wedding from even moving forward.

Many factors had a considerable impact on couples' physical and mental health with over half (51.7%) of recently married respondents reporting mental health ramifications, while just over one in 10 (11.6%) noting physical health impacts. More than three-fifths (65.2%) highlighted that COVID-19 increased the stress and anxiety around their wedding, most commonly (71.5%) due to having important family members unable to attend. Unfortunately, over half (56.7%) of couples who married in the last year had to change their wedding date one time while others (43.3%) had to change multiple times. Naturally, this put a strain on a quarter (25.3%) of relationships.

"A striking element of the research is that at least half of all respondents said that their mental health had been impacted due to the stress of planning their wedding during COVID-19. I would venture to say that the impact of a wedding on mental health may remain the same regardless of a pandemic or not. There is so much societal pressure and expectations of a wedding and whilst it can be an incredibly enjoyable and memorable experience for many, there certainly is a mental, emotional, and financial cost. It's interesting to see from the research that both men and women are impacted," Fox added.

The research also found that social media plays a role in the physical and mental stress on couples, as more than a quarter (26.6%) felt pressured to have a wedding that was 'Insta-perfect', and over three-quarters (76.9%) stated that social media puts unnecessary stress on couples. This pressure also detracts from the meaning of a marriage (77.3%) and the joy of the occasion (77.2%).

Further insights from the research can be found on the Choosi website:
choosi.com.au/blog/general/cost-of-love-2021

Reasons for stress over wedding plans

Recently married couples



- 71.5% having important family members unable to attend
- 63.3% uncertainty on the date
- 56.9% having extended guests from interstate/overseas given border closures
- 49.7% people getting upset they were not invited/could not come
- 32.5% providing safe environment for guests
- 22.6% securing a venue
- 22.0% pressured to do it sooner before restrictions tightened

Couples planning to get married

- 63.1% uncertainty on the date
- 58.6% possibility of having extended guests from interstate/overseas given border closures
- 41.1% securing a venue
- 36.9% providing safe environment for guests
- 24.4% pressured to do it sooner before restrictions possibly tighten again

COVID-19 impacts on relationships

The good impacts on relationships

- 65.7% bringing couples closer together through appreciating what they have
- 57.8% spending more time together improved the bond
- 26.7% discovering new things about each other

The bad impacts on relationships

- 58.4% tension/frustration due to not being able to do normal activities and/or socialise as usual
- 46.5% tension/stress due to money worries or lack of job security
- 18.3% getting tired of each other
- 15.9% forced to spend a lot of time together

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

*Recently married (between March 2020 and March 2021) – 688; Planning to marry (in next 24 months) – 840; Not getting married (as of March 2021) – 530; Married in the past two years or longer - 2,402; Single/Divorced/Separated/Widowed – 653 = Total sample size - 5,113

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About Choosi



Choosi helps customers compare, choose, and apply for a range of insurance products online and over the phone. Choosi's free comparison service lets you compare the benefits and prices of a range of popular insurance products, so you can confidently choose cover that suits your needs, budget, and lifestyle.

About the Choosi Cost of Love Research Series

The Choosi Cost of Love 2021 Report follows on from the first iteration in 2018 and forms part of the Choosi Research Series. In its latest instalment, this in-depth study explores the costs, pressures and stresses of planning a wedding. It also investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on weddings and relationships.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Choosi and conducted by CoreData between 12 and 25 March 2021. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 5,113 responses from Australians aged 18 years and above. The sample is representative of the general population of Australians in terms of age, gender, wealth, and state/territory.