



Fox Symes

# Quarterly Debt Poll

 Conducted by 

## Research Summary - Australians' Attitude to Debt

The Fox Symes Quarterly Debt Poll is a national poll produced quarterly by GA Research for Fox Symes. It examines Australians' attitude to debt and changes in the levels of and causes of personal debt. Newspoll conducted the national telephone poll of 1,200 Australians over the age of 18 years during September 2006.

### Key Findings

1. Around 80% of Australians say the level of household debt in this country is a serious problem.
2. Almost one in four Australians (23%) think their financial situation has worsened in the last three months.
3. Australians are more worried about not having enough money to pay their bills than they are about being a victim of a violent crime.

### Household Debt in Australia

Australians recognise the seriousness of the household debt problem. Nine in ten feel that the level of household debt in Australia is a problem to some degree, with four in ten viewing it as a very serious problem.

**Table 1: Problem of Household Debt in Australia**

*"Thinking about the level of household debt in Australia on things like credit cards, home mortgages, car loans and other personal loans. At the moment, do you think the level of household debt in Australia is ...?"*

Responses	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	18-34 Years	35-49 Years	50+ Years
A Very Serious Problem	39%	36%	42%	23%	40%	50%
A Fairly Serious Problem	41%	41%	41%	49%	43%	34%
Serious Problem Sub-Total	80%	77%	83%	72%	83%	84%
A Minor Problem	12%	15%	9%	18%	12%	7%
Problem Sub-Total	92%	92%	92%	90%	95%	91%
Not a Problem at All	4%	4%	3%	6%	2%	3%
Don't Know	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%	6%
Totals* ('000)	15,599 100%	7,655	7,944	4,739	4,531	6,329

\* Australian Population Over 18 years WTD. RESP. (000's)

Note that respondents over 50 years old are significantly more likely to believe the current level of household debt is a 'very serious problem' than other age groupings.

### Changing Financial Situation

In regards to their own financial situation in terms of income and expenditure over the past three months, 16% of respondents say their financial situation has improved, 23% say it has worsened and 60% say it has stayed the same.

**Tables 2 & 3: Assessment of Current Financial Situation Compared to Three Months Ago**

*"Compared with three months ago, do you think your financial situation is now...?"*

**Table 2: Detailed Breakdown by Families with Children in House Under 18 Years Old**

Responses	Total	Have Children	
		Yes	No
Better	16%	20%	14%
Worse	23%	24%	22%
Same	60%	56%	63%
Don't Know/Refused	1%	0%	1%
Totals ('000)*	15,599 100%	5,348	10,251

\* Australian Population Over 18 years WTD. RESP. (000's)

Families with children under 18 years old have greater volatility in their financial situation with two out of five being either better or worse off financially compared with three months ago.

**Table 3: Detailed Breakdown by Age Groupings**

Responses	Total	Age		
		18-34 Years	35-49 Years	50+ Years
Better	16%	24%	20%	8%
Worse	23%	18%	23%	26%
Same	60%	58%	56%	65%
Don't Know/Refused	1%	0%	1%	1%
Totals ('000)*	15,599 100%	4,739	4,531	6,329

\* Australian Population Over 18 years WTD. RESP. (000's)

Most people over 50 years of age say their financial situation has not changed in the last three months. If anything, the situation is deteriorating in comparison with that of younger people, with fewer saying they are better off and more saying they are worse off.

## Changes in Personal Debt

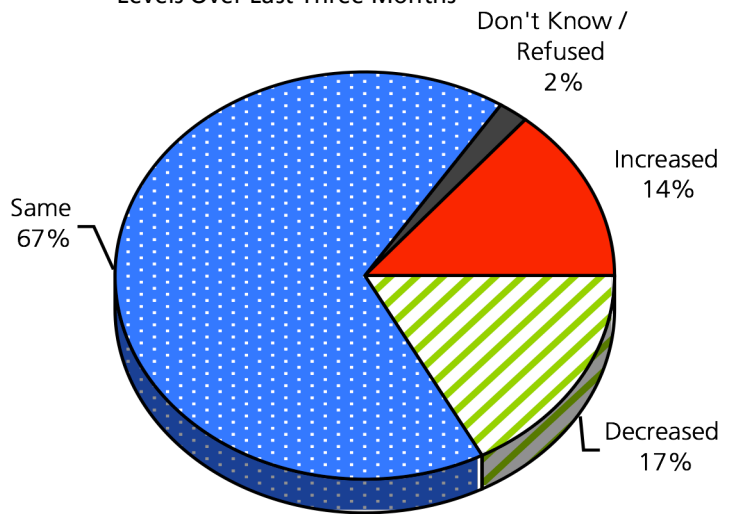
Fourteen per cent of respondents say their own level of debt has increased in the past three months, 17% say it has decreased and 67% feel it has remained the same.

Increased debt was experienced by a higher percentage of those under 49 years (17%) compared to those over 50 years (8%); and by respondents with children under 18 at home (19%) compared to those with no children (11%).

Of the 14% whose debt has increased, the reasons given were:

- new purchases and expenses - eg new car, home renovations, household purchases etc (31%)
- day to day living expenses / bills (26%)
- the costs of petrol and / or running a vehicle (22%)
- mortgage, loan or interest rates (22%)
- employment related reasons (9%)
- other reasons included credit cards, the cost of education, drought, business related expenses and health / medical expenses

Chart 1: Changes in Personal Debt Levels Over Last Three Months

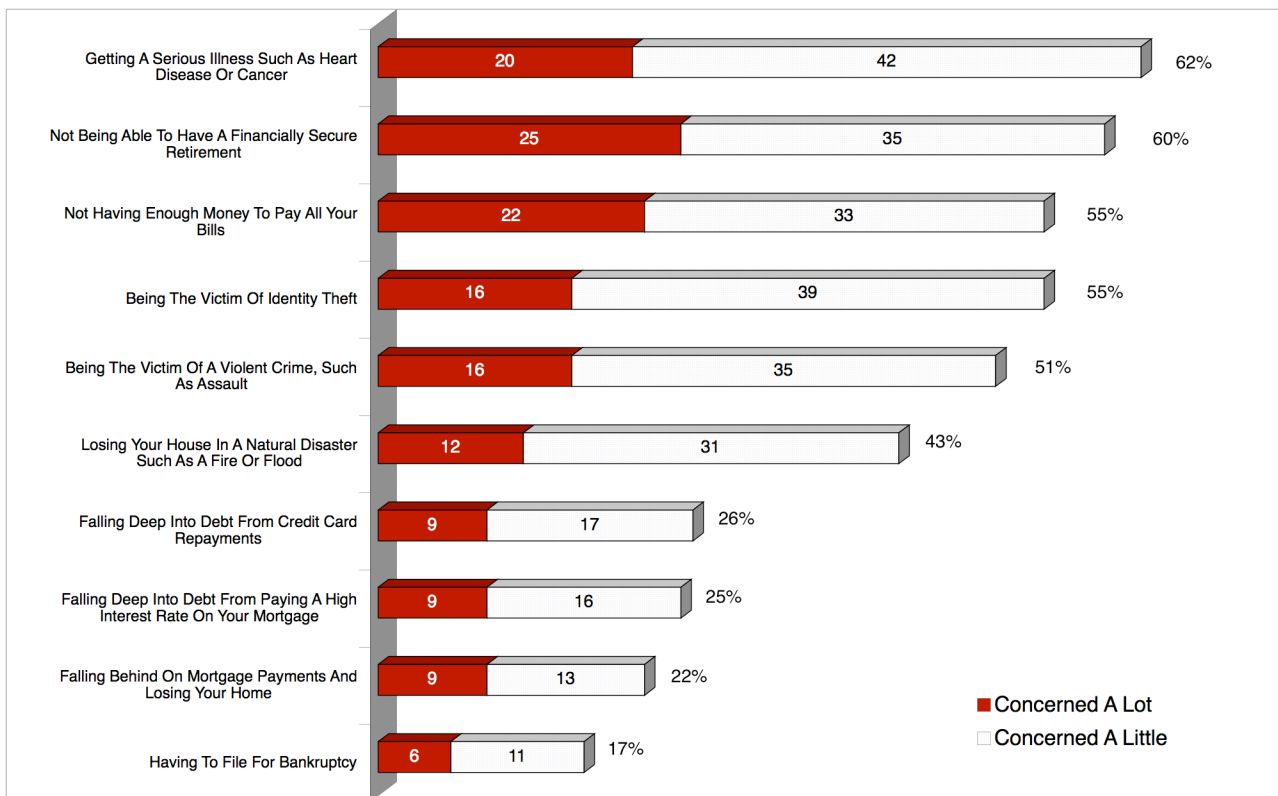


## Levels of Concern

When asked about their relative levels of concern about a range of potential situations, respondents indicated that only 'getting a serious illness' was a greater worry than 'not having a financially secure retirement' and 'not having enough money to pay the bills'.

Graph 2: Levels of Concern

"Now a question about things that some people may worry about. At the moment, do you personally worry about each of the following things a lot, a little, or not at all?"



### About Fox Symes

Fox Symes is the premier debt relief company in Australia. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of FSA Group Limited, a public company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. Fox Symes helps people manage their debt by restructuring their current situation. It is not a bank, financial institution or law firm. Since 2000 Fox Symes has helped thousands of Australians work their way through debt. Additional information can be found at [www.foxsymes.com.au](http://www.foxsymes.com.au) or by calling 1300 361 204.