

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Lady Luck to blame for financial woes: survey**

Many of those unhappy with their financial situation say their money woes are not their fault, blaming bad luck rather than debt, a new survey has found.

The 'financial fulfillment' survey - commissioned by Australia's third biggest super fund Sunsuper\* - found that one in four respondents identified 'bad luck' as a top reason for their financial dissatisfaction, while 'good luck' and 'positive thinking' played a big role in the financial happiness stakes.

Of those who said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their finances, the other most common reasons were 'not earning enough money' and 'lack of financial planning', although less than half of those surveyed listed the latter as a top reason for their gloomy financial outlook.

Astonishingly, the two factors expected to account most for financial worries, 'the economic downturn' and 'having too much debt' were rated by only 3 and 2 per cent of respondents respectively as a reason for dissatisfaction.

The survey also found that men were nearly twice as likely as women to lay their financial woes at Lady Luck's door, and Gen Y, more than any other age group, blamed the cruel hand of fate, with 30 per cent saying if they were luckier they'd be richer. Those who earned under \$60,000 p.a. were also more likely than those who earned more to blame providence.

Sunsuper CEO Tony Lally said the big proportion of respondents attributing their financial situation to luck was staggering.

"It's concerning that so many of those surveyed believe their financial situation is largely out of their hands - that it's fate or chance that somehow leads to financial satisfaction or disappointment. It's particularly remarkable when you consider that while respondents were 12 times more likely to blame bad luck than too much debt, the average Australian household is in arrears to the tune of around \$128,000\*\* - which is not small change.

"It might be a useful way to avoid taking responsibility for their own financial situation, but blaming Lady Luck isn't going to increase the size of people's bank or super balances, lower debt, or secure a financial future," Mr Lally said.

"There are many things people can do to improve their situation and take control of their financial destiny and getting a good financial plan is a great place to start. It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive and it can make a real difference to people's financial futures."

The survey found that of those who said they were satisfied with their financial lives, 69 per cent said it was because they 'worked hard', although, interestingly, 20 per cent gave 'positive thinking' as a top reason, while 13 per cent attributed it to 'good luck'. Only one quarter listed 'good financial planning' as playing any part in their financial satisfaction.

And, in further evidence that men seem to be more fatalistic than women when it comes to money, 41 per cent of the financially satisfied men credited their happiness to 'good luck' and 'positive thinking', compared to only 28 per cent of women.

Interestingly, as you get older, the belief in the power of positive thinking and good luck seems to wane, with only 25 per cent of baby boomers attributing either to their financial satisfaction, compared to 35 and 37 per cent for both Gen X and Gen Y respectively.

In other surprise findings, only 3 per cent of the Gen Ys who responded attributed their financial fulfillment to their parents, contradicting the notion the under-35s enjoy sponging off mum and dad.

Gen Ys were also the most satisfied with how their lives were turning out financially, with the survey finding that the older you get, the more your financial dissatisfaction grows. Only 15 per cent of Gen Ys said they were financially dissatisfied, in comparison to 27 per cent of Gen Xs and 32 per cent of baby boomers.



In other findings, one in three respondents said they considered the statement 'money can buy you happiness' to be true. But, overall, those surveyed were a bunch of romantics with a whopping 76 per cent agreeing with the statement 'money can't buy you love'. (Although women were three times more likely to disagree with this statement than men.)

Finally - and perhaps not surprisingly given the ongoing economic crisis - more respondents declared 'money was the root of all evil' than not, with only 21 per cent of those who responded disagreeing with that statement.

Mr Lally said if people wanted to get help to boost their financial satisfaction and get on track to a financially comfortable future they could get advice - in many cases for free - from a qualified financial planner in Sunsuper's Member Advice Centre.

#### Other survey findings:

- Despite generally earning less, women (43 per cent) more than men (38 per cent) were more likely to express satisfaction in their current financial situation.
- More respondents from Brisbane and Melbourne (both 17 per cent) attributed their financial satisfaction to 'good luck' than those from Sydney (12 per cent) or Perth (7 per cent).
- NSW respondents (28 per cent) were most likely to attribute good financial planning to their financial satisfaction than respondents from other states.
- Sydneysiders said they were the most financially satisfied of those who live in the capital cities surveyed followed by Perth, but regional Queenslanders said they were the most financially satisfied overall. More Brisbane respondents said they were financially dissatisfied than those from any other surveyed capital city. Regional NSW respondents said they were the most financially dissatisfied overall.
- More Melbournites (34 per cent) blame 'bad luck' for their financial dissatisfaction than the residents of any other capital city surveyed. They were also the most likely to say they don't earn enough money (62 per cent).
- Sydneysiders (54 per cent) more than the residents of any other capital city say it's poor financial planning which causes their dissatisfaction.
- Twice as many men as women blame the 'economic downturn' for their financial dissatisfaction. More women than men say it's 'poor financial planning' which contributes to their financial unhappiness.
- One third of those who earned more than \$100,000 said they were financially dissatisfied because they didn't have enough money.
- Only just over half of the Brisbanites (53 per cent) surveyed attributed their financial satisfaction to 'hard work' in comparison to 79 per cent of those who lived in Perth.
- Nearly twice the number of Baby Boomers (15 per cent) blame divorce or bad relationships for their financial unhappiness than Gen X (8 per cent).

\*Survey undertaken of 750 Australians by TNS Research on behalf of Sunsuper. Sunsuper is Australia's third biggest super fund by number of members.

\*\*Australian Social Trends, March 2009, Household Debt, Australian Bureau of Statistics. \$128,000 is cited as the average amount of debt among indebted households.

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