

# Love After 50 Report



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## About the report

The *Love After 50 Report 2023* forms part of the Australian Seniors Research Series. In its latest instalment, this study explores the landscape of relationships with Australians over 50, delving into the factors influencing relationship satisfaction in later stages of life, the dynamics of singlehood, and the interplay between financial matters and relationships.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Australian Seniors and conducted by CoreData between 7 and 11 August 2023. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 1,240 responses from Australians aged 50 and above.

The sample is representative of the general senior population of Australians who are in a relationship, divorced/separated or widowed in terms of age, gender, wealth, and state/territory.

### Important things to observe about the charts and figures

- *Charts without a specific note represent questions that were asked to all respondents.*
- *Footnotes directly underneath the charts may refer to one or more of the following below dependent on the data presented. If more than one note is required, it would appear as a bulleted list.*
  - *Subset of the total sample size as certain questions would only be asked to specific respondents (e.g. \*n = 757, In a relationship)*
  - *Types of questions asked, for instance where multiple answers allowed, appears when the question called for more than one answer from the respondent*
  - *Data has been excluded from analysis (e.g. The option 'Not applicable' has been excluded from analysis; outliers removed from analysis)*
  - *Expanded explanation for figures that require additional calculations involving external publicly available data*
- *Some charts and figures may not be equal to 100% due to rounding differences. This is also true for summed up figures.*





# Key findings





# Key findings

## Trust and loyalty drive relationship satisfaction

- A majority of over 50s (85%) who are in relationships are satisfied with their relationship.
- The primary factors contributing to satisfaction in these relationships include trust and loyalty (77%), mutual respect (71%), and open, honest, and respectful communication (66%).
- Dissatisfaction in these relationships is primarily driven by poor communication (36%), emotional needs being unmet or feeling unappreciated (33%), and financial stress or disagreements (32%).
- Advice shared by over 50s for individuals seeking or maintaining happiness with a partner in later life revolves around open and honest communication regarding changing needs, desires, and addressing sources of stress with one's partner (65%), supporting each other's personal growth and fulfillment (57%) and maintaining a sense of independence (49%).

## Money troubles can harm relationships

- Close to 9 in 10 (88%) over 50s in a relationship feel comfortable discussing finances with their current partner.
- The most common shared finances for those in a relationship are shared assets such as property (58%), a will or estate planning (56%), and joint accounts (55%).
- For those not in a relationship or previously separated or divorced, separate accounts (53%), open talks about money (45%), and budget agreements (38%) are methods for handling finances in new relationships later in life.
- Over 2 in 5 (42%) in relationships claimed money and debt have negatively affected their relationship. Among them, 59% say rising living costs have negatively impacted their relationship.
- The primary ways rising living costs affect relationships include less disposable income (65%), financial strain and stress (57%), and difficulty in saving for the future (52%).
- Over half (57%) who are currently widowed or currently and/or previously separated or divorced experienced negative financial impacts as a result. Around 72% of women in the same category feel that the financial impact of divorce or separation is worsened by a gender superannuation gap.
- Around two thirds (66%) currently in a relationship or currently separated/divorced believe divorce costs more than separation.

## Key findings

### Empty nesting and increased financial pressure are perceived factors leading to rise in 'grey divorce'

- According to respondents, the primary factors contributing to the increase in 'grey divorce' or separation are empty nest syndrome (48%), increased financial pressures straining relationships (35%), and retirement adjustments (34%).
- The greatest challenges perceived by individuals over 50s during a 'grey divorce' or separation include asset division and legal complexities (55%), financial instability (53%), and emotional impacts and adjustments (50%).

### Many are satisfied being single later in life

- Almost a third (29%) single over 50s indicate that their single status positively influences their happiness.
- More than half (55%) single over 50s are content despite the absence of a committed partner.
- Most (57%) single over 50s are happy to remain single at this stage in their lives.

### Some over 50s have doubts about their relationship

- Over a third (37%) have questioned whether to continue their current relationship.
- A quarter of over 50s (25%) have seriously considered separating or getting divorced. This percentage is higher among those aged 50–59 (32%) compared to those aged 70 and above (15%).
- Around 1 in 6 (16%) individuals have engaged in discussions about divorce or separation with their partners in the past, ultimately choosing to remain together.
- The primary challenges faced by over 50s in their relationships include changes in sexual health, appetite, or intimacy (32%), physical health, ageing or caregiving responsibilities (28%), and financial difficulties or issues (20%).
- The primary strategies employed by over 50s to address these challenges are open and honest communication (35%), regular physical activity, balanced diet, and routine medical check-ups for maintaining health (33%), along with discovering new enjoyable and feasible activities for both partners (26%).

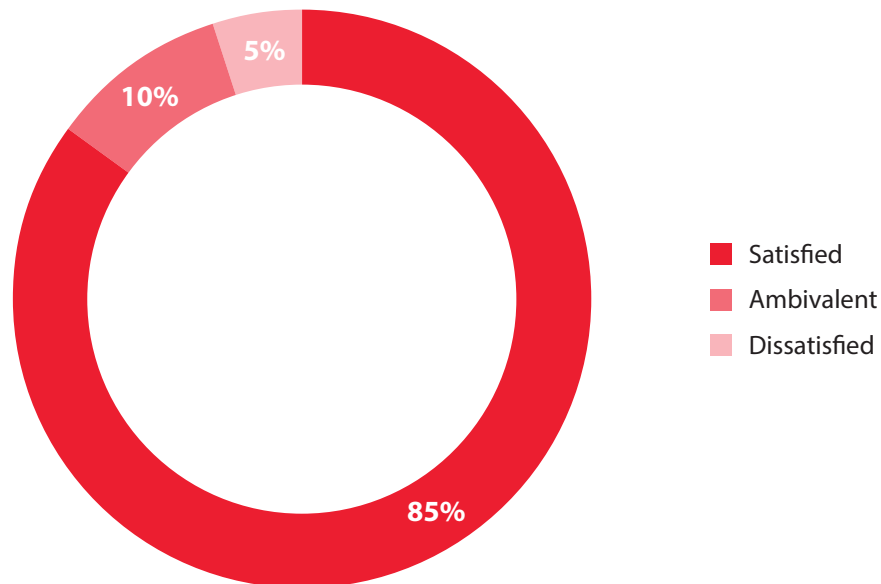


# Secrets of a happy relationship



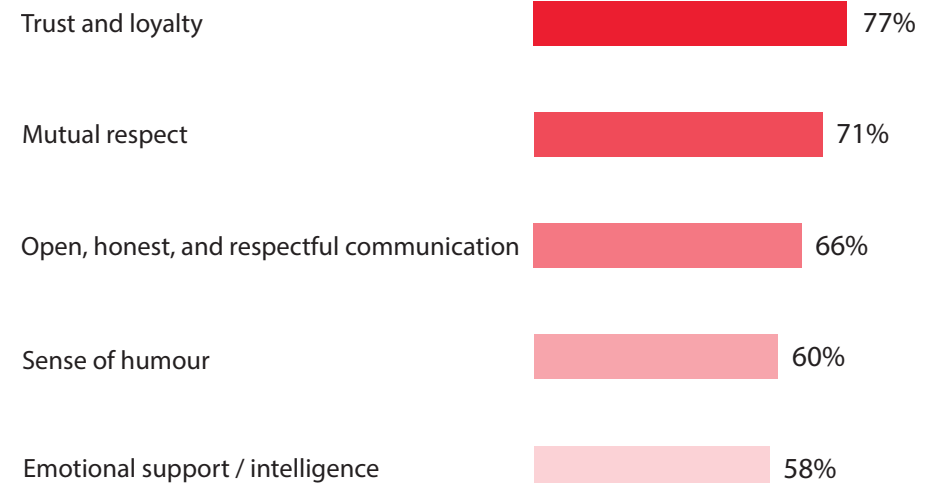
# Relationship satisfaction

How satisfied are you overall with your current relationship?



■ *n = 757, In a relationship*

What are the main factors that drive satisfaction in the relationship with your partner?



■ *n = 757, In a relationship*  
■ *Multiple answers allowed*  
■ *Top 5 answers*

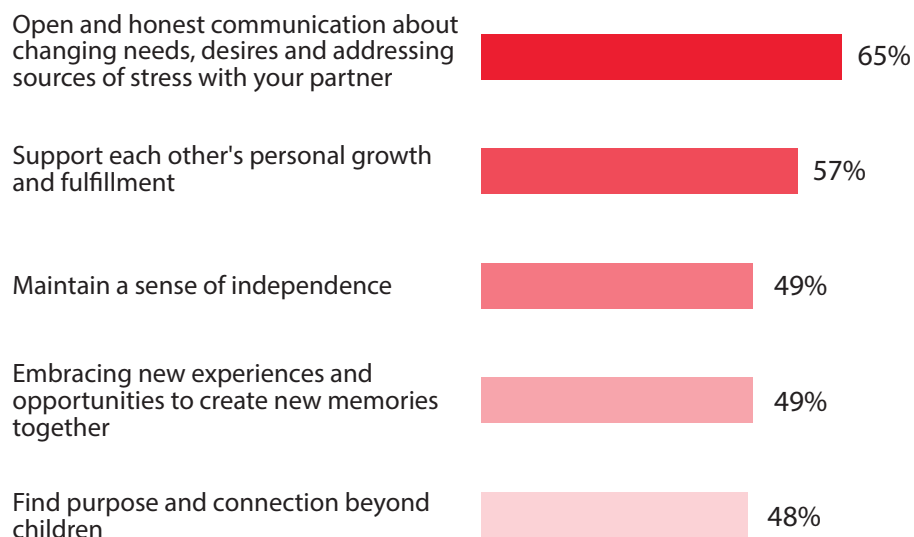
Over 4 in 5 (85%) over 50s who are in relationships are satisfied with their relationship.

The primary factors contributing to satisfaction in these relationships include trust and loyalty (77%), mutual respect (71%), and open, honest, and respectful communication (66%).



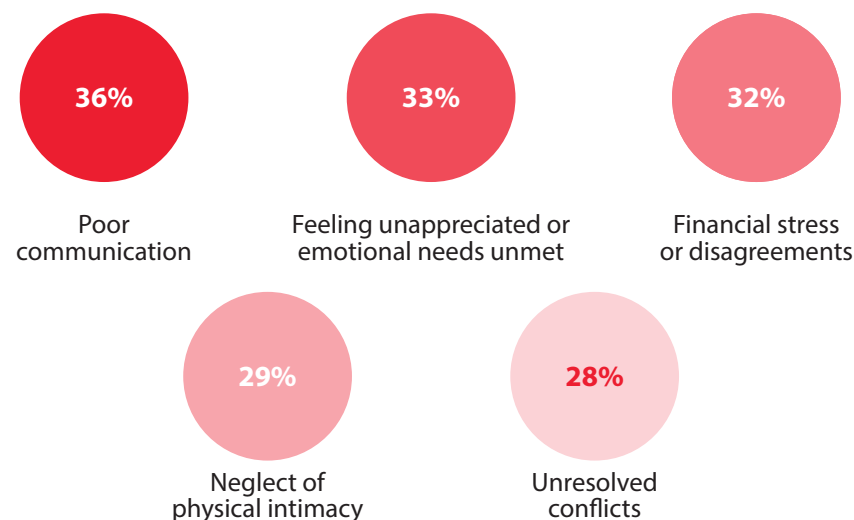
## Advice and dissatisfaction with relationships

### What advice would you give to others on finding and or maintaining happiness with a partner in later life?



- Multiple answers allowed
- Top 5 answers

### What are the main factors that drive dissatisfaction in the relationship with your partner?



- n = 757, In a relationship
- Multiple answers allowed
- Top 5 answers

Advice shared by over 50s for individuals seeking or maintaining happiness with a partner in later life revolves around open and honest communication regarding changing needs, desires, and addressing sources of stress with one's partner (65%), supporting each other's personal growth and fulfillment (57%) and maintaining a sense of independence (49%).

Dissatisfaction in these relationships is primarily driven by poor communication (36%), emotional needs being unmet or feeling unappreciated (33%), and financial stress or disagreements (32%).

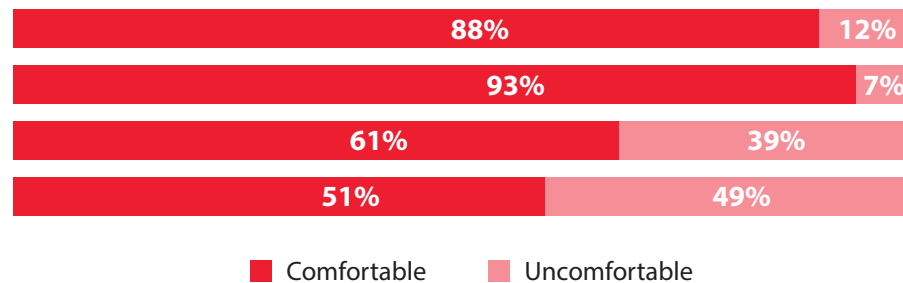
# Love and money





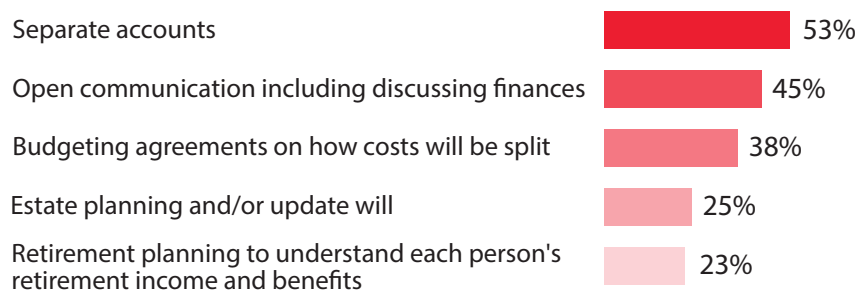
## Relationships and finances

How comfortable do you feel discussing finances with your current partner?



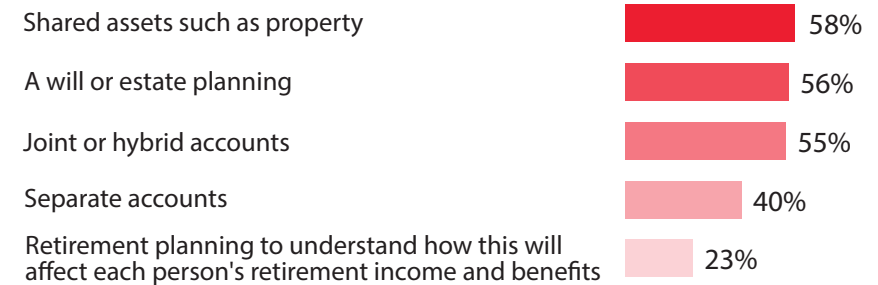
■ *n = 757, In a relationship*

How do/will you manage finances if stepping into a new relationship later in life?



■ *n = 699, Not in a relationship or has been separated/divorced in the past*  
 ■ *Multiple answers allowed*  
 ■ *Top 5 answers*

Do you have any of the following with your partner?



■ *n = 757, In a relationship*  
 ■ *Multiple answers allowed*  
 ■ *Top 5 answers*

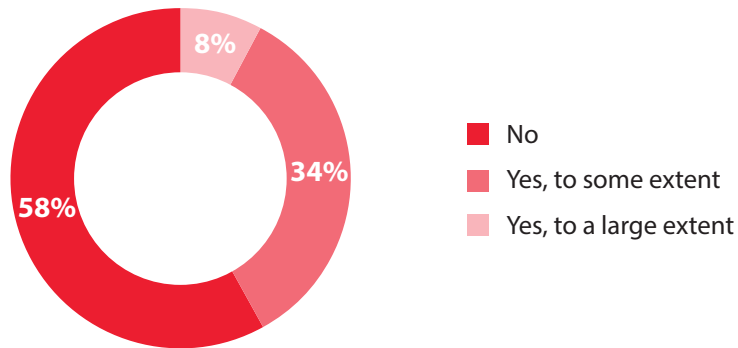
Close to 9 in 10 (88%) over 50s in a relationship feel comfortable discussing finances with their current partner.

The most common shared finances for those in a relationship are shared assets such as property (58%), a will or estate planning (56%), and joint accounts (55%).

For those not in a relationship or previously separated or divorced, separate accounts (53%), open talks about money (45%), and budget agreements (38%) are methods for handling finances in new relationships later in life.

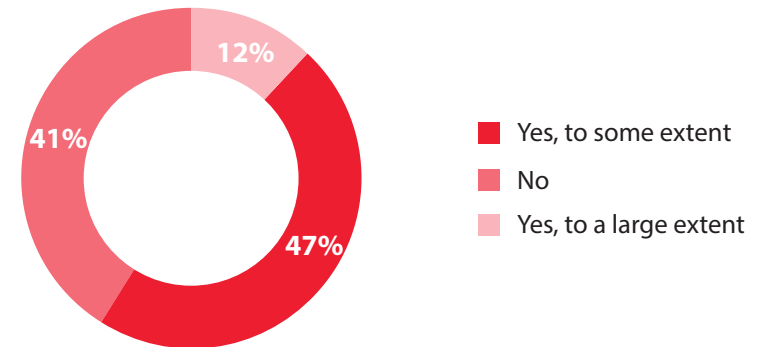
# Rising cost of living affecting relationships

Have finances/debt ever negatively impacted your relationship?



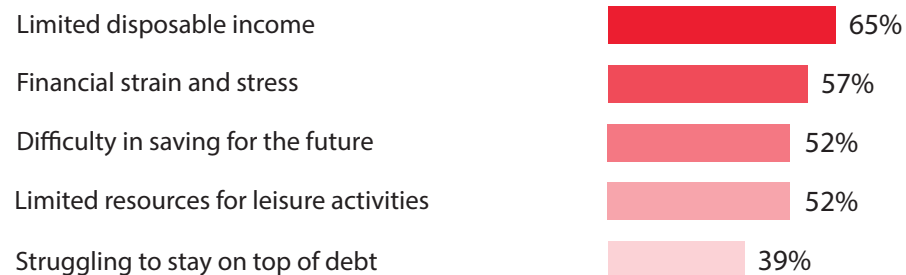
■ *n = 757, In a relationship*

Has your relationship been negatively impacted by the recent rising cost of living?



■ *n = 316, In a relationship AND finances/debt negatively impacted their relationship*

How do rising living costs negatively impact your relationship?



■ *n = 187, Finances/debt negatively impacted their relationship AND relationship has been negatively impacted by the recent rising cost of living*

■ *Multiple answers allowed*

■ *Top 5 answers*

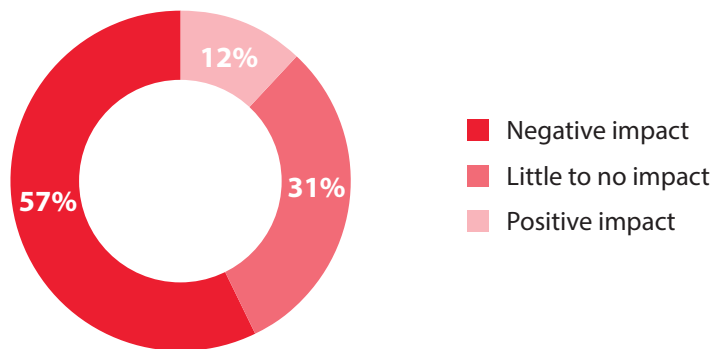
Over 2 in 5 (42%) in relationships claimed money and debt have negatively affected their relationship. Among them, 59% say rising living costs have negatively impacted their relationship.

The primary ways rising living costs affect relationships include less disposable income (65%), financial strain and stress (57%), and difficulty in saving for the future (52%).



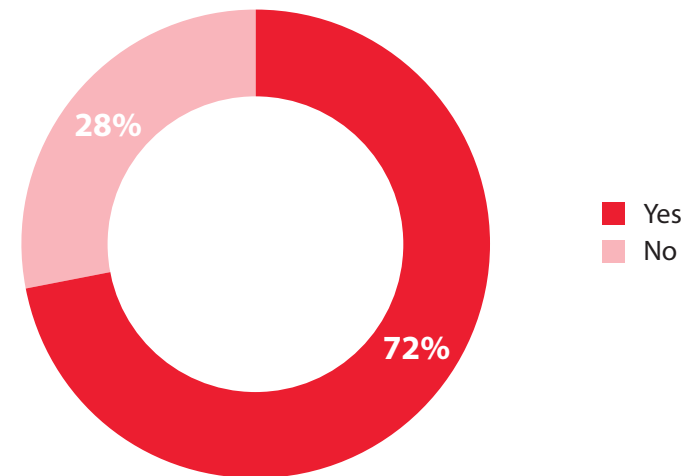
## Financial impacts negatively affecting relationships

Do you feel that you have been financially impacted by divorce, separation or being widowed?



■ *n = 567, Currently widowed or is currently/previously separated/divorced*

Do you feel the negative financial impact you have experienced from divorce, separation or being widowed has been made worse due to a gender superannuation gap?

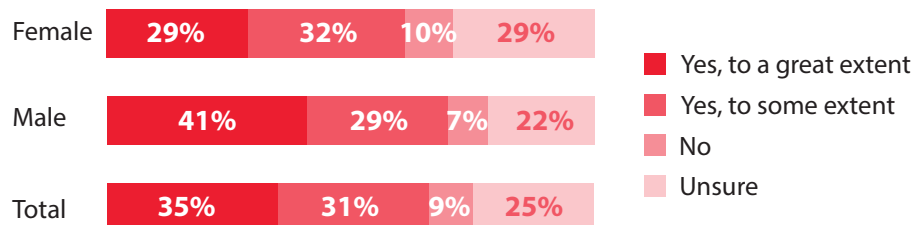


■ *n = 180, Currently widowed or is currently/previously separated/divorced AND females who were negatively financially impacted by divorce, separation or being widowed*

Over half (57%) who are currently widowed or currently/previously separated or divorced experienced negative financial impacts as a result. Around 72% of women in the same category feel that the financial impact of divorce or separation is worsened by a gender superannuation gap.

A third (66%) currently in a relationship or currently separated/divorced believe divorce costs more than separation.

Do you feel it costs more to get divorced than just separated?



■ *n = 1054, Currently in a relationship or is currently/previously separated/divorced*

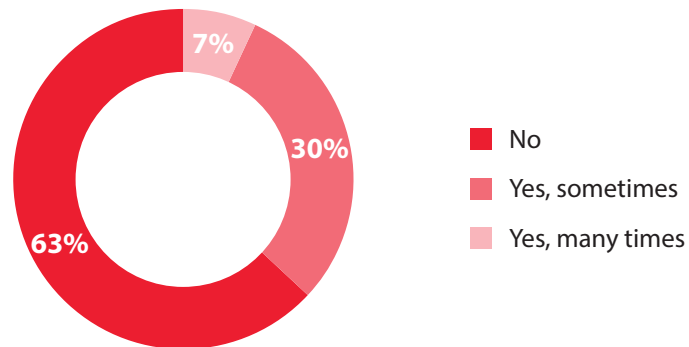
**Happily** *ever after?*





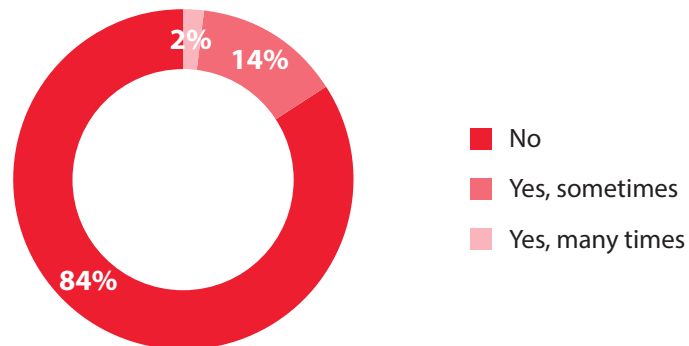
## Doubts in current relationship

Have you ever had doubts about continuing your current relationship?



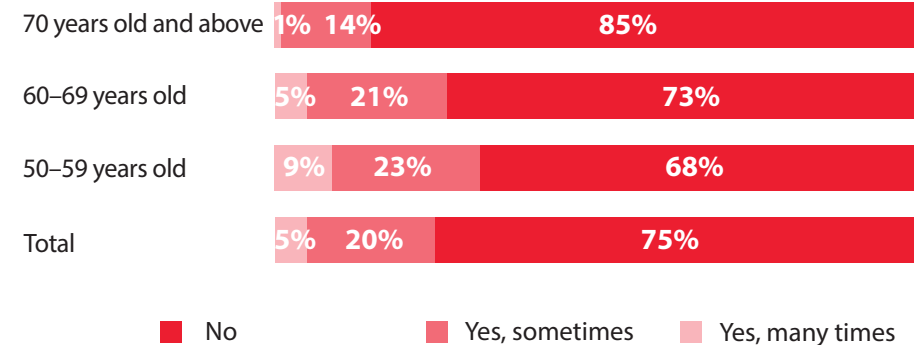
■ *n = 757, In a relationship*

Have you ever discussed divorce or separation with your partner in the past and decided to stay together?



■ *n = 757, In a relationship*

Have you ever seriously considered the possibility of separating or getting divorced?



■ *n = 757, In a relationship*

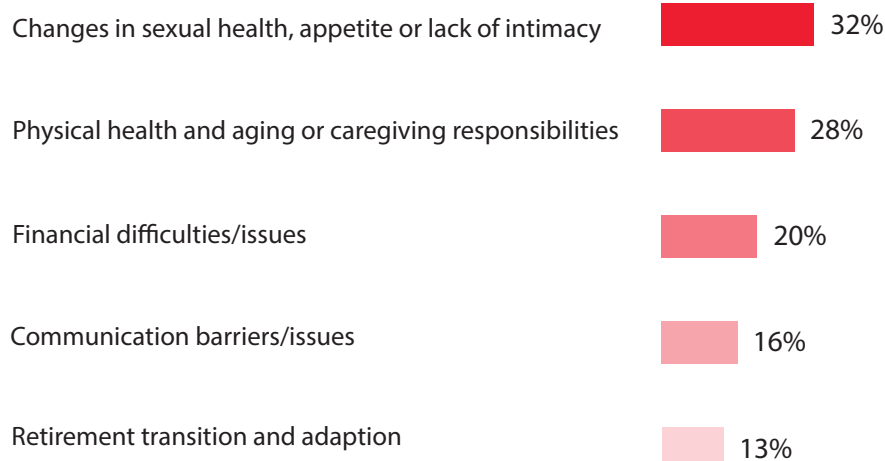
Nearly 2 in 5 (37%) have questioned whether to continue their current relationship.

A quarter of over 50s (25%) have seriously considered separating or getting divorced. This percentage is higher among those aged 50–59 (32%) compared to those aged 70 and above (15%).

Around 1 in 6 (16%) individuals have engaged in discussions about divorce or separation with their partners in the past, ultimately choosing to remain together.

# Challenges in relationships

## What are the main challenges in your relationship?



- *n = 757, In a relationship*
- *Multiple answers allowed*
- *Top 5 answers*

## How have you tried to overcome these challenges?



- *n = 561, In a relationship AND facing challenges in the relationship*
- *Multiple answers allowed*
- *Top 5 answers*

The primary challenges faced by over 50s in their relationships include changes in sexual health, appetite or intimacy (32%), physical health, ageing or caregiving responsibilities (28%), and financial difficulties or issues (20%).

The primary strategies employed by over 50s to address these challenges are open and honest communication (35%), regular physical activity, balanced diet, and routine medical check-ups for maintaining health (33%), along with discovering new enjoyable and feasible activities for both partners (26%).

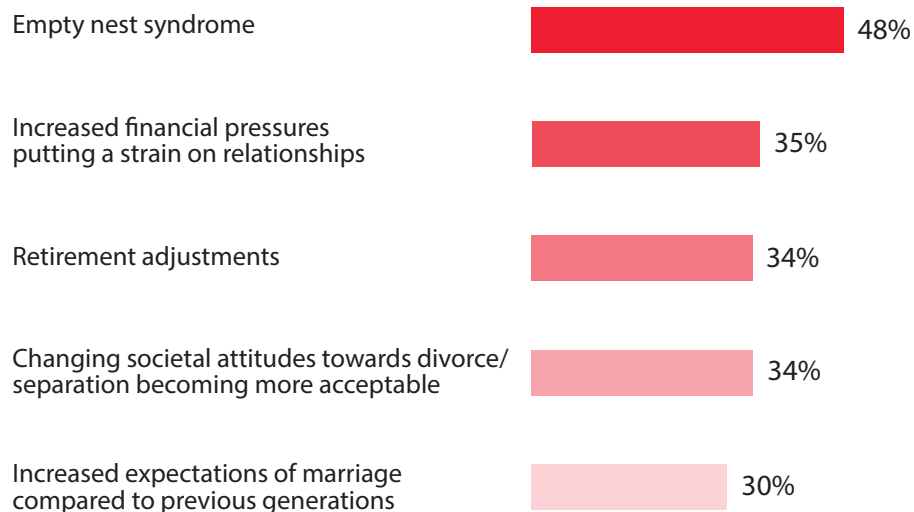


# Rise of the 'grey divorce'



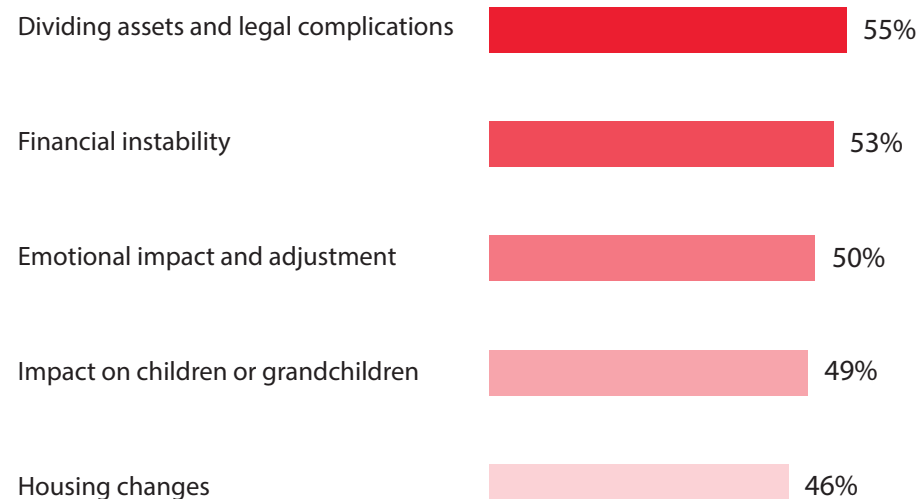
## Factors leading to 'grey divorce'

What factors do you feel contribute to the rise in 'grey divorce' or separation?



- Multiple answers allowed
- Top 5 answers

What do you think are the greatest challenges in a 'grey divorce' or separation?



- Multiple answers allowed
- Top 5 answers

According to respondents, the primary factors contributing to the increase in 'grey divorce' or separation are empty nest syndrome (48%), increased financial pressures straining relationships (35%), and retirement adjustments (34%).

The greatest challenges perceived by individuals over 50s during a 'grey divorce' or separation include asset division and legal complexities (55%), financial instability (53%), and emotional impacts and adjustments (50%).



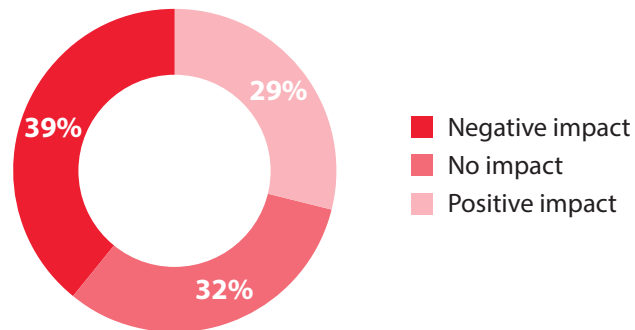
Single and loving it





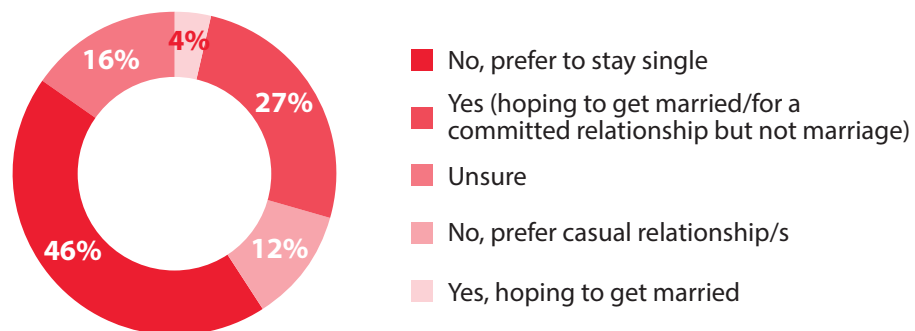
## Being single later in life

Does being single in later life impact your happiness at all?



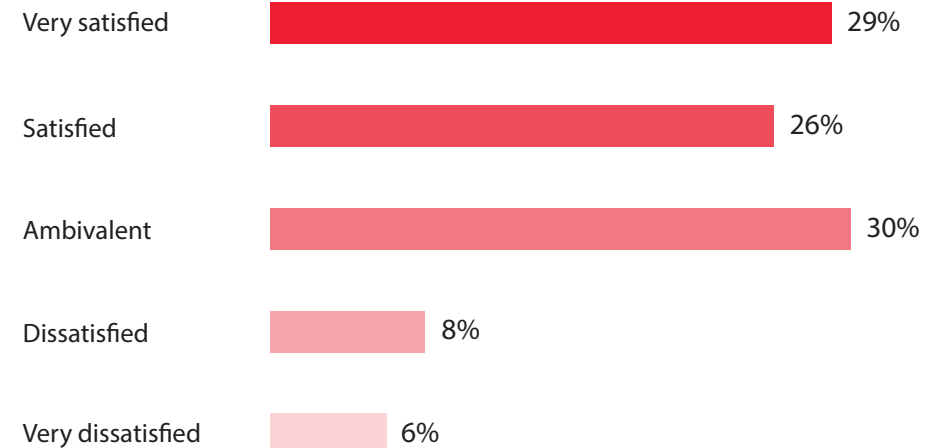
■ *n = 483, Not in a relationship*

Are you hoping to get into a serious relationship at this stage of your life?



■ *n = 483, Not in a relationship*

How satisfied are you overall with not currently having a committed partner?



■ *n = 483, Not in a relationship*

Nearly 3 in 10 (29%) single over 50s indicate that their single status positively influences their happiness.

More than half (55%) single over 50s are content despite the absence of a committed partner.

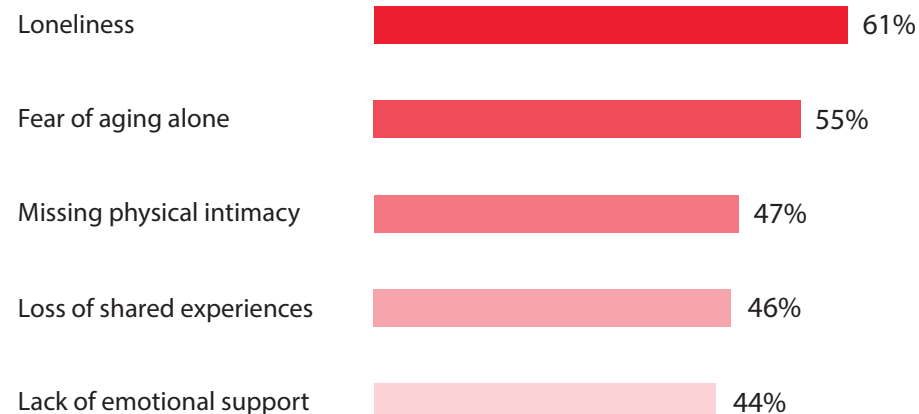
Most (57%) single over 50s are happy to remain single at this stage in their lives.

## Factors driving satisfaction and dissatisfaction with being single

### What do you feel are the main factors that drive satisfaction with being single?



### What do you feel are the main factors that drive dissatisfaction with being single?



- *n = 483, Not in a relationship*
- *Multiple answers allowed*
- *Top 5 answers*

- *n = 483, Not in a relationship*
- *Multiple answers allowed*
- *Top 5 answers*

The main driving factors of dissatisfaction with being single are loneliness (61%), fear of aging alone (55%), and missing physical intimacy (47%).

Almost three quarters (73%) cited personal space as the primary factor contributing to their satisfaction with being single. This is closely followed by independence (72%), and a desire for peace and quiet (63%).

The primary driving factors of dissatisfaction with being single are loneliness (61%), fear of ageing alone (55%), and a sense of missing physical intimacy (47%).



# More of the Australian Seniors Series coming soon...

## **About Australian Seniors**

Australian Seniors launched in 1998 to meet the needs of the often-ignored over 50s market. Since then, we've helped countless Australians protect the most important things in life – whether it's their family's future, valuable assets, or even their long-planned retirement.

We strive to be different through the diverse offering of our life, health, funeral, car, home & contents, landlords, pet, and travel insurance products by carefully selecting underwriters that share our vision of providing insurance that's simple, easy to understand, and cost-effective. That's why our policies have helped everyone from hard-working over 50s to self-funded retirees take control of the things that matter most.