

Discover your edge

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Fewer Aussies donating to charity, but it's not all doom and gloom

Uncertain economic times are notoriously challenging for charities, as people tighten their belts, reassess their budgets and cut back on expenses (including donations) where they can. And just as the proportion of Australians 14+ who believe our 'economy appears to be improving' has plummeted from 57% to 35% over the last five years, so too the proportion who donated to charity in an average 12 months has declined from 71% to 65% over the same period.

This decline is most evident in South Australia, where 64% of the population donated to charity in the 12 months to March 2014, down from 73% in the year to March 2010. Tellingly, the 'Festival State' is feeling less than festive about the national economy, with just 31% of its residents believing that our economy appears to be improving (down from 58%).

Charity donations and economic optimism: how each state compares

State	% donated to charity in last 12 months		% agree that 'the Australian economy appears to be improving'	
	2010	2014	2010	2014
NSW	69%	65%	56%	37%
Vic	73%	67%	60%	34%
Qld	70%	63%	54%	34%
SA	73%	64%	58%	31%
WA	73%	66%	62%	36%
Tas	69%	70%	54%	31%
National average	71%	65%	57%	35%

Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), April 2009-March 2010 (n=18,929) and April 2013-March 2014 (n=17,773). Base: Australians 14+

Queensland and Western Australia also saw fewer residents donating to charity in the 12 months to March 2014 than in the same period to March 2010, with about 10% of each state's donors dropping off over this time. The proportion of charity donors in Victoria and NSW also fell, as did optimism about Australia's economic improvement.

Heavy donors on the rise

Despite the overall decline in Australians donating to charity, the proportion of heavy donors (those who donated \$200 or more in an average 12 months) has increased slightly in the last five years. In the 12 months to March 2010, 30% of all people who donated to charity gave \$200 or more; in the 12 months to March 2014, this figure rose to 34%.

Of the individual states, New South Wales and Western Australia residents are slightly more likely to be heavy donors.

Norman Morris, Industry Communications Director, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“The decline in Australians donating to charity appears to be linked to increasing pessimism about our economic future rather than any trend away from charitable values. In fact, three quarters of the population still think ‘charity organisations make long-term differences to the world’s poorest people’ and more than half believe that ‘everyday people can help to raise living standards’.

“In encouraging news for not-for-profits, however, the proportion of heavy donors has risen slightly; an indication that charities should not be shy about appealing to people’s generosity even in these uncertain economic times.

“Furthermore, the proportion of Aussies who agree ‘a percentage of everyone’s income should go to charities’ has risen slightly in recent years. In view of this, perhaps charities that are feeling the pinch should consider putting more effort into promoting their workplace-giving programs? After all, it’s a win-win situation: the employee has a small amount deducted from their salary each pay before other expenses eat it up (plus they can claim it on tax) and the charity receives a steady flow of income.

“Many companies — such as JB Hi-fi, Australia Post and NAB — already offer workplace giving programs to their staff, but our data indicates that this kind of fundraising has the potential to grow even more popular.”

For comments or more information please contact:

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Related research findings

View our extensive range of [Charity Donor Profiles](#), including [Australians who have donated to charity in the last 12 months](#), [Large Charity Donor profile](#), [Small Charity Donor profile](#) and more. These profiles provide a broad understanding of the target audience, in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities and media usage in Australia.

About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years’ experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

In Australia, Roy Morgan Research is considered to be the authoritative source of information on financial behaviour, readership, voting intentions and consumer confidence. Roy Morgan Research is a specialist in recontact customised surveys which provide invaluable and effective qualitative and quantitative information regarding customers and target markets.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

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