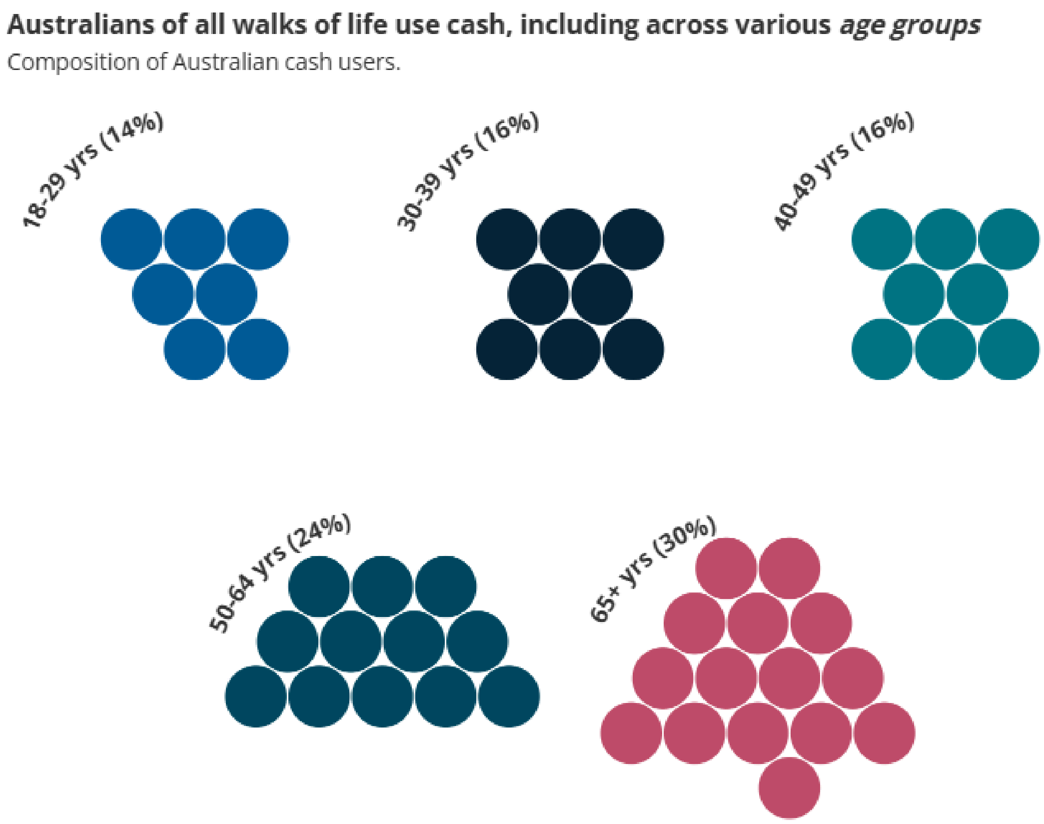
Behind the headlines: Which Aussies are using more cash?

RBA video: ‘Cash Use in Australia: What the 2025 Consumer Payments Survey Tells Us’

The RBA Consumer Payments Survey happens every three years (since 2007) and lays the basis for payments policy for the next few years.

In previous years, the CPS has always provided the media with the numbers they need for exciting and scary stories about an impending, inevitable cashless society.

This year the CPS showed an increase in cash usage for the first time, leading to widespread headlines and media stories about a return to cash in Australia.

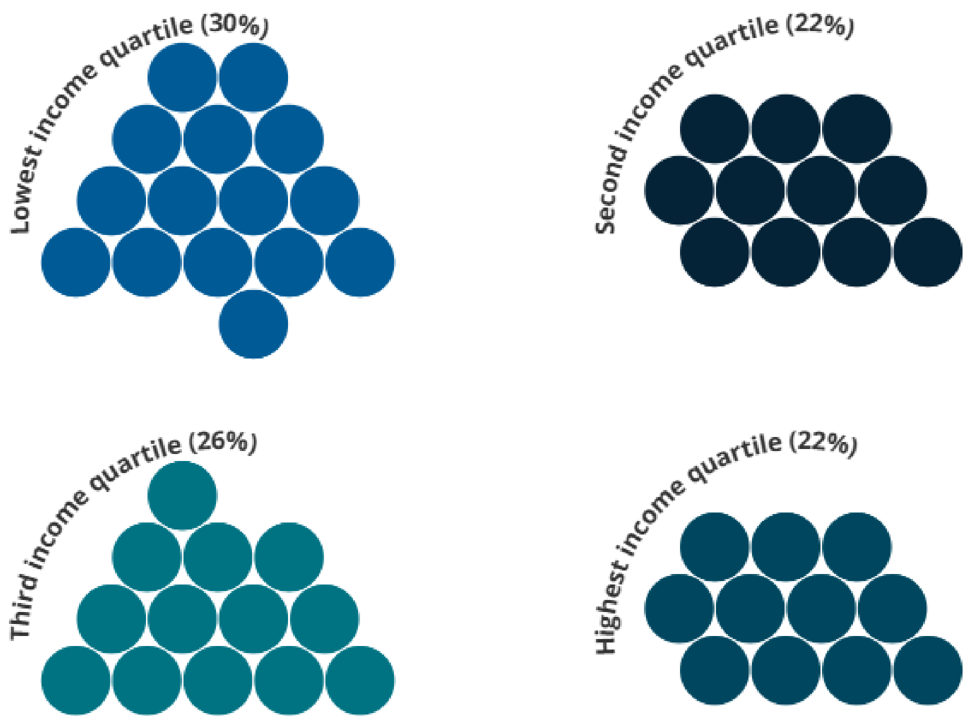


All income groups, from the lowest to the highest income earners use cash reports the Consumer Payments Survey.

Cash is not just for pensioners and low income earners, as some Cashless Society advocates claim.

Australians of all walks of life use cash, including across various *incomes*

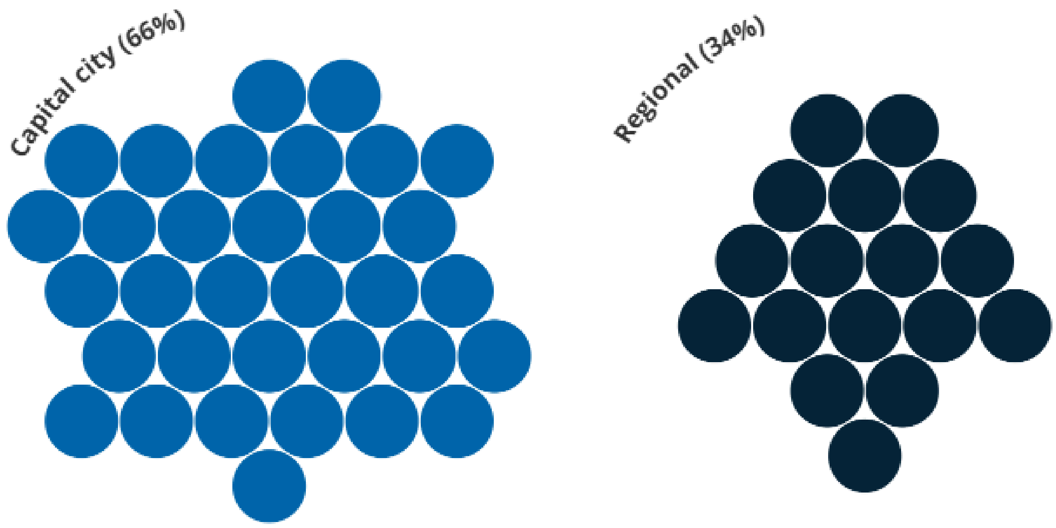
Composition of Australian cash users.



Both city and country Australians are using cash.

The key takeaway from the RBA CPS 2026 is that cash usage is widespread across age groups, incomes groups and location.

Australians of all walks of life use cash, including across various *locations*
Composition of Australian cash users.



All Australians need cash

The key headlines from the RBA CPS 2026 are:

**** 19% of in-person payments are made using cash, up from 16% in 2022.***
15 per cent of ALL payments, including online, were made in cash in 2025, compared with about 13 per cent in 2022

**** All indicators of cash system activity are trending up (including ATM withdrawals and lodgements at cash depots).***

**** Cash usage is up for small and large purchases.***

**** 75% of Australians carry cash (average = $65).***

**** Cash usage is up in all industries: Food, supermarket, petrol, transport and leisure.***

About 40% of leisure related transactions are made using cash.

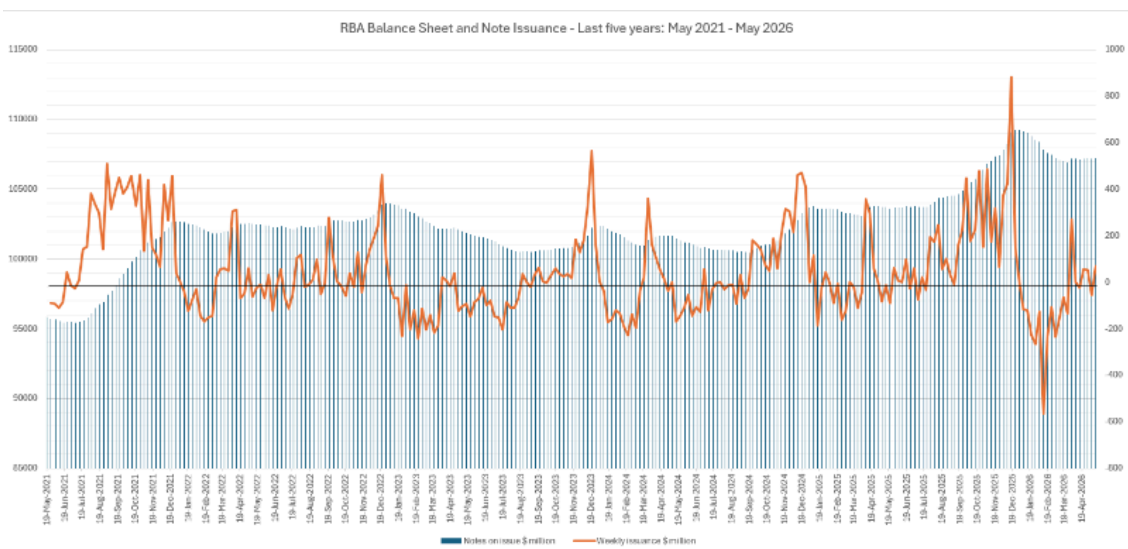
**** Cash usage is broadly the same across city and country Australia.***

**** Cash usage is increasing fastest among 18-29 year-olds.***

**** One third of Aussies would experience hardship if cash was not available.***

Importantly, this is not just a slowdown or a levelling off in the trend lines, this is a turn-around. The use of cash has clearly increased in Australia over the last three years.

Australia's mountain of cash keeps growing



[The RBA's Balance Sheet]() reported today (Monday 18 May) that the total value of Australian notes on issue rose last week by $68 million to $107.265 billion.

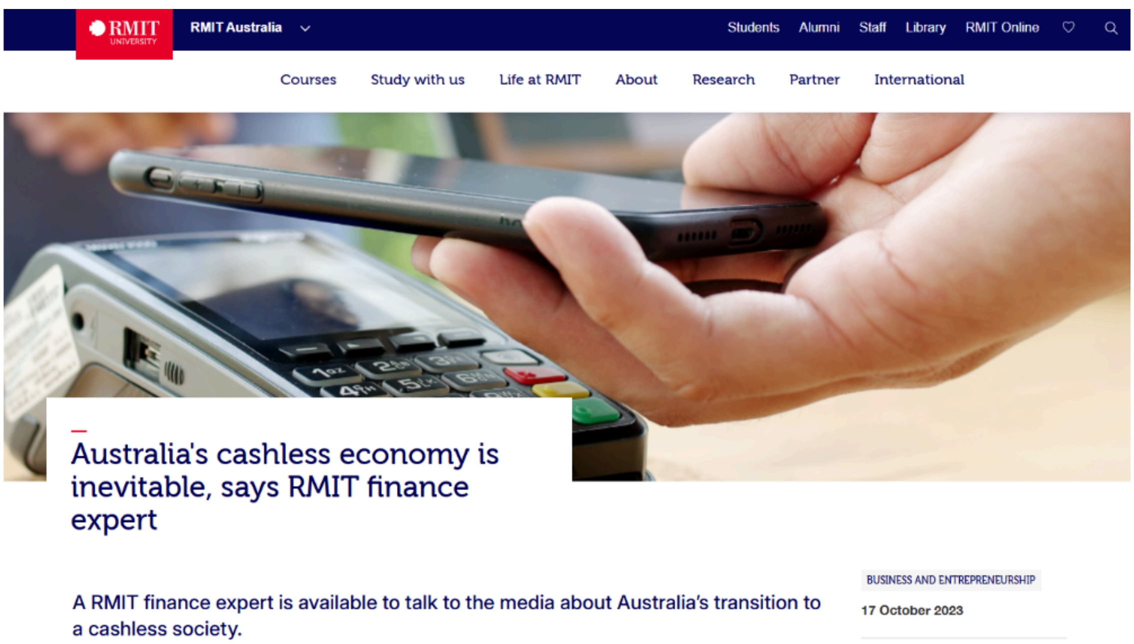
The chart above shows the mountain of Australian cash (blue lines) is generally growing because the RBA's weekly issuance of cash (orange line) has been mostly positive over the last five years.

When the orange line falls below zero, the RBA is withdrawing more notes than it issues.

Over the last five years, the value of notes on issue has grown by $12 billion.

Cashless Society is inevitable

says the expert "media star" partnering with Mastercard



Anyone who has read or watched any media stories about cash and digital payments over the last few years in Australia will probably have heard Professor Angel Zhong predict that [Australia will be "functionally cashless by 2030."]

Professor [Angel Zhong has been named a "media star"] by her employer RMIT for all her media appearances.

In 2025 RMIT admitted Angel Zhong to its "Media Star Hall of Fame!"

Angel Zhong invented the phrase "functionally cashless" and says it means that cash will be rarely used but still officially available.

In a recent social media video, Angel Zhong tells her followers that Mastercard makes it easy to know more about customer's motivations.

Angel Zhong

LinkedIn Top Voice | Deputy...

May 8, 2026

Learn more about Mastercard Customer Acquisition & Engagement solutions HERE https://www.mastercard.com/us/en/business/consumer-acquisition-and-

Please support the cash welcome campaign

Please sign and share our petition to demand a REAL cash and banking guarantee.

https://www.change.org/SayNOtoCashlessAustralia

Please click through to make an affordable gofundme donation

or deposit to the Cash Welcome Commonwealth Bank account:

Cash Welcome BSB 062-692 ACC: 4954 6502

Thanks and yours truly,

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