

Recent Survey: 70% of Mothers Say Economic Pressure Affecting Decision to Extend Family

9th December 2008: In a recent survey of 1500 Aussie mums conducted by parenting and pregnancy website Mum Zone (www.mumzone.com.au) almost 70% of respondents indicated that the current economic conditions are a factor in deciding how many children they would like to have.

This is despite the governments' continued efforts to encourage Aussie families to expand, such as the introduction of the Baby Bonus and former Treasurer Peter Costello's classic catchcry of "One for Mum, one for Dad and one for the country"¹.

This response was strongly supported by the fact that 53% of respondents have only one child and less than 40% are either pregnant or are planning/trying to get pregnant.

Mother of two Emma Newman, also the manager/editor of Mum Zone, says, "We always wanted to have three children, but now with uncertain economic times we're not sure whether it's a good idea to extend our family. The cost of living is always on the rise and even with two parents working, things are tough for the average Australian family."

Almost half of the survey respondents have a household income of \$50,000-\$100,000 per annum. But who's the breadwinner? Despite the stereotype of the "super-mum" who works full time whilst raising a family, 53% of respondents belong to a household where only one parent works.

Despite the recent drop in petrol prices, a whopping 78% of respondents are finding that the cost of fuel affects their travel patterns and car use to some degree.

"Although petrol prices are currently down, we all know how much it costs to run a car (or two) when you have a growing family," says Emma. "Like many, for us to have a third child, we would need a larger car which is a substantial outlay, plus the cost of fuel really has to be considered carefully when making the decision about whether to extend the family."

Ninety-six percent of respondents are concerned to some degree about how their families will get through the economic crisis, with less than 30% of respondents able to pay off their credit card each month. A quarter of respondents claim they are never able to pay off their monthly credit card balance in full.

But it's not all doom and gloom – this year 63% of respondents intend to spend the same or more than last year on their kids' Christmas presents. However not without sacrifice – it seems that presents for family and friends (52% less), holidays (48% less) and alcohol (45% less) will be the big losers in this year's Christmas budgets.

Mum Zone is an Australian parenting and pregnancy website with almost 12,000 subscribers nationally. www.mumzone.com.au

¹ Interview with Peter Costello, Treasury Portfolio Ministers Website, 22nd September 2006. Transcript available: <http://www.treasurer.gov.au/DisplayDocs.aspx?doc=transcripts/2006/133.htm&pageID=&min=phc&Year=2006&DocType=2>

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Full survey results: http://www.mumzone.com.au/credit_crunch_survey_results.php