

The fear of leftovers (FOLO) is gripping the workplace



What is FOLO?

The fear of leftovers or FOLO is gripping a quarter of Australians who say they are embarrassed to eat leftovers at work. A new study by McCrindle, commissioned by Australian Lamb, found that 24% of Australians are embarrassed to eat food at work, with 86% preferring to eat new or purchased meals rather than leftovers.

A lack of inspiration causes irrational fear of leftovers

Half of Australians shared that it was not inspiring to eat leftovers the next day (48%).

A further 46% said they didn't know how long the food would keep for, indicating we have

lost the common sense facts of how long food will last in the fridge or freezer. A third (36%) admitted that they simply didn't know how to make leftovers taste great.

The rise of Uber Eats since its launch in Australia in April 2016 could be contributing to our instant gratification cuisine culture. The rise of the [gig economy](#) and increased access to numerous cafés and restaurants means that rather than using leftovers as ingredients to make a new meal, people are simply clicking and chomping. What happened to the age-old truism that pizza or a fine curry tasted better the next day after marinating in the sauces for longer?

In freezers across Australia, it is likely there are many UFOs (Unidentified Frozen Objects) filled with old soups and stir fries that will probably not see the light of day anytime soon.

Food wastage is not only an economic issue, it is an environmental concern too

Food wastage is not just a social embarrassment or a light-hearted issue, it is costing the average Australian household \$1,036 per year.[\[1\]](#)

More than just costing the household budget, it is contributing to landfill and is an environmental concern. 4.3 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2016-2017.[\[2\]](#)

Younger generations love leftovers the most

The youngest Generation in the survey, Generation Z (aged 18-24), love leftovers the most (51%), possibly because they are [KIPPERS](#), Kids In Parents Pockets Eroding Retirement Savings. Now it seems they might be eating retirement savings as their form of erosion!

It was surprising that Baby Boomers were the least likely to say they loved leftovers (27%), revealing that age may have created a higher expectation of fresh, new food. This is despite them being the generation that was raised in the Post War era with parents who may have grown up on rations during the Second World War. It seems now, after a lifetime of frugality and living out the motto 'waste not, want not', that Baby Boomers are the most uppity of all, at least when it comes to leftovers.

Gen Z (18 - 24)	Gen Y (25 - 39)	Gen X (40 - 54)	Baby Boomers (55 - 73)
50.8%	36.9%	28.6%	26.8%

Research in the media

These research-based findings generated media activity in print, TV and radio, including:

- [Sun Herald](#)
- [3AW \(Melbourne\)](#)
- Triple M (WA)

Survey methodology

Online survey of 1,009 Australians, representative by age, gender and location (state). The survey was in field from Friday 12th April 2019 to Wednesday 17th April.

[\[1\] FoodWaste](#)

[\[2\] National Waste Report 2018](#)

For more information

If you found this article interesting, download our free [McCrindle Insights Report](#) for more information on the trends shaping the future of Australia.

For media commentary contact us on 02 8824 3422 or at info@mccrindle.com.au

Contact

Rebecca: rebecca@mccrindle.com.au