

## Australian Mums Speak: Guidance in Mother's Day Gifts

As Australians, we love getting the chance to give back to our mothers, especially on Mother's Day. Mother's Day is regarded as the most meaningful special day by Australians, superseding the importance placed on Remembrance Day, Valentine's Day, and even Father's Day. In fact, almost half of Australians rank Mother's Day as their most significant special day of the year (excluding public holidays).

The first Mother's Day in Australia was held in 1924, several years after it first began in the US in 1908. Interestingly, while 168 countries celebrate Mother's Day as an established tradition, just over half of those countries (51%, Australia included) celebrate Mother's Day do so on the second Sunday of May. Other countries have adapted an alternate date linked to women through historical significance or religious significance.

Choosing the right gift on Mother's Day isn't always an easy task. Our time-poor schedules often act as a deterrent to activating the genuine, heartfelt generosity we feel towards the woman most dear to us! In a recent nationwide study of 580+ respondents, we asked 260+ mothers around Australia what they really want this Mother's Day.

### Worst Gifts Given and Received

While mothers usually appreciate any gift given with love, it is evident that Australian mothers had opinions on the best and worst gifts for Mother's Day.

When asked about the worst gifts ever received for Mother's Day, mothers repeatedly said that the worst 'gifts' they had received are 'no-gifts' – having their spouse/children forget the day altogether, not receiving a gift or only receiving only a card, or even having mother's day plans cancelled at the last minute.

In a more tangible sense, there were a number of gifts that mothers received that were undesirable:

#### *Gifts that show you don't know your mother*

According to our research, giving your mother earrings when her ears aren't pierced, jewellery that she doesn't like, a foot spa she finds uncomfortable, or scented powder she won't enjoy are personal gifts that show that you simply don't know your mother's preferences.

In a similar way, giving an item she already has (whether it be candles, mugs, DVDs, or books) shows that children/spouses clearly haven't done their homework or are familiar with her latest interests.

A mother's preferred spending habits must also be taken into consideration. It is no use buying her an expensive item if the only memory she'll have of the item is a reminder of the bills still to be paid now that her joint bank account has crossed into the red zone.

Our research showed that some children and spouses just didn't know their mothers very well:

*"I gave her a DVD she already owned."*

*"I received earrings for pierced ears when I haven't had pierced ears for over 10 years!"*

*"[I received] heaps and heaps of mugs! You only need so many."*

### *Gifts that show it was a last-minute purchase*

As much as you might be tempted to rush to the shops on your way home from work on Friday to buy **flowers** which will be half wilted by Mother's Day on Sunday – hold back! The last thing your mother will want is a hurried, last-minute, impersonal purchase.

Mothers reported that receiving an untactful gift from the school's mother's day stall, cheap quality personal **care** items from the corner chemist, or **flowers** from the grocery store that have a 24 hour shelf life were simple 'no-nos.' In a similar way, giving **cheap chocolates** is as big red light – if ever there are chocolate connoisseurs, it's the mums, where quality counts!

Some last-minute gifts our respondents noted:

*"Used perfume when I was little, I forgot [Mother's Day] and just took something from my grandmother's collection."*

*"[I gave] some flowers that were not as fresh as they could have been, they were limp by Sunday and died within a couple of days."*

### *Gifts that create more work*

As much as you might be tempted to be practical on Mother's Day and give a gift that will get fair use, purchasing an item destined for more stress and sweat is simply in the no-go zone.

Mothers mentioned that some of their worst gifts had been items that simply created more work for them. Whether an iron, a vacuum cleaner, a saucepan, a rice cooker, a handmade coffee cup that didn't hold its

weight, a sponge, or a cross-stitch kit, these items were simply undesirable:

*"I gave her a saucepan – it was very expensive but she hated it!"*

### *Gifts that are bizarre or inappropriate*

Think twice before purchasing your mother that latest gadget you and your mates have been eyeing up. Sometimes what you might buy for a close friend or your boyfriend/girlfriend just isn't suitable for your mother!

Our mothers report that receiving **plastic flowers**, a **plastic ice-cream scoop that doesn't work**, **sticky tape dispensers**, **pre-loved salt and pepper shakers**, **scratch stickers**, **eggs**, or **picture frames** just don't fit the ideal gift this Mother's Day.

*"I received a cheap plastic ice-cream scoop too flimsy to do the job."*

#### Top 5 Gifts to Steer Clear From

1. Cheap Chocolates
2. Flimsy Flowers
3. Ugly Underwear
4. Trivial Trinkets
5. Any Appliances

In the same way, inappropriate clothing such as bras, underwear, socks, and slippers made it onto the worst list. Equally awful is **clothing that is too small for her** (which is a sensitive situation for anyone) or purchasing a gift such as a **cleaning voucher** (which is easy to misinterpret).

The take-home point is: If the item doesn't seem of value, it most likely won't show your mother that you deem her valuable!

*"I bought my mother a specialty cake which had green mould under the icing."*

## Most Desired Gift this Mother's Day

Mothers responded that their most desired gifts (chosen by 26% of all respondents) was something for her personally – whether pampering, hair styling, a massage, nail treatments, or beauty products. Next in line was something she could spend (15%) such as cash or a store voucher, and something she could wear (13% – i.e. jewellery, clothes or accessories). The least desirable categories included something she could use (cooking, cleaning, gardening, or sewing implements, at 7%), something for her home (flowers, décor, at 7%), and least of all, something she could consume (wine, gourmet foods and chocolate, at 3%).

### What would be the your most desired gift this Mother's Day?



If ever there was a gift that was explicitly desired by mums, it was time with family and the alleviation of everyday household tasks:

*"I would love the company of my children, a meal with my family... for my kids to be with me!"*

*"A cooked meal or a job that needed to be done around my home, to have a day off from home duties would be nice."*

Thoughtfulness and love-filled gestures were also appreciated:

*"I want nothing material, just breakfast in bed and a picnic."*

*"I would most like a card with thoughtful words, or a photo of my children all together."*

## 1 in 5 Aussie Mums Gift-Less This Mother's Day

Almost 1 in 5 Australian mothers will not receive a gift this Mother's Day, as 18% of respondents admit they have no intention of purchasing their mums a gift. Our research showed that some Australians are spot-on in their anticipated purchase while others have missed the mark. The most desired gift that mothers expressed – a gift for them personally, such as pampering or beauty treatments – is also the gift that Australians will go for more than any other, with 13% choosing this type of gift. On the flip side, while only 7% of mothers would like something for their home – such as flowers and décor – more than 1 in 10 Australians will opt for these items as their gift of choice.

Which category of gift will you most likely buy for your mother this Mother's Day?



*Mums are Gracious, After All*

What showcased itself most clearly in our research is that mothers are unconditional in their love and appreciate every gift. Mothers also noted that oftentimes, while not being overtly enthusiastic about a particular item, treasured a gift as an expression of their children/spouse's love for them:

*"I love every gift given to me as it's specially chosen for me by my precious children and hubby."*

*"No gift is bad because it is something the kids think is great hence you think it's great regardless – they buy it out of love."*

*"Anything given with love is fantastic."*

**About this Study:** This research was conducted by McCrindle Research in May 2013 based on a nationwide study of 580+ respondents including 260+ mothers around Australia. **For more information contact Eliane Miles [eliane@mccrindle.com.au](mailto:eliane@mccrindle.com.au) or via 02 8824 3422.**

### About This Study

DEMOGRAPHICS	This survey #	This survey %	National % of population aged 18-100
<b>AGE</b>			
18	4	1%	GEN Z 1.7%
19-33	136	23%	GEN Y 27.9%
34-48	187	32%	GEN X 26.8%
49-67	220	37%	BOOMERS 29.0%
68+	41	7%	BUILDERS 14.6%
TOTAL:	588	100%	100%
<b>STATE</b>			
NT	0	0%	1.0%
ACT	10	2%	1.6%
TAS	15	3%	2.3%
WA	32	5%	10.4%
SA	38	6%	7.3%
QLD	82	14%	20.3%
VIC	167	28%	24.9%
NSW	242	41%	32.2%
TOTAL	586	100%	100%
<b>GENDER</b>			
Male	176	30%	50%
Female	412	70%	50%
TOTAL	588	100%	100%