

Money stories: Financial resilience among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

Author:

Weier, Megan; Dolan, Kylie; Powell, Abigail; Muir, Kristy; Young, Amanda

Publication details:

Commissioning Body: National Australia Bank

Publication Date:

2019-05-29

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/27347>

License:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Link to license to see what you are allowed to do with this resource.

Downloaded from http://hdl.handle.net/1959.4/unsworks_59865 in <https://unsworks.unsw.edu.au> on 2024-05-03

May 2019

Money stories: Financial resilience among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians



The Indigenous Financial Resilience 2018 research has been conducted and released in partnership between the Centre for Social Impact, First Nations Foundation, and NAB

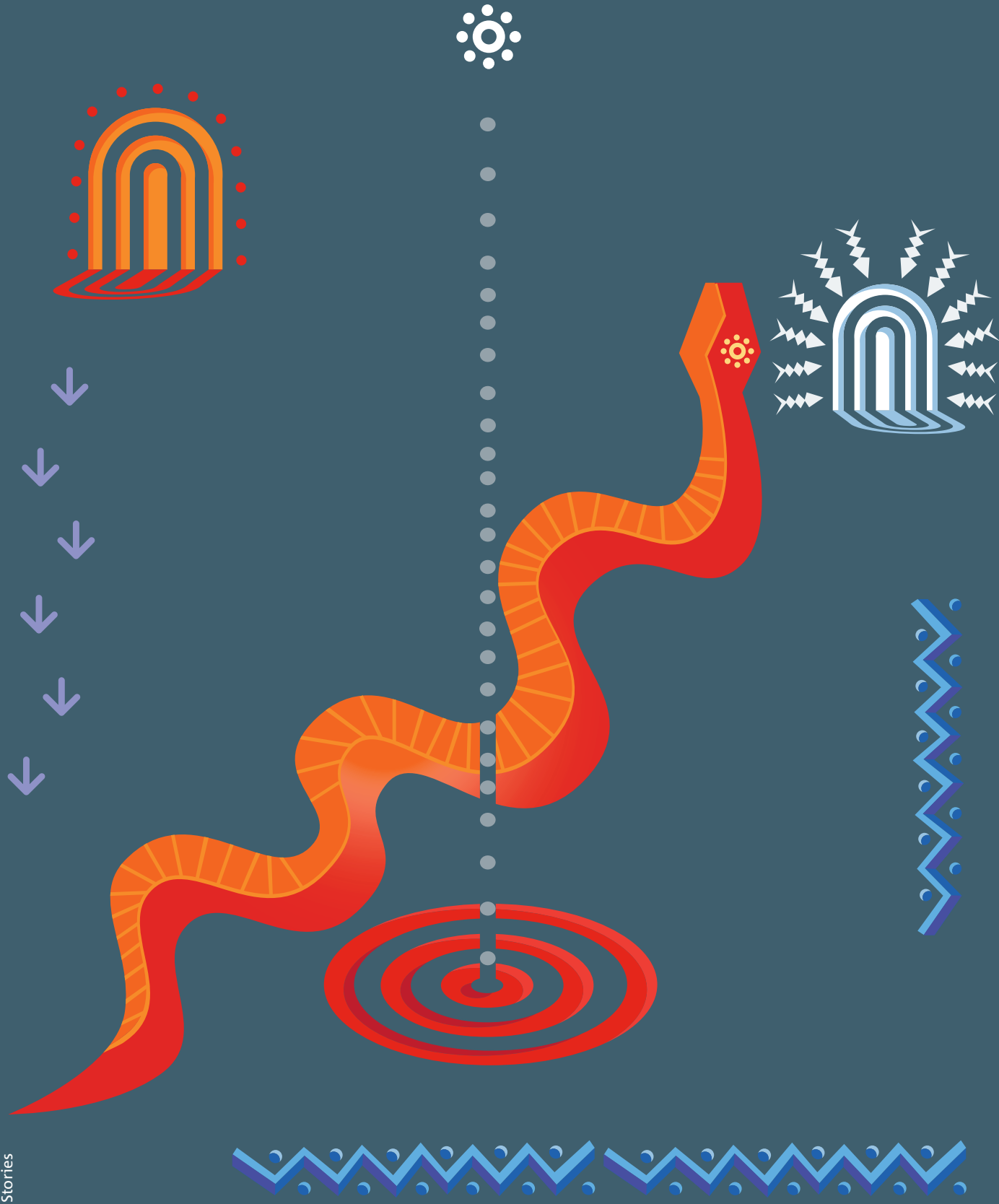


FIRST NATIONS
FOUNDATION



CENTRE
for SOCIAL
IMPACT

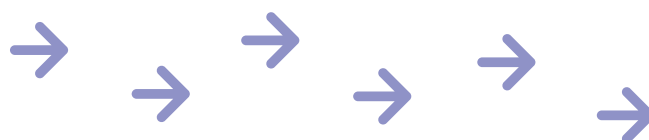




Contents

Preface	5
Executive Summary	6
Summary results: Financial resilience	7
Recommendations	10
Future research	11
1. Introduction	12
1.1 Background	12
1.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches to money	13
1.3 Background to the financial resilience model	13
1.4 Research method	14
2. Financial Resilience	16
2.1 Levels of financial resilience and vulnerability	16
2.2 Exploring the components of financial resilience	17
2.3 Economic resources	17
2.4 Financial products and services	21
2.5 Financial knowledge and behaviour	26
2.6 Financial social capital	30
3. Wealth and Money Troubles	34
3.1 Indigenous approaches to money	34
3.2 What does it mean to be 'wealthy' or 'rich'?	34
Monetary wealth vs Indigenous wealth	
3.3 What does it mean to have 'money troubles'?	36
3.4 Sharing money and resources	38
Conclusion	41
Next steps and future research	42
References	43
Appendix 1: Sample Details	45
Supplementary Appendix 1: Methodology	47
Supplementary Appendix 2: Additional statistics and figures	51
Supplementary Appendix 3: Financial resilience survey – adapted	59





Figures

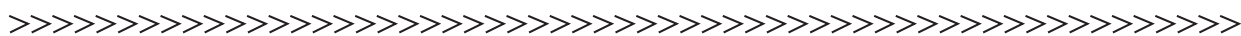
Figure 1:	Where would you get \$2,000 in a week from?	19
Figure 2:	How much money do you have put away?	20
Figure 3:	Types of credit accessible in last 12 months	22
Figure 4:	Type of credit used in the last 12 months	23
Figure 5:	Need for more credit	24
Figure 6:	Access to insurance	25
Figure 7:	Barriers to accessing financial products and services (multiple responses allowed)	25
Figure 8:	Proactive financial behaviour	28
Figure 9:	Source of financial advice or information	29
Figure 10:	Likelihood of getting financial support from family or community	31
Figure 11:	In the last 12 months, was it hard to pay for the things you needed for everyday living costs?	36
Figure 12:	How do you help your family with money?	38

Tables

Table 1:	Levels of financial resilience, total sample	17
Table 2:	Level of economic resources, by location	18
Table 3:	Level of financial products and services, total sample	21
Table 4:	Level of financial knowledge and behaviour, total sample	26
Table 5:	Level of social capital, total sample	30
Table 6:	Responses to humbugging	32
Table 7:	Financial difficulties in the last 12 months	37



Preface



The authors acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original and true owners of this land. We acknowledge Elders, Custodians and Traditional Owners of this land, past and present. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' stewardship of these lands, waters and resources is the bedrock on which the wealth and prosperity of Australia is built.

Our research acknowledges that past and ongoing practices have disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It also recognises the strengths of Indigenous people in economic and other spheres. We believe that, when these are both acknowledged, we will begin to see Indigenous prosperity.

We recognise that there is a general preference for the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' as a collective descriptor of the owners of this land and the people engaged in this study. For ease of reading in this report, we have at times interchanged this with the term 'Indigenous'. We refer to Australia's extended population—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—as 'broader Australia'.

We have included references to financial resilience research conducted by the CSI across broader Australia to contextualise the present research; we refer to this as the 'general' financial resilience survey. References highlight some culturally unique approaches to money among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, show some differences between population groups and highlight changes that are needed to address inequality. Survey responses have been weighted to be inclusive of the Indigenous Australian population; however, we recognise that responses and attitudes to money vary widely.

Authors: Megan Weier, Kylie Dolan, Abigail Powell, Kristy Muir, Amanda Young.

The authors would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their immense support and input during the project:

- The Advisory Group (Lynda Edwards, Nathan Boyle, Robynne Quiggin, Rebecca Harcourt, Jonathan Kneebone and Vinita Godinho)
- National Australia Bank (Elizabeth Campbell, Elliot Anderson and Jordan Grace)
- Wunan Foundation and Anglicare NT, for facilitating and hosting fieldwork
- Northern Land Council, for permitting us to carry out our research on Yolngu land
- Galiwin'ku and Kununurra community members and participants in our research
- All participants in the online survey
- Participants in cognitive pre-testing interviews and interpretation focus groups
- Polity Social Research
- Axelle Marjolin and Gillian Ames, for their feedback on the research design and findings.

Report citation: Weier, M., Dolan, K., Powell, A., Muir, K., Young, A. (2019) Money Stories: Financial Resilience among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2019. Centre for Social Impact (CSI) – UNSW Sydney, for National Australia Bank.

Executive Summary

This report builds on previous work on financial resilience in Australia and represents the beginning of an exploration of the financial resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Overall, we found significant economic disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This is not surprising, given the histories of land dispossession, stolen wages and the late entry of Indigenous Australians into free participation in the economy (it is only 50 years since the referendum to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as members of the Australian population).

Specifically, we found:

- Only one in ten Indigenous Australians are financially secure.
- Fewer than two in five Indigenous people can access \$2,000 for an emergency, compared with four in five in the broader Australian population.

Severe financial stress is present for half the Indigenous population, compared with one in ten in the broader Australian population.

- Financial stress is occurring in urban, regional and remote locations.
- Indigenous people are using high-cost and unregulated forms of credit, rather than credit cards or other forms of mainstream credit.
- Indigenous people engage in a sharing economy, in which money has now entered as a commodity and shared money both helps and hurts financial resilience.

In open-ended questions that had not been asked previously, we asked respondents about financial stress (money troubles) and their experiences and understanding of wealth. We learned that **'money trouble'** was familiar to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but that the concept of **'wealth'** was perceived more modestly than in general Western understanding: it meant getting by, the absence of money worries, being able to pay bills and take their kids on holidays, and having savings in the bank.

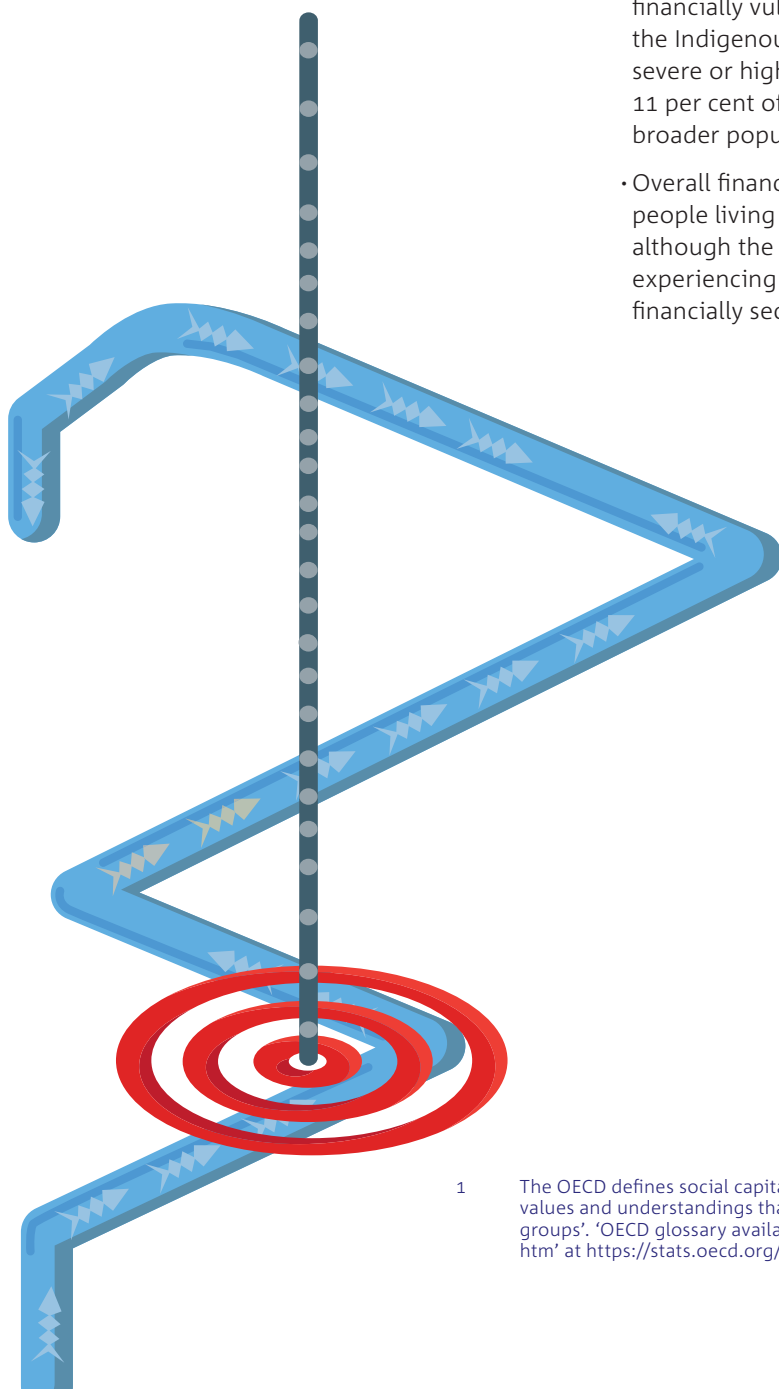
We explored the barriers that can prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from accessing and safely navigating financial products and services and the issues that drive them towards less safe products. We found that a high proportion of people used high-cost credit such as payday loans and that many reported challenges in accessing financial services due to distance, language barriers and the cost of access to services.

Since 2014, the Centre for Social Impact (CSI) and the National Australia Bank (NAB) have partnered to develop a model known as financial resilience, which provides insight into 'people's ability to access and draw on internal capabilities and appropriate, acceptable and accessible external resources and supports in times of financial adversity' [1]. To build on this model of financial resilience and gain insight into how financial resilience might operate in the context of Indigenous Australians, NAB and CSI partnered with First Nations Foundation to develop a measurement tool that was culturally appropriate and relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This research provides important insights for financial institutions that are seeking to better meet the needs of Indigenous peoples. This was an opportunity to talk with Indigenous Australians and hear about how they manage money and about their financial goals and aspirations. Using an adapted version of the financial resilience tool, we asked 620 Indigenous people across Australia about their economic resources, financial products and services use, financial knowledge and behaviour, and social capital in a financial context. In previous reports, this fourth category was referred to as 'social capital'; however, we refer in this report specifically to 'financial social capital', to reflect our focus on how familial and social connections provide financial support. This concept must be distinguished from the wider Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition of social capital.¹

Summary results: Financial resilience

- Using the original financial resilience scoring methodology, the overall mean level of financial resilience for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in this survey was 2.56 (score range 1–4). In an equivalent survey conducted on the broader Australian population in 2018, the mean financial resilience score was 3.05.
- One in ten Indigenous respondents in this survey were classified as financially secure, with a further four in ten experiencing only low levels of financial stress or vulnerability. In the 2018 survey of the broader Australian population, close to nine in ten respondents were either financially secure or experiencing low financial stress.
- Indigenous people are over-represented among financially vulnerable Australians. Nearly half of the Indigenous participants were experiencing severe or high financial stress, compared with 11 per cent of the respondents in the survey of the broader population.
- Overall financial stress is greater for Indigenous people living in regional and remote areas, although the disparity between Indigenous people experiencing financial stress and those who are financially secure is greater in urban areas.



¹ The OECD defines social capital as 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups'. 'OECD glossary available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/index.htm> at <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/index.htm>

Summary results: Financial resilience

Economic resources

- Over one-third of Indigenous respondents had moderate to high levels of economic resources. However, Indigenous participants in remote areas had very low levels of economic resources.
- While four in five respondents in the survey of the Australian population said that they would be able to obtain \$2,000 within a week in an emergency, fewer than two in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people said they would be able to do the same.
- Over half (54.5%) of the Indigenous sample said that they found it difficult to meet living expenses and over half (52.5%) reported that they did not have any savings. In the broader Australian survey, 13.5% of respondents said they did not have any savings.

Financial products and services

- Over half of the sample of Indigenous Australians had moderate to high levels of access to financial products and services; however, one in ten participants had very low levels of access.
- Indigenous respondents were ten times more likely than respondents in the broader survey to have low and very low levels of access and use of financial products and services. This highlights the need to understand the access barriers that are experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Barriers to financial products or services were generally structural (e.g., waiting times for appointments, expense of services or lack of trust) or knowledge dependent (e.g., participants not knowing what products and services are available).
- Indigenous respondents were less likely than broader survey respondents to use credit cards and were more likely to use fringe credit, such as payday lenders. This may reflect access issues, such as eligibility for credit cards.

Financial knowledge and behaviours

- Most Indigenous participants were confident in using and understanding financial products: over half said that they understood financial products and services well, and nearly one-third said they were 'pretty confident' or 'very confident' making decisions about financial products. This self-reported knowledge and confidence in using financial products was slightly higher than the response rates from the 2018 survey of the broader population; however, this should be interpreted cautiously, as it contrasts with other research and other findings in this study [2].²
- The proportion of Indigenous respondents with very low levels of financial knowledge and behaviours was higher than in the broader survey (14.6% and 3.6%, respectively). This was driven largely by low engagement in proactive financial behaviours rather than knowledge of, and confidence using, financial services and products.
- Engagement in proactive financial behaviours requires people to have an adequate level of economic resources. With over half of the Indigenous participants indicating that it was 'hard' or 'very hard' to meet everyday living costs, proactive behaviours such as saving or making additional repayments on loans is likely to be more difficult.

Financial social capital

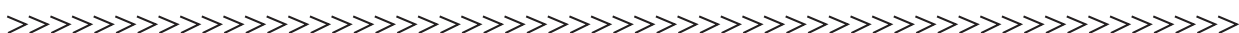
- Financial social capital was measured using three indicators: level of connection with others, likelihood of getting financial support from social connections, and access to community and government services.
- Despite strong social connections and the high value placed on caring for family and community, a substantial proportion of Indigenous respondents had very low (14.6%) or low (31.8%) financial social capital. This is likely due to low levels of economic resources (you cannot share what you do not have) and poor access to services.
- Respondents in regional areas were more likely than those in urban areas and remote areas to say that they needed community or government support, but had not been able to access it (23.0%, 13.5% and 10.7% of respondents, respectively).

2 Previous work evaluating the My Moola program demonstrated that, while participants said they were confident managing their money, they only had 'a little' knowledge about most financial topics and that they did not necessarily engage in long-term 'positive' financial habits such as budgeting and saving [2]. Findings in this report also indicate that, when asked about specific financial products and services, many respondents said they had little knowledge.

**Indigenous people
engage in a
sharing economy,
in which money
has now entered
as a commodity
and shared money
both helps and
hurts financial
resilience.**



Recommendations



While further research in this area is required, we have made several recommendations for people and organisations seeking to support Indigenous financial resilience and financial wellbeing:

- Recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people tend to have low financial resources, which limits access to safer financial products and services, pushes them towards high-cost credit products and perpetuates a cycle of poverty.
- Recognise that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have unique values and interests in relation to money. It is important for financial services, policymakers, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and researchers to:
 - acknowledge that some Indigenous people regard and use money in different ways to Western approaches
 - recognise that alternative perspectives on money can be constructive
 - integrate alternative values and perspectives into any services or 'solutions'.
- Introduce and promote more **appropriate**, **affordable** and **accessible** financial products and services that assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to:
 - plan and use their money, either on their own or as part of their wider family
 - save, by rewarding small and short-term saving
 - achieve financial security, while also being able to maintain connection to community
 - avoid high-cost or exploitative forms of credit when faced with a financial emergency.
- Recognise and remove barriers to Indigenous people's access to products and services, including addressing the cost of services, providing support for people who live far from branches and delivering language services.
- Target support to Indigenous people who are most financially vulnerable:
 - Target Indigenous people living in regional and remote communities. While remote areas of Australia have been identified as places of high financial exclusion, our findings show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in regional areas are also having difficulty accessing financial services and assistance.
 - Target Indigenous people in urban areas who have high levels of financial stress and vulnerability. Our findings suggest that, while some Indigenous people in urban areas are faring well in financial terms, there is a considerable cohort that is experiencing high financial vulnerability.
- Recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not a homogenous group. Some Indigenous people are doing well in terms of financial resilience and its components, but many are not. Some of these differences are related to geography, with higher levels of financial stress in remote and regional areas; however, it must also be recognised that there is a growing divide between financially secure and financially stressed Indigenous people in urban areas [3]:
- Support and resource programs for improving Indigenous people's financial literacy and capabilities.

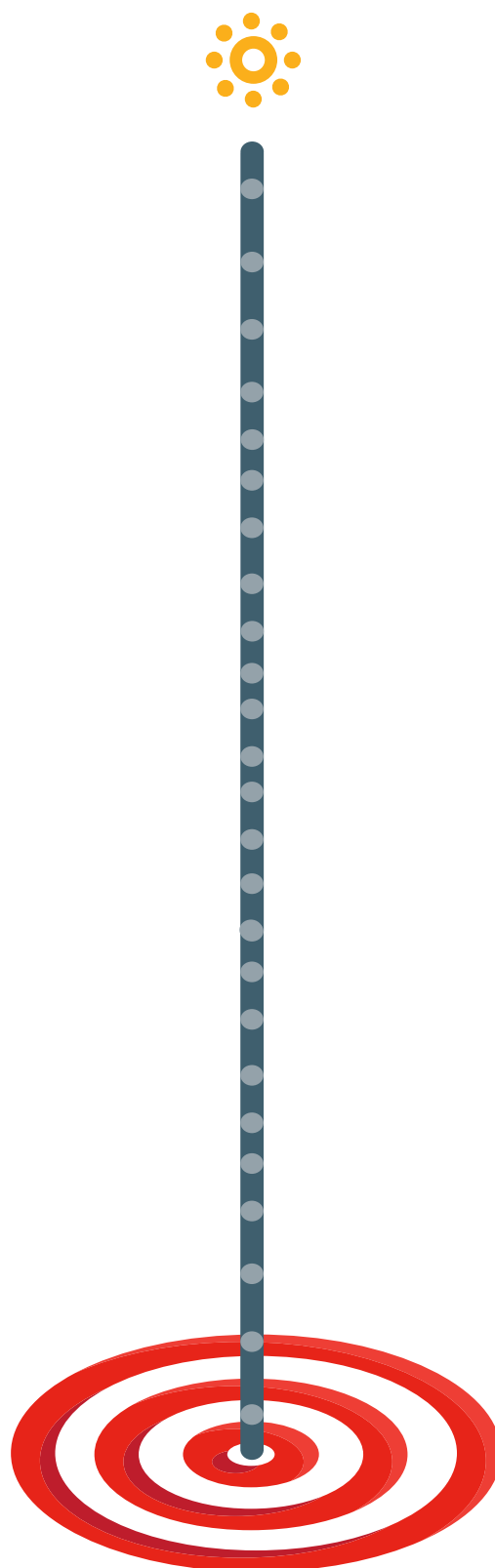
Recommendations

This report does not aim to show how to ‘fix’ Indigenous Australians’ approaches to money; it instead recognises that there are systemic and structural barriers that disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples’ engagement with Western economies. Likewise, this report is not intended as a critique of different approaches to money—rather, it is a descriptive analysis of a situation in today’s financial system.

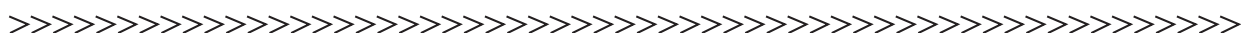
Future research

In addition to the recommendations above, we also suggest further research that is required to address the following:

- pursue the insights Indigenous Australians can offer research into financial social capital
- improve understanding of those Indigenous Australians who are experiencing relative financial security, including assessing how they attained this and what their future financial goals are, to enable strengths-based approaches
- assess the evidence base for financial products and services that are most appropriate, accessible and effective for strengthening Indigenous financial resilience.
- analyse the relationship between financial wellbeing and social wellbeing, to clearly explain the effects of poverty and financial resilience on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.



1. Introduction



We are still negotiating and affirming the value of Indigenous people to the financial services industry and constructing a rationale that engages this sector in the notion of investment with Indigenous people, not as deficit, not as dependents, not as costs to society or the financial services sector that have to be written off without reward. We need to work towards building a model that creates ownership by Indigenous people of the financial institutions, and knowledge and accountability of financial institutions to knowing their Indigenous customers.

Paul Briggs, Australian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association (AFCCRA) Conference, June 2007 (National Indigenous Money Management Agenda 2007) [4].

This report outlines how ‘money troubles’ and ‘wealth’ are understood in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts and the implications this may have in a Western context. It presents a headline measure of financial resilience among a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and assesses the level of resources across the four identified components of financial resilience: financial social capital, economic resources, financial products and services, and financial knowledge and behaviour.

1.1 Background

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ financial resilience has never been explored nationally, despite the strong contribution of Indigenous people to Australia’s current and past economy. For example, the role of Indigenous enterprises in construction, agriculture, resource management and the arts is growing, with Indigenous businesses contributing an estimated AUD\$2.2–6.6 billion to Australia’s GDP in 2016 [5] and Indigenous rights and interests now being recognised in over 40 per cent of Australia’s land [6]. Demand for financial products and services will continue to grow in this Indigenous business cohort. At the same time, Indigenous Australians have only recently had the opportunity to freely

engage in the capitalist mainstream economy [7]³, and there remains inadequate innovation in our financial systems and institutions to accompany this shift [8].

Since colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been both deliberately and inadvertently excluded from the mainstream economy [9], despite living on their land for at least 65,000 years. There has also been active destruction of the communities, institutions and resources, including land and waters, that have long sustained the economies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their societies [10]. Policies and practices prevented Indigenous people from gaining legal ownership of property and other assets, from accessing education and from directly receiving wages for work [7,9]. Many of these formal exclusionary practices were only ended in the 1970s; some remain. This history has affected the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—such as their health, families, connection to country and ability to participate in non-Indigenous systems, including the financial system. In 2012, it was estimated that 43 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were severely or fully financially excluded, compared with a national average of 17 per cent [11].

3 As recently as the 1970s, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were experiencing ‘stolen wages’, with authorities administering Indigenous wages [9].

A history of dismissing and rejecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples' cultures, values and practices entails that Indigenous approaches to managing resources and money have also been dismissed. This research explores how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people talk about money and examines the strengths of their perspectives on money. This also highlights differences in financial resilience between the broader population and the Indigenous population. The research also draws attention to cultural practices and perspectives on money and how current frameworks may not accurately capture these perspectives. Social and familial resources—or 'financial social capital'—are shown to be central features of Indigenous people's financial experiences.

There is much to be learned from analysing financial social capital and care for others as part of economic practices and decision-making among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Research completed in 2015 by CSI and First Nations Foundation showed that young Indigenous people contribute significantly to both the economy and their community by participating in unpaid work, such as caring for someone with a disability, caring for an aged relative or children, or domestic work [12]. Social capital is a growing field in global economics, as illustrated by the increase in social enterprise businesses, in environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing, and in the use of customer loyalty to brands and financial services to agitate for social change. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians teach us that the social factors are not easily disentangled from the economic.

1.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches to money

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' approaches to resources have historically differed from those of the capitalist economy, and many of these approaches remain relevant today. Here, we summarise some central themes that underscore Indigenous peoples' values and practices concerning money, to assist with interpretation of our findings on financial resilience.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities vary greatly, as do their approaches to money. However, relatedness is central to Indigenous ways of knowing and being [13]. This suggests that the 'individual' is deeply embedded within their family and community; independence and competition between individuals is less encouraged than in most Western communities. For many Indigenous people, sharing is a marker of cultural identity [14-16]. Sharing resources,

including money, is a widely reported social norm in Indigenous communities across Australia, whether urban, regional or remote [16]. In an Indigenous context, sharing can be viewed as part of a socio-economic system of exchange that is characterised by a range of rules, rights and obligations. These are underpinned by a strong rationale of sustainability and service—caring for community, country and culture [17]. Sharing serves important purposes, such as distributing resources beyond individuals in line with kin relationships [18], testing and substantiating those relationships [19] and, thereby, sustaining social relations among a broader kinship group and community.

Western money systems have only been introduced relatively recently into this system of values.

For many Indigenous people, money has been integrated into (and transformed by) their already existing systems of exchange [20]. The exchange or sharing of money has become a proxy for caring for others and sustaining families and communities [20]. Many Indigenous people now participate in both Indigenous systems of exchange and the Western capitalist economy. Negotiating these two economies requires skill and knowledge [15] and may create tensions and pull people in directions that are diametrically opposed. Although the two economies can coexist, it can be difficult for people to leave sharing economies, even if they wish to do so. Saving money and investing in large or long-term purchases can be difficult in a culture in which the individual and wealth accumulation are not always highly valued. This project considers the role of social connections and community when using money, which is an overarching feature of past and contemporary Indigenous economies.

1.3 Background to the financial resilience model

In 2015, CSI and NAB built on their existing partnership that was measuring Australia's financial exclusion [11]⁴ and developed a more holistic measure of people's financial experiences, known as 'financial resilience' [1]. Financial resilience was defined as 'the ability to access and draw on internal capabilities and appropriate, acceptable and accessible external resources and supports in times of financial adversity' [1]. Importantly, this model recognises that people's levels of financial resilience are dependent on not only their individual capacity, but also on the supports that they can draw on from other sources, such as the government.

4 Financial exclusion is defined as a 'lack of access to appropriate and affordable financial products and services'. [11]

The framework was based on four types of resources:

- 1. Economic resources.** These include income, savings, debt management, capacity to raise \$2,000 in an emergency and ability to meet cost-of-living expenses.
- 2. Financial products and services.** These include access to and demand for bank accounts, credit and insurance.
- 3. Financial knowledge and behaviour.** These include knowledge of, and confidence using, financial products and services, willingness to use financial advice, and proactive financial behaviours.
- 4. Social capital.** This includes level of social connectedness, likelihood of receiving financial support from social connections in times of crisis, and the need for and access to community and government support.

The financial resilience survey has been repeated nationally in 2015, 2016 and 2018 [1, 21, 22]. It was recently recognised that gaining an accurate and meaningful picture of financial resilience in Australia required a focused exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences with money. In 2018, CSI and NAB partnered with First Nations Foundation to incorporate experience, expertise and leadership in Indigenous economic empowerment.

1.4 Research method

This report includes analysis and reporting of an adapted version of the financial resilience survey. With advice from the project's advisory group and cognitive pre-testing of Indigenous community members, the survey was revised so that questions were more relevant, culturally appropriate and accessible to an Indigenous population. Responses were collected from 620 Indigenous Australians in June and July 2018. Of the surveys, 564 were completed online and 56 were completed in face-to-face sessions in two remote communities in northern Australia (see Appendix 1 for sample details). Responses were weighted to be representative of the Indigenous Australian population aged 18+, reflecting their age, gender and location. Throughout this report, the people who participated in the survey are referred to as 'the sample', 'participants' or 'respondents'.

Based on responses to the survey, participants were given an overall financial resilience score from very low to high (see Supplementary Appendix 1 for more information on the calculation of the scores). Using the same scale, participants' levels on each of the financial resilience components (economic resources, financial products and services, financial knowledge and behaviour, and financial social capital) were also calculated. This scoring framework enables a comparison of the responses from the Indigenous and 2018 general financial resilience surveys.

Statistical analyses were conducted on weighted data; differences between groups are noted in text ($p < .05$) to indicate significant differences between groups. For a descriptive comparison with the general Australian population, the weighted responses of 2,062 Australians aged 18+ who participated in the 2018 general financial resilience survey were used. Qualitative analysis was conducted on the open-ended items of the survey, using thematic analysis.

During the analysis phase of the project, focus groups and interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including financial capability workers in a remote community, were conducted. These aimed to 'check' our interpretations of the survey data by inviting participants of the focus group to comment on the project and its implications.

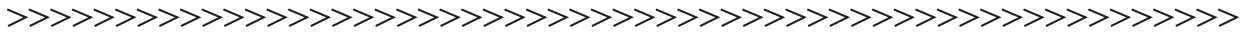
Further information on the methodology can be found in Supplementary Appendix 1 - Methodology.



**Indigenous Australians
were experiencing
financial difficulty at a
higher rate than
non-Indigenous
Australians, with
almost half of the
Indigenous respondents
experiencing severe or
high financial stress.**



2. Financial Resilience



Key points

- In this chapter, the ‘levels’ of financial resilience among Indigenous people are outlined and the data are further interpreted using qualitative data in Chapter 3.
- One in ten Indigenous respondents were classified as being financially secure, but nearly half (48.8%) were classified as experiencing severe or high levels of financial stress.
- Findings suggest a need to consider how Indigenous approaches to money can yield positive outcomes for the individual’s money goals and for wider family and community cohesion and wellbeing.
- Definitions of ‘financial social capital’ should be further explored, to understand how sharing and caring for community contributes to an individuals’ ability to navigate financial stress, either in the short or long term.

In this chapter, we examine the financial resilience of Indigenous survey respondents, but note that, despite efforts to ensure a culturally relevant and appropriate survey, the original financial resilience survey does not map directly to Indigenous perspectives of wealth and money. However, the findings do show that many disparities exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in terms of financial resilience, accessing services, saving and building strong financial futures.



2.1 Levels of financial resilience and vulnerability

The overall mean level of financial resilience for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in the survey was 2.56. Although there are problems with making direct comparisons as described above, this score is below the 2018 general survey financial resilience mean score of 3.05 [22]. Mean scores for each of the financial resilience components are shown in Supplementary Appendix 2, Figure 2.

The findings show that one in ten Indigenous respondents are financially secure, with a further four in ten experiencing only low levels of financial stress or vulnerability. However, 48.8% of Indigenous participants were experiencing severe or high financial stress, compared with only 11% of the general population (see Table 1). This is equivalent to approximately 209,245 Indigenous Australians aged 15 and over in the Australian population [23]⁵ and indicates that Indigenous people are over-represented among Australians who are financially vulnerable.

5 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census reports the Australian Indigenous population in five-year age blocks; the latest 2016 Census reports are used here for Indigenous Australians aged 15+.

Table 1:
Levels of financial resilience, total sample

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE POPULATION			
	Severe financial stress/ vulnerability	High financial stress/ vulnerability	Low financial stress/ vulnerability	Financial security
Indigenous sample	5.4%	43.1%	41.9%	9.7%
2018 general sample	0.5%	10.5%	55.1%	33.9%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 604, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.

2.1.1 Differences among respondents

There were substantial differences in scores across locations. Of note, respondents in urban areas were more likely than respondents in regional and remote areas to experience severe financial stress (9.3%) and financial security (11.5%; see also Supplementary Appendix 2, Table 3). This shows that, in urban locations, there is a greater divide between Indigenous populations that are doing well and those doing less well. More than half (55.5%) of the respondents in remote areas had scores that indicated high financial stress.

There was also a clear difference between those who received wages and those who received a government allowance for financial security: 14.5% of respondents earning a wage or salary were financially secure, compared with 3.7% of those receiving a government allowance (see Supplementary Appendix 2, Table 4).

2.2 Exploring the components of financial resilience

This section briefly discusses each component of financial resilience and highlights areas in which financial service providers could better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As with the general survey, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people scored highest in the financial products and services component⁶; however, their lowest scoring component was economic resources. This is important, because having lower economic resources can affect an individual's ability to access financial products and services and it is associated with lower levels of financial knowledge and behaviour [14].

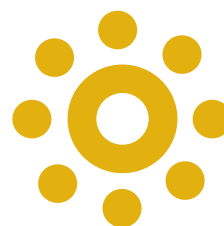
2.3 Economic resources

KEY FINDINGS:

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents had very low or low levels of economic resources, no 'emergency' savings and said they would not be able to raise money in an emergency.

People have different opportunities to make decisions about money, and this is dependent on how much money they have. The economic resources component considers people's level of savings, their ability to repay debt, whether they would be able to raise \$2,000 in an emergency and from where, their capacity to meet cost-of-living expenses, and their household's income level.

Overall, 38.3% of Indigenous respondents reported having moderate to high levels of economic resources, compared to 71.7% in the general population. This level differed significantly ($p < .05$) by geography: 26.0% of remote participants reported moderate or high levels of economic resources, compared with 47.5% of participants living in urban areas⁷ (see Table 2).



⁶ Australia generally has good access to financial services compared to other countries; this is largely because individuals receiving government payments require a bank account into which the payments are deposited.

⁷ Economic resources was the only financial resilience component that differed significantly across location.

Table 2:
Level of economic resources, by location

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE POPULATION			
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High
Urban	24.2%	28.4%	29.3%	18.2%
Regional	37.1%	29.5%	24.9%	8.5%
Remote	52.0%	22.1%	15.9%	10.1%
Total	34.0%	27.7%	25.4%	12.9%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 613. Difference between groups is significant ($p < .05$).

Access to money and economic resources was experienced differently by the Aboriginal and Torres Islander participants of the survey than the participants in the general 2018 survey. Over half of the Indigenous sample (54.5%) said that they found it very hard or a bit hard to meet living expenses, compared with 15.8% of the respondents in the 2018 general sample. Similarly, while four in five people in the general population said that they would be able to access \$2,000 within a week in an emergency, fewer than two in five Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people said they would be able to do the same; importantly, two in five of the Indigenous sample said they would not be able to get this money within a week. Difficulty in accessing money in both everyday and emergency contexts demonstrates the economic challenges faced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These economic challenges have implications for Indigenous people's overall financial resilience.

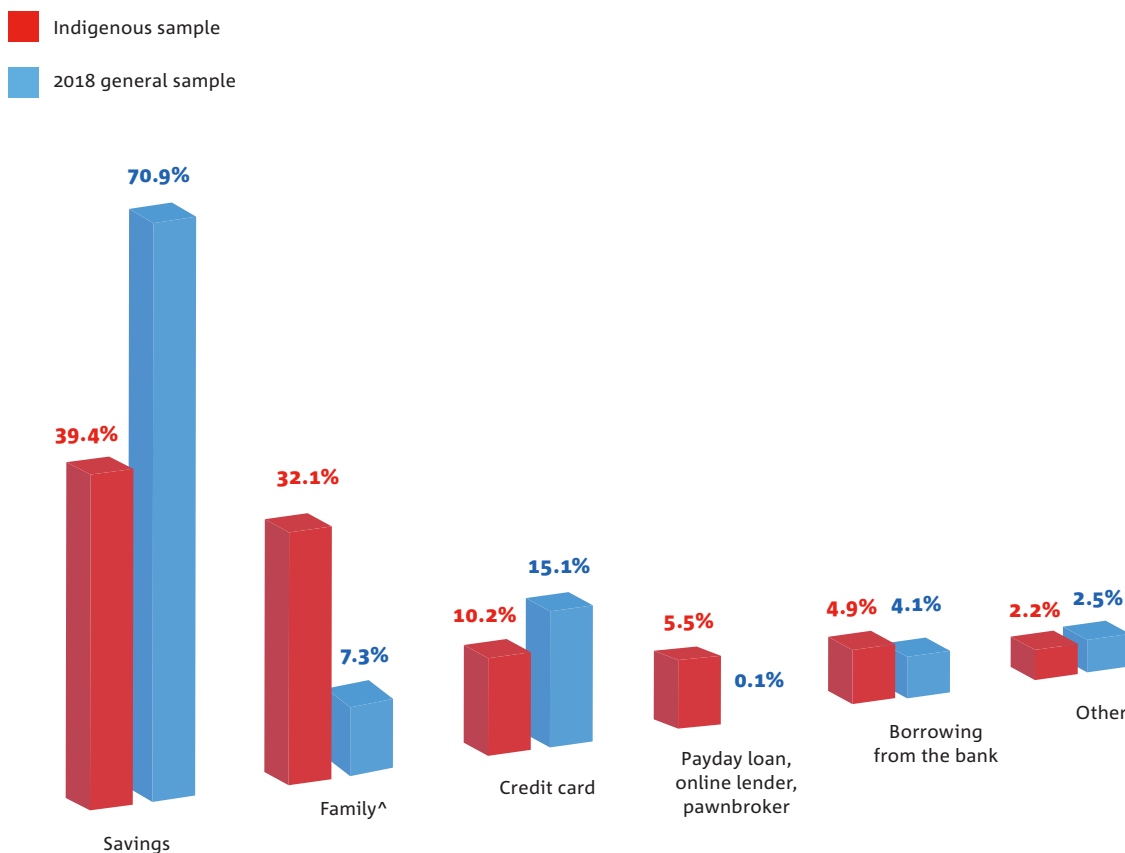
2.3.1 Access to emergency money

Of the participants who said they would be able to raise \$2,000 in one week, 39.4% said they would be able to obtain the money from their savings and 32.1% said they would from family (Figure 1). Access to emergency funds differs between the Indigenous participants and the general survey: respondents in the general survey were more likely to indicate they would draw on savings, whereas Indigenous participants were more likely to identify family as a potential source for funds. There were also significant differences in the source of emergency money according to location. Respondents in urban areas were more likely to say they would borrow from their family (38.5%) than the regional (27.5%) and remote (19.5%) participants.

Engagement with credit products for emergency funds also differed between the two surveys: more people in the general survey indicated that they would use a credit card, while more Indigenous survey participants said that they would use high-cost credit such as a payday loan or pawnbroker. Accessing fringe credit providers is likely to result ultimately in Indigenous respondents paying more for credit. This difference may reflect a problem of access for Indigenous people—difficulty in accessing mainstream or traditional credit may push people towards high-cost credit, due to either their location, their eligibility or time pressures.



Figure 1:
Where would you get \$2,000 in a week from?



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018, Roy Morgan 2018.
 Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 244, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+;
 Total Roy Morgan sample size = 1,685, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.
[^] The general survey response option was 'family or friends'.

2.3.2 Savings and debt

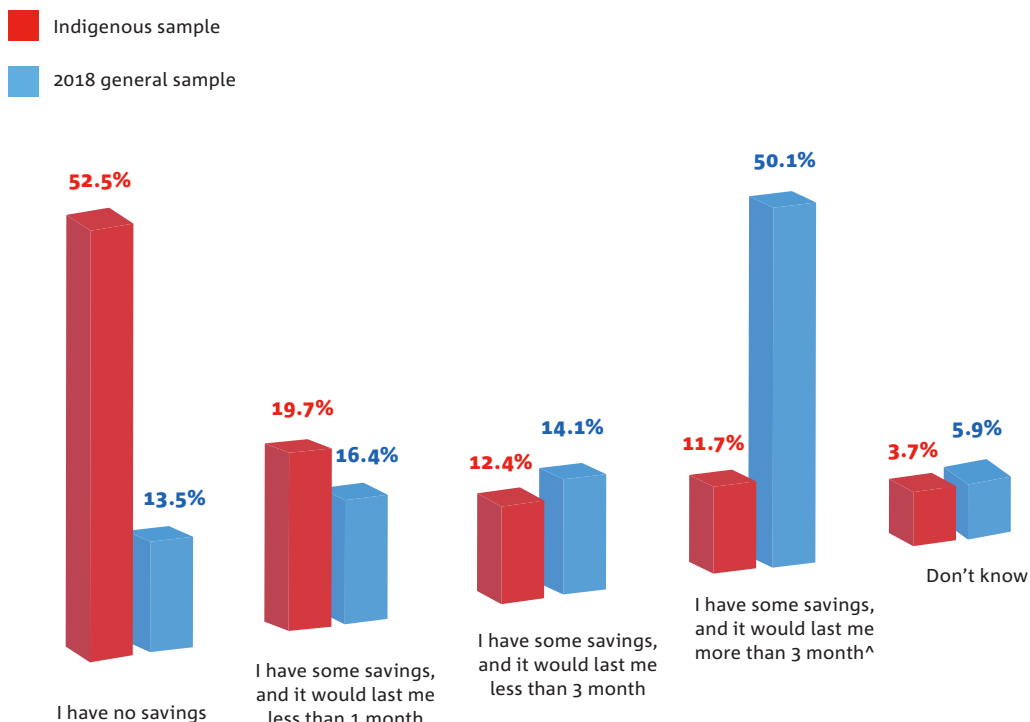
Experiences of savings and debt can have a significant effect on how people fare financially and on broader perspectives of money. As previously outlined, the value of savings and debt can be viewed differently in Indigenous and Western cultures.

Figure 2 illustrates a stark difference in financial resources between participants in the Indigenous and general financial resilience surveys. One in ten of Indigenous respondents said they had savings that would last them three months or more; 52.5% of Indigenous respondents reported that they did not have any savings, compared with 13.5% of general survey respondents⁸ (see Figure 2). While this is likely to be partly due to economic disparities (i.e., you cannot save what you do not

have), cultural factors may also be relevant when understanding decisions and behaviour around savings. Sharing resources with others may be valued over saving or accumulating money; perceptions of 'wealth' are addressed further in Chapter 3. It may also indicate that dealing with financial and familial pressures in the present is considered more pressing than planning for financial shocks in the future.

8 The survey did not ask for a quantified amount of savings, but rather whether participants had any savings and how long this would last them if their income were to be paused.

Figure 2:
How much money do you have put away?



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018, Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+; Total Roy Morgan sample size = 2,062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+;

^ The general financial resilience survey had an additional option of 'savings lasting 6 months or more' (34.4% of sample); these responses were combined with 'savings lasting more than 3 months' for the purposes of comparison.

Debt and over-indebtedness can be a significant source of financial and emotional stress (24). When asked about their level of debt, 19.5% of participants said that they did not owe any money and a further 44.8% said that they had debts that they were paying off without any significant stress. However, 31.7% of the respondents indicated that they had debts that they were either unable to pay back or were finding very hard to pay back; this compares with 20% of respondents in the general survey.

ON THE CHALLENGE OF SAVING

Many respondents detailed the challenges of meeting everyday expenses because of a low income. For instance, Monica* reported that paying the power bill was so difficult that she no longer used her lights at home. She had also cut back on food so that she could cover rent and other expenses. She noted that these were common practices in her community. In these circumstances, saving was nearly impossible.

FUNERALS

Funerals are significant cultural and memorial moments. They can also cost tens of thousands of dollars, placing a great financial burden on families and communities.

Indigenous families sometimes travel from around the country to attend ceremonies that can last several weeks. A coffin, travel, food, and accommodation for large groups need to be factored into expenses. In remote communities, the body of the deceased may need to be flown in a charter plane to a morgue and then back for burial.

In interviews conducted in this study, financial counsellors and regional organisations described how families attempt to cover these costs. Money might be obtained from family members, fringe lenders, the superannuation of the deceased, royalties and benevolent funds from Aboriginal corporations and land councils.

* Names have been changed throughout the report.

2.4 Financial products and services

KEY FINDINGS:

One in ten Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents reported very low levels of financial products and services use and access, compared to 1 in 100 of the broader Australian population. Indigenous respondents were more likely to use high-cost, fringe credit providers, and were less likely to have some form of insurance than the general population. Addressing key barriers may assist in increasing access to products and services and, therefore, address financial inclusion.

Access to financial products and services is one component of the financial resilience model, but it is also used as an indicator of financial inclusion or exclusion (i.e., having access to a bank account, credit and insurance). Approximately one-quarter of the participants had high levels of access and engagement with financial products and services (see Table 3). While over half of the sample had moderate to high levels of access to financial products and services, one in ten participants scored in the very low bracket for financial products and services. Low and very low inclusion is understood to occur if the individual has access to only one of the three forms of financial products (e.g., access to a bank account but not to credit or insurance) [11]. The proportion of respondents with very low financial inclusion was ten times higher for the Indigenous survey than for the general survey (10.3% and 1.0%, respectively; see Table 3). Given this, it is important to understand the barriers to access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2.4.1 Access to bank accounts

While the majority of Indigenous Australians have a bank account, 1.2% of respondents (equivalent to 5,145 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) did not have a bank account. A further 2.7% (approximately 11,577 people) said they used someone else's account; 1.9% of respondents in the general survey reported using someone else's account and 0.2% had no access to bank accounts. Financial services and other providers must consider the implications of people not having their own bank accounts.

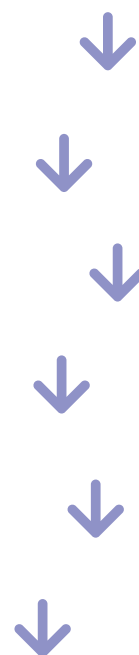


Table 3:

Level of financial products and services, total sample

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE POPULATION			
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High
Indigenous sample	10.3%	27.8%	37.5%	24.5%
2018 general sample	1.0%	9.6%	39.5%	49.8%

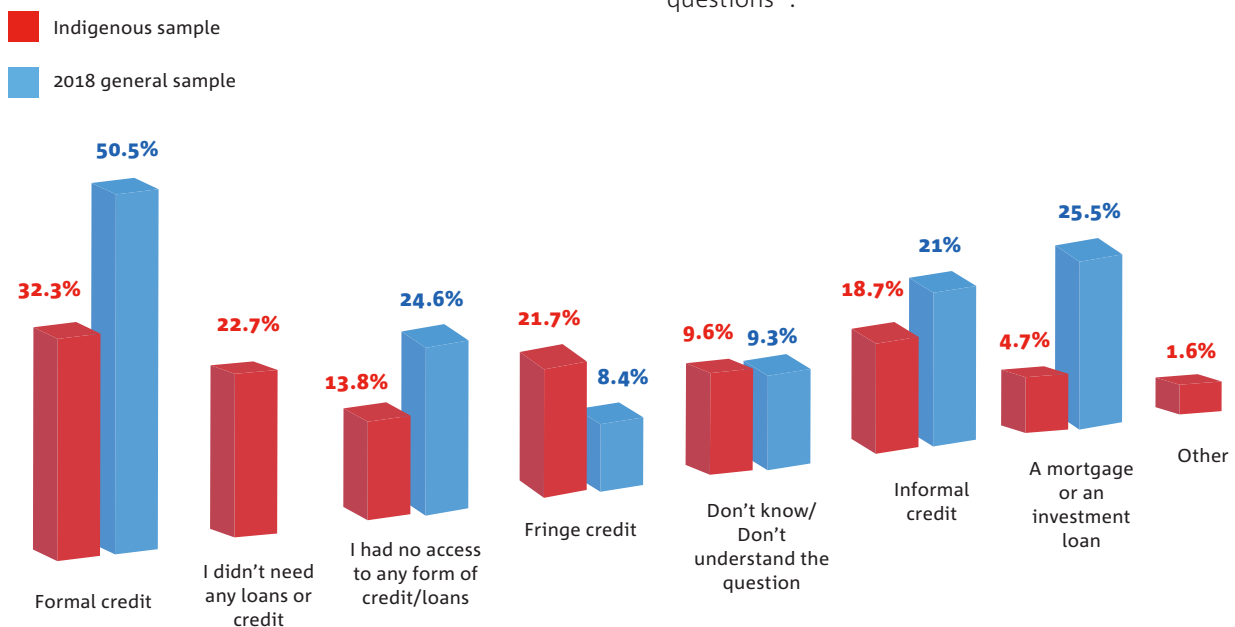
Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 613; Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.

2.4.2 Access to credit

Half of the sample said that they could have accessed some form of credit in the last 12 months if they had chosen to. However, 22.7% said that they did not need or want any form of credit, and 13.8% said that they had no access to any form of credit in the last 12 months⁹. When asked what kind of credit they were able to access, participant responses differed by location (see Supplementary Appendix 2, Figure 3): those in regional areas were more likely to indicate that they had no access to any form of loans or credit (one in four respondents said this).

Figure 3:
Types of credit accessible in last 12 months



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620; Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.

⁹ Response option not included in general survey. Formal credit includes a loan from a bank or credit union, Afterpay/Zip Pay, and community finance; fringe credit includes payday loans and loans from a pawnbroker; informal credit includes loans from family or friends, and Bookup¹¹.

When referring to credit that they had actually used in the last 12 months, 37.9% of participants said they did not have any credit, either because they did not need it or they could not access it (Figure 4). Formal credit, including community loans and

The respondents who indicated that they did not want loans or credit could be considered 'financially excluded'. However, these findings point to the need for a more nuanced approach to discussing engagement with credit, since 'choosing' not to access credit differs from not being able to access credit. The type of accessible credit varied between the Indigenous and general survey participants. While one in two respondents in the 2018 general survey said they were able to access formal credit (such as a credit card or other bank loan), one in three respondents in the Indigenous sample said this form of credit was accessible (see Figure 3). Another notable difference was that a higher proportion of people in the general survey (24.6%) than the Indigenous sample (13.8%) indicated that they had no access to credit; however, this is likely to be partly attributable to differences in survey questions¹⁰.

Centrelink advances¹², was the most common type of credit used; however, accessing fringe credit (which includes payday loans and loans from a pawnbroker) was higher in the Indigenous sample than in the general survey.

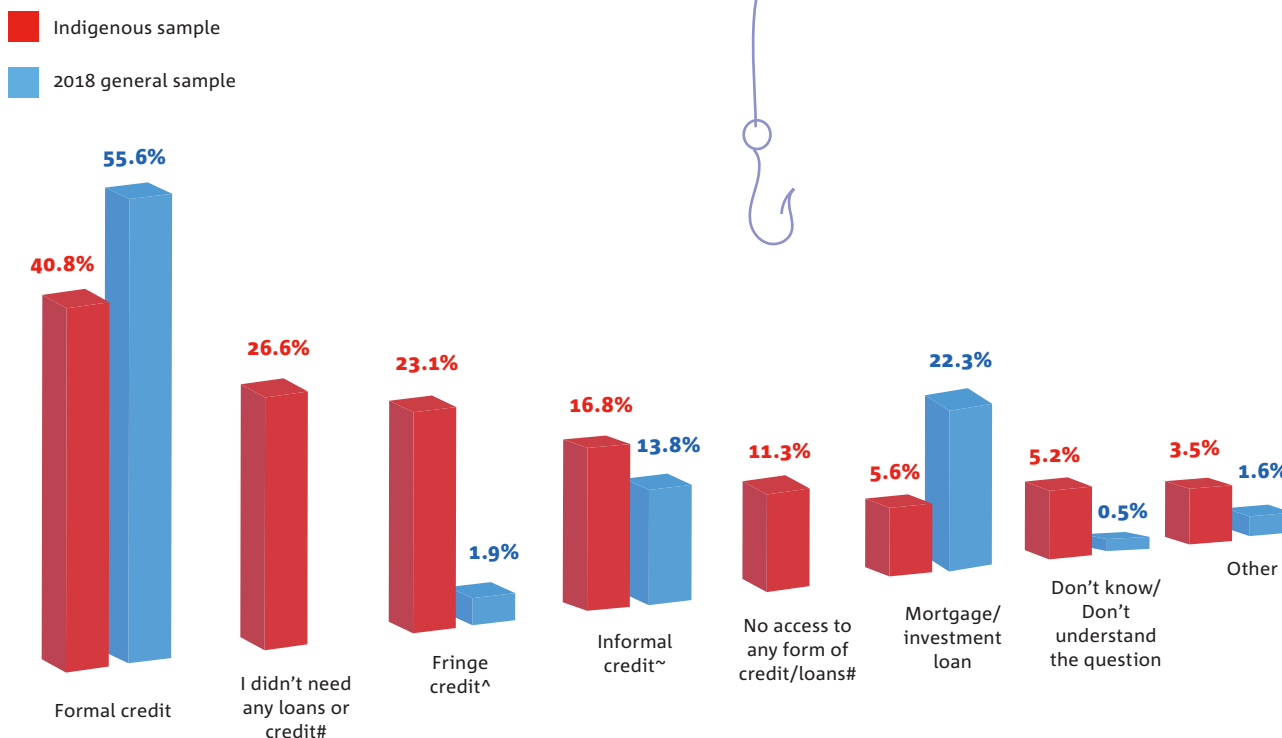
⁹ The 2018 general survey and previous iterations of the financial resilience survey did not include the response option 'I did not need any loans or credit'; therefore, this cannot be compared to the results reported here.

¹⁰ The response option 'I didn't need any loans or credit' was a new response option in the Indigenous survey and was not in the general survey; it is possible that, for the general survey population, the response 'I had no access to loans or credit' could be considered to include respondents who would respond with 'I didn't need any loans or credit' if it were available.

¹¹ Bookup is an informal form of credit offered by stores and other traders that allows customers to pay for what they buy later. Stores may charge a fee for the service, and customers may lose track of their spending. For more information see <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/life-events-and-you/indigenous/book-up>.

¹² Although Centrelink advance payments are repaid from later Centrelink payments, they were understood and reported by some participants as a form of credit and are, therefore, included in this category.

Figure 4:
Type of credit used in the last 12 months



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 610; Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 1374, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.

General survey did not include this response option.

^ Indigenous survey included payday loans and loans from a pawnbroker.

~ Indigenous survey included Bookup.

When asked about the type of informal and fringe credit that they had used in the last 12 months across location, more respondents in remote areas reported using Bookup ($p < .05$) and fewer remote respondents had used a loan from a pawnbroker ($p < .01$) (see Supplementary Appendix 2, Figure 4). In general, a higher proportion of respondents living in urban and regional areas were accessing fringe credit, such as payday loans and 'buy now, pay later' products¹³, than those in remote areas.

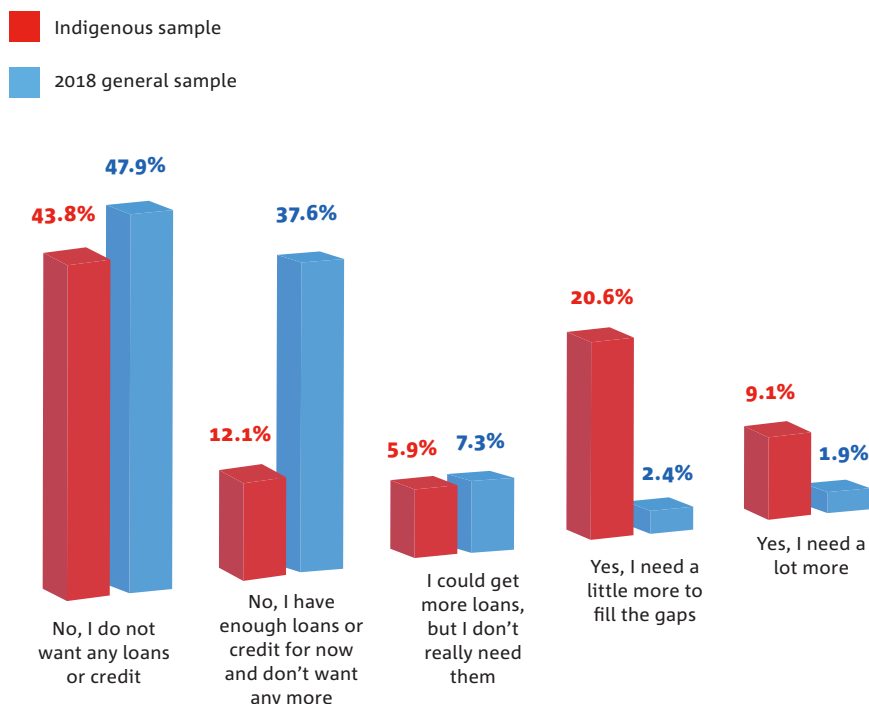
Nearly 30% of the Indigenous sample said that they either needed 'a lot more credit' (9.1%) or 'a little more to fill the gaps' (20.6%); this compared with 4.3% of the general survey sample (see Figure 5). Importantly, 43.8% of the total sample said that they did not want to be using any loans or credit; 22.8% of these people said they were not currently using credit and 18.6% said that they were using

some form of credit. This indicates that there is a proportion of the sample who currently have credit who may not wish to continue using it.

During the focus groups conducted to help with the interpretation of the survey results, one interview participant noted that an important part of improving Indigenous financial inclusion is to consider how Indigenous conceptualisations and ways of using money can affect the opportunities available to participate within a Western financial system. For example, by choosing not to use formal credit, such as a credit card, an individual may be later disadvantaged if they apply for a loan and are denied because they have no credit history. A similar concern was raised for the ability of Indigenous people to begin a business if a large amount of capital is required to start the business.

13 'Buy now, pay later' products, such as Afterpay and Zip Pay, currently have no obligations under the National Credit Code.

Figure 5:
Need for more credit



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 613; Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.

2.4.3 Access to insurance

Overall, Indigenous respondents appear to be underinsured. When asked about insurance, 37.6% of participants said that they had no insurance at all (including 58.4% of respondents in remote areas), and 22% said that they had 'some' insurance (see Figure 6). In contrast, only 10.3% of respondents in the general survey had no insurance. Many Indigenous people may have group insurance through their superannuation but are unaware of it¹⁴. 31.8% of respondents said they thought they needed more insurance; health and life protection was the form of insurance that most respondents believed they needed.

Some predatory general insurance products, such as Indigenous-targeted funeral insurance, were raised at the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry, revealing the vulnerability of Indigenous people in purchasing products that were not fit for their needs (25).

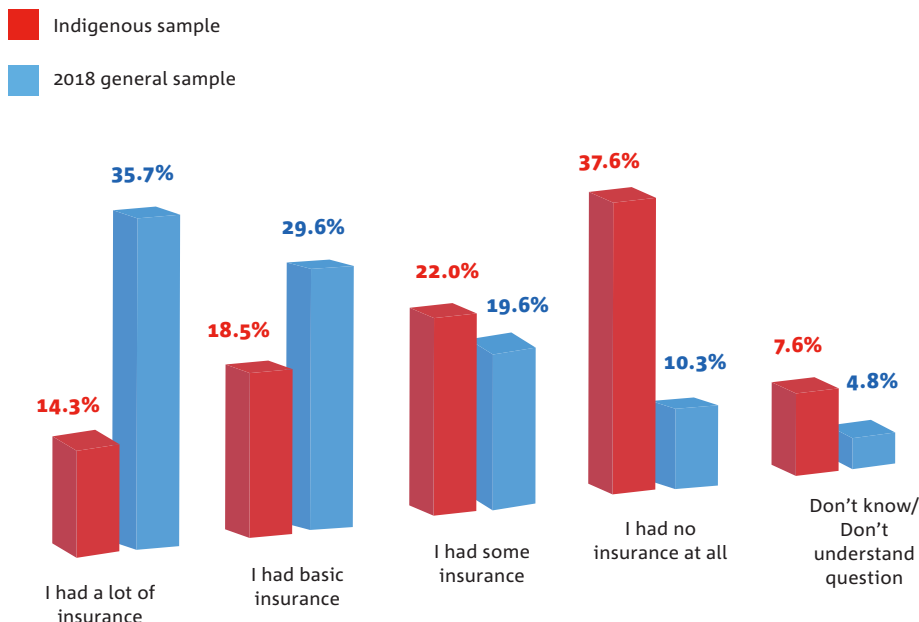
2.4.4 Barriers to access

Three-quarters of all participants indicated that they had experienced at least some problems accessing financial products and services (see Figure 7 and full chart in Supplementary Appendix 2, Figure 5). The most common barriers (experienced by around one in ten) were either structural, knowledge dependent or based on relationships and reputation. Structural barriers, which could be partially addressed by the financial services industry and government services, included waiting times for appointments, the high cost of services, and services not being suited to the local area. Participants either did not know what was available or felt that they did not know enough about the financial products and services. Reducing shame, embarrassment and stigma could also be addressed by the financial services industry, by building trust with Indigenous people through investing in financial literacy and plain language product descriptions and through promoting ways of receiving financial help that aligns with cultural values. The latter approach could include consideration of the importance of sharing and the potential difficulties associated with humbugging¹⁵.

¹⁴ First Nations Foundation conducts Indigenous superannuation outreach events and has found that most Indigenous participants are unaware that they have death or total and permanent disability group insurance or income protection as part of their superannuation. This active outreach model has made people aware of this cover and assisted with insurance claims.

¹⁵ Humbugging is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

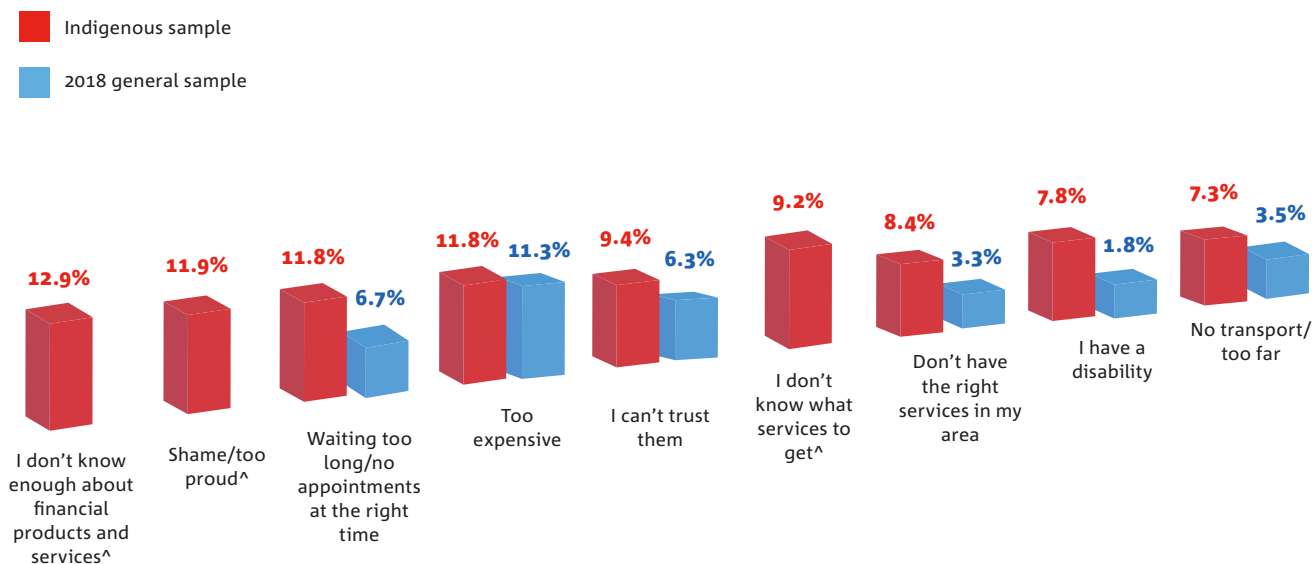
Figure 6:
Access to insurance



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.
Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.

Figure 7:
Barriers to accessing financial products and services (multiple responses allowed)



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+;
Roy Morgan sample size = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.

^ Response option new to the Indigenous survey and not included in general survey.

2.5 Financial knowledge and behaviour

KEY FINDINGS:

Given its close relationship with financial resources, many Indigenous respondents also have low levels of financial knowledge and behaviour. Most respondents engaged in at least one proactive financial behaviour, such as making additional payments on loans, putting money away or paying extra into superannuation; however, many of these proactive behaviours are extremely difficult without additional disposable income.

This section considers people's level of knowledge of financial products and services, their confidence using financial products and services, their willingness to seek financial advice and their proactive financial behaviours. As previously noted, the ability to engage in positive financial behaviours is at least partly dependent upon available financial resources. Therefore, it is not surprising that the overall level of financial knowledge and behaviour in the Indigenous sample is lower than in the general population survey.

2.5.1 Financial confidence and knowledge

Over half of the sample (54.3%) had moderate or high levels of financial knowledge and behaviours (see Table 4). The Indigenous survey respondents generally self-reported high levels of knowledge and confidence in using financial products and services, but a lower proportion of the respondents had sought financial advice or practiced more than one proactive financial behaviour. Consequently, while respondents may feel confident in their knowledge and use of financial products and services, they may not translate this confidence to seeking advice and engaging in proactive financial behaviours, or they be restricted by a lack of accessible services. This is reflected in low financial knowledge and behaviour component scores: 14.6% of the Indigenous sample had very low scores, compared with 3.6% of the respondents in the general survey.

Table 4:

Level of financial knowledge and behaviour, total sample

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE POPULATION			
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High
Indigenous sample	14.6%	31.1%	39.8%	14.5%
2018 general sample	3.6%	29.6%	44.2%	22.6%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 609, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Roy Morgan sample size = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.



VALUING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

David¹⁶ spoke of the lack of value placed on Indigenous knowledges by non-Indigenous institutions. He explained that Aboriginal leaders have knowledge equivalent to that of doctors, which is learned in stages and over a lifetime, much like a university system. He told us, 'Yolngu¹⁷ people, our leaders, they have learned from the writing on the sand; it wasn't writing on the paper. [And they] pass it on'. David also recognised the importance of the opportunities from formal schooling, such as employment and gaining an income. Navigating these two systems of knowledge was something he prized and imparted to his kids. However, financial knowledge was not taught in either system, making it difficult for people to prosper financially despite their vast knowledge.

¹⁶ All names have been changed in the report.

¹⁷ People of north-east Arnhem Land.

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOUR

During fieldwork, Angela, a health professional, approached and asked if we could help find her debit card. She had ordered it from a bank two years ago and had been waiting for it since. As Angela lived in a remote community, it was not simply a matter of walking into her nearest local bank branch for help. This simple interaction with a bank is challenging in remote circumstances and can have profound effects on a person's daily financial management.

Nearly two-thirds of participants (63.4%) said that they felt 'pretty confident' or 'very confident' when making decisions about financial products and services. This is similar to the responses in the general survey (see Supplementary Appendix 2, Table 5). Similarly, 56.8% of Indigenous participants said they understood financial services and products well or very well, compared with 46.6% of the general survey participants. Self-reported levels of understanding of financial products are not tested further in either the Indigenous or general surveys. 39.0% of Indigenous respondents also reported only understanding financial services a bit, or not at all (See Supplementary Appendix 2, Table

5). However, there were also a small number of participants who were unsure about their financial product usage: 5.2% of the sample said they did not know if or what types of credit they had used in the last 12 months, 7.5% said they did not know if they held any insurance, and 12.9% said they had not sought financial help because they did not know enough about financial products and services (see 'Financial products and services' section).

Despite this confidence in navigating financial services that was expressed by participants, there are both structural and personal issues: there are unequal opportunities and barriers for Indigenous Australians in accessing financial advice and products, due to location and language challenges, and, in some instances, a relative lack of knowledge about financial products ('you don't know what you don't know') [2]. These can only be addressed with tailored financial literacy education.



BANKING

John* lived in a remote community and had made a loan application with a large bank for a car and boat that he wished to purchase to start a small tourism business. He dreamed of taking Yolŋu and visitors to his country and teaching them Yolŋu ways. When John called the bank to enquire about the progress of his loan, he was told he needed to visit his nearest branch. To do so, John would need to travel by plane.

John persisted on the phone and was asked several identification questions that he found hard to understand in English. John's first language was Yolŋu Matha. He was offered the use of a translator, who came on the line speaking Aranda, a different Aboriginal language. The operator would not hear or accept that the translator was speaking a different language. John was unable to answer the identification questions to the operator's satisfaction and was dismissed from the call.

This story illustrates a primary barrier to Indigenous people accessing services and products, which is reported by Australian financial counsellors and support organisations: identification methods such as birth certificates or pay slips are often required by financial services to set up or access accounts, as is the need to be physically present when setting up an account, but this is not necessarily understood by the customer when trying to access these services [26]¹⁸.

* Names have been changed throughout the report

18 In a background briefing paper for the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry, the Commonwealth of Australia noted that a lack of identification documents can affect access to banking services, credit, superannuation and insurance products [26, p 11]. AUSTRAC (Australia's financial intelligence agency) recommended that services consider adopting a 'flexible approach to the identification and verification of persons of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage' [26, p 25].

2.5.2 Proactive financial behaviours

Most respondents (84.5%) said they had engaged in at least one proactive financial behaviour in the past year (Figure 8), although most respondents engaged in two or three behaviours; the average number of behaviours reported was 1.9 out of 7. The most frequently reported behaviours were checking bank statements for irregular transactions (52.2%), sticking to a budget (38.8%) and putting money away (saving; 36.6%). In general, the participation in these behaviours was lower in the Indigenous sample than in the general survey. However, many proactive behaviours require disposable income, such as making contributions to superannuation or extra loan repayments. Given that half of the sample reported they had found it hard to pay for everyday living costs in the past 12 months, it would be difficult to find the required economic resources to practice some proactive behaviours.

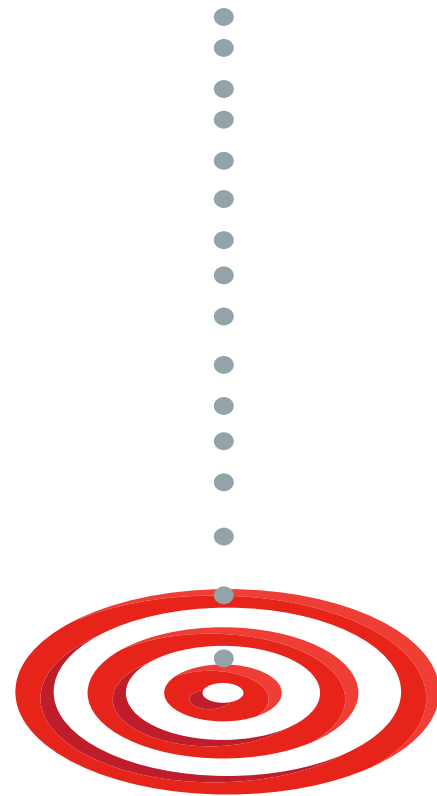
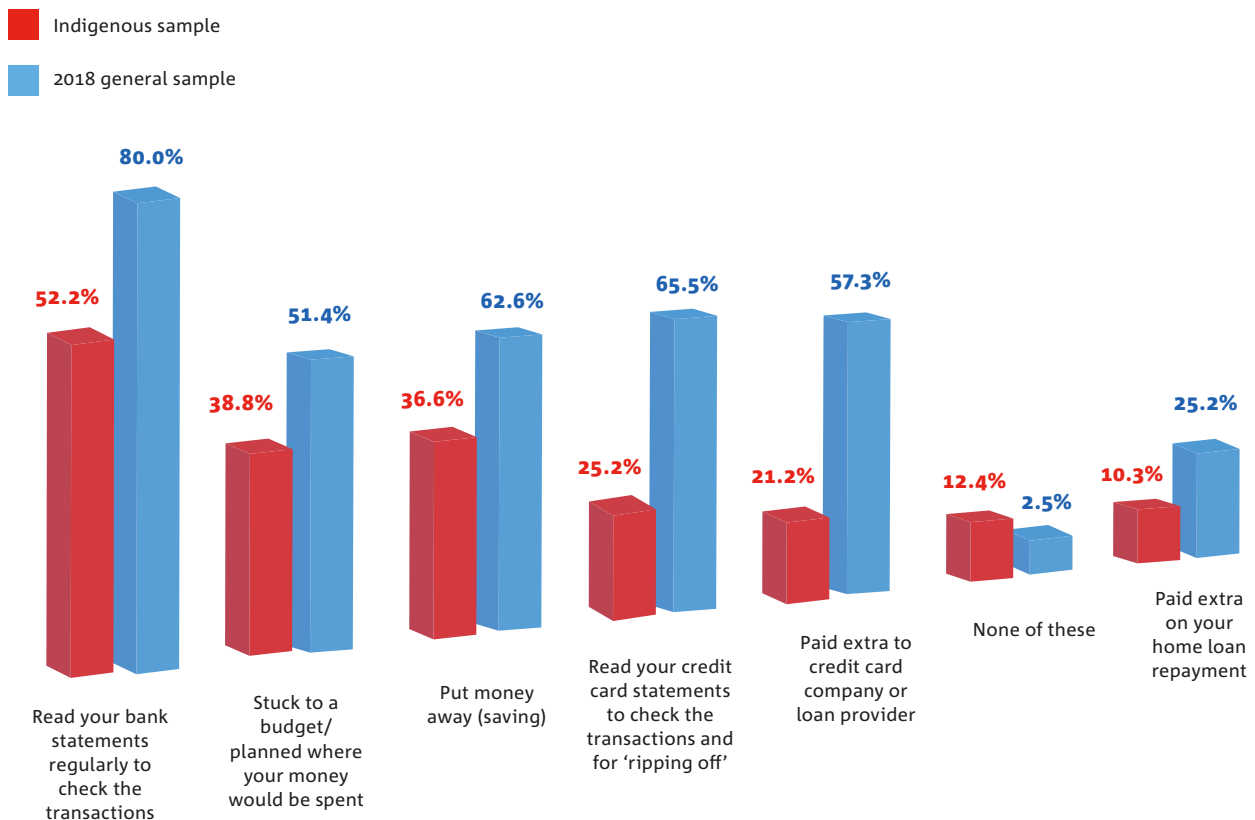


Figure 8:
Proactive financial behaviour



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Roy Morgan sample size = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. The question and response wording differed slightly between the Indigenous and general surveys.

2.5.3 Financial help seeking

Less than half of the sample (39.4%) said that they were currently seeking or had previously sought financial advice or information (see Figure 9). When asked what types of advice or support they had already used or would use in the future, respondents most frequently indicated they had previously used a government information service (such as MyGov or Centrelink), a free community service or information from the internet. Of the sample who said they would potentially seek advice in the future, half (50.3%) said that they would consider using a free community service.

EXISTING INDIGENOUS FINANCIAL LITERACY PRODUCTS

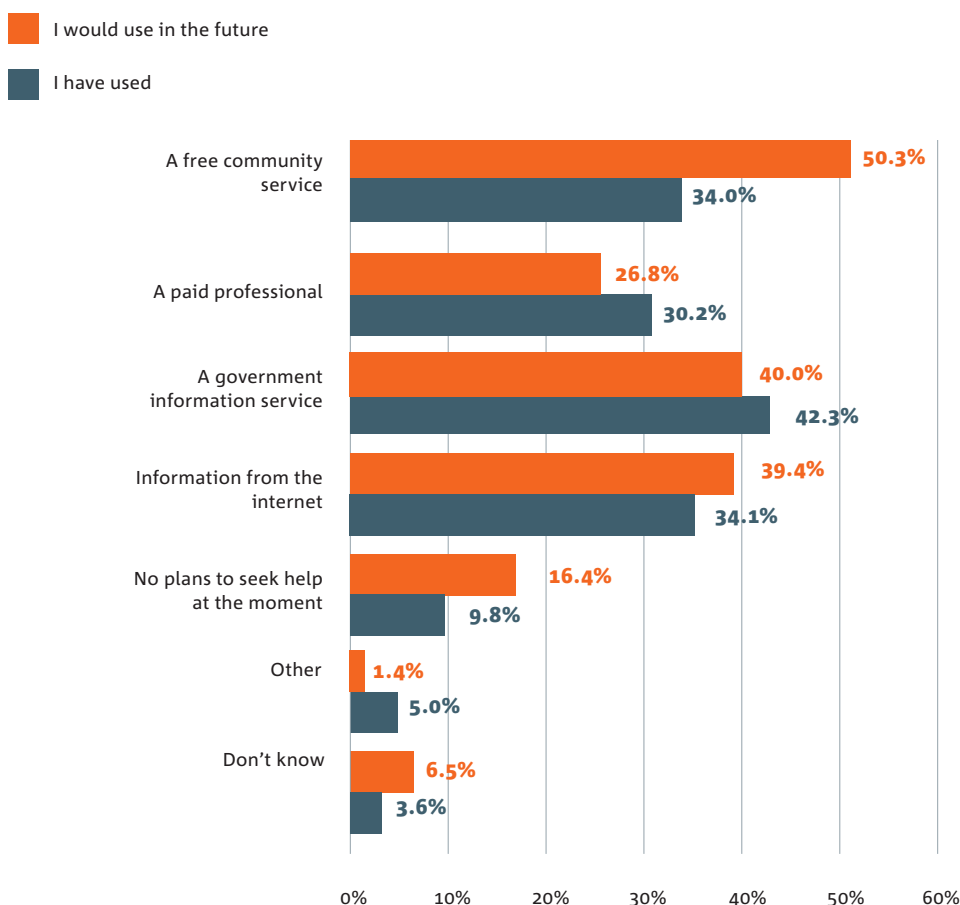
Indigenous-designed financial literacy programs such as My Moola¹⁹ from First Nations Foundation and Yarnin' Money²⁰ from the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (ICAN) have shown positive outcomes for clients in improving attitudes and behaviours towards money [2, 27-29]. Opportunities for extending the reach of these programs should be explored.



Figure 9:

Source of financial advice or information

Which sources of advice and information would you consider or have you already used?



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 380, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.

¹⁹ My Moola <http://www.fnf.org.au/mymoola.html>.

²⁰ Yarnin' Money <http://ican.org.au/programs/yarnin-money/>

2.6 Financial social capital

KEY FINDINGS:

A substantial proportion of Indigenous respondents appeared to have very low or low financial social capital. This is likely to be due to low levels of economic resources (you cannot share what you do not have) and poor access to services. Respondents in regional areas were more likely than others to say they needed community or government support, but they had not been able to access it.

Social capital is understood to be a strong demonstrator of social connectedness and relatedness, that is valued in many Indigenous contexts. Our consideration of financial social capital here is confined to how social connections can provide financial support²¹. The ‘financial social capital’ score is based on three items: level of connection with other people, likelihood of getting financial support from social connections and access to community and government services. Using this scoring framework, more than half of the sample (53.6%) had scores that indicated moderate to high levels of social capital (Table 5), compared with 85.8% of general survey respondents.

Table 5:
Level of social capital, total sample

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE POPULATION			
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High
Indigenous sample	14.6%	31.8%	28.7%	24.9%
2018 general sample	2.4%	11.7%	36.8%	49.0%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.
Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 604, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.



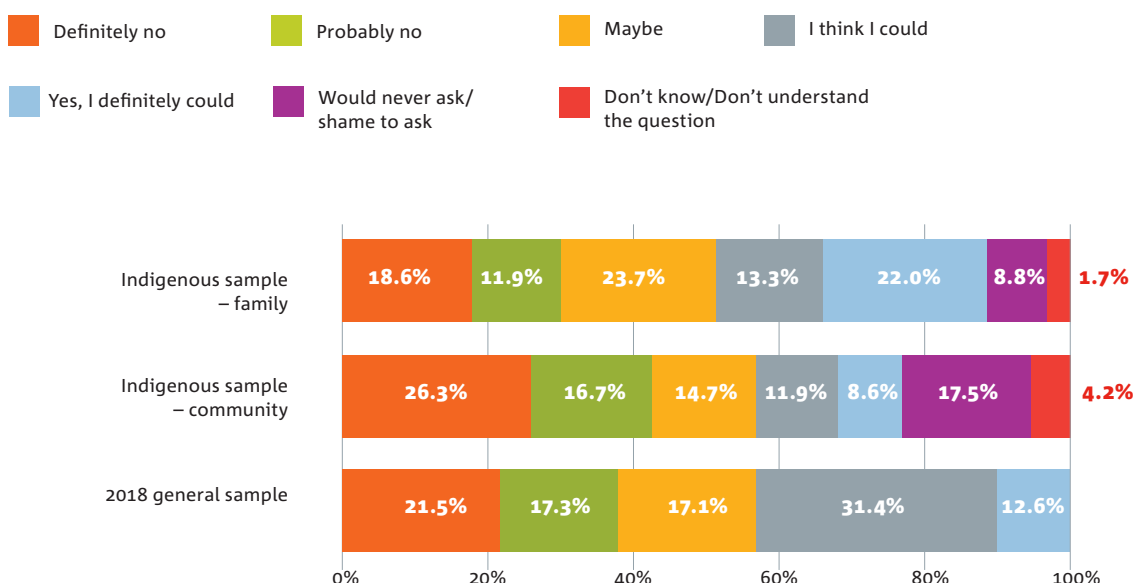
²¹ In previous reports, this fourth category was referred to as ‘social capital’, but here we refer specifically to ‘financial social capital’ to reflect our focus on how familial and social connections provide financial support. As stated previously, this concept must be distinguished from the wider OECD definition of social capital.

2.6.1 Sources of support

Participants indicated that they were more likely to ask for and receive financial help from family rather than their wider community (see Figure 10).

The ability to receive financial support from family requires the family to have adequate economic resources to lend or share; money troubles among the family may have affected how a participant would answer this question.

Figure 10:
Likelihood of getting financial support from family or community



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 611, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Roy Morgan sample size = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. The wording and response options differed in the general survey²², and the proportions here are for top-level comparisons only.

Approximately one-third of participants (37.0%) said that they had not needed any support from community or government organisations in the past 12 months. However, 23.0% of participants in regional areas reported that they had needed community or government support but had not been able to access it, compared with 13.5% in urban areas and 10.7% in remote areas (see Supplementary Appendix 2, Figure 6). This lack of access to services for people in regional areas mirrors the difficulties accessing credit for people in regional areas (see Section 2.4 Financial products and services). While remote areas of Australia have been previously identified as places of high financial exclusion [30], these findings indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in regional areas are also having difficulty accessing the financial services and assistance that they need.

Of the participants who had used some form of community or government support in the last 12 months, half (51.3%) indicated that they had accessed a Centrelink advance payment. These participants also reported using emergency assistance such as energy vouchers or food parcels (40.6%) and receiving a payment extension on a bill (24.4%). Less frequently used were no interest loan schemes (NILS) (used by 10.4% of those who had accessed community or government support) or low interest loans from a community organisation (8.8%).

22 General survey question wording was 'How likely are you to get financial support from your social connections (family, friends, work colleagues, neighbours or clubs) in times of crisis?'

2.6.2 Financial social capital in a sharing economy

The tensions between the cultural values of sharing and the need to save money to reach wealth goals are relevant when considering financial social capital. This is explored further in Chapter 3. Of the participants who stated that they shared money with family, 27.5% said that they did not try to stop people from asking for money (humbugging), and 32.9% said that they would tell people they had no money so that they would not have to give it, whether or not this was true (see Table 6). As there is no common definition of humbugging, it is difficult to measure whether being asked for money is considered bothersome. Respondents' attitudes to the practice varied—it could be either

maladaptive or a positive form of sharing. Financial counsellors and capability workers involved in this study suggested that humbugging was considered negative when an individual gave away their own money but then did not have enough left for their own expenses.

HUMBUGGING

There is no one accepted definition of 'humbugging' across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but it is understood as on-demand sharing, asking or pressuring a family member or other connection for money or other assistance in a way that can be bothersome.

Table 6:

Responses to humbugging

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED INDIGENOUS SAMPLE
Tell them I don't have anything	32.9%
I don't try to stop people humbugging	27.5%
I avoid them	15.8%
Don't know/Don't understand the question	10.4%
Make a separate account	5.8%
Other	3.9%
Give my card to someone else (to keep it safe)	3.7%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 467, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.

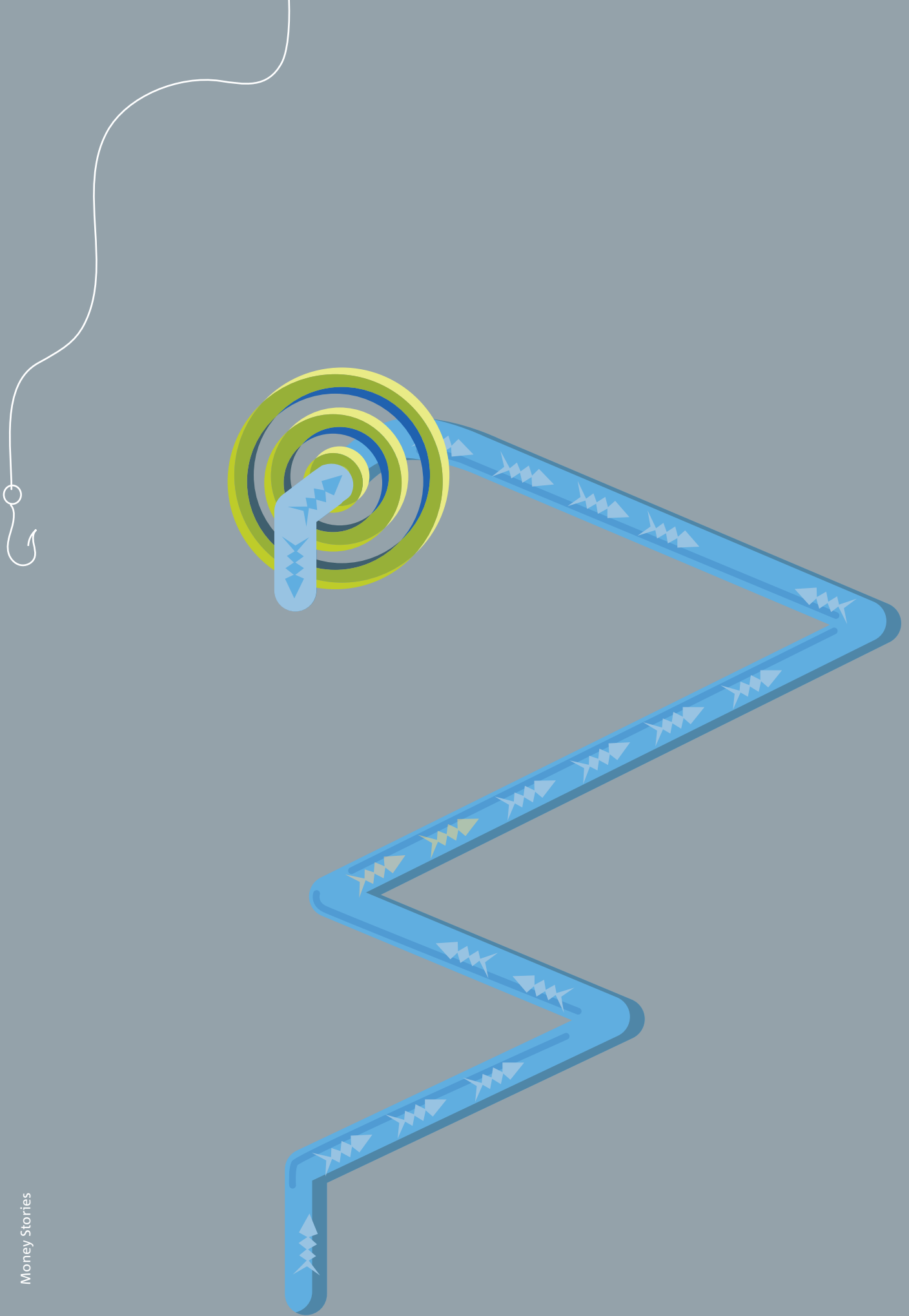
The Indigenous survey included additional questions around social resources and sharing. An example of this is the proportion of participants who said they helped their family with money. While the most common way to help financially was to give cash (71.7%), other ways of helping with money included buying items when shopping (48.3%) and providing other services, such as cooking, childcare or transport, the receiving family member then wouldn't need to pay for. Helping with money may not be completely captured by surveys such as this unless the variety of forms this support could take are clearly outlined.

CURBING SHARING:

THE CASHLESS DEBIT CARD IN KUNUNURRA

The Cashless Debit Card is being trialled in the East Kimberley (among other sites in Australia), with a goal of curbing alcohol, gambling and welfare dependence [31]. The card applies to all working-age Centrelink recipients in the region, quarantining 80% of a person's Centrelink payment onto a card that does not permit cash withdrawals or spending on proscribed items. It appears that a lack of cash has made sharing more difficult. Some participants reported having access to just \$20 in cash, which meant that parents were unable to give their children money for food, fairs and school excursions, which they felt were important ways of caring for family. Others reported that both helping and receiving help from family had become much more difficult because of a lack cash to share.





3. Wealth and money troubles



Key points

- In this chapter, we outline how participants defined wealth and money troubles in their own words, and present selected statistics.²³
- Being wealthy or rich in monetary terms was an abstract concept for many.
- Financial desires were about ‘getting by’, ‘having food in the fridge’ and not having to worry about money.
- Wealth was more commonly perceived in non-monetary terms, such as caring for family.
- A significant number of Indigenous Australians appear to be experiencing enduring money troubles.
- These perspectives of money help to further interpret the analysis of the financial resilience survey.

3.1 Indigenous approaches to money

Two open-ended questions were added to the Indigenous financial resilience survey: we asked participants to tell us what they thought ‘money trouble’ and ‘being wealthy or rich’ meant. Asking these questions provides a depth to understanding people and their relationship to money that numbers alone cannot always deliver. Here we discuss some of the themes we identified when analysing participant responses.



3.2 What does it mean to be ‘wealthy’ or ‘rich’? Monetary wealth vs Indigenous wealth

When we asked, ‘what does “wealth” or “being rich” mean to you?’, responses were mainly abstract and imaginative. Participants made comments such as ‘never going to happen to me’, ‘unobtainable’ and ‘not something I’m in control of’. Another said that they would ‘like to roll around in it! [I] joke because it won’t happen’. When completing the survey in a face-to-face setting, participants’ first responses were often to laugh. We interpreted this as a signal of the notion’s extravagance. However, we noted that many people’s ways of talking about wealth aligned closely with definitions of having financial wellbeing—when a person is able to meet expenses and have some money left over, they feel in control of their finances and feel financially secure both in the present and the future [32].

Few participants expressed a desire to be rich or have a large amount of money. Instead, wealth was described as an absence of stress or worry about money, or as being able to provide for others. Being wealthy or rich was conceptualised as being able to ‘get by’ comfortably, to have bills paid and food in the fridge²⁴. Having a lot of money was about

²³ These concepts have not previously been included in research on financial resilience. For this reason, no comparison can be made with previous or national data.

²⁴ Examples are based on open-ended responses by participants.

Wealth and money troubles

having enough to fix what was broken, and to not worry, not struggle and not ‘live pay cheque to pay cheque’. This project presents a unique insight into an Indigenous perception of wealth: namely, that attaining financial wellbeing and not needing to worry about money is wealth. Having money was considered desirable because it helped participants to ‘help other families’, ‘give out money to [their] siblings’, ‘give to poor people’ and fund programs (e.g., to reduce youth crime). Others wished to share their money even if they did not have enough for themselves, illustrated by responses such as ‘the pleasure to give when not having that much to give’. For some, being rich was seen as ‘bad’, ‘fake’, ‘trouble’ and the ‘root of all evil’. When ‘wealth’ or ‘being rich’ was desirable, it was generally conceptualised in non-monetary form or taken as a means of caring for family.

Not all participants rejected the idea of monetary wealth—for some, being financially wealthy did hold attraction. For example, one participant said that having money meant ‘being able to achieve [their] goals’ and ‘doing and having whatever [they] want’. Some participants described aspirations for wealth so that they could obtain material items, such as a boat or car. Nevertheless, the majority of monetary aspirations were relatively modest, and included owning a house and car, and having financial security and a lack of stress in relation to money; there was little aspiration for simply accumulating large amounts of money.

Again, wealth was spoken of as a metaphor for family, community, culture and knowledge. More important than paying bills, one participant conveyed, was ‘knowledge learnt and shared’. To this participant, it was this kind of wealth that made them ‘rich physically emotionally intellectually and spiritually’. Wealth was ‘nothing to do with money’, for they were ‘rich with love because of [their] family’. Another participant wrote that, while ‘being rich’ meant ‘cash’ by definition, it ‘should be what else you have in your l[i]fe, like love and family’. For another, ‘wealth [wa]s seeing others flourish’.

Money was also perceived as a means of caring for family and community. Caring for loved ones becomes possible when one has the financial means to do so. One participant felt that being rich would enable them to ‘look after community—because the community looks after me’. Many others spoke of providing for their families and children by buying necessities like clothes and food, and treating them with holidays, a better education, secure housing and toys.



WHAT DOES WEALTH OR BEING RICH MEAN TO YOU?

‘Being able to pay all necessities and having a little left for non-essentials’.

‘Not worrying about bills always having money being able to buy things and go on holidays’.

‘Living in a decent suburb and having plenty of money’.

‘Having a roof over our heads and food on the table for the kids’.

‘Wealth and being rich to me means all my bills are paid however more importantly the knowledge learnt and shared. This give me wealth and am rich physically emotionally intellectually and spiritually’.

Box 1: Definitions of wealth



3.3 What does it mean to have ‘money troubles’?

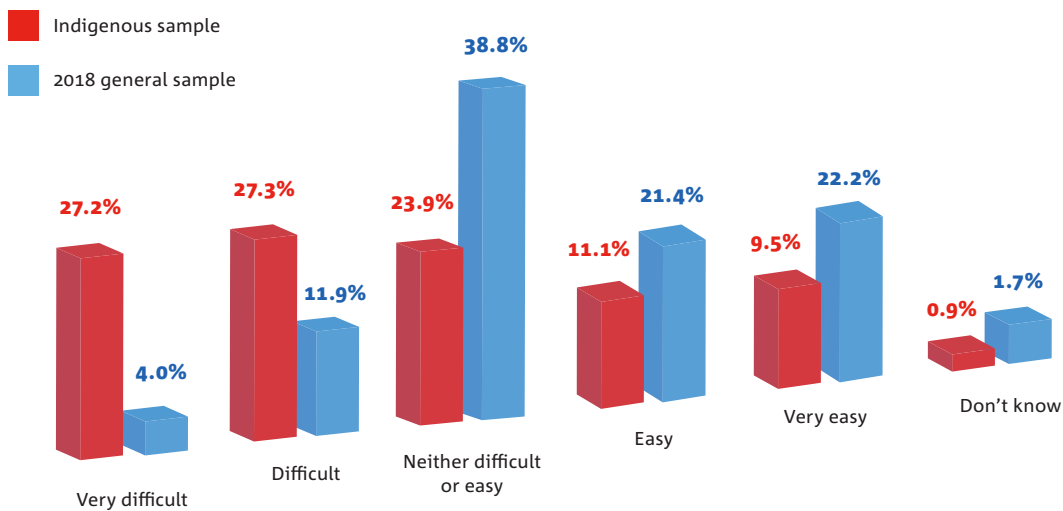
Many participants expressed familiarity with having ‘money troubles’. Respondents defined this as a lack of money or resources and going without basic or necessary material items. Examples of this included the inability to ‘pay bills and put food on the table’, ‘family missing out on things’ and making ‘sacrifices’. These examples were supported by quantitative results. For example, a significant proportion of survey respondents said that they experienced money troubles: 47.5% said that they had money troubles ‘often’ or ‘always or all the time’ and 32.6% reported having money troubles ‘sometimes’.

Although one in five Indigenous respondents found it easy to meet everyday living costs, Indigenous participants were much more likely than the general population to find it ‘very difficult’ to pay for everyday necessities like rent, bills and food (27.2% and 4.0%, respectively; see Figure 11).



Figure 11:

In the last 12 months, was it hard to pay for the things you needed for everyday living costs?



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Roy Morgan sample size = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. The question and response wording differed slightly between the Indigenous and general surveys.

The ongoing nature of financial stress for many participants was evident. For most respondents, money trouble or financial hardship was enduring—it was not an occasional or one-off event. People described living ‘pay to pay’, ‘day to day’ and ‘week to week’. Others used the terms ‘all the time’, ‘never ending’ and ‘continuously’ to describe their money troubles.

This theme also emerged in our focus groups and informal discussions with service providers. The management of enduring financial difficulties points to high levels of resilience among Indigenous people.

3.3.1 Control of money

Powerlessness or a lack of control concerning money was prevalent in the responses to the questions. Negative language pervaded nearly all open-ended responses about money trouble. The words ‘can’t’, ‘don’t’ and ‘unable’, followed by a desired behaviour or outcome, were regularly used to describe money trouble. Participants described experiences of ‘waiting’, feeling ‘stuck in the middle’, and being ‘caught out’, referring again to a lack of control over their circumstances.

Other research has shown that feeling in control and having control of finances are important [32], and this was particularly evident among the Indigenous respondents. The emotional and social weight of a lack of control was reflected by emotional experiences such as ‘stress’, ‘worry,’ ‘shame’, ‘embarrassment’ and ‘feel[ing] no good’. Money troubles took hold of many participants so that they felt robbed of financial and other agency. Future research should consider the role of agency and locus of control in building financial resilience.

WHAT DOES ‘MONEY TROUBLE’ MEAN TO YOU?

‘When the outgoings are more than the incoming’.

‘Family missing out on things’.

‘Go hungry’.

‘Living payday to payday’.

‘Being on edge can’t relax’.

‘Stress & shame of not having any money’.

‘Feeling no good’.

Box 2: Definitions of money trouble

3.3.2 Effect of money troubles

When asked about financial difficulties that had occurred because of inadequate funds in the last 12 months, Indigenous respondents reported a far higher level of occurrence than those in the general survey (see Table 7). The most frequently reported events were asking friends or family for money, going without meals and being unable to pay utility bills. Overall, 77.6% of participants in the Indigenous sample said they had experienced some form of financial difficulty in the past 12 months, compared to 27.1% in the general survey.

Table 7:

Financial difficulties in the last 12 months

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE	
	Indigenous sample	2018 general sample
None of these	22.4%	72.9%
Asked for money from friends and family	31.3%	11.7%
Went without meals	31.1%	6.0%
Could not pay electricity, gas or telephone bill	29.2%	8.1%
Other	25.8%	1.7%
Pawned or sold something	20.3%	5.2%
Could not pay for car service/repairs	19.9%	9.1%
Could not pay rent/mortgage	19.1%	3.6%
Was unable to use air con or heat at home [^]	17.0%	3.4%
Could not pay car registration or car insurance	16.5%	5.3%
Could not repair/replace essential household items	14.7%	4.9%
Could not pay for hospital or dentist	13.0%	4.9%
Could not pay home/contents insurance	8.8%	1.7%
Could not pay for children to participate in school activities	7.2%	1.8%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.
Total Roy Morgan sample size = 2,062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+.

[^] The general survey asked only about being ‘unable to heat home’.

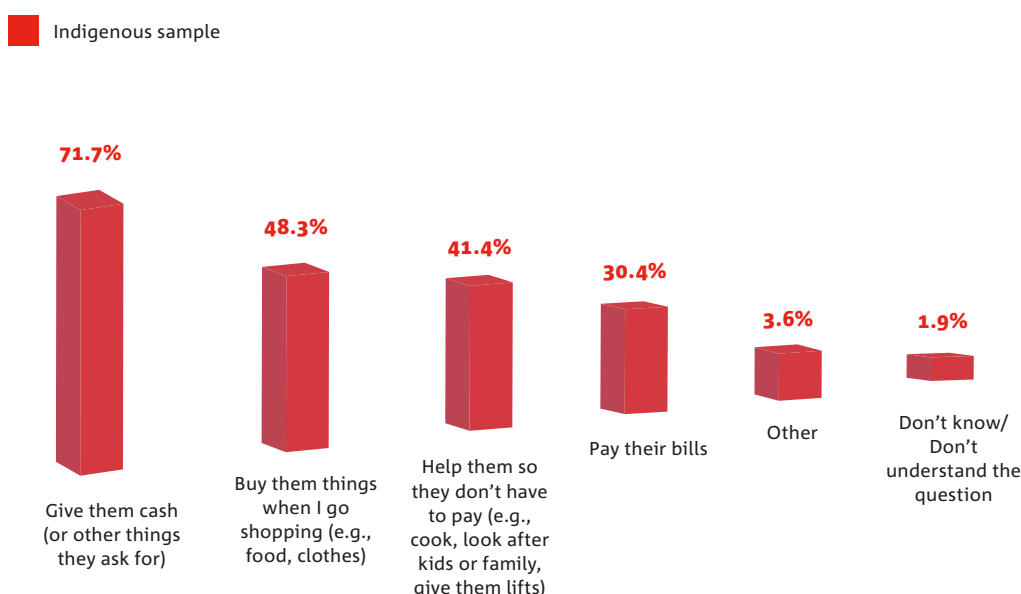
3.4 Sharing money and resources

Supporting family and community was a key part of the concept of wealth for the Indigenous survey participants, and sharing money and other resources to help family members was an unquestioned part of life for many participants. We asked participants about their attitudes and behaviour around sharing.

Three-quarters of respondents (75.8%) said that they shared money with their family and nearly half (46.2%) said that their family helped them with money 'often' or 'a lot'. Of 462 participants who shared money with their family, 71.7% gave their family cash or other items that they asked for, 48.3% helped their family by shopping for them, and

41.4% provided assistance to their family to relieve them of expenses, such as by looking after children in lieu of paying for child care (see Figure 12). When participants who had helped their family with money were asked how they felt about this, 33.0% said that they thought it was 'good' and 37.5% said that they 'don't mind' sharing their money. However, over half of those who had shared money said that their sharing behaviour created money troubles, depending on how much money they were asked for or how much they had.

Figure 12:
How do you help your family with money?



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018.

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 462, proportion of respondents who said they help family with money, weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.

Wealth and money troubles

Even when participants were experiencing their own money troubles, the value of 'sharing and caring' for family and community meant that they were torn between their own and their family's needs. Accessing financial resources in difficult financial circumstances can itself be challenging for individuals, but to also experience an expectation to share what money they have can compound money troubles. This is a complex dynamic, in which the need to provide for the self or immediate family may conflict with the value of supporting and sharing with others. It requires balancing individual needs with cultural values so that neither a person's capacity to live nor their cultural and community practices are compromised. During focus groups to help us interpret the survey findings, a financial capability worker in a remote town told us:

Aboriginal people have already lost so much of their culture, and to discourage them from sharing is to lose more of that culture. But we want to work to fostering an attitude with clients of sharing and caring while also planning for a future where they don't have to worry about money.

While sharing was expressed as a general cultural norm, sharing money specifically was not something that all respondents engaged with. Several techniques were used to resist the obligation to share, as discussed in section 2.6.2. It should be noted that respondents could only give one response to this question, yet in face-to-face interviews some respondents indicated that they engaged in more than one practice of refusal or avoidance. Sharing and refusing to share depended on many factors, such as the individual's circumstances at the time and their relationship with the person asking.

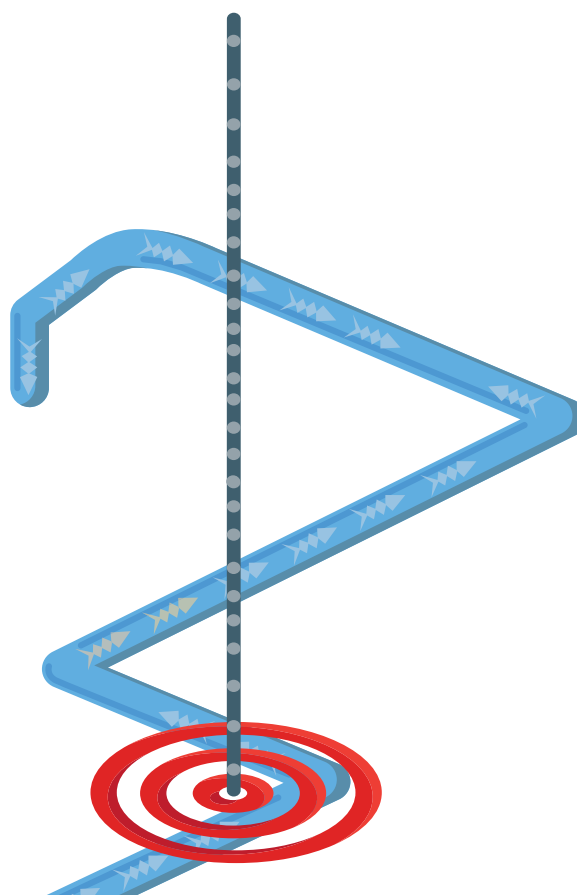
Sharing practices did not only involve money or cash. Many respondents said they did not always have cash to spare for family members and others did not want to give cash in case it fuelled behaviours they did not condone, such as drinking or gambling. In focus groups during the analysis phase of the project, participants identified helping family members with food and accommodation in difficult times as an alternative to sharing cash; this also encourages them to be economically independent and earn an income themselves.

Of the participants, 35.3% believed they 'definitely' or 'probably' would be able to obtain money from their family. Sharing occurred almost exclusively with family, both immediate and extended. Far fewer people (20.5%) felt that they would be able to draw on other people in their networks, such as friends, colleagues or neighbours. Asking for financial assistance was difficult for some respondents: 17.5% of participants said that they would 'feel shame' or would 'never ask' people outside their family if they could borrow money, and 8.8% of participants gave this same response about their family.²⁵ However, being able to borrow money from family was an important source of financial support in times of financial emergency.

ON MONEY LESSONS CHANGING OVER TIME

Sandra's* mother taught her the value of 'giving, caring and sharing' with money. Sandra was taught to 'share money, share food', and 'give people what they want'. Nowadays, however, she thinks about money differently and teaches her son different lessons. While giving to immediate family is fine, she tells her son, 'if I get money, don't tell people that I got some money'. When she gives him money, she wants him to 'go to school, have this for lunch, or have it for recess break', rather than share it with others.

She explains that she needs to keep her money now because 'these days people are greedy [with] their money in this community'. The cost of living means people are struggling to cover their own expenses, limiting their ability to share.



* Names have been changed throughout the report.

²⁵ The option 'Shame/would never ask' was a new response option that was added to the Indigenous survey.



Conclusion

This project is the first to explore nationally how Indigenous approaches to money contribute to overall financial resilience and financial wellbeing. The multistage project, incorporating cognitive pre-testing, data collection, fieldwork and focus groups, enabled many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to contribute to the findings.

When we consider how Indigenous Australians navigate Western financial contexts and systems, our research demonstrates that:

- there is a long-standing economic disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians that has been reinforced through both historical events, such as land dispossession and stolen wages, and current disparities in employment opportunities and wages
- lower levels of economic resources, combined with contextual factors such as location, language and culture, lead to more barriers to Indigenous Australians accessing appropriate financial services and products
- these barriers affect a person's ability to practice positive financial behaviours, and system-level inequalities lead to increased individual financial stress.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face higher levels of economic, health and social disadvantage. Our research shows that Indigenous Australians have much lower levels of savings and personal income, and that they experience greater difficulty meeting cost-of-living expenses, than the broader Australian population. Because of the low levels of savings and low access to mainstream credit, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are more likely to use fringe credit and, therefore, pay more for small amounts of credit. They are also more likely to experience ongoing financial stress.

Part of the reason for the differences between the financial resilience of Indigenous Australians and the 2018 general sample is that most Australian financial institutions have been developed to meet the needs of the mainstream market, overlooking the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Efforts to engage Indigenous Australians with the mainstream economy have focused on integrating Indigenous people into Western practices [26].

However, our research shows that money and wealth often have different meanings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in terms of what it means, how it is spent and shared, and its value. Integrating these insights into the established financial resilience framework will help to shape an understanding of financial resilience that is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Recognising the nature and validity of alternative values with regard to finance is the first step in creating genuine engagement between Indigenous people and financial institutions, products and services. Introducing innovation to the structures, functions and aims of financial institutions to reflect the values of Indigenous peoples will be the second step.

Our model of financial resilience places equal value on the four components of resilience: economic resources, financial products and services, financial knowledge and behaviour, and financial social capital. However, our research suggests that, for some groups, financial resilience may be influenced more by structural disadvantages than individual behaviours. For example, low levels of economic resources, resulting from exclusion and lack of access to services, impede the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to make proactive financial decisions (e.g., saving money or paying extra off loans). At the same time, our findings suggest that, in an Indigenous context, wealth is more closely aligned with the definition of financial wellbeing [32] than with the Western focus of building and accumulating wealth.

Conclusion

We are not arguing that the only valid approaches to Indigenous financial systems are those that value sharing at the expense of building monetary wealth. However, alternative approaches to money have not received the same level of attention or validation as the mainstream Western financial systems have received. Just as a Western approach to money offers benefits in improving an individual's overall wellbeing, we argue that including Indigenous approaches to money as another valid point of view will create a picture of economic and financial participation that is more nuanced and revealing.

Next steps and future research

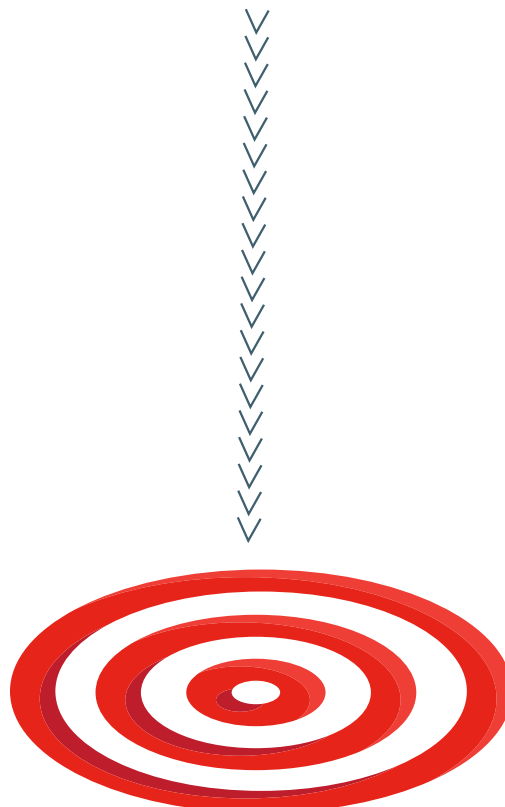
This research has identified multiple avenues for future work. The following suggestions have been developed with input from the project advisory group and the focus groups during the interpretation phase of the project.

Indigenous financial resilience

- Expand the scope of data capture for social capital for both Indigenous and broader Australian cohorts and undertake comparative analyses.
- Conduct field and survey research in urban, regional and very remote Indigenous communities in similar proportions to the census demographics (noting that the 2016 Census indicated that 79% of the Indigenous population lives in urban areas and 20% lives in regional and remote areas).

Further research

- Develop a larger evidence base of the links between financial wellbeing and overall wellbeing in both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.
- Develop a larger qualitative evidence base of the barriers to financial products and services. Further research with Indigenous Australians is needed to assess what financial products and services are most appropriate, accessible and effective. Further work is also needed to better incorporate Indigenous priorities into our definition of financial social capital and, subsequently, into how financial resilience is defined and measured.
- Improve our understanding regarding Indigenous Australians who are experiencing relative financial security. This may include analysing cases in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have achieved their money goals (whether that is having a full fridge, buying a house or owning a business) and using this to explore how Indigenous people's cultural values have contributed to this success.
- Explore ways that Indigenous people's perspectives on money and wealth can be integrated into financial services for the broader Australian population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have much to offer regarding how wealth is conceptualised, especially in terms of caring for family and community.



[illegible]

-

[illegible]

- 44

[illegible]

Demographic characteristics		Polity	Field-work	Online survey	Total sample
	TOTAL	450	56	114	620
Gender	Male	155	22	27	204
	Female	295	34	87	416
Indigenous background	Aboriginal	398	55	102	555
	Torres Strait Islander	8	0	5	13
	Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	44	0	7	52
Age	18–24	58	6	10	74
	25–34	153	14	27	194
	35–49	142	17	52	211
	50–64	82	15	22	119
	65+	15	4	3	22
Location	Australian Capital Territory	9	0	4	13
	New South Wales	192	1	34	227
	Victoria	49	0	20	69
	Queensland	107	0	33	140
	South Australia	31	0	5	36
	Northern Territory	3	19	9	31
	Tasmania	26	0	2	28
	Western Australia	33	36	7	76
Remoteness	Urban	213	2	46	261
	Regional/Rural	209	5	44	258
	Remote/Very remote	28	49	23	100
English skills	Not much	2	6	1	9
	Basic	57	14	7	78
	Comprehensive	385	36	97	518
	Don't know	6	0	3	9
Educational attainment	Year 9 or below	38	17	2	57
	Year 10 or 11	95	27	12	134
	Year 12	60	8	7	75
	Certificate (level unknown)	8	0	1	9
	Certificate I or II	19	1	3	23
	Certificate III or IV	86	0	33	119
	Advanced Diploma or Diploma	56	0	16	72
	Bachelor's degree or higher	82	1	32	115
	Prefer not to say	6	2	2	10

Appendix 1: Sample details

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS		POLITY	FIELD-WORK	ONLINE SURVEY	TOTAL SAMPLE
Labour force status ²⁶	35 hours or more per week	152	7	79	238
	>35 hours a week, happy with hours	62	3	15	80
	>35 hours a week, want more hours	30	3	7	40
	Not working, looking for work	1	11	2	14
	Not working, not looking for work	16	0	4	20
	Prefer not to say	66	12	1	79
Source of income	Wage or salary (paid from your job)	194	11	92	297
	Government pension or allowance	195	44	9	248
	Superannuation	7	0	0	7
	Workers' compensation	9	0	1	10
	Investment income	5	0	0	5
	Royalties	2	0	0	2
	No personal income	15	0	1	16
	Other	12	1	4	17
Housing	Prefer not to say	11	0	2	13
	Temporary accommodation	2	0	0	2
	Homeless or in a shelter	5	1	0	6
	Government/public housing or community housing	62	16	7	85
	Short-term lease	44	3	7	54
	Private lease	109	16	33	158
	Student accommodation	1	0	0	1
	At home with my parents	32	1	4	37
	With family, just for now	27	5	6	38
	With family, for a long time	10	9	2	21
	In a home that I own	147	4	46	197
	Other	5	1	1	7
	Prefer not to say	6	0	2	8
Annual household income	Under \$19,999	92	12	9	113
	\$20,000 to \$49,99	126	21	21	168
	\$50,000 to \$79,999	68	29	7	104
	\$80,000 to \$99,999	66	11	1	78
	\$100,000 to \$149,999	51	20	3	74
	\$150,000+	18	11	1	30
	Prefer not to say	29	8	14	51

26 We noticed when conducting fieldwork that when we asked participants if they were working, some would say that they were, before telling us that they got their income through Centrelink. It is possible that some of the responses here reflect that participants are working a set number of hours as part of the Community Development Plan or Newstart, and have answered this question based on their experience.

Supplementary Appendix 1:

Methodology

This project builds on the financial resilience framework and tool developed in 2015 in partnership with NAB [1]. Furthermore, the changes in financial resilience between 2015 and 2018 were analysed and tested for statistical significance.

The financial resilience framework and tool

A multi-dimensional framework for financial resilience (Figure 1), and corresponding survey,

were developed in 2015, and has been further updated and refined in 2016 and 2018. In response to feedback from the advisory group, along with input during the pre-cognitive testing phase (see Data collection, below), additional items were added to the survey, some items were removed, and the language of the survey was adapted so it was more accessible in its language and terminology. The scoring methodology used to assess respondents' level of resources across all four components, and their level of financial resilience overall remained the same.

Figure 1:
Components of financial resilience

Economic resources	Financial products and services	Financial knowledge and behaviour	Social capital
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings • Debt management • Ability to meet living expenses • Ability to raise funds in an emergency • Income level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a bank account • Access to credit & needs met • Access to insurance & needs met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of financial products & services • Confidence using financial products & services • Willingness to seek financial advice • Proactive financial actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social connections • Access to social support in times of crisis • Access to community and government support when needed

Source: Muir, Reeve [1]

There are three to five scoring questions within each component. For each of these questions, respondents are allocated a score from 1 to 4 depending on their selected answers. To assess

their overall level of resources in a component, an average total score is calculated. Based on their average total score, each respondent is allocated to one of four possible categories as per Table 1.

Table 1:
Level of resources for components of financial resilience

Level of resources	Very low	Low	Moderate	High
Score	1 – 1.75	1.76 – 2.5	2.51 – 3.25	3.26 – 4

Source: Muir, Reeve et al. [1]

Supplementary Appendix 1: Methodology

To determine an individual's level of financial resilience overall, their scores across all four components are averaged to calculate a financial resilience score. Again, based on their overall financial resilience score, individuals are allocated to one of four financial resilience categories as per Table 2.



Table 2:

Level of financial resilience

Level of financial resilience	Severe financial stress/vulnerability	High financial stress/vulnerability	Low financial stress/vulnerability	Financial security
Score	1 – 1.75	1.76 – 2.5	2.51 – 3.25	3.26 – 4

Source: Muir, Reeve et al. [1]

Additional survey items

Recognising that there is a large social and cultural component to giving and sharing money, the Indigenous version of the Financial Resilience survey included new items that aimed to better explore these concepts.

When measuring social capital, the items were separated out so that respondents were asked whether they could borrow money from a) their family and b) their community (including friends, neighbours, co-workers etc). From pre-cognitive testing interviews, a number of participants indicated that while they would consider asking for money from their family, they may not necessarily ask for money from their wider community.

Additional items around asking for money or humbugging were also included in the adapted survey. These items considered whether the participant ever asked their family for money, and also whether they usually were asked themselves. Humbugging was considered to function beyond giving cash directly, but may also include buying groceries or clothes, paying bills, or providing other services (such as transport or childcare) that also constitute financial help.

As a form of savings for the future, superannuation presents another form of economic resources which have, at this stage, not been included in the financial resilience model. Items were included in the Indigenous survey that asked whether the participant had a superannuation account, as well as behaviours that may be associated with maximising superannuation potential (making voluntary contributions, looking for and combining multiple accounts, knowing the balance of

superannuation account). These items were not included in the overall financial resilience score, but would be a useful addition to future surveys – both for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous specific versions.

There was also the option for participants to provide some text responses in the survey. We asked participants: 'What does "money trouble" mean to you?', 'What does 'wealth' or 'being rich' mean to you', as well as provided the opportunity to give any additional feedback or insights at the end of the survey.

Data collection

Data was collected over a multi-stage process, which covered the revising of the survey, survey data collection, and interpretation of the findings. The methodology is described briefly here.

Stage 1 – Advisory group input

The advisory group of the project were asked for their input on the latest version of the survey. Group members noted in particular the need for inclusion of terms such as 'money trouble', and advocated for the inclusion of questions around superannuation and sharing.

Stage 2 – Cognitive pre-testing

Cognitive pre-testing interviews were conducted with 10 Indigenous Australians (7 in Shepparton, 1 in Melbourne, 1 in Sydney, 1 in Kununurra). The purpose of the interviews was to go through the survey with the participant, and attempt to understand how the participant comprehended, recalled and made decisions about their question responses. This stage was important to confirm whether most respondents were interpreting the

questions the way the researchers intended. It also provided the opportunity for participants to provide any further feedback about the survey, particularly about questions that seemed unclear or required more information prior to answering. This stage provided a unique opportunity to get an insight into how people understood and answered the survey, as previous surveys had been conducted online without engaging with the target population.

As mentioned above, additional items around social capital and sharing were included in the survey based on feedback from participants. Items were also reworded where participants indicated they had difficulty understanding the purpose or meaning of the question.

Stage 3 – Survey collection

Following pre-cognitive testing and making suggested adaptations, the survey tool was distributed more widely through three methods of sampling:

a) *Polity Social Research:*

Polity drew from its Indigenous panel sample, and the survey was distributed online. Polity hosts firstinsights.com.au, which is the only dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander panel community in Australia. Panel members earn and collect rewards for completing surveys.

b) *Snowball online recruitment:*

CSI and FNF hosted the survey online using Qualtrics, and was promoted through CSI and FNF social media and sent to connections. Respondents to the survey were able to enter a competition for the chance to win one of 10 \$100 gift vouchers as an incentive for taking part in the survey.

c) *Remote community fieldwork:*

An acknowledged challenge of online-only survey collection is that remote and very remote locations are usually under sampled or completely excluded due to challenges with technology, literacy or other barriers to access. Remote experiences of money trouble are particularly relevant to Indigenous Australians, and it was a priority that remote fieldwork was a component of survey collection in this project. Two communities – Elcho Island in the Northern Territory, and Kununurra in Western Australia were visited by two members of the research team in late June, 2018. Respondents who agreed to take part in the survey sat with the research team member and worked through the survey, talking about their responses where clarification or extra information was needed. The interviews were voice recorded where respondents gave their permission. Respondents were given a \$25 gift voucher to thank them for their time.

All respondents were 18+ years of age, and identified as being Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both. A total of 620 responses to the survey were received. Polity Social Research merged the three datasets and applied weightings to make results nationally comparable, based on Indigenous identity, age, gender and location.

Stage 4 – Interpreting results

2 focus groups and 2 interviews were conducted by members of the research team once initial top line analysis of the survey had been completed. The purpose of the focus groups was to receive feedback about the interpretations of the survey responses. The intention was to engage with focus group members about how they reacted to the results presented (did the findings make 'sense?'), as well as seeking alternative interpretations of the data, and suggestions for future research priorities and responses from financial services.



Analysis

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was undertaken in Stata 14.2. It explored the changes in the population's level of resources across all four components of financial resilience, and overall level of financial resilience, between 2015 and 2018.

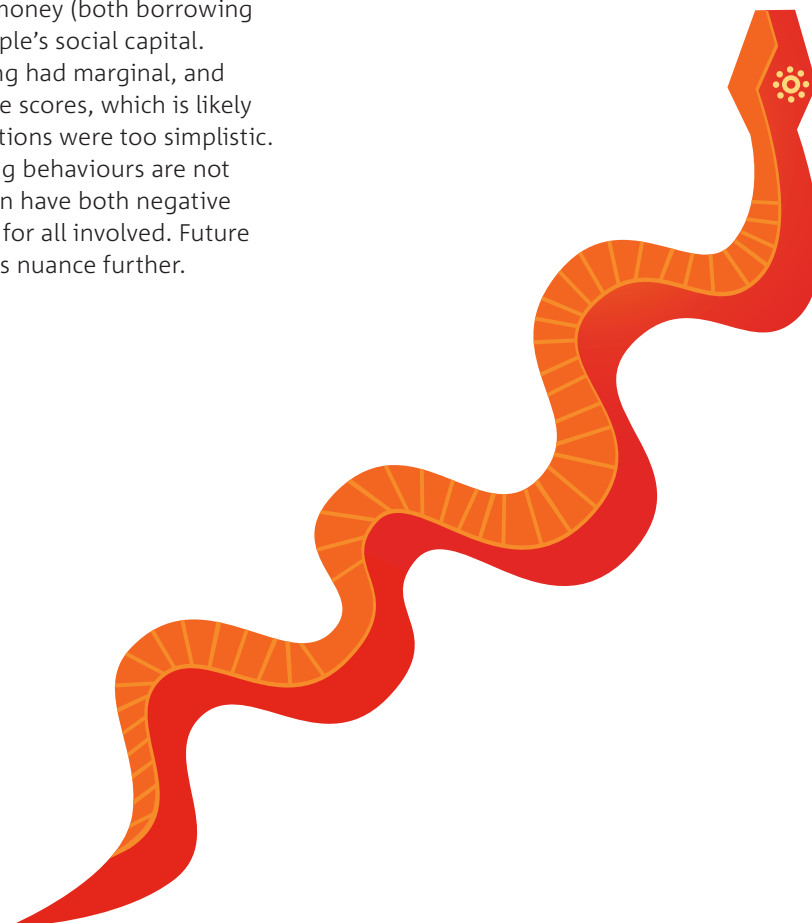
Independent sample t-tests, Chi-square tests and analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to assess the statistical significance of differences between sub-groups of the population (e.g. gender, age group, economic resources category) and changes between years. Statistical tests were performed on weighted data and only between consecutive years, that is, 2015 and 2016, and 2016 and 2018. Significant differences between two years are indicated by a caret (^) next to the latter year; differences between groups are indicated by an asterisk to indicate level of significance (e.g. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$).

Social capital

Since social capital is such a fundamental part of life for many Indigenous people (as described previously), we expected that these scores may be more comparable. Given this we also explored a revised calculation of the social capital score that recognised the sharing of money (both borrowing and lending) as part of people's social capital. However, the revised scoring had marginal, and non-significant effect on the scores, which is likely to be because the modifications were too simplistic. This may be because sharing behaviours are not simply good or bad, and can have both negative and positive consequences for all involved. Future research should explore this nuance further.

Qualitative analysis

Qualitative responses were analysed following the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Authors Dolan and Weier read through the qualitative responses multiple times to familiarise themselves with the responses. They then independently classified each of the responses to themes based on common words used or based on themes that were being expressed by the participant. They then discussed their interpretations together to draw on their shared interpretations of the data. Thematic analysis does not contend that there are themes existing within the data to be 'discovered' but the process of analysis is instead an interpretive exercise, and interpretations are informed by the aims of the research project, as well as previous experience in the collecting of the data.



Supplementary Appendix 2:

Additional statistics and figures

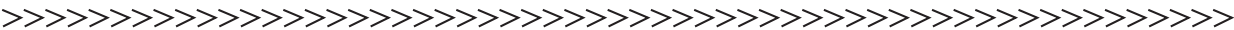
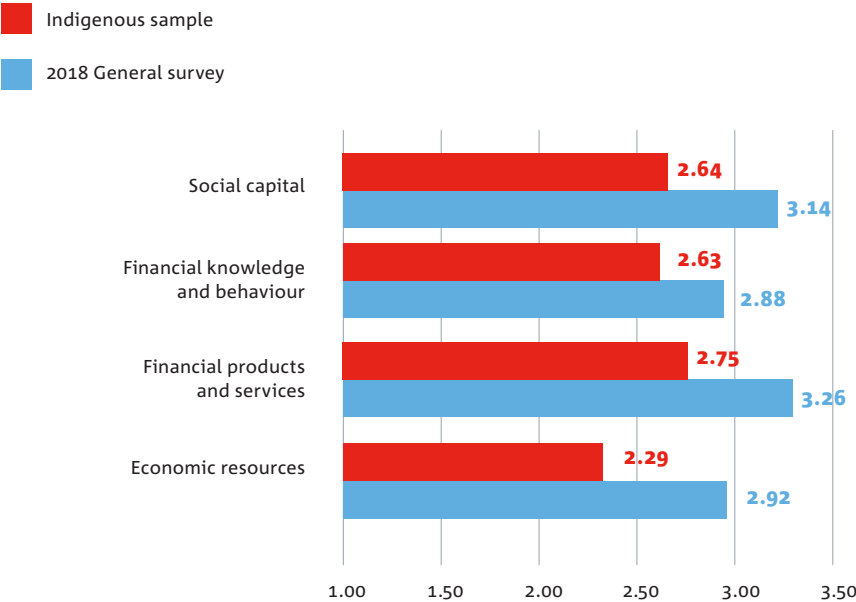


Figure 2:
Mean population scores for financial resilience components



	Economic resources	Financial products and services	Financial knowledge and behaviour	Social capital
Indigenous sample	2.29	2.75	2.63	2.64
2018 General survey	2.92	3.26	2.88	3.14

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 613; weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.. Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 2062 weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. Differences between locations were not significant

Geographical differences

While there was no significant difference across locations in the overall financial resilience category scores, participants in urban areas demonstrated a greater spread across the categories – almost equal proportions were classified as experiencing severe financial stress or vulnerability as those who were classified as being financially secure. Respondents in regional and remote areas tended to be more concentrated in scores that indicated they were experiencing high financial stress and vulnerability.



Table 3:
Financial resilience categories, by location

	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLED POPULATIONS			
	Severe financial stress/vulnerability	High financial stress/vulnerability	Low financial stress/vulnerability	Financial security
Total Indigenous sample	5.4%	43.1%	41.9%	9.7%
Urban (n = 261)	9.3%	32.5%	46.6%	11.5%
Regional (n = 258)	2.1%	49.1%	39.8%	8.9%
Remote (n = 100)	3.3%	55.3%	34.7%	6.7%
2018 General survey	0.5%	10.5%	55.1%	33.9%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 613. Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 2062 weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. Differences between locations were not significant

These results point to chronic levels of financial stress for significant numbers of Indigenous Australians. In this context, financial resilience for Indigenous Australians illustrates whether they are to access the appropriate resources to help them cope with chronic, ongoing financial stress. We later expand financial resilience to include a greater consideration of community and social capital by scoring items around sharing and borrowing money from family. This shifts the focus from being solely on the individual's ability to counter financial stress, and introduces the need to consider a community's ability to cope with financial shocks and stresses.

Differences by income source

Economic resources, particularly income sources, are a key driver of financial resilience. Financial capability workers suggested to us that people who were receiving a wage or salary may have higher levels of financial resilience; this difference has been demonstrated in previous financial resilience work [2]. This played out in our findings (as shown

in Table 4), with people whose main source of income was a wage or salary being much less likely to experience severe financial stress (2.4% compared to 10% of people whose main income was government benefits).

People earning a wage or salary were more likely than those whose main income is welfare to have a higher income, which also leads to increased access to financial products and services. However, during interpretation focus groups, financial capability workers that we spoke with said they believe there is a current gap in the delivery of financial education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for people who start working for a wage (or otherwise start receiving money such as royalties¹), and don't necessarily learn how to manage larger incomes. This can be a particular challenge when navigating cultural pressures or the desire to share extra income with family; planning a steady supply of food for family or a 'full fridge' may be a more practical way of encouraging people to plan how they allocate their wage or salary.

1 Royalties are payments made to Indigenous landowners by other parties conducting activities on that land.

Table 4:
Financial resilience category, by main income source

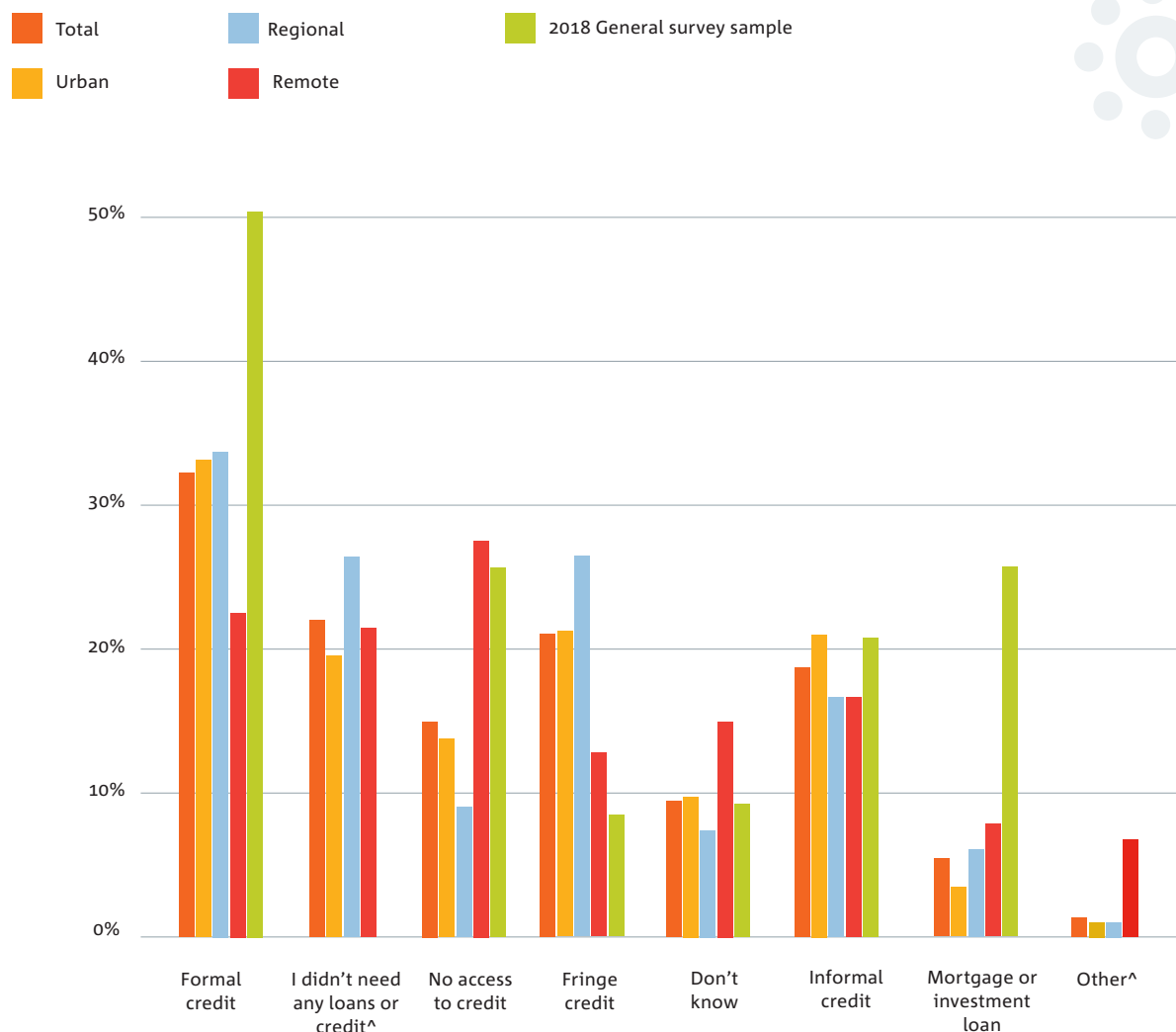
	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE POPULATION			
	Severe financial stress/vulnerability	High financial stress/vulnerability	Low financial stress/vulnerability	Financial security
Wage or salary (N = 297)	2.4%	29.7%	53.4%	14.5%
Government pension or allowance (N = 248)	10.0%	57.3%	29.0%	3.7%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 545; weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Only respondents receiving a wage/salary or Government allowance were included in this analysis, difference between groups was significant ($p = .002$)



Figure 3:

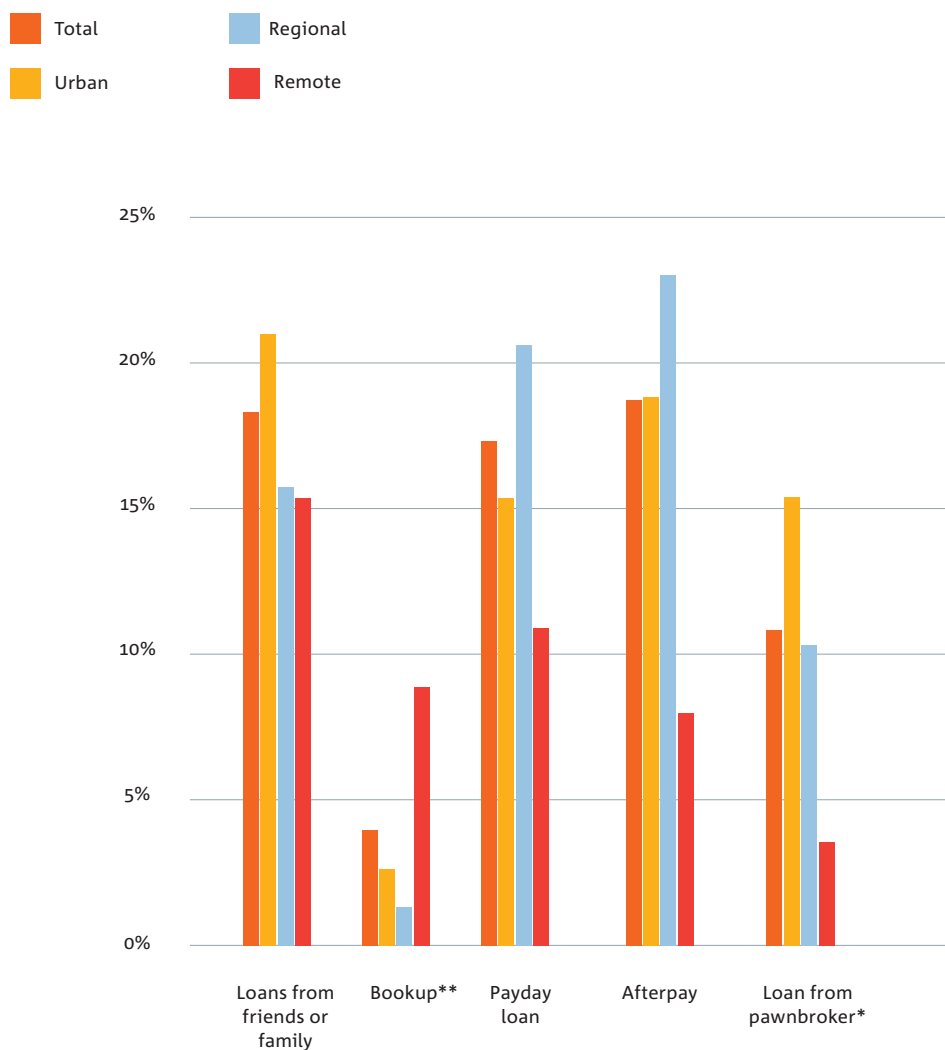
**Type of credit available to access, by location (multiple response available),
Indigenous and General survey**

	Formal credit	I didn't need any loans or credit^	No access to credit	Fringe credit	Don't know	Informal credit	Mortgage or investment loan	Other^
Total	32.3%	22.7%	13.8%	21.7%	9.6%	18.7%	4.7%	1.6%
Urban	33.3%	19.4%	12.8%	21.8%	9.7%	21.3%	3.3%	0.7%
Regional	34.7%	26.9%	9.0%	25.5%	7.3%	16.7%	5.1%	0.7%
Remote	23.2%	21.6%	27.3%	12.7%	14.5%	16.7%	7.4%	6.0%
2018 General survey sample	50.5%		24.6%	8.4%	9.3%	21.0%	25.5%	

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 613. Roy Morgan sample size 2018 = 2062 weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. ^ Response option not included in general survey

Figure 4:
Informal and fringe credit used in last 12 months, by location



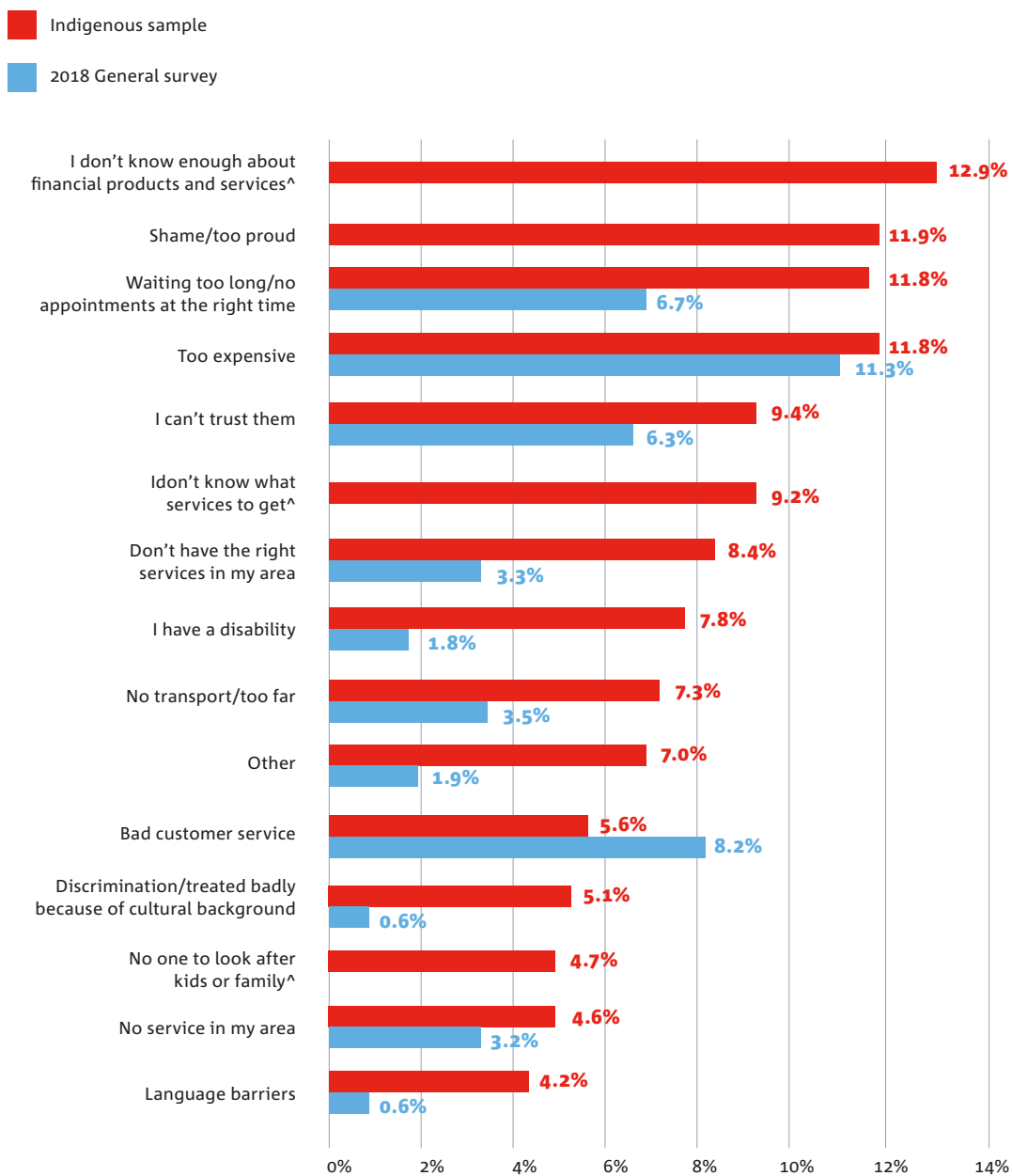
	Loans from friends or family	Bookup**	Payday loan	Afterpay	Loan from pawnbroker*
Total	18.0%	3.2%	17.3%	18.8%	11.4%
Urban	20.8%	2.4%	15.7%	18.8%	15.1%
Regional	15.9%	1.9%	21.7%	23.3%	10.5%
Remote	15.8%	8.3%	11.3%	8.1%	3.9%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620; weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Difference between groups was significant if * ($p < .05$) or ** ($p < .01$).



Figure 5:
Barriers to accessing financial products and services (multiple responses allowed)



Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620; weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Roy Morgan sample size = 2062, weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. ^response option not included in general survey

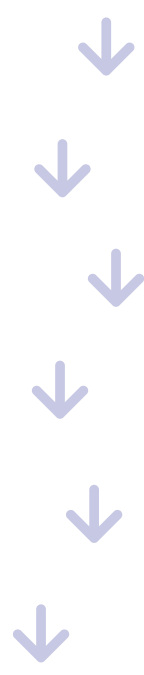


Table 5:
Understanding and confidence using financial products and services

Do you know much about financial services and products?	PROPORTION OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE POPULATION				
	I don't understand them at all	I understand them a bit	I understand them pretty well	I understand them very well	Don't know/ Don't understand question
Indigenous sample	4.0%	35.0%	32.2%	24.6%	4.2%
2018 General sample	4.8%	47.3%	31.9%	14.7%	1.3%

Do you confident when you make decisions about financial services and products?					
	No, not at all	A little bit	Pretty confident	Yes, very confident	Don't know/ Don't understand question
Indigenous sample	7.3%	25.2%	34.2%	29.2%	4.0%
2018 General sample	5.2%	32.1%	47.2%	13.1%	2.4%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018; Roy Morgan 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 620; weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+. Roy Morgan sample size = 2062; weighted to be representative of the Australian population aged 18+. Note: question and response wording differed slightly between Indigenous and general surveys.

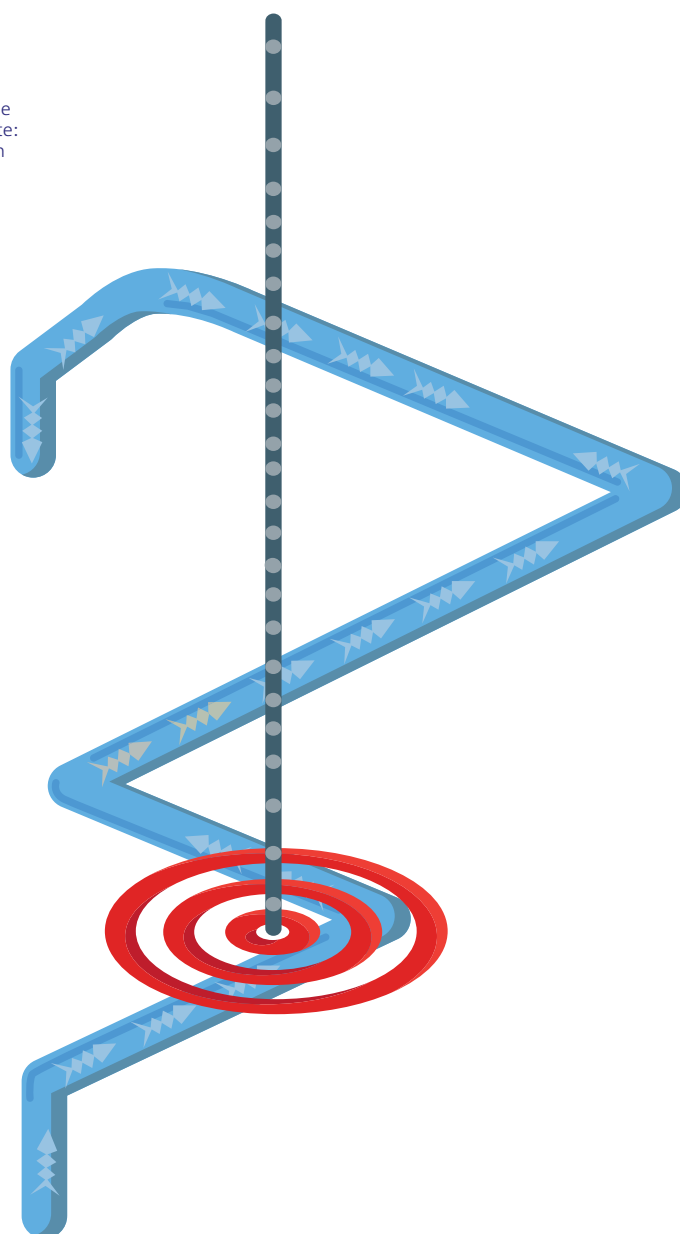
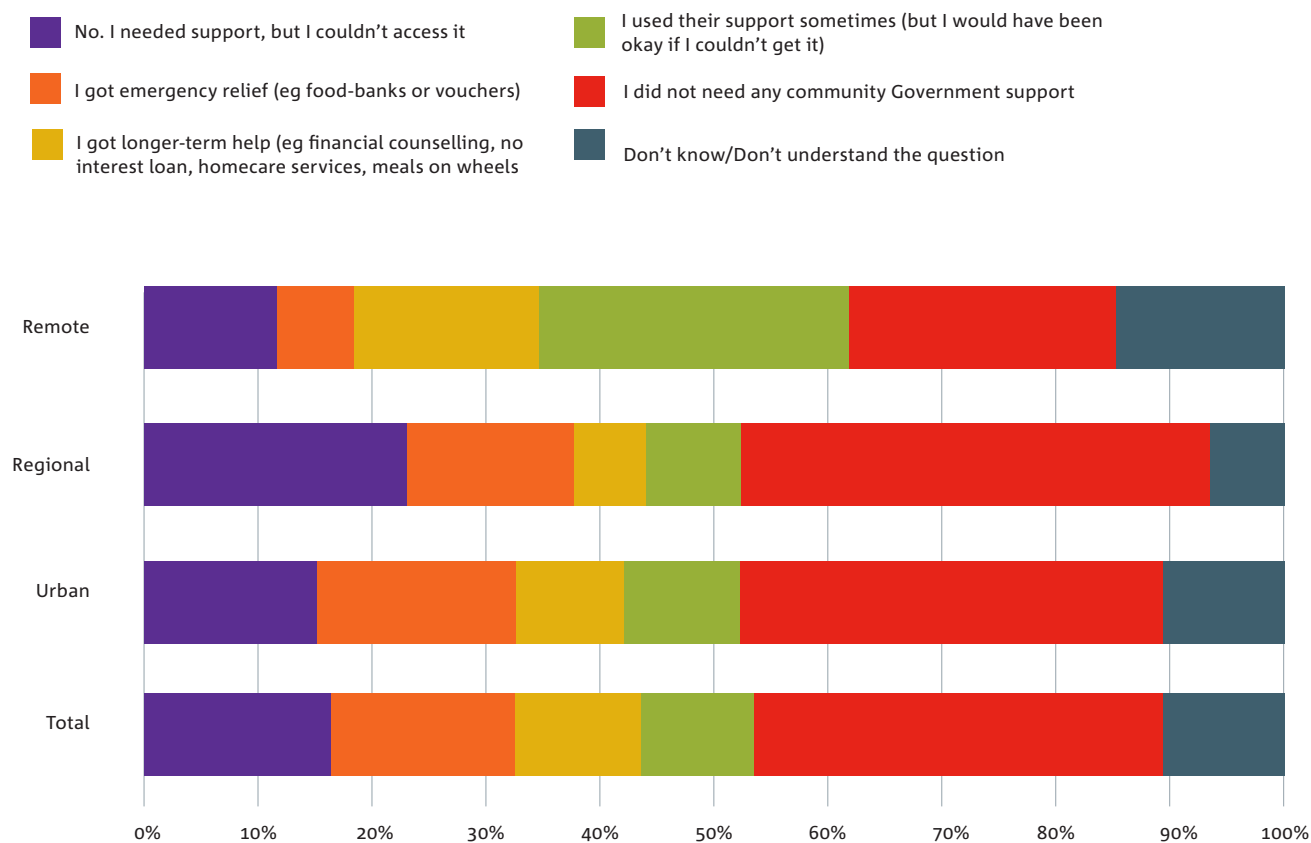


Figure 6:
**Did you need any help with money troubles in the
 past 12 months from community or Government services?**

By location



	Total	Urban	Regional	Remote
No. I needed support, but I couldn't access it	16.9%	13.5%	23.0%	10.7%
I got emergency relief (eg food-banks or vouchers)	14.8%	17.3%	15.3%	7.4%
I got longer-term help (eg financial counselling, no interest loan, homecare services, meals on wheels)	9.7%	9.5%	7.0%	16.7%
I used their support sometimes (but I would have been okay if I couldn't get it)	11.9%	10.8%	7.3%	25.6%
I did not need any community Government support	37.0%	38.5%	41.0%	23.4%
Don't know/Don't understand the question	9.8%	10.5%	6.4%	16.2%

Source: Polity Social Research, FNF & CSI 2018

Notes: Total Indigenous sample size = 610; weighted to be representative of the Australian Indigenous population aged 18+.

[illegible]

***IF CODE 98 ON PCODE, THEN TERMINATE**

QUESTIONNAIRE BODY

These first questions are about you and your life at the moment. We are asking them so we can get a better understanding of who is doing the survey.

A1. How much paid work are you doing at the moment? Please answer considering all your jobs.

1. 35 hours or more per week
2. Less than 35 hours a week and happy with hours
3. Less than 35 hours a week but want more hours
4. CDP
5. Voluntary/unpaid placement
6. Not working, looking for work
7. Not working, not looking for work
99. Prefer not to say

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR A1 IS 1 – 3

A13 How many jobs do you have?

1. 1
2. 2 or more
99. Prefer not to say

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR A1 IS 1 – 3

A12.3 What kind of job contract do you have?

1. Permanent or a contract of 1 year or more
2. Contract of less than 1 year
3. Casual
4. Self-employed (I have my own business)
99. Prefer not to say

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR A1 IS 6

A1.1 How long have you been not working and looking for work?

1. Less than 1 month
2. More than 1 month, less than 2 months
3. More than 2 months, less than 3 months
4. More than 3 months, less than 6 months
5. 6 months to 1 year
6. 1 year or more
99. Prefer not to say

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR A1 IS 7

A1.2. What is the main reason why you are not working and not looking for work?

3. Don't need the money
1. Studying
2. Retired
4. Stay-at-home parent looking after kids
5. Caring for family or friend
6. Have a disability or health problem and I can't work
7. I want to work but don't think I can get a job
97. Other [Specify]
99. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

A2. How do you get most of your money?

1. Wage or salary (paid from your job)
2. Government pension or allowance (e.g. Centrelink parenting payments, unemployment benefit, disability pension)
3. Superannuation
4. Workers' compensation
5. Investment income
6. Royalties
7. No personal income
97. Other
99. Prefer not to say

How much do you earn each fortnight (every two weeks)? This includes wages, government benefits, superannuation paid from your account, etc. Guessing is fine.

[Type]

98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to say

A6. How much money comes into your household each year? (before tax and expenses). This includes wages, government benefits, superannuation paid from your account, etc. Guessing is fine.

1. Under \$10,000 per year (under \$385 every two weeks)
2. \$10,000 to \$19,999 per year (\$385 to \$769 every two weeks)
3. \$20,000 to \$29,999 per year (\$770 to \$1,154 every two weeks)
4. \$30,000 to \$39,999 per year (\$1,155 to \$1,538 every two weeks)
5. \$40,000 to \$49,999 per year (\$1,539 to \$1,923 every two weeks)
6. \$50,000 to \$59,999 per year (\$1,924 to \$2,308 every two weeks)
7. \$60,000 to \$69,999 per year (\$2,309 to \$2,692 every two weeks)
8. \$70,000 to \$79,999 per year (\$2,693 to \$3,077 every two weeks)
9. \$80,000 to \$89,999 per year (\$3,078 to \$3,462 every two weeks)
10. \$90,000 to \$99,999 per year (\$3,463 to \$3,846 every two weeks)
11. \$100,000 to \$109,999 per year (\$3,847 to \$4,231 every two weeks)
12. \$110,000 to \$119,999 per year (\$4,232 to \$4,615 every two weeks)
13. \$120,000 to \$129,999 per year (\$4,616 to \$5,000 every two weeks)
14. \$130,000 to \$139,999 per year (\$5,001 to \$5,385 every two weeks)
15. \$140,000 to \$149,999 per year (\$5,386 to \$5,769 every two weeks)
16. \$150,000 to \$199,999 per year (\$5,770 to \$7,692 every two weeks)
17. \$200,000 to \$249,999 per year (\$7,693 to \$9,615 every two weeks)
18. \$250,000 or more per year (\$9,616 or more every two weeks)
99. Prefer not to say



A3. Where do you live at the moment?

- 10. In a home that I own
- 5. I rent a house or flat on a private lease longer than 6 months (including sharing with others)
- 4. I rent a house or flat on a lease less than 6 months or no lease (including sharing with others)
- 7. At home with my parents
- 8. With family, just for now
- 9. With family, for a long time
- 6. Student accommodation
- 1. Temporary accommodation (accommodation just for now, e.g. a boarding house or caravan park)
- 2. Homeless or in a shelter or crisis/long-grasser's accommodation
- 3. Government/public housing or community housing
- 97. Other (please specify)
- 99. Prefer not to say

A4. How many people aged 15 and older normally live at your house?

[Text]

- 99. Prefer not to say

A5. How many people younger than 15 normally live in your house?

[Text]

- 99. Prefer not to say

A7. Do you speak much English?

- 1. Not much
- 2. Basic
- 3. Comprehensive
- 98. Don't know

A8. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- 1. No, only English
- 2. Yes, I speak other language(s) (please specify)
- 99. Prefer not to say

A15. What is your highest level of schooling/education?

- 1. Year 9 or below
- 2. Year 10 or 11
- 3. Year 12
- 4. Certificate (level unknown)
- 5. Certificate I or II
- 6. Certificate III or IV
- 7. Advanced Diploma or Diploma
- 8. Bachelor's degree or higher
- 99. Prefer not to say

These first questions are about money and money troubles.

B1. Do you have money trouble (eg bills, money for food, rent)?

(Note for Polity: have this as a 5 point likert scale)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always/all the time

- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

C13. In the last 12 months, was it hard to pay for the things you needed for everyday living costs (like housing, electricity, water, health care, food, clothing or transport?)

1	2	3	4	5
Very hard	A bit hard	Somewhere in between	Pretty easy	Very easy

- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

D1. What does 'money troubles' mean to you?

- [Text]
- 99. Prefer not to say

D2. What does 'wealth' or 'being rich' mean to you?

- [Text]
- 99. Prefer not to say



These next questions are about financial knowledge and behaviour. We are asking them so we can understand how people get information and make decisions about money.

B2. Do you know much about financial services and products (like banks accounts, loans, insurance, credit cards, banks, financial counsellor)?

1	2	3	4
I don't understand them at all	I understand them a bit	I understand them pretty well	I understand them very well

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

B3. Do you feel confident when you make decisions about financial services and products (like banks accounts, loans, insurance, credit cards, banks, financial counsellor)?

1	2	3	4
No, not at all	A little bit	Pretty confident	Yes, very confident

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

B4. Have you ever looked for financial advice or information? (To help with money troubles, or money goals)

4. I got help before and would look for it again
5. I got help before but I would not look for it again
3. I am getting help at the moment
2. Maybe if I knew how or could afford it
1. No, never

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR B4 IS 2, 3, 4 OR 5**B4.1. Which sources of financial advice and information have you used already or would you think about using? Choose all that apply.***(Note to Polity: have this as a table option)*

	I have used	I would use in the future
1. A free community service (e.g. financial counsellor, money business mob, your local Aboriginal community service)		
3. A Government information service (e.g. Centrelink, ASIC, MyGov, Tax Office)		
4. Information from the internet (e.g. google search, loan compare sites)		
2. A paid professional advice (e.g. financial planner)		

5. No plans to seek help at the moment
97. Other (please specify) (e.g. people contacting you to use financial products)
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

ASK ALL**B5. Which of the following have you done in last 12 months? Choose ALL that apply**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Stuck to a budget/planned where your money would be spent | 7. Read your credit card statements to check the transactions and for 'ripping off' |
| 2. Put money away (saving) | 96. None of these |
| 3. Paid extra to credit card company or loan provider | 98. Don't know |
| 4. Paid extra on your home loan repayment | |
| 5. Made extra contributions towards your superannuation | |
| 6. Read your bank statements regularly to check the transactions | |

A9. Have you had any trouble getting help with money from services or people? What were they?

96. No problems accessing financial services
1. Too expensive
 2. No service in my area
 3. Don't have the right services in my area
 4. No transport/too far
 5. I have a disability
 6. Waiting too long/no appointments at the right time
 7. Bad customer service
 8. Language barriers
 9. Discrimination/treated badly because of cultural background
 10. I don't really know enough about financial products and services
 11. I don't really understand financial products and services, I don't know what services to get
 12. I can't trust them
 13. Shame/too proud
 14. No one to look after kids or family
 15. Other (please specify)
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

These next questions are about family and friends. We are asking these because we want to learn about how connected you feel with your family and community

C1. How often do you see your...

	Family?	Community (friends, work mates, neighbours)?
1. Everyday		
2. Once a week		
3. Once a month		
4. Once in three months		
5. No regular contact		
6. No family/community		
98. Don't know		

C2. How often do you talk by phone, text, social media etc with your...

	Family?	Community (friends, work mates, neighbours)?
1. A few times everyday		
2. Once a day		
3. A few times every week		
4. Once a week		
5. Once a month or more		
6. Every three months or more		
7. We haven't been in touch recently		
8. I never talk to my family		
98. Don't know		

C3. How connected are you with other people?

1. I don't have people who know me well
2. There are people who know me a bit
3. There are people who know me well
4. There are people who know me very well
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question



C4a. If you were having money troubles, do you think you would be able to get money from...

	Family?	other people in your community (friends, work mates, neighbours)?
1. Definitely no		
2. Probably no		
3. Maybe		
4. I think I could		
5. Yes, definitely I could		
6. Would never ask/shame to ask		
98. Don't know		
99. Don't understand the question		

D3. Does family normally help you with money? (eg. give you cash, buy you things)

1	2	3
Not much	Sometimes	A lot

98. Don't know

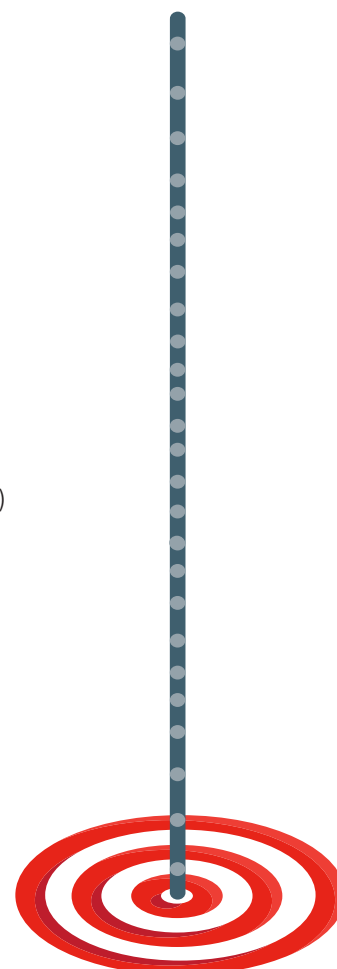
99. Don't understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR D3 IS 2 OR 3**D4. How do they help you?**

1. Give me cash (or other things I ask for)
2. Buy me things when they go shopping (e.g. food, clothes, etc.)
3. Pay my bills
4. Help me so I don't have to pay (eg. cook, look after kids or family, give me lifts)
5. Other (please specify)

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question



D5. Do you normally help family with money? (eg. give them cash, buy them things)

1	2	3
Not much	Sometimes	A lot

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR D5 IS 2 OR 3

D5.1 How do you help them?

1. Give them cash (or other things when they ask for it)
2. Buy them things when I go shopping (e.g. food, clothes)
3. Pay their bills
4. Help them so they don't have to pay (eg. cook, look after kids or family, give them lifts)
5. Other (please specify)

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

D5.2 When you give family money, does it give you money troubles?

1. No – I only give what I can afford
2. Sometimes – it depends on how much they ask for
3. Sometimes – it depends on what money I have
4. Yes – I give more than I can afford (it gives me money troubles)

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

D5.3 How do you feel about sharing your money with family?

1. I think it is good to share my money
2. I don't mind when people ask me for money
3. People humbug me too much

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

D5.4 Do you try to stop people humbugging?

1. No
2. Yes, avoid them
3. Yes, tell them I don't have anything
4. Yes, give my card to someone else (to keep it safe)
5. Yes, make a separate account
6. Other (please specify)

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

ASK ALL

C5. Did you need any help with money troubles in the past 12 months from community or government services?

5. I did not need any community or Government support
1. No. I needed support, but I couldn't access it
2. I got emergency relief (e.g. food-banks or vouchers)
3. I got longer-term help (e.g. financial counselling, no interest loan, homecare services, meals on wheels)
4. I used their support sometimes (but I would have been okay if I couldn't get it)

98. Don't know

99. Don't understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR C5 IS 2, 3 OR 4**C.5.1 What support services did you used in the past 12 months?**

1. No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) loan
2. A low interest loan through a community organisation (e.g. StepUP)
3. Financial counsellor (someone you can talk to about money and managing money)
4. Emergency Assistance (energy vouchers, food parcels etc.)
5. Centrelink Advance Payment (get some of your Centrelink money early, then pay it back)
6. Centrelink Crisis Payment (extra money from Centrelink if you are having bad money troubles)
7. Payment plan or payment extension (e.g. on payment of utility bill; mortgage; credit card)
8. Community legal service (e.g. your local Aboriginal legal service)
97. Other – please specify
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

These next questions are about economic resources – how much money, either in cash or credit you have or can get. We ask these questions so we can understand how much people are getting by on.

ASK ALL**C6. Do you have a bank account?**

3. Yes
2. I use someone else's
1. No
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR C6 IS 2, 3 OR 98**C6.1. What types of bank accounts do you use? Which ones?**

1. Everyday account that you use for everyday expenses/ for Centrelink money
2. Savings (an account that gets some interest)
3. Mortgage offset account (an account that can help you reduce how much you owe on your home loan)
4. Other (please specify)
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

ASK ALL**C7. How much money do you have put away (cash or savings, other assets like investment shares)? How long would this last if you had no more income (and had to pay for rent, food, bills)?**

1. I have no savings
2. I have some savings, and it would last me than less than 1 month
3. I have some savings, and it would last me less than 3 months
4. I have savings, and it would last me more than 3 months
98. Don't know

ASK ALL**C8.1 Over the past 12 months, did you use loans or credit? Which ones?**

- 11. I didn't need any loans or credit
- 1. I needed a loan but I couldn't get it
- 2. A loan from friends or family (borrowing or asking)
- 3. Bookup
- 4. A payday loan (e.g. Nimble, Wallet Wizard)
- 5. Afterpay
- 6. A loan from a pawn broker (e.g. Cash Converters)
- 7. A loan (including credit card) from a bank or credit union
- 8. Community finance (e.g. NILS, StepUP)
- 9. A mortgage or an investment loan
- 10. Other (please specify)
- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

C8. Over the past 12 months, which of these loans or credit could you access, even if you didn't use them? This means that you could get this if you wanted it.

- 11. I didn't need any loans or credit
- 1. I needed a loan but I couldn't get it
- 2. A loan from friends or family (borrowing or asking)
- 3. Bookup
- 4. A payday loan (e.g. Nimble, Wallet Wizard)
- 5. Afterpay
- 6. A loan from a pawn broker (e.g. Cash Converters)
- 7. A loan (including credit card) from a bank or credit union
- 8. Community finance (e.g. NILS, StepUP)
- 9. A mortgage or an investment loan
- 10. Other (please specify)
- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

ASK ALL**C8.2. Do you owe money at the moment (e.g. debts, loan, credit card, mortgage)? How easy or hard is it to pay back?**

- 5. I don't owe any money
- 4. I owe money that I am paying back very easily
- 3. I owe money that I am paying back, and it is not too hard
- 2. I owe money that I am paying back, but it is hard
- 1. I owe too much money and I can't pay it back
- 96. Forgotten
- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

C15. Do you have a superannuation account? (Money your work has to put into an account for when you retire)

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 98. Don't know

ASK IF RESONSE FOR C15 IS 1**C16. How many superannuation accounts do you think you have? (Account for when you retire)**

- 1. One
- 2. Two or more
- 3. Not sure how many
- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

C17. How much money is in your superannuation account (account for when you retire)? Guessing is fine

- 1. Less than \$10,000
- 2. Less than \$20,000
- 3. Less than \$50,000
- 4. \$50,000 to \$99,999
- 5. \$100,000 to \$199,999
- 6. \$200,000 to \$299,999
- 7. \$300,000 to \$499,999
- 6. \$500,000 or more
- 98. Don't know
- 99. Prefer not to say

C18. Have you ever put extra (your own) money in your superannuation account? (Account for when you retire)

- 2. A few times
- 3. Regularly/I do this quite often
- 1. Never
- 5. I didn't know that I could add extra money to superannuation
- 4. I don't know how to add extra money
- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

C19. Have you ever tried to find any lost superannuation money, like looking for money in lots of accounts, or a boss owing you superannuation? (You could do this by asking MyGov or the tax office, or going to Big Super Day Out.)

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 98. Don't know

ASK ALL

These final questions are about your financial resources – including if you are able to get loans or credit. We ask these so we can understand if people can get the right loans or financial help if they need it.

C9. Do you need more loans or credit than you have at the moment?

- 5. No, I do not want any loans or credit
- 4. No, I have enough loans or credit for now and don't want any more
- 3. I could get more loans, but I don't really need them
- 2. Yes, I need a little more to fill the gaps
- 1. Yes, I need a lot more
- 98. Don't know
- 99. Don't understand the question

IF RESPONSE FOR C9 IS 4, 5 OR 98, SKIP TO C10**C9.1. What do you need more loans or credit for? Which ones?**

- 1. Running your car (maintenance and repairs; insurance and registration)
- 2. Paying for school fees, uniforms, TAFE, etc.
- 3. Health costs (medication, doctor fees, etc.)
- 4. Paying your rent or accommodation
- 7. Water, gas, electricity, telephone
- 13. Fashionable clothing, eating out, entertainment



- 12. Moving house (bond, cleaning, removalists)
- 5. Big household expense (like whitegoods and furniture)
- 6. Small household expense (like food, clothing)
- 9. Funeral costs/sorry business
- 15. Money to support family
- 14. Birthdays or other celebrations (presents, parties)
- 11. Holidays or vacations
- 10. Emergency or “just in case”
- 8. Paying back other debts
- 97. Other (please specify)
- 98. Don’t know
- 99. Don’t understand the question

ASK ALL

C10. If you really needed \$2,000 for an emergency, could you get it in one week? (e.g. for health care, flights, or if your car stops working)

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 98. Don’t know
- 99. Don’t understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR C10 IS 1

C10.1. Where would you get most of this money from? Pick one

- 1. Family
- 2. Friends
- 3. Savings
- 4. Borrowing from the bank (e.g. a loan or overdraft)
- 5. Using a credit card
- 6. Payday loan, online lender, pawn broker
- 7. Aboriginal community service
- 8. Emergency assistance (please specify)
- 97. Other (please specify)
- 98. Don’t know
- 99. Don’t understand the question

C10.2. Where else could you get this money from? Which ones?

- 1. Family
- 2. Friends
- 3. Savings
- 4. Borrowing from the bank (e.g. a loan or overdraft)
- 5. Using a credit card
- 6. Payday loan, online lender, pawn broker
- 7. Aboriginal community service
- 8. Emergency assistance (please specify)
- 97. Other (please specify)
- 98. Don’t know
- 99. Don’t understand the question

ASK ALL

C11. How much insurance did you have over the past 12 months? (including funeral insurance)

1	2	3	4
I had no insurance at all	I had some insurance	I had basic insurance	I had a lot of insurance

- 98. Don’t know
- 99. Don’t understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR C11 IS 2 TO 4, ASK:**C11.1 You mentioned that you have some insurance. Which ones?**

1. Motor-vehicle- insurance
2. Home (building) insurance
3. Home (contents) insurance
4. Health insurance
5. Life insurance
6. Income protection
7. Funeral insurance
8. Trauma insurance
97. Other (please specify)
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

ASK ALL**C12. Do you think you need more insurance than you have at the moment?**

1. Yes
2. No
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

ASK IF RESPONSE FOR C12 IS 1**C12.1. What type of extra insurance do you think you would need? Which ones?**

1. Motor-vehicle- insurance
2. Home building insurance
3. Home contents insurance
4. Health insurance
5. Life insurance
6. Income protection
7. Funeral insurance
8. Trauma insurance
97. Other (please specify)
98. Don't know
99. Don't understand the question

ASK ALL**C14. Which of the following have happened in your household in the past 12 months due to not having enough money? Choose all that apply.**

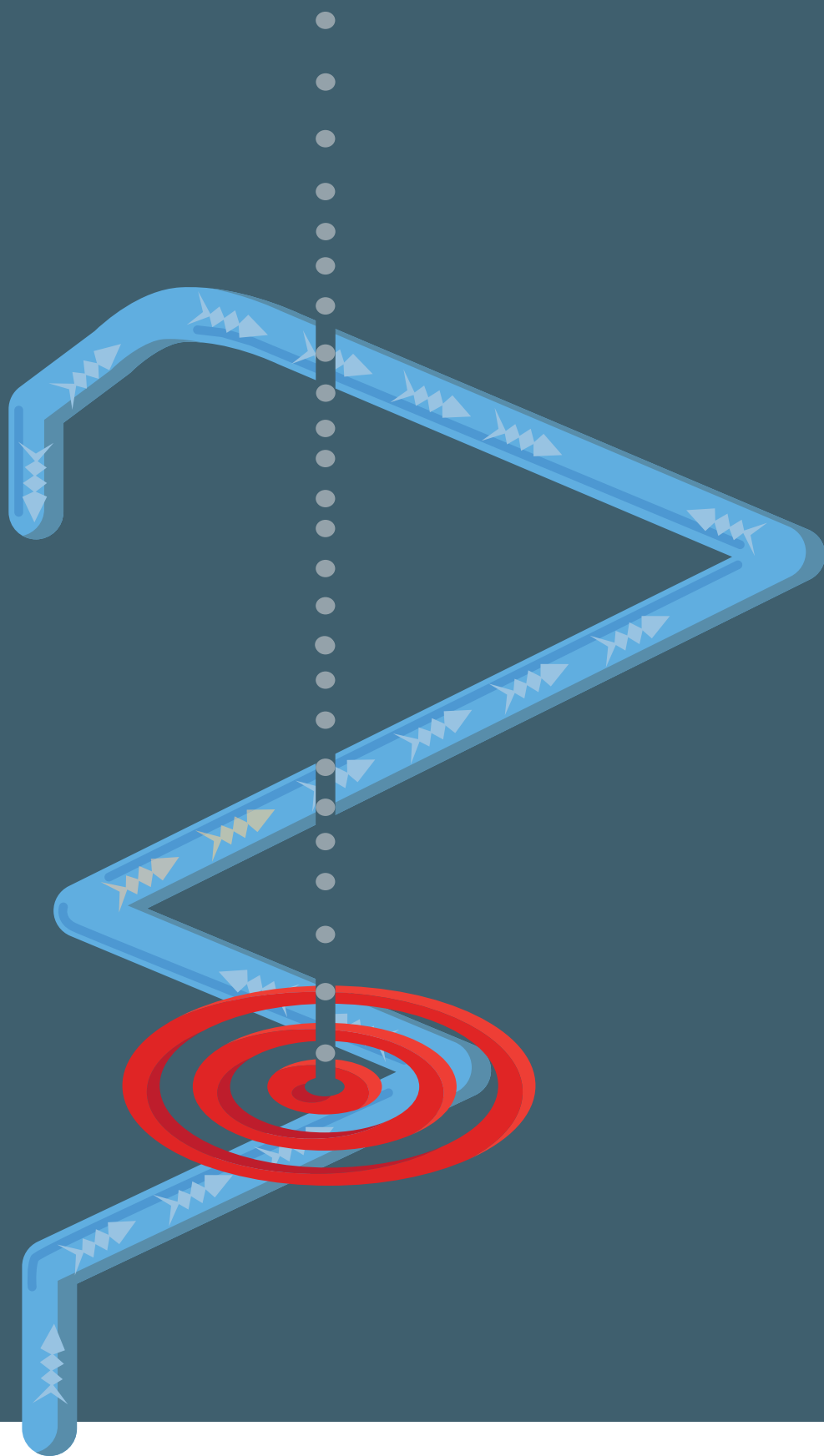
12. Could not pay rent/mortgage
1. Could not pay electricity, gas or telephone bill
2. Could not pay car registration or car insurance
3. Could not pay home/contents insurance
4. Pawned or sold something
5. Went without meals
6. Was unable to use air con or heat at home
7. Asked for money from friends and family
8. Could not pay for hospital or dentist
9. Could not pay for repairs/replacement to essential household items (e.g. washing machine, fridge)
10. Could not pay for car service/repairs
11. Could not pay for children to participate in school activities and outings
97. Other (please specify)
96. None of the above
98. Don't know

D6. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about money or money troubles? Has this survey made you think of anything that we didn't think about?

[Text]

Appendix References

1. Muir, K., et al., Financial resilience in Australia 2015. 2016, Centre for Social Impact - University of New South Wales, for National Australia Bank.
2. Marjolin, A., et al., Financial resilience and employment: Financial Resilience in Australia 2016 - Part 3. 2017, Centre for Social Impact - University of New South Wales, for National Australia Bank.



www.csi.edu.au/financialresilience
www.nab.com.au/financialresilience



FIRST NATIONS
FOUNDATION



CENTRE
for SOCIAL
IMPACT

