

Mega Trends Shaping the Consumer Landscape

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- Grant Dusting, a social researcher and the Director of Strategy at the internationally recognised research organisation McCrindle, spoke at the WA Horticulture Update in October 2025
- Grant delivered a data-packed presentation, sharing insights into the megatrends shaping the consumer landscape in Australia
- This article summarises key messages from his presentation

Australia is growing very quickly, expected to reach a population of 28 million in 2026! Much of this population growth comes from overseas migration, which accounted for 81% of Australia's population growth in 2024.

In WA, 36% of Perth residents were born overseas, and 50% of the population is either born overseas or has parents born overseas. One in five Perth residents (20%) use a non-English language at home, and migration patterns have shifted from historically European (and English-speaking) to Asian-centric. This diversity is reflected in the customer base and needs to be considered by marketers in any promotional campaigns.

Mega Trend 1: Expanding consumer lifecycles

The consumer base is expanding in both directions, getting older and younger at the same time. It's expanding upwards because people are living longer and have purchasing power for longer. It's expanding downward because young people and children are exerting greater influence on household spending than ever before.

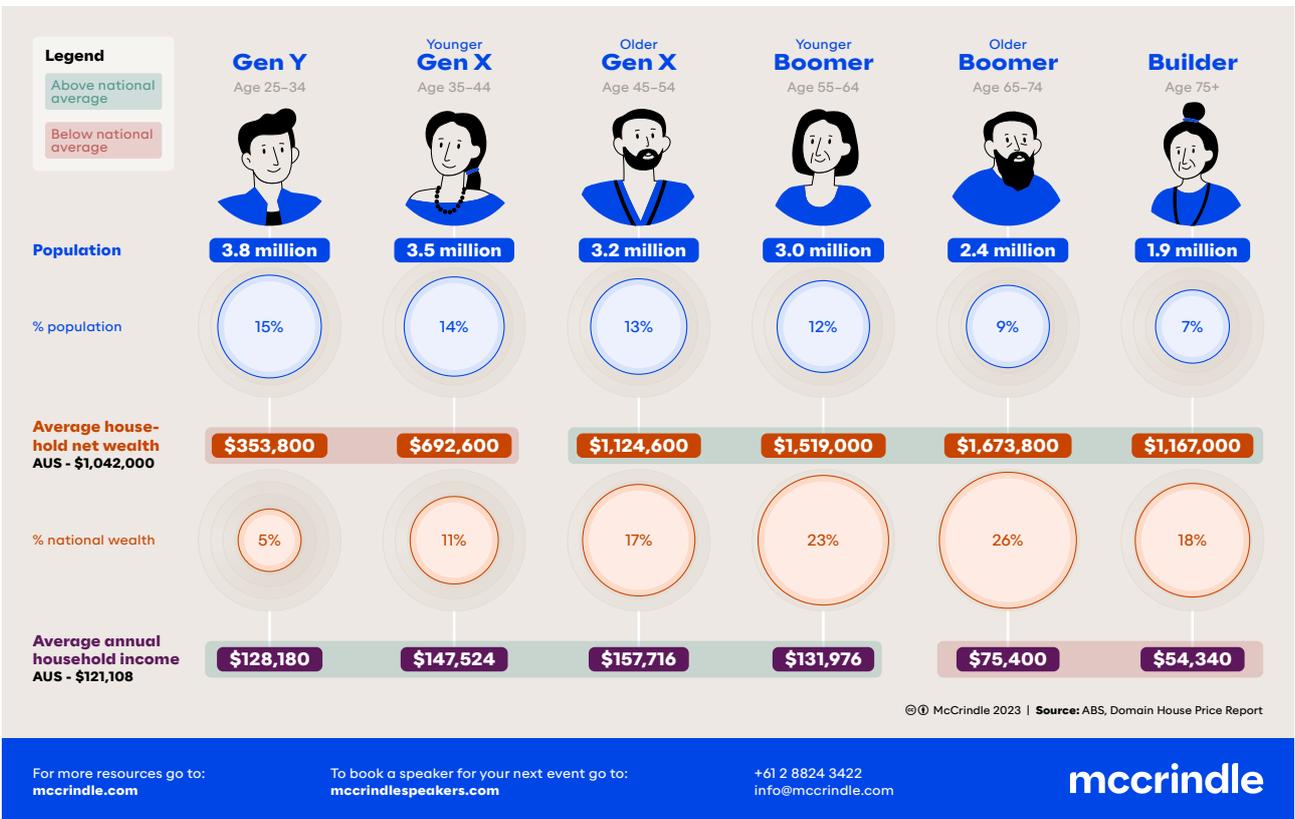
In Australia, 55% of families agree their grandparents often buy day-to-day items for children; 77% of families with dependents agree their children strongly influence what they buy. This means that brand engagement can be built early, as children are influencing purchasing decisions.





55%
of families with dependent children agree **their grandparents** often buy day to day items for their household or children

Income and Wealth by Generation



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Source: mccrindle

Mega Trend 2: Hyper global and re-engaging locally

We live in an era of hyper-globalisation, and yet people are re-engaging locally at the same time. The challenge for today's companies is to have the systems that can allow you to leverage a global audience (where that's relevant) while maintaining engagement with local customers.

When consumers were asked why they chose to purchase from a local company, the top reason was to support the local economy or community, followed by a desire to see or try the product in person. There are generational differences, though, particularly among the emerging Gen Z population, where ethical labour practices, fair wages, and access to locally made, unique, or artisanal products are also priorities.

WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO PURCHASE FROM A LOCAL BUSINESS?

To support the local economy or community

57%

Able to see or try the product in person

48%

Better customer service or more personalised experience

40%

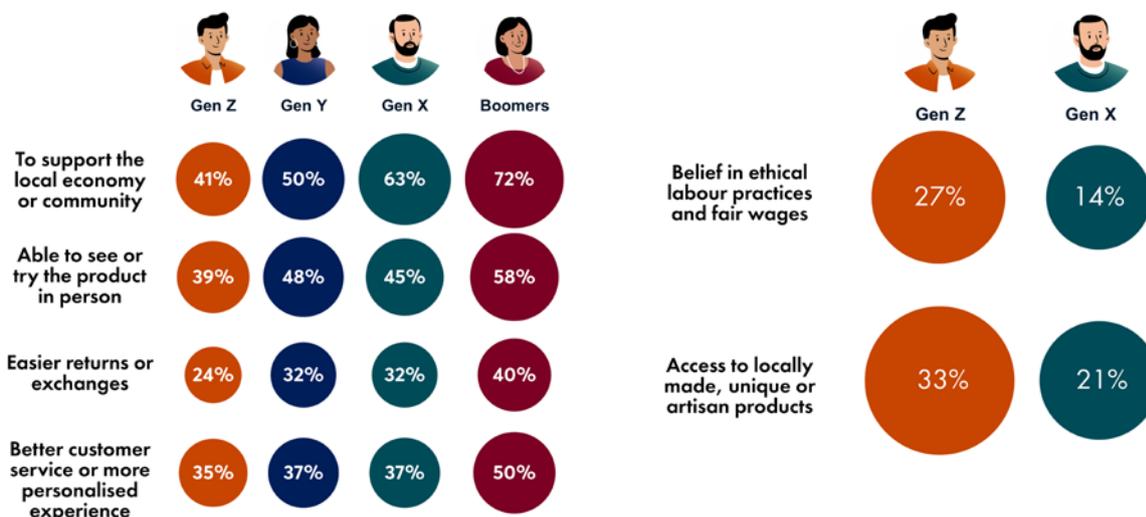
Greater trust in product quality or authenticity

38%

Faster delivery or same-day pick-up

36%

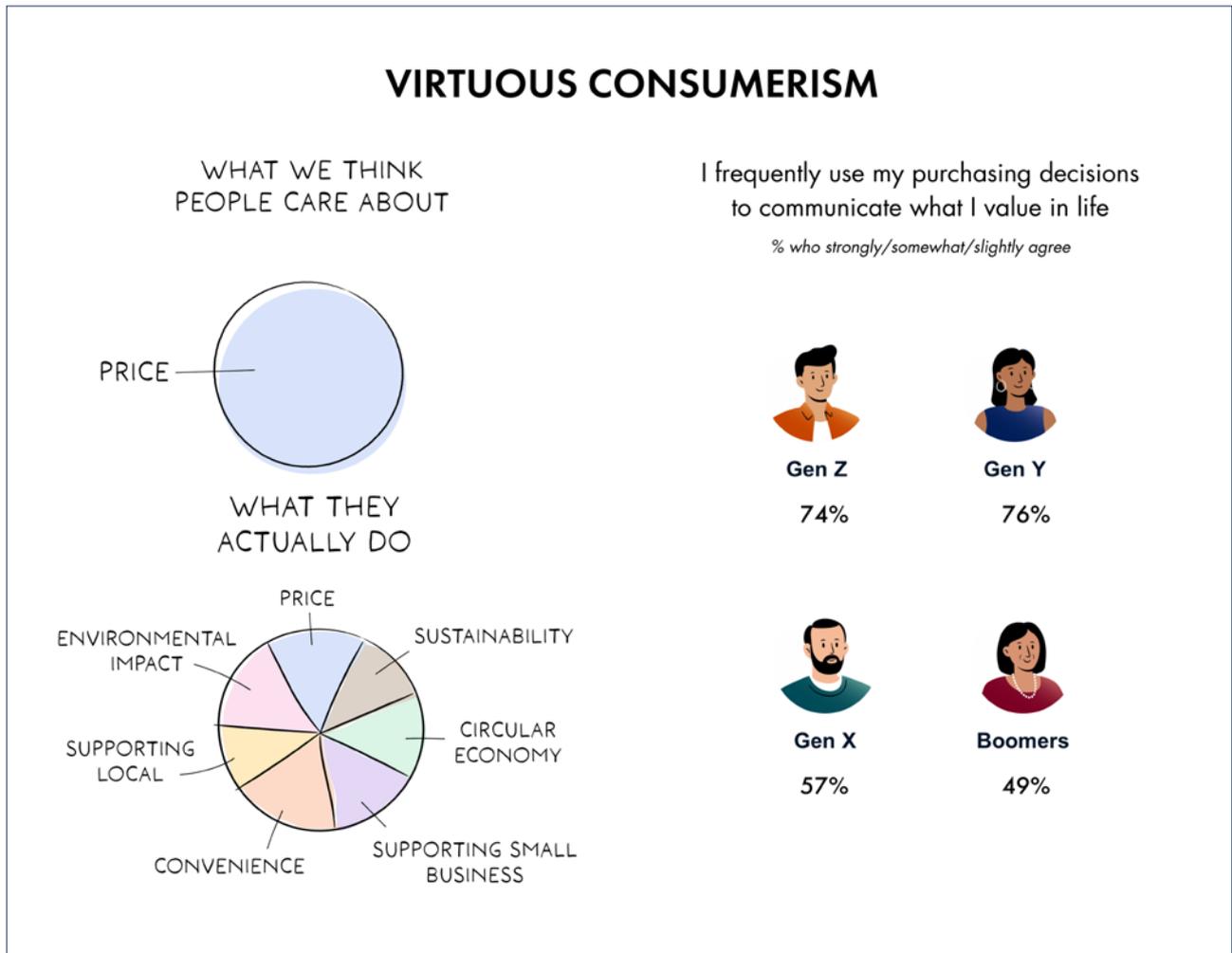
REASONS FOR CHOOSING A LOCAL RETAILER? Areas of greatest difference



Source: Megatrends shaping the consumer landscape report (mccrindle, 2025)

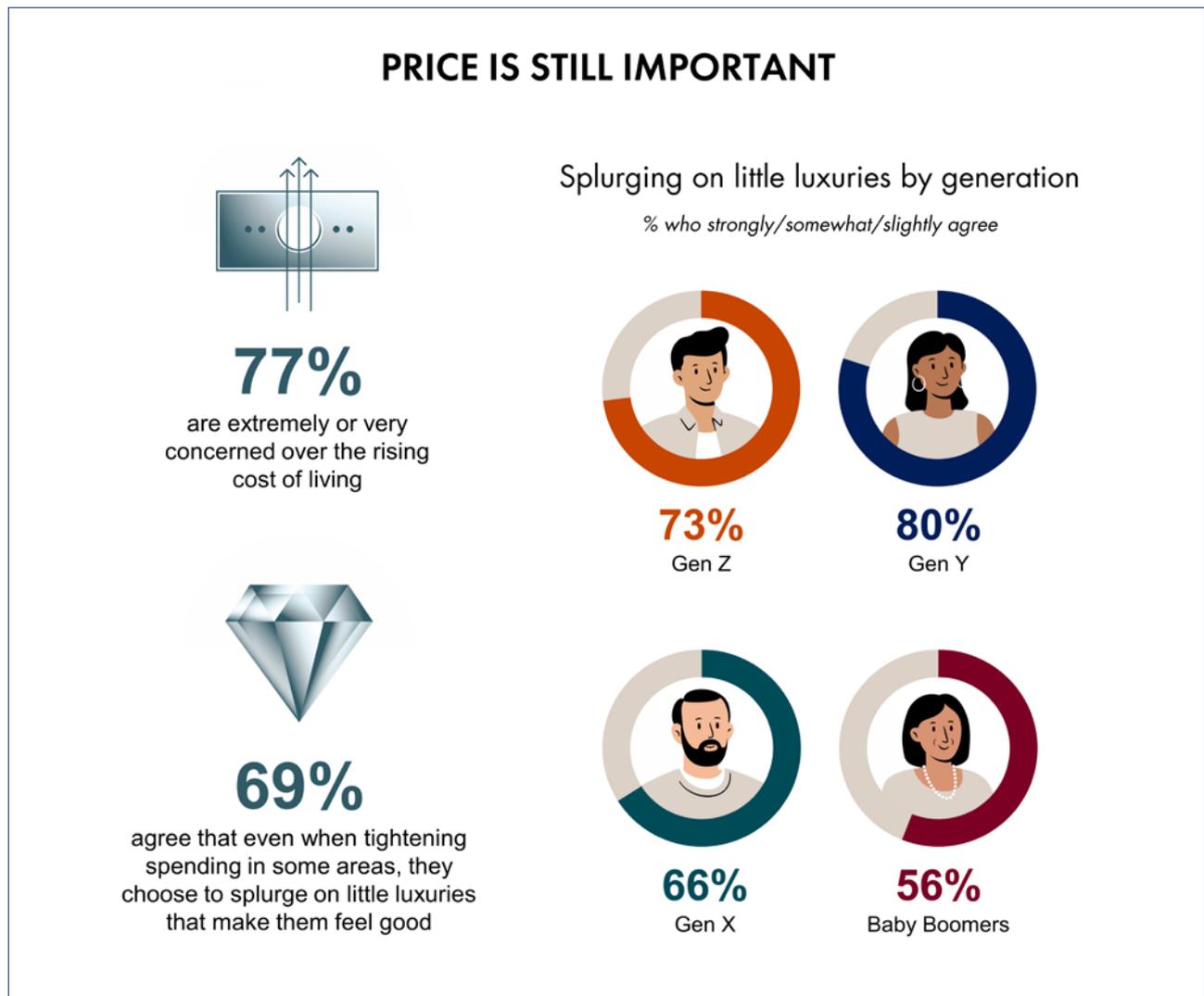
Mega Trend 3: Values driven decisions

Increasingly, particularly among younger generations, people say their values drive their decisions. There is a whole range of factors people bring to a purchasing decision. They are wondering about sustainability, environmental impact, circular economies, and how to support local and small businesses. Since COVID, there has also been a stronger emphasis on lifestyle; people are making purchasing decisions with their lifestyle in mind, not just functionality and productivity.



Source: Megatrends shaping the consumer landscape report (mccrindle, 2025)

Price is still important, though. Consumers have their values, but they are also seeking value because they want their money to go further. Seventy-seven per cent of consumers say they are extremely or very concerned about the rising cost of living, yet there is also a trend towards buying boutique, artisan, and premium products. When thinking about how to market to today's and tomorrow's consumers, your core market segment will be the overlap between individual (consumer) values and your own company values. This is where you can get the most resonance.



Source: Megatrends shaping the consumer landscape report (mccrindle, 2025)

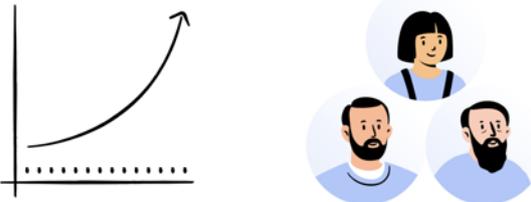
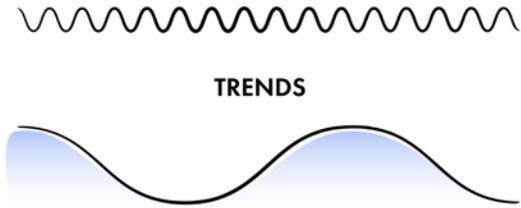
“ People don't just buy what you do, they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe. ”

Simon Sinek, *Start with Why*

This is why companies invest in social media and videography: telling your story and getting people to buy into it matters to a growing number of people. They don't just buy the product; they want to know the backstory. They're interested, and it feels good to support a good company or a quality, locally made product.

What to do with this information

All this information and change can be overwhelming, so Grant provided a four-step roadmap for how a business can think about and successfully engage with the future.

<p>INPUTS FUTURES</p>  <p>Not <i>the future</i> but <i>possible futures</i></p> <p>Be multifactorial, not just linear.</p> <p>The future is not just an extrapolation of what's happening now. Think about what the possible futures may be and how to prepare for them now. Multiple factors (customer expectations, climate, workforce, etc.) inform this, giving you a more holistic picture of where things are heading. It's not 'the future' but 'possible futures'.</p>	<p>WHAT WHY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p>  <p>Data gives us the <i>what</i> and understanding people, the <i>why</i>.</p> <p>Think generational, not just statistical.</p> <p>You can do all the analysis around the 'what' (e.g. consumer data), but you need to keep people front of mind (the 'why'). Remember who you are talking about - generational analysis puts a face to the future. Getting out and interacting and talking to people and is an excellent way to road-test your assumptions and validate data.</p>
<p>FADS (Fast. And. Deceptively. Superficial)</p>  <p>Fads gain <i>attention</i>. trends are <i>transformational</i></p> <p>Observe the tides, not just the waves.</p> <p>Fads come and go and will continue to do so. Trends may be slower moving but are here to stay. Fads gain attention, trends are transformational.</p>	<p>PEOPLE INFORMED PREDICTIONS</p>  <p>Ground <i>predictions</i> in an understanding of <i>people</i></p> <p>Be practical, not just theoretical.</p> <p>Think about what's timeless, how we know people behave. Ground predictions in an understanding of how people behave.</p>

HAVE A STRATEGY THAT DOESN'T JUST FOCUS ON WHAT IS CHANGING BUT ALSO WHAT IS UNCHANGING

Despite the tides of change, some timeless human needs have remained the same. To remain adaptable to disruption and lead change, use human centred foresight. Tap into the timeless drivers of decisions and behaviour.



Source: Consumer paradoxes: Trends and Counter Trends Shaping Customer Behaviour (mccrindle, 2025)

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Generational consumer profiles						mccrindle
Generation	Gen Alpha 2010-2024 Aged 15 and under	Gen Z 1995-2009 Aged 16 - 30	Gen Y 1980-1994 Aged 31 - 45	Gen X 1965-1979 Aged 46 - 60	Baby Boomer 1946-1964 Aged 61 - 79	
Global population	24% 2.1 billion	23% 1.8 billion	21% 1.7 billion	16% 1.3 billion	12% 0.9 billion	
Earning power	Pocket money & chores	Early career & side hustle	Building a career & gig economy	Peak earning years	Pension & retirement savings	
Payment methods	Digital wallet, crypto, contactless	Contactless, virtual/neo banks	PayPal, credit & debit cards	Direct debit	Cash, cheque	
Marketing channels	AI algorithm suggestions	Short-form video	Social media	Online media	Mass media (print, TV, radio)	
Customer service preference	Virtual bot	Live chat	Email + online support	Call centre	In-person	
Values as consumers	Brand transparency, focus on authenticity	Purpose-driven, prioritise ethics over loyalty	Affordability and ethical concern	Loyalty-driven but influenced by practical benefits	High brand loyalty, prefer familiar brands, value for money	
Marketer insight	Interactive, digital native, immersive	Authentic, aesthetic, social	Simplicity, ethical, sustainable	Practical, value, convenience	Quality, trust, reliability	

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