



# Inside the Mind of an Australian Grocery Shopper

Australia & New Zealand  
**shop! vpr**

INDUSTRY REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2025

# Introduction

**Grocery shopping has never been harder in Australia. From the current cost-of-living crisis to the overwhelming always-on volume of advertisements and marketing messages, mostly on social media, grocery shoppers are spoilt for choice when it comes to brands and reevaluating what value means to them, how they plan their shopping and who they trust to help with these decisions.**

However, there is significantly less choice when it comes to where consumers choose to shop. According to the recent Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) supermarkets inquiry, the two major retailers, Coles and Woolworths, account for approximately 67% share of supply in the country's supermarket retailing industry. Due to this structure, the two competitors have limited incentive to compete vigorously on price.

In this report, we combine new Vypr data about Australian grocery shopping behaviour with recent industry trends, to help brands understand how consumers actually make decisions. This research doesn't focus solely on what happens in stores – we've delved into the three crucial stages of the customer journey: pre-purchase, instore and post-purchase.

According to the results, winning the grocery basket is not only about setting strategic pricing, but about showing up at the right moments along the customer journey, which increasingly starts before a list is even written and continues long after a shopper has left the store or clicked 'pay for purchase'.

With margins tighter than ever and little room for error, it has never been more important for brands and retailers to make the right calls. This report is a guide on how brands, retailers, and retail marketers can break through this noise.

# Executive Summary

While the Australian grocery shopping experience is evolving, consumer behaviour remains rooted in **habit and value**, and brands and retailers need a holistic approach to ensure they remain top of mind. Three themes dominated the Shop! ANZ & Vypr data.

**Price is top of mind.** This is understandable given the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported a 3% increase in the cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages over the 12 months to June 2025. Nearly half of shoppers (48%) said they were heavily influenced by price, and there has been a positive attitude shift towards own-label brands, with more than two in five (42%) of consumers directly referencing price, value or cost of living pressures as the reason for their shift. Promotions remain extraordinarily powerful and can change behaviour: nine in 10 (90%) shoppers have bought a product because it was on promotion, and over four in 10 (43%) have even gone out of their way to access a promotional deal.

There is a clear shift towards **more planned shopping**. The days of browsing to be inspired – at least for grocery shopping – are nearly behind us as most purchases skew toward full shops or essential top ups, not discovery. Nearly half of shoppers (49%) said they planned more now than they did in 2020. They tend to use more planning support tools like online lists, instore signage, pre-packed bundles and clear, fast navigation. This basically means that if a product is not on the list, it's much harder for it to make it into the trolley or basket.

**Marketing influence doesn't end at checkout**, with social media leading the charge and often being the spark for instore conversion. Nearly half (48%) of shoppers said an advertising and marketing influenced their decision to buy a product instore, with social media being the biggest driver. More crucially, more than two in five (43%) said they noticed marketing and advertising more after buying a product.

It's clear that winning the first purchase is only the beginning for brands and retailers – reinforcing this with the right content and at the right moments outside the actual shopping activity leads to long term impact.





# Methodology



Vypr is a global product intelligence and consumer insights platform that helps brands make informed product decisions quickly and confidently. Our approach combines mobile-first research tools with engaged consumer communities, delivering insights that are accurate, actionable and agile.

The findings in this report are based on research conducted between June and August 2025 with a sample of 200 Australian consumers, weighted to the latest population data across age and gender. Vypr's methodology is rooted in behavioural science and captures instinctive, System 1 responses through short, targeted, mobile-optimised questions.

To provide a rounded view of consumer attitudes and behaviours, we combined structured survey data with open-ended feedback, analysed using both traditional quantitative methods and AI-driven sentiment analysis. This approach offers a balanced perspective on consumer preferences, behaviours and the motivations behind them.

# The Customer Journey

The customer journey from awareness to purchase to advocacy is rarely linear, and grocery shopping is no exception. Australian grocery shoppers are making decisions at multiple touchpoints, and by breaking the journey into three clear stages – pre-purchase, instore and post-purchase – we can better understand not only how shoppers think and act, but also how brands and retailers can show up at the right time with the right message.

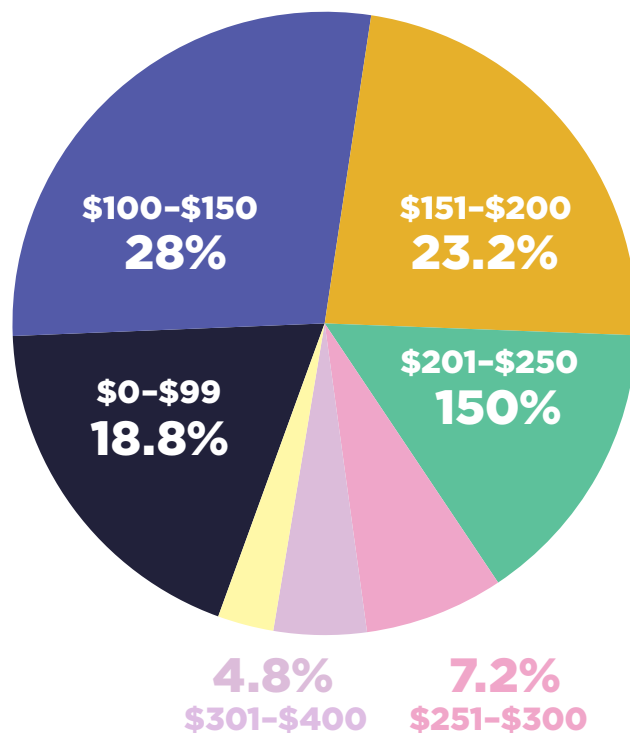




The instore experience is the make or break moment in the customer journey. Here, brands fight for visibility during whatever short windows shoppers have, trying to get them to see past their lists through price, placement, and packaging.



**home  
brand is  
cheaper**



The biggest driver of this planned behaviour change is price. We've seen a clear hierarchy of influence, with price and affordability sitting right at the top, which makes sense given the Australian Bureau of Statistics put food and non-alcoholic beverage inflation at 3% from June 2024 to June 2025. This increase is a substantial hit to weekly budgets, so anything that makes money go further earns attention.

There has been a positive attitude shift towards own-label brands because of this. Over four in 10 (42%) shoppers to our survey explicitly cited price, value and cost of living pressures as the reason for their shift, with comments like "home brand is cheaper" and "cost of living has forced me to do this" appearing frequently. It shouldn't come as a shock, then, that Aldi's messaging around a consistent price gap is resonating with consumers. The own-label leader recently announced Australians could save about \$3,000 a year shopping at its grocery stores over Woolworths, Coles and IGA. In this climate, a compelling own-label proposition feels not like a smart trade-off, rather than the trade down it may once have been.

If own-label brands continue to innovate, focus on health credentials, or mimic premium branding, we expect them to continue to increase their marketshare, meaning other brands can't afford to ignore them any longer.

As financial pressures persist, mid-tier budgets remain dominant, with few households spending at the top end. Most (28%) shoppers spend \$100-\$150 per week, with the majority falling under the \$200 mark. This is driven primarily by two-person households. Spending over \$300 typically involves shopping for 3-4 people, with 60% of those spending \$301-\$400 buying for three, and 33.33% of those spending over \$400 catering for 5+ people. There is a clear spend-to-household size alignment. As more singles and couples dominate lower-spend bands, expect increased interest in small format convenience and price sensitive promotions. Brands targeting smaller baskets or efficient value packs will likely see greater traction.



While secondary placements work to sway the consumer, core shelving still dominates. The majority (57%) of shoppers pick up products from regular shelves, and it's visually bold and relevant designs that set brands up to compete. Nearly 75% of shoppers said packaging had at least a little influence on their purchase decisions. But, while an eye catching design is a great way to get shoppers to see your product, it shouldn't overshadow what they really need: clear product information was listed as the most important packaging feature, even ahead of visual appeal.

Promotions take this up a notch, sitting among the strongest behavioural nudges in grocery shopping. A massive nine out of 10 (90%) of shoppers bought a product simply because it was on promotion, and over four in 10 (43%) have even gone out of their way to access a promotional deal. This confirms the conversion power of instore promotions. Although this trend holds across age groups, it is especially strong among 35-44-year-olds and those aged 65 years and over.

# 75%

**of shoppers said packaging had at least a little influence on their purchase decisions**

# 90%

**bought something because it was on promotion**

With most shoppers going instore to shop due to the want or need to see the physical products and being able to purchase on the day, sampling campaigns are a great way to get shoppers to interact with new products. This is especially true for food and beverage. Six in 10 (60%) shoppers said they tried samples because they were free and convenient, and more than half (59%) bought the product immediately or later.

In a heavily digital world, traditional media, such as catalogues and flyers, still matter and continue to drive traffic. Print isn't dead, especially for older shoppers. The Shop! ANZ & Vypr data shows that store magazines are widely picked up with only one in four (25%) of shoppers saying they never do.

This is evidenced in Roy Morgan's Australian Magazine Readership report for the 12 months to June 2025. With a print readership of 4,995,000 and 4,477,000 respectively, the two most widely read (free) magazines are Coles Magazine and Woolworths' Fresh Ideas. These, as well as catalogues, can be a valuable content and promotional tool, as we found that most price-led triggers, such as "buy one, get one free" and multibuys, are found out via catalogues, instore signage or apps. It's important to note that older demographics of 55-64 and 65+ are over represented among regular readers of print.

# 60%

**shoppers tried samples**

# 59%

**of shopper who sampled purchased**

# When to shop?

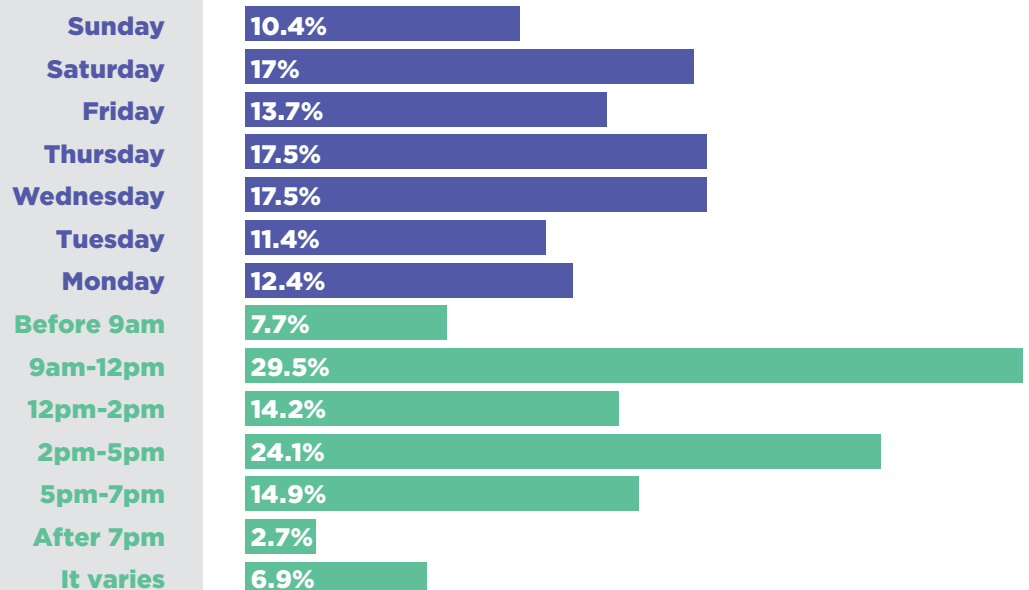
Now that we know what shoppers look for while instore, we need to also understand when they actually make it there.

Our data shows that shopping tends to cluster around standard daylight hours. Morning remains the most popular time, with 37% of consumers preferring the 9am-12pm window. As work patterns continue to shift post-pandemic, the afternoon may even become an even more dominant slot for flexible or hybrid workers.

There's also a heavy preference for mid-week shopping as Wednesday and Thursday tied – at 33% each – as the most common shopping days. This mid-week shop popularity may reflect a strategy to avoid weekend crowds or access fresher stock, presenting a strong opportunity for retailers to promote offers or product launches during this period.

This is probably why all the major retailer deals start around Wednesday. Coles and Woolworths release their new catalogues with weekly specials every Wednesday morning, with a sneak peek available online on Monday evenings. While Aldi's timing can vary, its weekly specials are usually updated on Wednesdays as well.

Saturday is not far behind – 32% of people said they did their shopping then. However, at 20%, Sunday doesn't have the same appeal as its weekend counterpart. It remains the least favoured, likely due to shorter trading hours or preferences for early-week stock-ups.





# Key takeaways

We've put together some key takeaways and recommendations for brands and retailers based on our research.

## Value almost always wins

Our data shows that value is a major decisive factor for grocery shoppers in every possible way. With the current cost of living pressures, it's not something brands and retailers can afford to ignore. This is a key driver for consumers' increased trust in and relevance of own-label brands. If these brands continue to innovate, focus on health credentials and mimic premium branding, we expect to see further trial and a continued shift in perception. Brands that can counter with superior functionality, credible health benefits or real indulgence can still win share, as long as the premium is easily understood at a glance.

There is also an opportunity for brands and retailers to offer consumers plain and simple discounts – make it easy for them to make sense of whatever discount they're getting. While many decisions are made before shoppers even set foot in store, promotional deals can change behaviour instore. However, the more complex the deal, the more likely you are to miss the moment.

## Physical space still dominates

Despite significant online growth in almost every other industry, Australian grocery is still a primarily instore activity for most shoppers. Seeing physical products and being able to immediately purchase products remain strong draws of being in a physical store. This means brands and retailers need to optimise shelf space by investing in strong instore visibility tactics, especially on the midweek (Wednesday and Thursday) and Saturday peak shopping days. Shelf signage needs to answer three key questions: what it is, why it's better and how much it is.

## Social media is the king of influence

As the most influential promotional channel, according to our data, social media is key for brands and retailers to have a continued impact beyond the first sale. The days when scrolling through popular platforms like Instagram and TikTok were just for entertainment are long gone. While targeted advertising via owned channels can be effective, brands need to look beyond this and tap into the power and trust consumers have in influencers. Planning for partner influencers' content rollout schedules to align with product availability and accompanying brand content in retailer magazines, such as Coles Magazine or Woolworths' Fresh Ideas, will provide that holistic approach to brand visibility.

## Repeat exposure is the best way to create brand loyalty

Our data showed a cognitive bias where people are more attuned to a product once they've engaged with it, with many shoppers noticing advertising more after they buy a product. There is an opportunity for brands to not only offer moments of repeat exposure, but to do so with a consistent message across multiple touchpoints. The same message should thread through social media, retailer and other magazines, and instore promotions and displays. For example, a recipe in Coles Magazine should feature the same product packaging displayed on the end cap instore. The price promise on Instagram should match the instore price during the window specified on your post. Brand loyalty is built when all the dots connect.

# Summary

Grocery shopping continues to be part of Australians' weekly routine, and while some aspects of it remain familiar, the way they go about it has changed. It still happens primarily in stores, with the majority of shoppers still pushing their trolleys or carrying their baskets down aisles, responding to the same timeless price, placement and packaging tactics, especially with the cost of living pressures.

Consumers are becoming more intentional and digital marketing heavily influences their planning, as well as the brands and retailers they choose to engage with. From jotting down lists in their notes to scrolling through recipe ideas on social media, the path to purchase starts well before they set foot in a store or jump onto a website. In addition, with brands and retailers all competing heavily for attention, value is scrutinised more closely than ever and consumer trust in own-label brands is steadily rising.

**To earn a place on the weekly shopping list, brands and retailers need to show up across the full customer journey – from pre- to post-purchase – with simple, resonant cues that help Australians feel they are making smart, satisfying choices.**

# About Shop! ANZ

Shop! ANZ (formerly POPAI) is the only global, not for profit industry association exclusively advocating for excellence in shopper marketing and retail experience. With 20 offices covering 45 countries and over 1700 member companies worldwide, Shop! brings global best practice intelligence, resources, recognition and networks and to our members.

## About Carla Bridge

Carla Bridge is General Manager of Shop! ANZ and has more than 15 years' experience in the Australian retail and FMCG industries. Prior to Shop! ANZ, she was Head of Media and Communications at the Australian Retailers Association (ARA), and spent 10 years at Octomedia as Managing Editor of leading retail trade news titles, Inside Retail and Inside FMCG.



## Contact Shop! ANZ

[www.shopassociation.org.au](http://www.shopassociation.org.au),  
[shop@shopassociation.org.au](mailto:shop@shopassociation.org.au)  
(02) 9281 2630