

For immediate release
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Bill scare, don't care: Aussies numb to big phone expenses

- ➔ Australians are only surprised by a bill 4.5 times their base plan
- ➔ 5.1 million Aussies have experienced mobile phone bill shock
- ➔ How to reduce your mobile data usage

21 March, 2017, Sydney, Australia -- Australians have a high threshold for overspending on smartphone bills, according to a new survey by Australia's most visited comparison site, finder.com.au¹.

The finder.com.au study of 2,004 people reveals that one in four (23.5%) -- equivalent to 5.1 million Australians -- have opened at least one unexpectedly high mobile bill in the last two years.

Of those who have experienced bill shock, one in three (35%) have received a bill of \$200 or more.

The survey finds on average Aussies pay \$47.60 per month for their mobile phone plan. But the shock of a bill blowout only sets in at \$214: that's four and a half times the base plan cost and an overspend of \$166.

Alex Kidman, tech expert at finder.com.au, is surprised by Aussies' tolerance to bill shock.

"Phone providers are very clear with warning consumers when they're going over data caps or open to roaming charges, so it shouldn't come as a shock when bills come in higher after those notifications," he says.

The research found 197,694 Aussies have landed a bill of at least \$1,000 in the last two years. Collectively that's at least \$197.7 million of excessive mobile spend.

¹ Experian Hitwise since 2015

“This is astronomically high. It highlights just how important it is for Aussies to [review their plans](#) and find the best possible option available. If you’re regularly going over your data cap, maybe it’s time to look at a plan with a bigger allowance.”

“You don’t have to continually tolerate mobile phone bills that are a lot higher than your set cost. There are other options you can explore, especially when smaller players are offering competitive deals,” says Mr Kidman.

The survey found the most common reason for mobile phone bill shock is excess data charges (70.4%).

“Unlimited text and calls are included in most mobile plans so it’s no surprise that data is the main culprit for Aussies high phone bills.”

“Most people are unaware of all the different applications that chew up their data. Facebook, YouTube, emails, and not to mention automatic app updates make going over your data limit an all too easy task,” says Mr Kidman.

Top reasons for bill shock	
1	Excess data charges (70.4%)
2	Exceeding call allowance (12.3%)
3	International roaming charges (7.2%)
4	Making international calls from within Australia (4.0%)
5	Exceeding text allowance (3.6%)
6	International roaming call and text charges (2.3%)

Source: finder.com.au



5 tips for keeping bill shock at bay

1. Monitor your data usage

If you’re lucky, your phone will already have an inbuilt data usage monitoring tool. But if not, there are apps you can download that will tell you which apps are consuming data. Most of the time it will be those that have a video playback function such as Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Youtube and Netflix. Once you know what apps are most data-hungry, you can adjust how much you use them.

2. Make sure you exit out of apps

If you just press the homebutton you aren’t properly closing the app and therefore it is still running in the background and secretly eating your data. This is notorious for catching people

out.

3. Review your plan

If you find yourself constantly receiving high-priced phone bills, perhaps you've outgrown your plan. In this case it's time to [review your current plan](#) and pick the best possible deal to suit your needs.

4. Disable automatic updates

Whether it's updates for specific apps or software, situations where your phone needs to download something from the Internet will consume a substantial amount of data. Switch these automatic updates off and make sure that you're in reach of Wi-Fi next time you update your phone.

5. Change Facebook settings to remove autoplay

Video autoplay chews up a lot of data. Every time you scroll through Facebook and a video automatically starts playing that's adding to your data consumption, even if you don't watch it. Turn it off so you only watch the ones you want to. It may seem small but it could be the tipping point on forking out another \$10 for an extra gigabyte of data.