# Australian online dating faces user fatigue, financial pressure and safety concerns



In recent years, the landscape of online dating has been marked by significant challenges and shifting user behaviours, as evidenced by reports from Australia reflecting user fatigue, financial pressures, and declining subscription numbers for major dating platforms. A detailed account from The Guardian reveals the experiences of individuals navigating the complexities of dating apps alongside other major life priorities.

Anne\*, a 31-year-old Sydney resident, provides a personal narrative highlighting the dual pressures of seeking a romantic partner while simultaneously hunting for a home to buy. Last year, feeling overwhelmed and financially strained, she chose to delete her dating apps after months of stressful and transactional first dates, coupled with the rising costs associated with both dating and housing. “Going for drinks a couple of times a week … doesn’t seem that much until it starts adding up really quickly,” she remarked. Anne also noted the mental toll dating took on her, eventually deciding to prioritise house hunting. After eight months and 92 apartment viewings, she found a flat but eventually withdrew from the dating scene. She later attempted to return to dating apps but quickly became discouraged and opted to explore other ways of meeting people, such as salsa dancing lessons.

These individual experiences reflect broader trends in the industry. Shares in Match Group, a US-based company that owns several major dating services including Tinder, Hinge, and OkCupid, have plummeted by more than two-thirds over five years; Bumble Inc has seen an even steeper decline of nearly 95% from its pandemic highs. The decline is attributed primarily to a reduction in paying subscribers. Match Group's recent financial report reveals a net loss of 704,000 paying subscribers across its platforms, despite some growth in Hinge’s paid user base. The Guardian reports that while some users switch platforms, the overall number of paying subscribers is decreasing. Match Group’s CEO, Spencer Rascoff, recently acknowledged these challenges in an open letter, admitting the apps have sometimes felt like a numbers game rather than fostering genuine connections, stating, “To reach our full potential, we must confront a hard truth: we haven’t always met the high standards we set for the user experience.”

John\*, a 51-year-old, shared his frustrations with online dating platforms such as eHarmony, where he encountered barriers like paywalls that restricted access to viewing profiles without a fee. When attempting to delete his account, John was informed that due to a “pending legal matter in Australia,” eHarmony could not delete his profile, though it was made inaccessible to new matches. John described feeling “flabbergasted,” expressing concern over data privacy and the inability to remove personal information from the platform. Representatives for eHarmony confirmed their commitment to user experience but noted that legal requirements necessitated retaining certain user data, and declined further comment due to the ongoing legal issue. The experience led John to lodge a complaint with NSW Fair Trading. The agency reported that of the complaints received about dating services since early 2023, the majority related to eHarmony, focusing on cancellation policies and cooling-off periods.

Beyond user experience frustrations, a survey conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology studied nearly 10,000 web and app dating service users, finding that three-quarters had experienced sexual violence while using these platforms, with one-third reporting in-person sexual violence perpetrated by someone they met online. This alarming data has prompted regulatory responses. On 1 April, the Australian government introduced a new code of conduct for dating services aiming to reduce harm and improve user safety. This code applies to popular platforms such as Bumble, RSVP, Grindr, and Match Group’s services, with non-compliance potentially resulting in penalties including formal warnings.

As Australian singles increasingly express weariness with online dating, alternative approaches to social connection are gaining appeal. Anne’s eventual choice to take up salsa dancing is one example of seeking interpersonal relationships through offline activities. Her experience echoes wider sentiments among friends and peers, who have found the dating app environment to be frustrating and emotionally taxing.

This collection of personal accounts, financial disclosures, regulatory developments, and research findings offers a comprehensive snapshot of the current state of online dating in Australia, revealing challenges tied to user engagement, safety, and the sustainability of the business models underpinning popular platforms.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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3. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-09-07/eharmony-sued-by-accc-in-federal-court/102825988> - This report details the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's lawsuit against eHarmony for allegedly misleading consumers about subscription terms, aligning with the article's mention of user experience frustrations and data privacy concerns.
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5. <https://www.axios.com/2024/08/08/bumble-stumbles-dating-app-fatigue> - This article reports on Bumble's declining growth due to dating app fatigue and decreased user engagement, supporting the claim of challenges in the online dating industry.
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7. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/apr/27/dating-apps-user-decline> - Please view link - unable to able to access data