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TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

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**A quality life: Can understanding
society's concerns ensure our future
wellbeing?**

Terry Flynn
The Centre for the Study of Choice (CenSoC)

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Citizen Rat

Public demands improved transport

ANDREW WEST

February 12, 2010

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ALMOST two thirds of Sydneysiders support "high investment in public transport" - and they are prepared to pay for it.

One of the most extensive surveys of commuter needs finds the public is desperate for improved train, bus, light rail and ferry services - and even drivers, who rarely use mass transit, strongly favour better public transport.

Have your say

The survey of 2400 randomly selected people - conducted by the Centre for the Study of Choice at the University of Technology, Sydney - reflected an overwhelming preference for public transport solutions to the city's congestion crisis.

A subgroup of 1200 people, who were asked about long-term solutions, said they were prepared to pay a mixture of slightly higher fares, limited congestion charges and even annual household levies, which would raise almost \$36 billion over the next 25-30 years to improve public transport. But the public was strongly against paying more for the current levels of service, which they consider inadequate.

The results of the research come as the *Herald*-backed independent public inquiry into Sydney's transport needs - headed by Ron Christie, a former chief of the State Rail Authority and the Roads and Traffic Authority - prepares to



The Mosman Daily

Australia's Best Community Newspaper 2009*

incorporating North Sydney

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009

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COMMUNITY PULSE

The happiest residents in Sydney

GOEL ERIKSSON and
KATE CRAWFORD

LOWER North Shore residents may be working more hours and worrying about money and global warming, but they do it with a smile on their face.

Our residents are the happiest in Sydney, according to a recent survey.

The Cumberland-Courier Community Pulse Survey revealed the *Daily's* readers topped the polls when it came to happiness.

When asked to rate their happiness from one to 10, lower North Shore residents rated themselves an average 7.5.

Ken Palmer, who moved to Mosman in 1971, said the suburb was full of happy people.

"You only need to go down to Balmoral (beach) and look around to see all the smiling faces," said Mr Palmer, who heads there every morning to take the water temperature.



He said most Mosman residents could "afford to smile", with many of them having saved money and paid off their mortgages.

"I think a lot of people around here are very happy," he said.

"Many are retirees who have lived here for a long time. They've made a conscious decision to put down

their roots here. And many have put away a bit of money for a rainy day."

Comedian John Knowles, of Mosman, said he was not surprised lower North Shore people rated themselves happy.

"The lower North Shore inspires happiness in my family with its simple pleasures and fond recollec-

tions," he said. "My family arrived in Mosman with nothing but a few suitcases and before long had made wonderful friends."

Jackie Curran, who runs laughter classes at Neutral Bay, said lower North Shore residents would feel happy about the environment in which they lived.

"They live in a very nice



Are you happy?

Tell us what you love about where we live at mosmandaily.com.au

Early morning swimmers at Balmoral beach have plenty to smile about.

Picture: DAVE SWIFT

Economic conditions and global warming were the two biggest concerns among residents, with 42 per cent stating they worried about climate change, and economic-related issues troubling 68 per cent.

Lifeline Northern Beaches chief executive Shirley Eggleton believed some people in affluent areas worried more about the economy because they were more vulnerable to it.

"People in affluent areas can have more financial commitments that makes them more vulnerable to the economy," she said.

"For other people, if you don't have a lot, you have less to lose.

"There are probably many people in Mosman who are employed in industries affected by the financial crisis."

Terrorism and politics were the least of residents' worries, at 19 per cent and 21 per cent respectively.

Courtesy of The Mossman Daily

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H.L. Mencken's take on the simple answer

Explanations exist; they have existed for all time; there is always a well-known solution to every human problem — neat, plausible, and wrong.

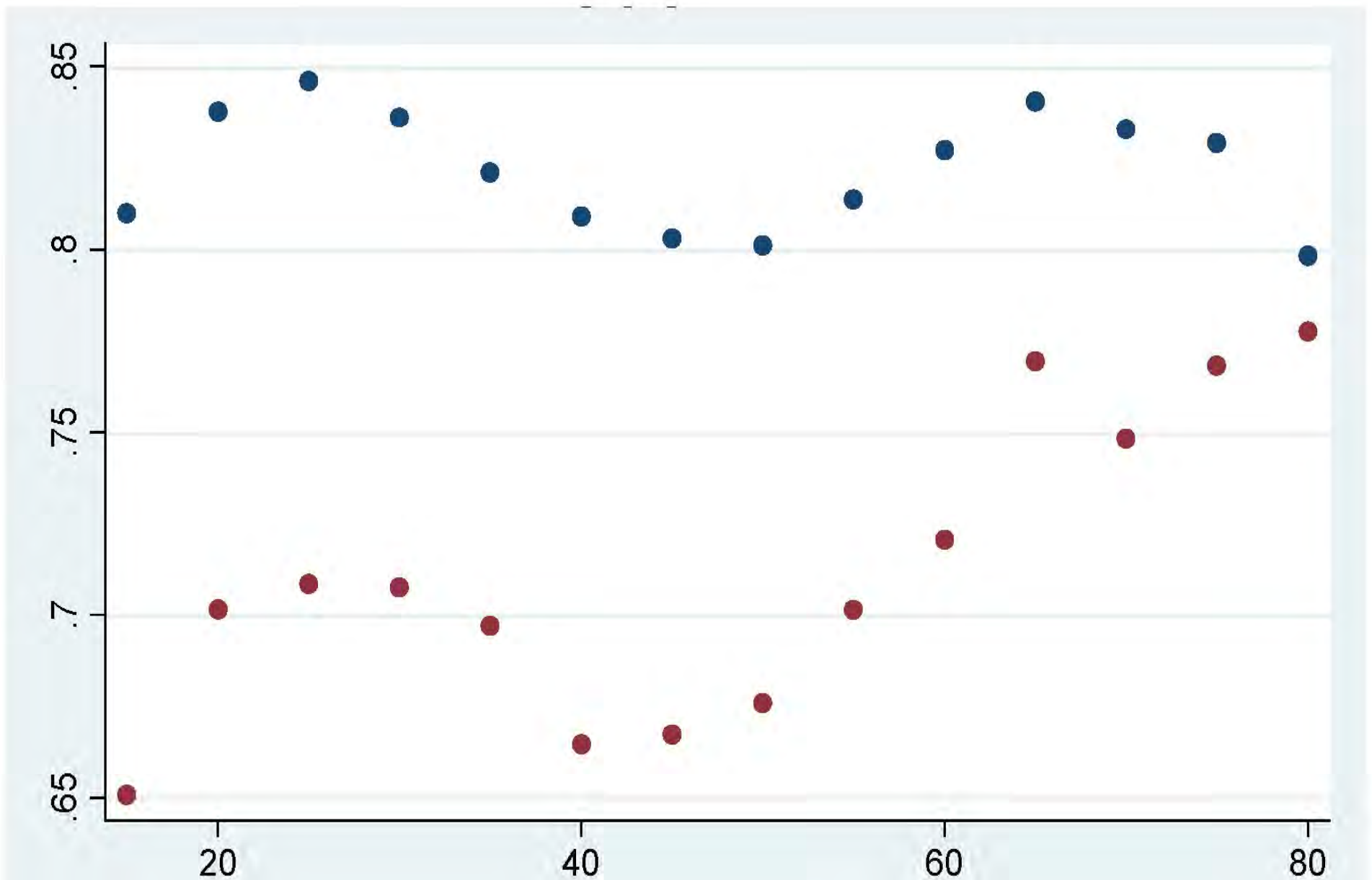
"The Divine Afflatus" in *New York Evening Mail* (16 November 1917); later published in *Prejudices: Second Series* (1920) and *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (1949)*

[http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/H. L. Mencken](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/H._L._Mencken)

Problems with rating scales like happiness

- Lucky/unlucky numbers
- Avoid the extremes
- Yea-saying
- Where you are, not what you value or where you want to be
- Ecological fallacies

Happiness (red) & Quality of life (blue) by age



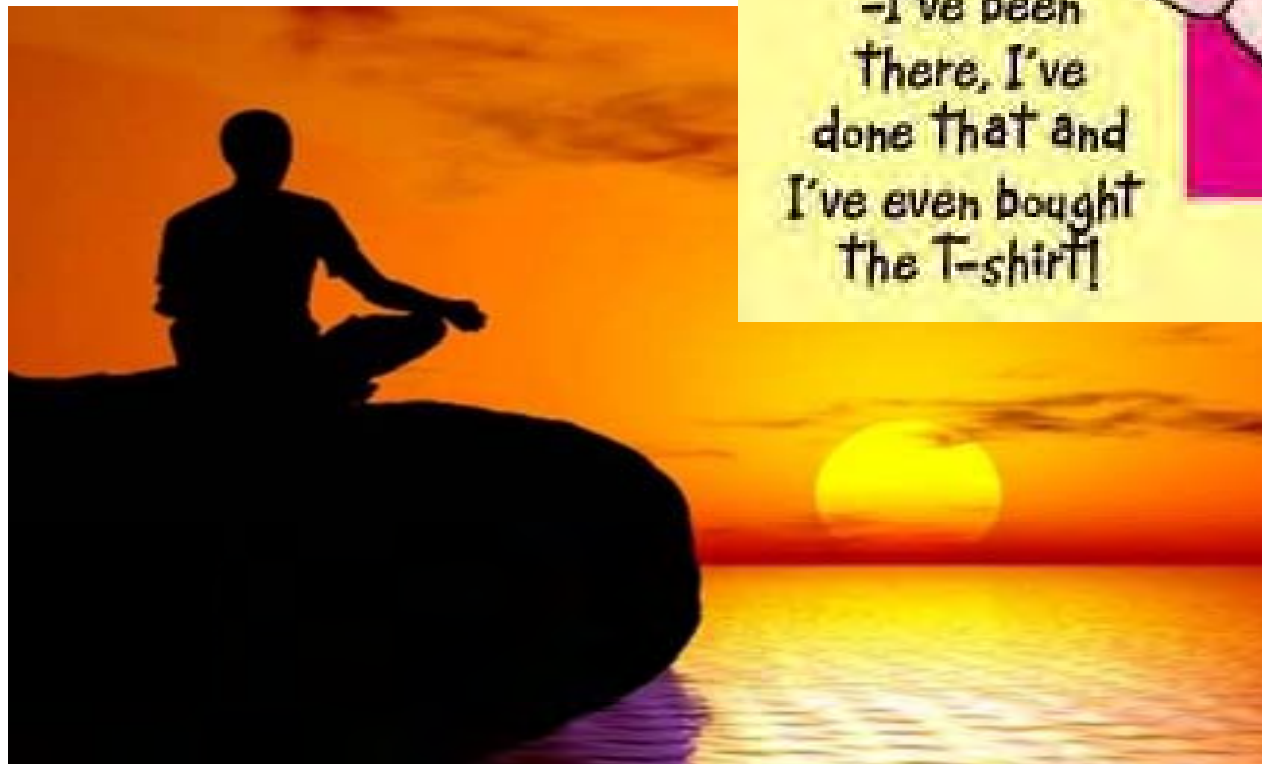
It's just a flesh wound



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Think positive vs meditation

You are a genius!
YES, YOU!
I'm pointing at you!
I mean you!
You're destined
for success...
believe me,
I know
-I've been
there, I've
done that and
I've even bought
the T-shirt!



How did we get here and did we take a wrong turning somewhere?

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think.

Jeremy Bentham. *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) Ch I, p. 1

The triumph of economics

- Willingness to pay
- Health economics takes a slightly different approach

But common features are choices between competing options....

....and stated preferences

ABOUT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

By placing a tick (✓) in ONE box in EACH group below, please indicate which statement best describes your quality of life at the moment.

1. Love and Friendship

- I can have **all** of the love and friendship that I want
- I can have **a lot** of the love and friendship that I want
- I can have **a little** of the love and friendship that I want
- I cannot have **any** of the love and friendship that I want

<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	1

2. Thinking about the future

- I can think about the future **without any** concern
- I can think about the future **with only a little** concern
- I can only think about the future **with some** concern
- I can only think about the future **with a lot** of concern

<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	1

3. Doing things that make you feel valued

- I am able to do **all** of the things that make me feel valued
- I am able to do **many** of the things that make me feel valued
- I am able to do **a few** of the things that make me feel valued
- I am unable to do **any** of the things that make me feel valued

<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	1

4. Enjoyment and pleasure

- I can have **all** of the enjoyment and pleasure that I want
- I can have **a lot** of the enjoyment and pleasure that I want
- I can have **a little** of the enjoyment and pleasure that I want
- I cannot have **any** of the enjoyment and pleasure that I want

<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	1

5. Independence

- I am able to be **completely** independent
- I am able to be independent in **many things**
- I am able to be independent in **a few things**
- I am **unable** to be at all independent

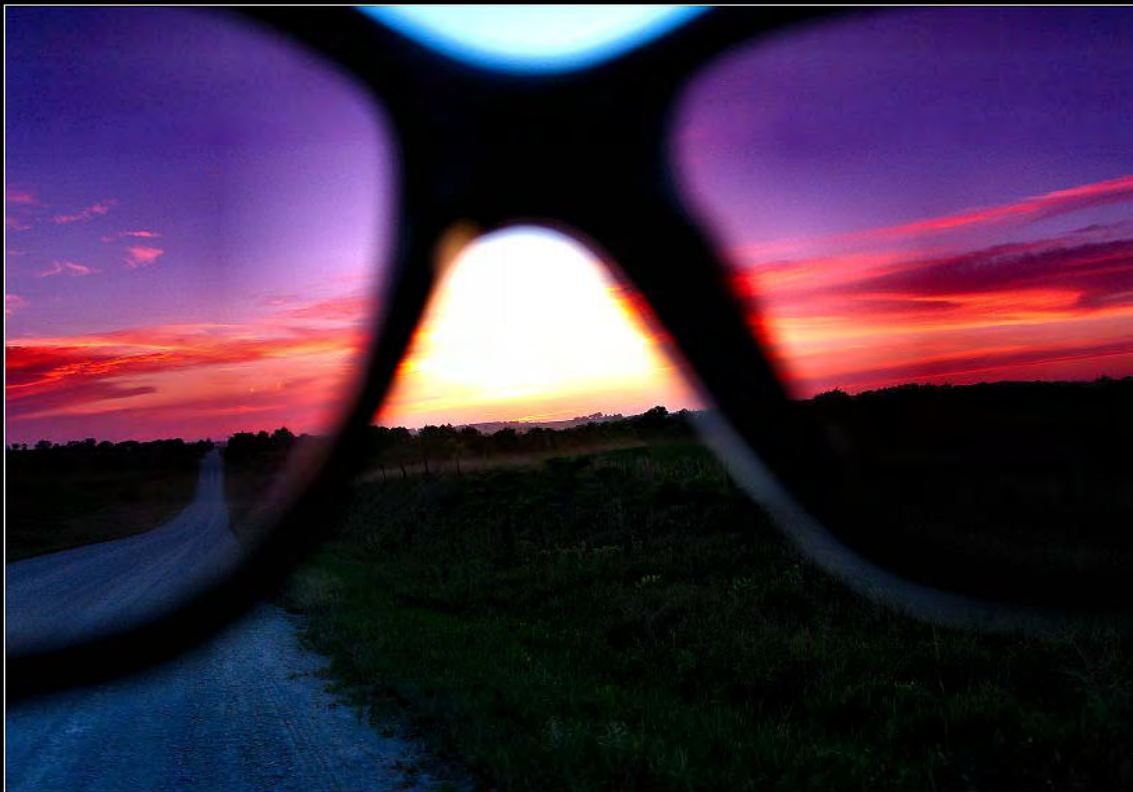
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
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<input type="checkbox"/>	1

Tick
one
box
only in
each
section

© Joanna Coast & Terry Flynn

Investigating
Choice
Experiments for the
Preferences of
Older
People
The ICEpop CAPability
Instruments
(– O and –A)

Value other possible lives







The previous questions asked about your own quality of life.

For the next part of this survey you will be asked to consider 16 **imaginary** quality of life states, which will be presented one at a time. **Imagine** living in the quality of life state presented and decide which of the five things describing that life you think would be **best to live with**, and which you think would be **worst to live with**.

Here is an example that someone has completed:

 Best	Quality of life example state	 Worst
<input type="radio"/>	You are able to feel settled and secure in many areas of your life	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	You can have quite a lot of love, friendship and support	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	You are able to be independent in many things	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	You cannot achieve and progress in any aspects of your life	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	You cannot have any enjoyment and pleasure	<input type="radio"/>

Please pay attention to the wording of the statements (for example 'many', 'a little' etc) as they will change and each quality of life state is different.

PLEASE PRESS "NEXT" TO CONTINUE...

Back

Next

Enter choice modelling

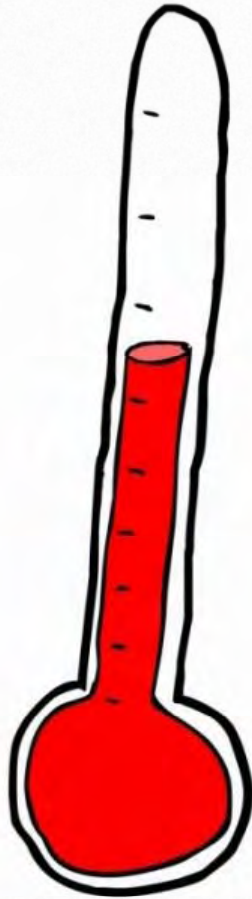
- How often a person chooses something tells you how much they value it
- Don't ask people to rank lists of things; they tend only to be good at top and bottom rankings

Marley AAJ & Louviere JJ (2005). Some probabilistic models of Best, Worst, and Best-Worst choices. JMP; 49: 464-480

Finn A & Louviere JJ (1992). Determining the Appropriate Response to Evidence of Public Concern: The Case of Food Safety. Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 11(1), 12-25.

Flynn TN et al (2007). Best-worst scaling: what it can do for health care research and how to do it. 26(1), 171-189.

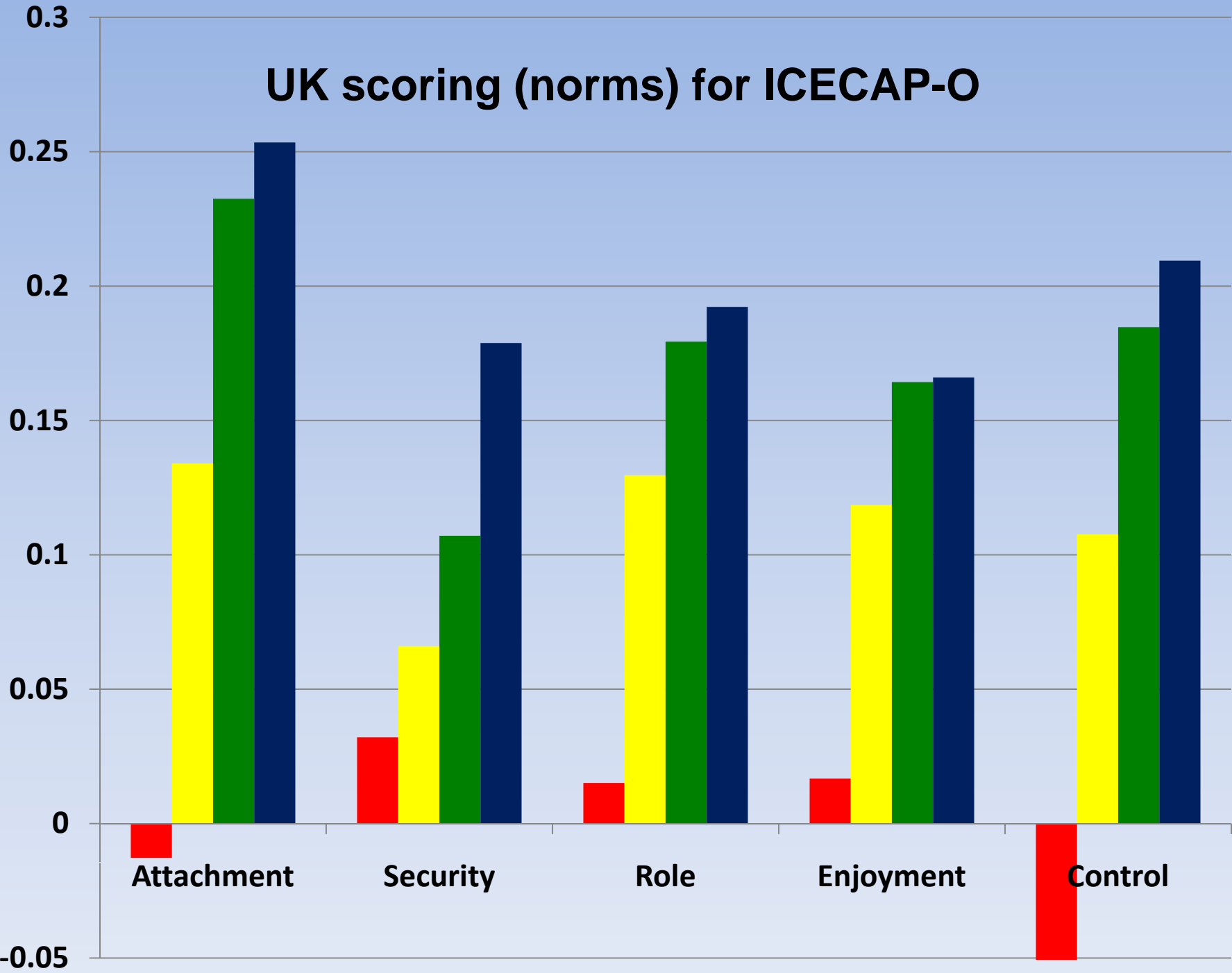
Elicit each respondent's 'norms' (values)



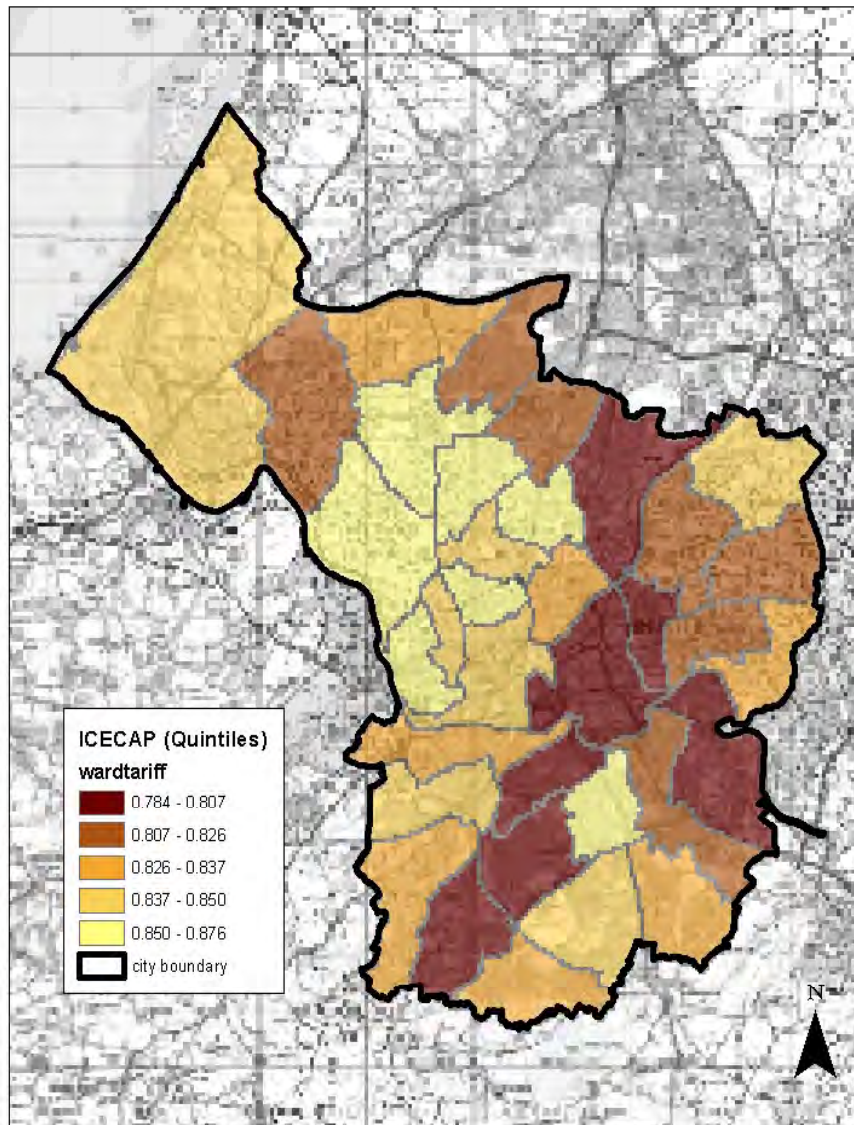
How bad social isolation is, relative to impaired independence

How bad severe worries about the future are, relative to being unable to do things that make them feel valued

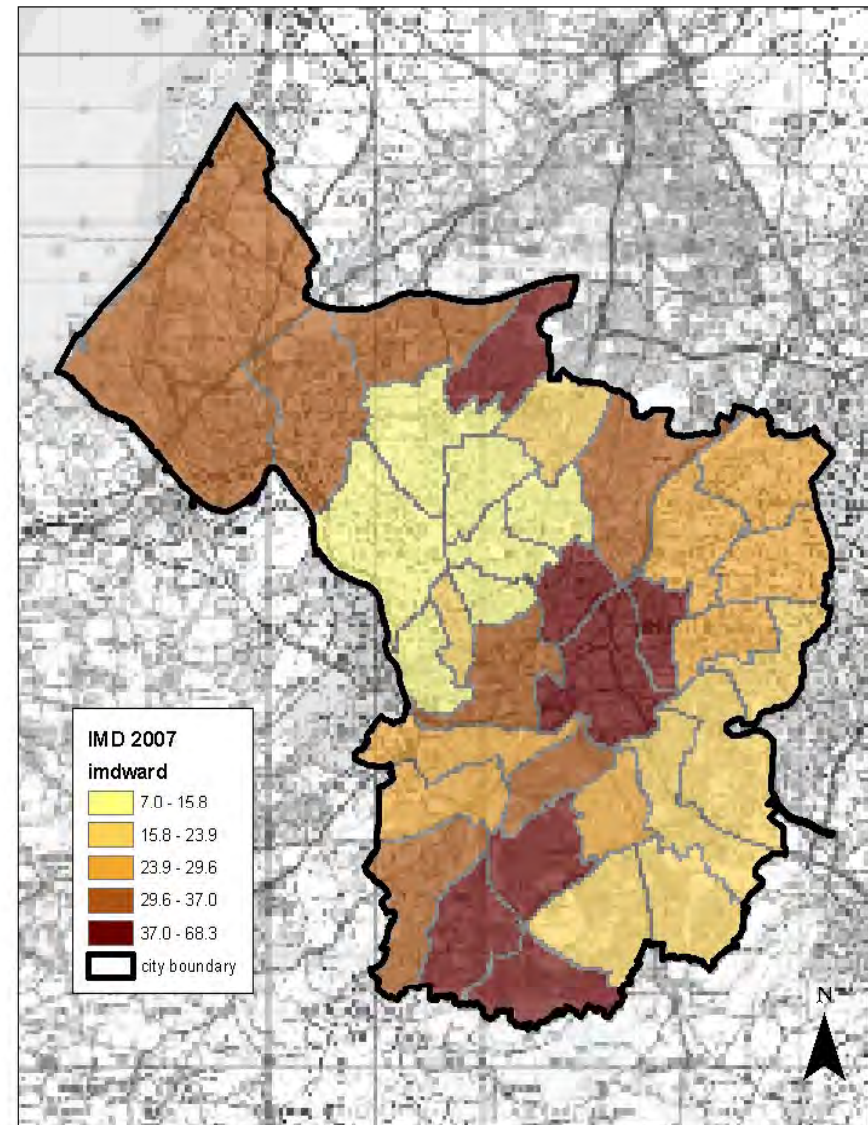
UK scoring (norms) for ICECAP-O



ICECAP 2006 by Ward (17 yrs and older)



Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 by Ward



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Bristol City Council
100023406

0 1.5 3 6 Kilometers



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0 1.5 3 6 Kilometers



Health & wealth

- Health impairment associated with up to 11% impairment
- Sleep quality: 11%
- Small income effects
 - Increasing income from under \$20,000 to the \$40,000 - \$65,000 band improves quality of life by 1%
 - To gain another 1% income must increase to \$120,000

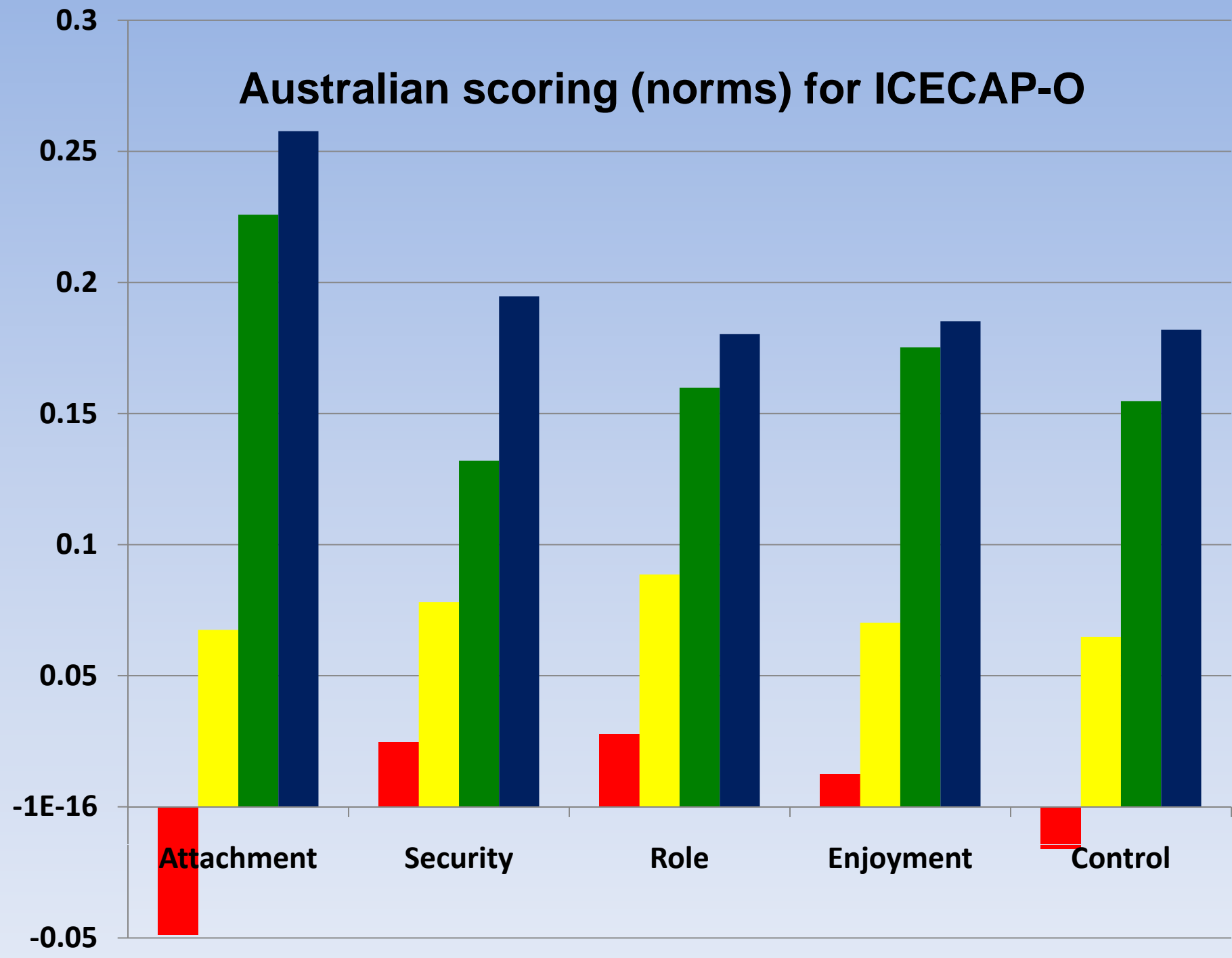
Family and social life


- Having children is good for your quality of life [0% to 1%]
 - Unless you live in Sydney [-2%]
- Divorce hits Aussie men hard [-7%]
 - But gives Aussie women their freedom [no change]
- Women don't like 'only' living with a partner
- Middle-age is the worst time of life [-3.5%]
 - Early 20s and retirement are best
- Socialising regularly provides a big boost [+3% to +5%]

Social empowerment

- The 'disenfranchised Aussie male' [-6% vs -3%]
 - Sydney men's ideas of influence less bound up in identity?
 - Do Sydney men have lower expectations of city/State government?
- University education gives no benefit (beyond the higher incomes and better employment prospects it often facilitates)
- Lack of trust in local people hits people hard [-5%]
 - Particularly in Sydney [-11%]

Australian scoring (norms) for ICECAP-O





YES! We're all
different

I'm not!

Who are the Australian 'types'?

- Young ones looking for love
- Middle aged striving (with mixed success) for 'no worries'
- Old ones striving for independence....some getting it through divorce

What happens when we value our own lives?

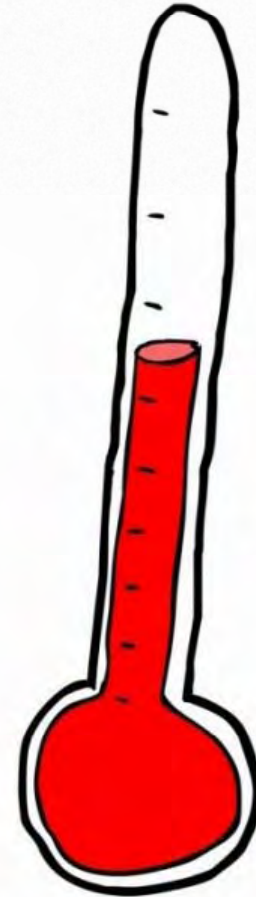
- Sydney even better if you're childless
 - even worse if you have them
- Being widowed isn't so bad (they are typically older so focus more on independence)
- Approx \$65K p.a. is still the point at which there's a >1% improvement in quality of life
- Higher education still not beneficial (the opposite)

Valuing our own lives (2)

- Poor health or poor sleep each associated with 14% impairment
- Similar patterns with respect to trust, (dis)enfranchisement and socialising

Where next?

- Find out what drives the ‘types’
 - Age and marital status
 - What else?
- Administer ICECAP – O and –A in surveys / trials
- Longitudinal data
 - How does my quality of life and how do my values (norms) change?
- Personalised scale



Other quality of life research & related work

- The experience of caring for an older person
- Quality of life in adolescents
- Social care related quality of life
- Eliciting scores for Schwartz's List of Values



Thank you for listening, and thanks to

- Jordan Louviere and Joanna Coast
- *pureprofile*
- Ingo Bentrrott
- Gail Bradford, Frances Terlich, Elisabeth Huynh, Jane Pong, Edward Wei, Karen Cong, Flavio Freire Souza
- Phil Chan & Bristol City Council