



MEDIA RELEASE

AUSSIES ADDICTED TO CELEBRITY CHIC \$8.7 billion bill to look like the stars

25 August 2006 – Australians are obsessed with celebrity image and the pressure to keep up with the ever changing style of the stars is driving an annual \$8.7 billion credit card spending spree, according to new research from Virgin Money.

Virgin Money's annual Celebrity Spending Survey, which tracks the rise of celebrity culture in Australia, reveals that nearly nine in ten young Aussie women (86 per cent) feel they are expected to match the idealised images and designer wardrobes of the stars.

18-34 year old women are Australia's biggest Celebrity Spenders. Two in three admit to pulling out the plastic to copy celebrity chic, and they're maxing out their credit cards to the tune of \$2,000 a year on the clothes, accessories, hair styles and beauty treatments popularised by the stars.

Super-stylish Nicole Kidman topped the list for the second year in a row as the celebrity Aussie women most want to emulate, closely followed by Angelina Jolie and Princess Mary.

Virgin Money spokesperson, Kirsty Lamont, said, "Forget about keeping up with the Joneses, these days it's all about keeping up with the stars. The modern day cult of celebrity is now so pervasive that young men and women alike are racking up expensive credit card debts to copy the looks of the rich and famous."

Nearly half (44 per cent) of Aussie blokes aged 18-34 admit to being influenced by the style of Hollywood's leading men, and they're using their credit cards to spend almost as much as women (\$1,700 a year) in an effort to look and dress like the stars.

Johnny Depp's quirky style is a huge hit with Aussie blokes, who also admire the classic good looks and style of George Clooney and Brad Pitt.

Ms Lamont said, "It seems our addiction to celebrity knows no bounds, with Aussies admitting to purchasing everything from celebrity endorsed beauty products to sports cars."

48 per cent of young women, and 30 per cent of young men, surveyed by Virgin Money admitted to purchasing clothes and accessories after seeing a celebrity wearing them.

Women are also likely to buy a range of other celebrity endorsed products including beauty products (31 per cent) and jewellery (22 per cent), while some blokes will even go as far as purchasing expensive gadgets (30 per cent) and cars (16 per cent) after seeing a celebrity promoting them.

Virgin Money's Celebrity Spending Survey also reveals that:

- One in ten young Aussie women are prepared to spend more than \$350 a month to look as good as the stars.
- Fashion and gossip magazines are the Celebrity Spenders' bibles, with more than nine in ten young women (94 per cent) trawling their pages for the latest "It girl" looks.
- Men are catching on to celebrity chic, with almost one in two young Aussie blokes (48 per cent) searching the glossies for style inspiration.

- Fashion disaster Anna Nicole Smith and trashy hotel heiress Paris Hilton are the celebrities Aussie women most love to hate.
- Shane Warne's sloppy style has been named and shamed by Aussie blokes, along with Marilyn Manson and Elton John.

Celebrities most admired for looks and style:

	Votes by 18-34 women		Votes by 18-34 men
Nicole Kidman	23%	Johnny Depp	26%
Angelina Jolie	22%	Brad Pitt	14%
Princess Mary	21%	George Clooney	14%
Scarlett Johansen	11%	Rove McManus	10%
Eva Longoria	8%	Jude Law	6%
Mischa Barton	6%	David Beckham	5%
Kate Moss	2%	Heath Ledger	4%

Celebrities least admired for looks and style:

	Votes by 18-34 women		Votes by 18-34 men
Anna Nicole Smith	36%	Marilyn Manson	28%
Paris Hilton	27%	Elton John	18%
Gretel Killeen	12%	Shane Warne	17%
Britney Spears	7%	Ian Thorpe	11%
Mariah Carey	6%	Russell Crowe	7%
Victoria Beckham	6%	David Hasselhoff	6%
Pamela Anderson	5%	Pete Doherty	5%

The Celebrity Spender's shopping list*:

	Women 18-34	Men 18-34
Clothes and accessories	64%	64%
Grooming and make-up products	44%	26%
Hair cuts and styling	37%	31%
Beauty treatments, e.g. facials, manicures and fake tanning	26%	11%
Gym memberships and personal training sessions	13%	22%
Cosmetic enhancements e.g. teeth whitening and botox	7%	7%

*Credit card purchases over the last 12 months

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Notes to editors:

Virgin Money commissioned Galaxy Research to conduct a national online survey of 600 Australians aged 18-34 in August 2006.

About Virgin Money:

Virgin Money is the financial services arm of Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Group. We launched in Australia in May 2003 to do one thing – shake up the financial services industry. Today, we are well on our way to achieving that goal with award-winning products spanning credit cards, home loans and superannuation. Virgin Money products are simple, great value and transparent, and they're backed up by our world-famous Virgin customer service. There's no funny stuff, just money stuff.
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