



Daily living expenses driving B.C. consumer debt



By [Jeremy Nuttall](#), 24 hours Vancouver
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British Columbians are living in debt mainly because of daily living expenses, according to a new consumer debt report.

The study released by Sands & Associates found an equal number of men and women struggled with debt in the province, at a rate higher than most of Canada.

And the debt isn't being racked up just on homes and automobiles," according to Blair Mantin, a trustee with the Vancouver area proposal administrator, trustee and bankruptcy firm.

"Across all the demographics it was actually the same, it was over extension of credit," he said. "It was basically that people got too much credit, it accumulated over time, and when we delved a little bit deeper it was all about daily costs that they were putting on credit cards."

It really comes down to income that many of those questioned made between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month, which isn't enough income to make meaningful debt repayments.



According to Mantin, B.C. now has 1.5 times the rate of consumer debt as the rest of Canada and government often “talks out of two sides of their mouth” on the issue.

“On one side it’s the consumer that’s always looked to to get us out of these recessions and ‘the consumer needs to keep spending,’” he said. “Then, on the other side, the government is now very concerned about household debt.”

Another “surprising” discovery in the study was the high amount of retired people who still hold a mortgage.

The study showed those close to or in retirement had the highest amount of debt caused by overextended credit or financial mismanagement at 46% of the cause consumer debt.