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Media release

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Unwanted Christmas presents - new study

New research published today by The Australia Institute shows that over 50 per cent of Australians receive unwanted Christmas presents and that 21 per cent of Australians will give presents to people they don't want to during the festive season.

The research paper reports the results of a specially commissioned Newspoll survey of 1200 people to assess the extent of wasteful consumption by Australians on Christmas presents and the willingness of Australians to accept a gift given to a charity on their behalf as a substitute for a Christmas present.

"The results of the survey confirm widely held suspicions that many presents go straight from the Christmas tree to the tip", Research Fellow Emma Rush said.

The survey found that people from richer households are more likely to receive unwanted presents and to give presents to people they don't want to than those from poorer households. Sixty-eight per cent of people from households with incomes over \$70000 receive unwanted presents, compared to 38 per cent of people from households with incomes less than \$30000.

"As people get richer, they usually spend more on Christmas presents, but it appears they become less discerning about the presents they give and to whom they give them", Ms Rush said.

More positively, nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of Australians say they would be happy for somebody to make a donation to a charity on their behalf instead of giving them a Christmas present, with women in particular (82 per cent) pleased to see a charity benefit (only 63 per cent of men feel the same way).

"Our research indicates that one solution to the problem of wasteful consumption on Christmas presents is to encourage people to make donations instead of giving presents. This would reduce waste and help charities to meet real needs, and would do so in a way that doesn't lessen any of the enjoyment of the festive season," Research Fellow Andrew Macintosh concluded.

The report can be read under What's New at www.tai.org.au.