



# Great expectations

Our member survey reveals how long you think your appliances should last, from big-ticket whitegoods to the latest tech devices, writes Kate Browne

**H**ow long do you expect your TV to last? How about your toaster? In years past, a television may have sat in the corner of your lounge room for an average of 10 to 15 years. But these days, studies show the average TV is replaced about every four years, and it's more likely to be people wanting a bigger, brighter, better TV than the old one breaking down.

In a disposable world, where Kmart and other discount appliance stores sell toasters, kettles and sandwich makers for less than \$20, the question of whether to replace or repair suddenly becomes redundant too.

We surveyed a panel of 561 CHOICE members about their expectations when it comes to just how long they think a range of appliances should last, from smartphones to washing machines.

voice your choice

Thanks to all the Voice Your Choice members who helped with this research. If you'd like to have your say and be part of CHOICE's member research community, find out more at [voiceyourchoice.com.au](http://voiceyourchoice.com.au)

## Repair or replace?

As for the bigger-ticket items, it can be difficult to know whether to repair or replace when they're looking poorly. Here's a guide to when to get a service, and when to go shopping.

### Large kitchen appliances

#### REFRIGERATOR

Expect it to last: 10 years

#### Repair or replace?

Faulty thermostats and damaged door seals are worth repairing. The cooling performance of an older fridge can be partially restored by replacing worn seals.

If your fridge suffers a major fault (like a compressor failure) and it's more than 10 years old you'd be better off with a new fridge. It'll be more efficient and have lower running costs.

#### DISHWASHER

Expect it to last: 10 years

#### Repair or replace?

You can easily replace broken racks, seals and inlet valves – and most manufacturers will keep spare parts for years. But get a quote to repair electronics – it may not be worth it.

#### OVEN

Expect it to last: 10-20+ years

#### Repair or replace?

Good news if you love your oven: they're worth repairing while the spare parts are still available. Broken doors, thermostats, simmerstats and elements can all be replaced. Broken fans and electronic panels can be more expensive to fix.



### Laundry and cleaning appliances

#### WASHING MACHINE

Expect it to last: 10 years

#### Repair or replace?

Blocked pumps and broken door seals are easy to fix. If the machine's drum stops spinning, the motor or the drive belt might have worn – get a quote before jumping into repair mode.

#### DRYER

Expect it to last: 10 years

#### Repair or replace?

Vented dryers can be easy to repair.

Drive belts, thermal fuses and the drive motor can be replaced and door catches, controls and lint filters should be available from the manufacturer.

#### VACUUM CLEANER

Expect it to last: 10 years

#### Repair or replace?

Jammed brush rolls and blocked filters can be unclogged or replaced, as can hoses and nozzles if available. If it's an expensive fix, weigh it up against how much you spent in the first place.

### Electronic appliances

#### TV

Expect it to last: 10 years

#### Repair or replace?

If you've got an old telly, you'd be better off replacing it. Individual components are hard to fix and a complete printed circuit board may cost as much as the TV itself. New TVs also have in-built digital tuners which will save you the cost of a set-top box.

#### LAPTOP

(See infographic below for smart phones and tablets)

Expect it to last: 5 years

#### Repair or replace?

A US consumer report shows that one in three laptops fails by its fourth year. Keeping your antivirus protection up to date will help but if your computer isn't running well after five years, it's time to say goodbye. ■

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK \* FIGURES IN GRAPHS MAY NOT ADD UP TO 100% AS SOME PEOPLE ANSWERED 'I DON'T KNOW'. WE DIDN'T INCLUDE THESE RESPONSES

## How long do you expect your appliances to last?\*

Research conducted on **voice your choice** January 2015; n=561

