



Media Release

EMBARGOED AND NOT FOR USE BY MEDIA PRIOR TO WEDNESDAY 23rd NOVEMBER, 2016

Salvation Army poll reveals how worried Australians are about the cost of Christmas

As The Salvation Army launches its annual Christmas Appeal, new research reveals 8.4 million Australians believe Christmas is a ‘financial nightmare’, with nearly half a million children likely to receive no presents.

The research also revealed 852,000 almost always feel lonely at Christmas... enough people to fill a major sports stadium like the MCG eight times.

The Salvation Army’s Major Paul Moulds says the Salvos desperately need funds to help the thousands of families in crisis this Christmas.

Tens of thousands of families across Australia will face tough times and heartbreak this Christmas, warns The Salvation Army. It’s urging people to dig deep and support its Christmas Appeal to help give hope where it’s needed most.

New Roy Morgan research being released by the Salvos shows the real level of suffering many families and individuals across the nation will experience this Christmas. The new research reveals:

- Approximately half a million children under 10 are likely to receive no presents this Christmas.
- 8.4 million Australians (equivalent to 45% of survey respondents) believe ‘Christmas is a financial nightmare’.
- 12.2 million Australians (equivalent to 65.3% of survey respondents) know people who will be lonely this Christmas.
- 1.8 million Australians (equivalent to 10.1% of survey respondents) believe Christmas will leave them in worrying debt.
- 2.4 million Australians (equivalent to 13% of survey respondents) are worried about how they will pay for Christmas.
- 611,000 Australians (equivalent to 3.3% of survey respondents) said they would need to sell things to fund Christmas.
- 2.8 million Australians (equivalent to 15.5% of survey respondents) know someone who will need to sell things to meet the cost of Christmas.

The Salvation Army’s Major Paul Moulds says, “Our biggest challenge at Christmas is finding ways to meet the needs of the huge number of people coming to us for care and assistance. Christmas is one of our busiest times of the year and when Australians who are experiencing hardship feel this the most. We need the support of the public more than ever so we can support them. It reminds us how difficult circumstances are for some people, when people tell us that they’re having to sell

things just to scrape up enough money for Christmas, and others say that some children in their household will not even get one present this Christmas.”

The Salvation Army expects to help 70,000 families across Australia in the six weeks before Christmas and in the critical month afterwards. It's relying on the generous support of the Australian community. For \$29, you can give comfort and joy to a family in crisis by giving a box of emergency supplies. To donate visit salvos.org.au

“When families end up in a situation where they cannot afford food or life's necessities, they turn to The Salvation Army for help. At Christmas they do it in record numbers and this is why we need donations from the public.”

The Roy Morgan poll also found that 45% of respondents (equating to 8.6 million Australians) either buy “way too much food” or “too much food” at Christmas time. “When you compare that to our surveys that show that nearly half of our clients are forced to skip meals due to extreme financial hardship, the contrast is astounding and disturbing.”

“In fact, 70% of survey respondents - which equates to a huge 13.2 million Australians - believe that the gap between rich and poor has been getting bigger. We are a nation known for standing by people in need. By donating to The Salvation Army's Christmas Appeal, you can give hope where it's needed most by blessing families in crisis with a Christmas they could never afford to have,” Major Paul Moulds said.

Other data from the new survey revealed:

- 852,000 Australians (equating to 4.6% of survey respondents) revealed they ‘almost always’ feel lonely at Christmas with a further 6% (1.1 million) saying they “often feel lonely” at Christmas.
- 529,000 people **often** get into more debt than they can comfortably afford to pay back while a further 484,000 people revealed they almost **always** get into debt that they cannot afford to pay back.

Major Moulds added, “Poverty is not limited to the absence of material things. Relationships and social connections are also often impacted. Sadly, for many of our clients, Christmas is a time this isolation is most acute and painful. As families and friends gather to celebrate, this survey reminds us that there are some Australians who have no one to share a Christmas meal with.”

The Salvation Army has a network of local churches around the nation offering a range of activities leading up to Christmas, including Christmas Carol events and community Christmas lunches for people who wish to connect at Christmas time. To find out what's happening at your local Salvos, log on to salvos.org.au

To donate to The Salvation Army Christmas Appeal, please visit salvos.org.au or call 13 72 58 (13 SALVOS).

Media enquiries to: Media Key on 03 9769 6488

(The new Roy Morgan research surveyed 1,007 people aged 18 plus from their consumer panel. The research was undertaken from 28th October to 2nd November, 2016 via an online poll. The results were then projected up to the Australian population 18 plus based on the respondent's age, sex and area of residence.)

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Key Statistics At A Glance ...

- Approximately half a million children under 10 are likely to receive no presents this Christmas.
- A huge 1.9 million Australians say they almost always or often feel lonely at Christmas (10.6% of the survey).
- A remarkable 852,000 said they almost always feel lonely at Christmas (4.6%). A further 1,121,000 said they often feel lonely at Christmas (6%).
- 1.8 million Australians think it is likely that Christmas will leave them in worrying debt (10.1%).
- 2.4 million Australians are worried ('quite worried' or 'very worried') about how they will pay for Christmas (13%).
- 611,000 people said they would need to sell things to fund Christmas (3.3%).
- 2.8 million people know someone who will need to sell things to meet the cost of Christmas (16%).
- 45% of people in the survey (8.4 million) believe 'Christmas is a financial nightmare'.
- An enormous 8.6 million said they either buy way too much food or too much food for Christmas. (45.9%).
- 12.2 million Australians know people who will be lonely this Christmas (65.3%).
- 484,000 people revealed they almost always get into debt that they cannot comfortably afford to pay back (2.6%) and a further 529,000 (2.8%) often get into more debt than they can comfortably afford to pay back.
- 1.8 million people revealed it will take 2 to 3 months to pay off credit card debt (9.8%) and a further 2.5% (476,000 people) take 6 months or more to pay off the credit card debt.
- 13.2 million people believe the gap between rich and poor has been getting bigger (70.7%).
- 3.2 million people revealed many people they know will find it hard to meet the cost of Christmas (17.5%). A further 8.9 million (47%) said someone they know will find it hard to meet the cost of Christmas.
- The average amount people are spending on a loved one is \$157.57.
- The average number of presents for children under 10 is 1.41.