St Vincent de Paul Society
NATIONAL COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA Inc.
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Monday 2 November 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

Christmas joy clouded by financial stress

Christmas should bring joy, not financial worry. Yet more than half of Australian adults (52 per cent) feel more financially stressed heading into Christmas than they did a year ago, a new YouGov survey commissioned by the St Vincent de Paul Society reveals.

Launching the 2026 Vinnies Christmas Appeal nationally today, the Society is calling on Australians who can afford to give to help bring practical support and hope to people facing hardship this festive season.

The survey also found 57 per cent of Australian adults will have to prioritise essential expenses over Christmas spending this year, while 36 per cent have felt the need to hide financial hardship from friends and family at Christmas.

“Christmas should be a time of connection and celebration, but for many Australians it brings added financial pressure and worry,” said the Society’s National President, Mark Gaetani.

“When the household budget is already stretched, the prospect of buying presents or sharing a Christmas meal can feel overwhelming.

“These findings also remind us that hardship is not always visible. Someone close to us may be struggling without feeling able to talk about it.”

Among adults with children under 18 in their household, 60 per cent say they will have to prioritise essential expenses over Christmas spending, and 55 per cent feel more financially stressed heading towards Christmas than they did a year ago.

“No parent wants to disappoint their children at Christmas. But keeping a roof overhead, paying the bills and buying groceries must come first,” Mr Gaetani said. “For a family with little left after the essentials, practical support can ease the pressure and make room for some Christmas joy.”

The research also highlights the hidden nature of financial hardship among younger Australians. Almost half of adults aged 18 to 24 (49 per cent) have felt the need to hide financial hardship from friends and family at Christmas.

“There can be enormous pressure to put on a brave face at this time of year,” Mr Gaetani said. “We want people who are struggling to know they are not alone. It's okay to ask for help, we're here to assist, and that everyone deserves to be treated with compassion and dignity.”

Through the Vinnies Christmas Appeal, donations help provide food hampers, gifts and essential assistance to people experiencing hardship.

“A donation can help put food on the table, provide a gift for a child or ease the pressure of paying rent,” Mr Gaetani said. “Just as importantly, it can remind someone that they matter and that their community cares.

“We know many Australians are watching every dollar. If you are in a position to give, please support the Vinnies Christmas Appeal and help make life a little brighter for someone doing it tough.”

To donate to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal, visit donate.vinnies.org.au/donation-hub.

Note: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov online survey undertaken 24-28 September 2026. Total sample size: 1,068 adults. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian adults aged 18 and over.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has more than 40,000 members and volunteers, who work hard to assist people in need and to combat social injustice across Australia. Internationally, the Society operates in 153 countries and has over 800,000 members.

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