



MEDIA RELEASE

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Survey shows a third of Queenslanders go without basics

A new survey shows one in three people in Queensland go without household essentials and can't pay bills because their cost of living has become too expensive.

The survey of 1,000 people across Australia by not-for-profit Good Shepherd Microfinance shows 30 per cent of respondents in Queensland couldn't pay for medical treatment they needed, 25 per cent went without food and 23 per cent couldn't afford home appliances in the past year.

Good Shepherd Microfinance CEO Adam Mooney said the survey demonstrated the urgent need to increase Newstart so that more people could meet the costs of basic living expenses like car repairs, paying for utilities or having a pet.

"The reality is that Newstart hasn't kept up with the cost of living which means that families and individuals are struggling with the basics," Mr Mooney said.

"But this survey also shows that even people earning an income are doing it tough and, unfortunately, more are turning to expensive fast cash or payday loans just to cover the essentials of living.

"A better alternative is our No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) which offers loans of up to \$1,500 at more than 690 locations across the country. NILS is designed to reach people on low incomes who need to purchase essential items or services."

The survey revealed the costs Queenslanders most struggled to afford were power bills (31%), repairing or registering their car (20%), replacing appliances (13%), medical bills (10%) and food (6%).

Mr Mooney said the respondents also raised the cost of fuel, rates, credit cards, rent and health insurance.

Asked when they would most likely be in a better financial position, 30 per cent needed to pay off debt, 11 per cent said they needed a job and eight per cent wanted more hours at work.

However, 12 per cent could not see a time when things would get better.

"People are trying to juggle but worry about their children going without or losing their independence," Mr Mooney said.

"Comments made to the survey are a wakeup call - clearly having a job no longer means financial security with responses such as 'After 40 years of working, worrying about finances is very disheartening' and 'I stress about being retired and not being able to top up finances'."

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GOOD SHEPHERD MICROFINANCE COST OF LIVING SURVEY 2018

Compared with a year ago, my cost of living has:	QLD
Become a lot more expensive - I either can't pay bills or have to borrow money to make ends meet	4%
Increased a lot - I have to go without some essentials	28%
Become a bit more expensive but I'm managing	58%
Not changed	10%
In the past year, my financial situation has meant that I have gone without:	QLD
Medical procedures/treatment	30%
Food	25%
Home appliances (e.g. washing machine)	23%
A pet	16%
A car	11%
Utilities (e.g. electricity, gas, water, phone)	8%
The cost I most often struggle to afford is:	QLD
Power bill	31%
Repairing or registering a car	20%
Replacing broken white goods	13%
Medical bill	10%
Food	6%
Water bill	4%
Education cost	2%
Phone bill	2%
The hardest part about financial stress is:	QLD
Feeling ashamed or embarrassed about my situation	33%
Feeling left out - everyone else seems to be coping	20%
Hiding our struggles from friends and family	18%
Not knowing where I can get help	2%
I will most likely be in a better financial position when I:	QLD
Have paid off current debts	30%
I can't see a time when things will get better	12%
Get a job	11%
No longer need to support children/dependents	10%
Get more hours at my current job	8%
Finish studying/training	5%

Visit www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au