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## **COST-OF-LIVING PRESSURES TAKING A HEAVY TOLL ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**

*The Big Giveback* campaign launches nationally today to raise much-needed funds for young Australians in need through The Smith Family's education support programs

The cost-of-living crisis is having a major impact on families already experiencing disadvantage and causing worrying disruptions to children's education, The Smith Family said today.

The national children's education charity said that as living expenses soar this year, schools and families are reporting that:

- Children are missing out on basic school items, such as uniforms, books and devices needed for learning
- Children are coming to school without lunch or not attending because they can't afford lunch
- High petrol prices are preventing families from getting their children to school
- More students are leaving school to work so they can help support their families
- There is an increase in families living in unstable or temporary accommodation (eg camping in friends' yards, staying in caravans or motels), which can significantly impact children's ability to learn
- Families who can't afford rental prices are being left with no choice but to move homes and schools, causing disruption and potentially impacting on children's ability to learn and stay engaged in their schooling.

In recognition of these challenges, *The Big Giveback* campaign has launched across Australia today, aiming to raise more than \$500,000 to support young Australians in need.

During the month of August, at participating stores, 10 cents from the sale of non-alcoholic drinks made by Asahi Lifestyle Beverages (formerly Schweppes Australia) will be donated to The Smith Family.

More than **10,000** convenience stores, service stations and major chains across Australia are participating, including Ampol/Caltex sites, Lord of the Fries and Wendy's stores, to raise funds.

The Smith Family's CEO Doug Taylor said: "*The Big Giveback* is launching at the right time to support young Australians in need. What we're hearing from the schools and families we work with is that families are more stretched than ever before. Families are having to make impossible decisions as to where they spend their dollars each week.

"When families are facing challenges such as lack of affordable housing and rising food bills, it makes it much harder to support children's education and increases the risk of learning difficulties or disengagement from school altogether. At a time when children are still dealing with the impacts of Covid and catching up on missed learning, the ripple effect of these added financial pressures at home could set them back even further."

Funds raised from *The Big Giveback* will be critical in helping The Smith Family almost double the reach of its *Learning for Life* program over the next five years – from 58,000 students to 100,000 students nationally.

The evidence-based program is proven to help children experiencing disadvantage overcome the educational challenges they face, and gain the self-belief and skills they need to realise their true potential.

Participating students are not only more likely to attend school and do well in their studies, but [four in five](#) go on to further education, training or work within a year of leaving the program.

“We know this support can make all the difference in a young person’s life, but we are reliant on the Australian community to help us achieve this,” Mr Taylor said. “We’ve set the bar high because the need is great.”

Asahi Lifestyles Beverages CEO Nigel Parsons said: "It is clear the pandemic’s impact on vulnerable children will be long-lasting. **The Big Giveback** will see everyday Australians help these young people through the simple act of buying a drink. The Smith Family is our flagship charity partner and we are very pleased to be able to help support them and the incredible work they do via this campaign.”

Australians can get behind **The Big Giveback** at participating stores or by making a donation online at [thebiggiveback.com.au](http://thebiggiveback.com.au)

All funds received by The Smith Family from this campaign will go to its *Learning for Life* program, helping young Australians in three distinct ways:

- Providing financial support for school essentials, like uniforms and books
- Providing access to additional learning programs before and after school – tailored to each child’s individual needs
- Providing dedicated personal support from a team member at The Smith Family to help children stay motivated at school, complete their education and go on to further training or work.

Mr Taylor said: “The Smith Family appreciates our partner Asahi Lifestyle Beverages and the generous support of the community in helping to raise much-needed funds for our work.

“Together, through the success of campaigns like **The Big Giveback**, we can reach even more young Australians in need.”

#### EDITOR’S NOTES

*The Smith Family is a children’s education charity that helps young Australians experiencing disadvantage to create better futures for themselves through harnessing the power of education. It works with more than 700 Australian schools to support 58,000 students experiencing disadvantage through its Learning for Life education support program. For more, visit [thesmithfamily.com.au](http://thesmithfamily.com.au)*

*The Big Giveback is an Asahi Lifestyle Beverages initiative. Participating brands include Schweppes, Cool Ridge water, Solo, Pepsi Max, Gatorade and Lipton Iced Tea. For more information on participating products and retailers, visit [thebiggiveback.com.au](http://thebiggiveback.com.au)*

*The Smith Family CEO Doug Taylor is available for interview, along with alumni students from The Smith Family’s Learning for Life education support program.*

#### Media enquiries:

Michael Tarquinio, Acting National Media Manager, The Smith Family | 0481 903 439 | [michael.tarquinio@thesmithfamily.com.au](mailto:michael.tarquinio@thesmithfamily.com.au) OR Naomi Kaplan, Media Advisor | 0411 758 596 | [naomi.kaplan@thesmithfamily.com.au](mailto:naomi.kaplan@thesmithfamily.com.au)

Simon Pristel, Headline PR | 0412 393 433 | [simon@headlinepr.com.au](mailto:simon@headlinepr.com.au)