

1 August 2024

New data shows cost of living squeeze means families are struggling to afford schoolbooks, lunches and uniforms

*The Smith Family, in partnership with Asahi Lifestyle Beverages, announces return of **The Big Giveback** to raise vital funds to support the education of young Australians experiencing disadvantage*

More than a quarter of Australian families cannot pay for or are struggling to afford school lunches and snacks for their children, The Smith Family's Community Attitude Survey has found.

The national survey also revealed more than a third of families are having difficulty paying for school uniforms, shoes, and school bags. Nearly a third of families are struggling with schoolbooks and stationery while almost half are having difficulty paying for things such as music lessons and sport.

These shocking results come as The Smith Family, in partnership with Asahi Lifestyle Beverages, launches The Big Giveback 2024.

The campaign is in its fifth year and will see 10 cents from the sale of non-alcoholic drinks made by Asahi Lifestyle Beverages (Pepsi, Pepsi Max, Solo, Mountain Dew, Sunkist, Schweppes 7UP, Passionata, Gatorade, Lipton Iced Tea, Cool Ridge) during the month of August donated to The Smith Family. Around 5,000 convenience stores, service stations, and major chains across Australia are participating, including Euro Garages, Hoyts, El Jannah, CIVEO, Endeavour Fuel, Lord of the Fries, and Wendy's.

The Smith Family's CEO Doug Taylor said the survey highlighted how families are being forced to make tough choices between household bills and their children's education during the cost-of-living crisis.

"The fact that so many families are struggling to afford things as basic as school lunches or books shows just how deeply the cost-of-living crisis is affecting families across the country, particularly those families that were already experiencing disadvantage."

Asahi Lifestyle Beverages CEO, Nigel Parsons, said: "Through The Big Giveback, your small change can make a big change. This is a simple way for people to support Aussie kids who are doing it tough. By raising funds for Australian students who need extra support, The Smith Family can help children who need it the most. We are proud to again be supporting our charity partner The Smith Family with this nationwide initiative."

Money raised by The Big Giveback will help support students on The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program. This provides them with access to vital learning and mentoring programs and helps their families meet the costs of school essentials such as uniforms, books, and other things they need for their education.

"The results of the survey also highlight the broader impact that disadvantage can have on a child's education. Young people experiencing disadvantage need our support now more than

ever before, so they are able to catch up, keep up and make the most of their schooling,” Doug Taylor said.

“The Smith Family is committed to increasing the number of students participating in our flagship *Learning for Life* program, which provides financial support, personal support, and access to extra reading, career pathways, and mentoring programs to help students catch up at school and improve their overall educational and life outcomes.”

Outcomes from The Smith Family’s out-of-school programs are assessed each year and proven to have a positive impact on student educational outcomes.

“We all want children to succeed at school and, together with the support of the generous community and our valued partners at Asahi Lifestyle Beverages, we can ensure that young people have access to essential learning support to help them thrive in their education and create brighter futures for themselves,” said Mr Taylor.

Australians can get behind The Big Giveback at participating stores or by making a donation online at thebiggiveback.com.au.

About the Survey:

- **Respondents:** 1,126
- **Conducted by:** Essential Research

More Key Stats:

- **School lunches and snacks:** 26% of families cannot or struggle to afford
- **School uniforms, bags, and shoes:** 35% of families cannot or struggle to afford.
- **Stationery, exercise books, and textbooks:** 31% of families cannot or struggle to afford.
- **Extra-curricular activities** (e.g. music lessons, participation in sports teams, coaching): 46% of families cannot or struggle to afford.
- **Laptops or other digital devices:** 45% of families cannot or struggle to afford.
- **School camps and excursions:** 39% of families cannot or struggle to afford.

Editor’s Notes

The Smith Family is a national 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 around 800 Australian schools to support 63,000 students experiencing disadvantage through its *Learning for Life* education support program. For more information, visit 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.

Media Enquiries:

- **Carla Horton** | The Smith Family Media Advisor | 0423 618 776 | carla.horton@thesmithfamily.com.au
- **Simon Pristel** | Headline PR | 0412 393 433 | simon@headlinepr.com.au