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Australians' small change will make a big change, as part of campaign to raise \$1 million+ for charity

Thousands of disadvantaged Australian children whose education has been disrupted by COVID will get a helping hand from fellow Aussies in a major new campaign.

The Big Giveback will see small change make a big change, with 10 cents from the sale of non-alcoholic drinks at participating locations including Schweppes, Cool Ridge water and Solo donated to flagship partner and children's education charity The Smith Family.

The money will help fund homework clubs, mentoring programs, stationery and other things Smith Family students need to help them stay engaged at school and reach their full potential.

The campaign's been launched by leading drinks-maker Asahi Lifestyle Beverages (formerly Schweppes Australia) and 10,000+ of Aussie service stations, convenience stores and other shops will participate.

The Smith Family currently supports 57,000 students across Australia and that support is needed now more than ever, with the effects of COVID set to flow in to 2021.

The Smith Family is seeing students living in poverty face significant additional challenges during the pandemic, which are putting them at greater risk of falling behind in their studies. These include:

- New data showing 1 in 5 Smith Family students don't have a home computer with reliable internet access
- Other compounding challenges that make it harder to cope, including that 40% of students and 50% of their parents/carers are experiencing a health or disability issue
- Research that estimates that while learning at home through lockdown, disadvantaged students are likely to have learnt at only about 50 per cent of their regular rate.

The Smith Family's Head of Strategy and Philanthropy, Judy Barraclough said: "*The Big Giveback* is a simple way to support Australian children who are most in need. In purchasing their favourite drinks through *The Big Giveback*, Australians' small change will help make a big change for children who are struggling."

"Pre COVID-19, children were already experiencing the impacts of poverty on their education. The pandemic is exacerbating these problems, so it's critical we continue supporting children to ensure they stay engaged at school and not give up on their learning. We believe that education is a pathway out of poverty."

The campaign will run in other states too to raise a target of more than \$1 million nationally. Ampol and Caltex sites, Bunnings stores, Noodle Boxes, cafes, leisure centres and many more are participating throughout November, with participating venues displaying prominent in-store signage.

Asahi Lifestyle Beverages CEO Stuart Roberts said: "Our research showed people want to help those affected by the pandemic but didn't know how. We decided to launch *The Big Giveback* and, with community support, donate 10 cents from the sale of our drinks. This'll give students and families more of the support they need as our community faces the unprecedented challenge of recovering from the pandemic."

A second phase of *The Big Giveback* will launch in late November to support additional charities, with more details to be announced in coming weeks. For more information visit: www.thebiggiveback.com.au

Media should contact **Lisa Gilbert from Headline PR** for interviews or more information on **0412 822 673**