



CATHOLIC  
ARCHDIOCESE  
OF SYDNEY

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### INTEREST FREE LOANS PROGRAM FOR FAMILIES FIGHTING COST OF LIVING PRESSURES

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney is publicly celebrating the Sisters of Saint Joseph for their interest free loan program helping ease cost of living pressures for Australians.

The program allows low-income earners and people receiving Centrelink payments to receive interest free loans to assist with household financial pressures.

The loans will be available to purchase whitegoods, pay for car registration and repairs, medical expenses, courses and essential household items.

Called the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), administered by Good Shepherd Microfinance, the initiative works on a not-for-profit circular community credit system, where all repayments are used to fund the needs of the next recipient.

While a smaller version of the scheme was previously available in rural and regional areas – the program has now been expanded into metropolitan Sydney due to the dire needs of city families facing cost of living pressures.

Eligible applicants can borrow up to \$2,000 with a repayment period of up to 18 months, giving them access to essential items, so they do not have to live in poverty.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference spokesperson for Families, Most Rev Bishop Richard Umbers said the quiet work of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, through their charitable arm, Mary MacKillop Today, is an exemplar of Christian charity we should all aspire to.

“The Sisters of St Joseph have been the guardian angels of Australians in need for more than 150 years. They provided us with our first Saint and continue as the champions of the poor to this day.”

“Many Australians are in economic peril, which places an incredible burden on the family unit. I am so proud that our religious orders are there to help those families in need,” Bishop Richard said.

Mary MacKillop Today Financial Inclusion Team Leader Anita Van Dartel said they are thrilled to continue the mission started by St Mary of the Cross in Penola back in 1867.

“At Mary Mackillop Today, we take a ‘holistic approach to help people improve their financial situation. If a person needs support outside of what we can offer, we’ll do everything we can to connect them with the extra help they need”.

Ms Van Dartel said while the program has been assisting people in rural and remote communities for more than twenty years, current economic conditions require it to expand to all areas within Australia.

“The fact we’re now having to extend our No Interest Loan Scheme to the cities shows just how hard life is getting for Australian families.”

Bishop Richard said the work of Mary MacKillop Today is a reminder of the important place of the Church in Australian life.

“Before Centrelink, public education and public health, the Catholic Church was nations social safety net. We are proud to assist those government services by continuing our mission today.”

For more information on Mary MacKillop Today’s [No Interest Loan Scheme \(NILS\) click here.](#)

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