

MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE THAN HALF OF AUSTRALIANS BUYING LESS FOOD AS VINNIES NSW SEES INCREASE IN FOOD ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

More than half of Australians are buying less food than they would like because of rising grocery costs, according to new YouGov research commissioned by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

The survey found four in five (83%) Australians are spending more on groceries than they were 12 months ago, while 55% say financial pressures have forced them to cut back on food purchases.

Cost-of-living pressures are being felt across all income brackets, with households earning less than \$50,000 (82%), \$50,000-\$99,000 (82%), \$100,000-\$149,000 (83%), and over \$150,000 (87%) all saying they are spending more on groceries than a year ago.

Financial pressures also made it harder for 55% of survey respondents to keep their household stocked with essential items.

The survey comes as demand for food assistance continues to grow across NSW, with requests for food assistance through the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW increasing by 5% over the past year.

Yolanda Saiz, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW CEO said the research reflected what volunteers and members are seeing in communities across the state every day.

"A weekly grocery shop doesn't go as far as it used to. The price of almost everything has increased, but many household budgets simply haven't kept pace," said Ms Saiz.

"It's heartbreaking to hear from parents who are skipping meals so their children can eat. No parent should have to make that choice, yet for many households it has become a reality.

"The survey shows Australians are buying less food because they simply can't afford the grocery bill, and we're seeing the consequences of that every day through increasing demand for food assistance."

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has supported over 106,000 people across the state through its members in the last year, providing more than \$9.7 million in food-related assistance with hampers, supermarket vouchers and Christmas hampers.

Food assistance remains one of the most common reasons people seek help from the Society, accounting for nearly three in four people (73%) assisted by local members in the past year.

"Every day we are meeting with people who have already cut back everything they can. There is simply nothing left to give," Ms Saiz said.

"When households are buying less food and struggling to keep basic essentials stocked at home, it doesn't take much for a financial setback to become a crisis.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW State President Peter Houweling said the organisation continued to rely on community support to meet growing demand.



"In cities and regional communities alike, we're seeing people who never imagined they would need assistance now reaching out for help with basic essentials," Mr Houweling said.

"Our members and volunteers are helping families put food on the table, providing practical support and reminding people that they don't have to face these challenges alone."

As demand for food assistance continues, the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is encouraging people who can help to support its Hampers of Care appeal. A donation of \$89 can provide a household with a hamper containing essential food and grocery items, delivered by a volunteer connected to the local community.

"Making a donation is a small action that makes an immediate impact for someone in their time of need. Your donation means that someone will have food on the table tonight," Mr Houweling said.

You can donate to the Vinnies Hampers of Care appeal at nsw.vinnies.org.au/hampersofcare. All donations are tax deductible.

ENDS

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Food Assistance & Key Pressures Survey results:

- Over four in five (83%) Australians agree that they are **spending more on groceries than they were 12 months ago**, including over half (53%) who *strongly* agree.
 - Gen X (84%) and Baby Boomers (89%) are more likely to agree than Millennials (77%).
- Over half (55%) of Australians agree that they **buy less food than they would ideally like because of financial pressures**, including 23% who *strongly* agree.
 - Women are more likely to agree than men (61% vs 47%).
- 55% of Australians agree that **financial pressures have made it harder for them to keep their household stocked with essential items**, including a quarter (26%) who *strongly* agree.

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** Vinnies – Budget Pressures Survey prepared for St Vincent de Paul Society NSW by YouGov. Online survey of nationally representative sample of 1,049 Australians aged 18 years and older, conducted 3-6 September 2026.*