



Media Release

4 December 2015

Salvos Research Reveals Other Side of Christmas

As The Salvation Army's major Christmas campaign gets under way, new Roy Morgan research – commissioned by The Salvation Army – paints a disturbing picture of the other side of Christmas.

New Roy Morgan research reveals*:

- 2.7 million people aged 18-64 (18.6%) say they know at least 5 families who will experience financial hardship/poverty this Christmas.
- Over 1 million people aged 18-64 (7.3%) say they know at least 10 families who will experience financial hardship/poverty this Christmas.
- 10.6 million (71.7%) say the gap between rich and poor has been getting bigger. (When the Salvos last asked this in 2011, 60% said that).
- Almost 3.7 million people (24.9%) are worried about how they will pay for Christmas this year.
- 39.7% (almost 5.9 million people aged 18-64) say that their household buys too much food for Christmas Day.

“The disparity is incredibly sad,” says Major Bruce Harmer of The Salvation Army. “It’s heartbreaking that some families have more than enough food to share, while others are skipping meals and are unable to buy their child a Christmas present.”

The Salvation Army expects to help around 300,000 Australians doing it tough at Christmas. It is expected that around 100,000 food vouchers and hampers will be distributed and 10,000 meals served to those in need. The Salvos will also give out over 500,000 gifts and toys with the help of the Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal.

“Australia is a nation of people who stand by those in need,” says Major Harmer. “We have seen that recently in the outpouring of love and support for those suffering across the world. This Christmas let’s stand by those Aussie families who are doing it tough. By donating \$29 to The Salvation Army Christmas Appeal, you can help put a present under the tree and food on the table, bringing hope to where it’s needed most.”

“Poverty has a significant effect on people. For some, Christmas is a deeply isolating time. Many of our clients find this time of year extremely difficult because of the huge stress and financial difficulties they are up against. At this time of the year, why not look around and help those you know who need some help.”

The Roy Morgan research also looked at gifts purchased at Christmas revealing the disparity between “the haves and the have nots”. Roy Morgan research shows that 1.6 million Aussies were likely to spend \$200-\$299 on a present for a loved one and for those who had children, 785,000 said – on average – each child will receive at least 5 presents ... 420,000 revealed – on average – each child would receive between 10 to 14 present. In contrast Salvation Army research shows 60% of clients are unable to purchase at least one gift anytime in the year for a loved one - let alone at Christmas.

Furthermore, 39.7% of people (almost 5.9 million people aged 18-64) believe they buy too much food for Christmas Day, with 550,000 people aged 18-64 claiming their household is spending between \$500 to \$749 on food. A stark contrast to Salvation Army research finding 25% of clients would go without one substantial meal per day, while 34% were not able to afford fresh fruit and vegetables for their children.

“It’s clear from the research that huge numbers of people are struggling,” says Major Bruce Harmer. This research shows that over half a million people know between a staggering 10 to 14 families who will face financial hardship this Christmas. Christmas is a wonderful time of the year with many Aussies indulging with loved ones, but while there may be abundance for some, our clients are struggling to afford access to three square and nutritious meals daily.”

“We believe no one should have to go it alone at Christmas. We want to encourage Australians to give financial support to help those struggling this Christmas.”

Major Harmer says, “We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and would ask that amongst the joy of this time of the year, you take a moment to give hope where it’s needed most to others.”

The Salvation Army has a network of local churches around the nation, with many offering a range of activities leading up to Christmas, including Christmas Carol events and Christmas Day church services. Some also offer community Christmas lunches. Details will be listed on salvos.org.au/Christmas.

To donate to The Salvation Army Christmas Appeal, please visit salvos.org.au or call 13 72 58 (13 SALVOS)

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For more information or media comment please contact:

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#spreadthehope

*Data was post-weighted to project survey estimates to the actual 18-64 year old Australian population of 14.841m people.

Embargoed and not for use prior to Friday December 4th, 2015

Roy Morgan Research surveyed a demographically representative sample of 1,171 people across Australia aged 18-64 years from Thursday 5 November to Thursday 12 November, using its online research panel - OzPanel. Data was post-weighted to project survey estimates to the actual 18-64 year old Australian population of 14.841m people.

The new Roy Morgan Research reveals (of people aged 18 to 64 – a total of 14.8 million people):

How worried are you about how you will pay for Christmas this year?

- 17.5% (almost 2.6 million) are quite worried.
- 7.4% (1.1 million) are very worried.

Thinking about Australia in the last 12 months, do you believe the gap between the rich and poor has been getting bigger, getting smaller or staying the same?

- 71.7% (10.6 million) Australians say it is getting bigger.

How many families do you know that are likely to be experiencing financial hardship or poverty this Christmas?

- 6.1% (900,000) know 1 family.
- 9.2% (almost 1.4 million) know 2 families.
- 7.1% (almost 1.1 million) know 3 families.
- 4.4% (658,000) know 4 families.
- 7.2% (1,070,000) know 5 families.
- 4.1% (605,000) know between 6 and 9 families.
- 3.8% (559,000) know between 10 to 14 families.
- 2.4% (361,000) know between 15 to 29 families.
- 1.1% (159,000) know 30 or more families.

If there are children under 10 living in your household, how many Christmas presents, on average, is each child likely to receive from all members of the household?

- 2.9% (426,000) said 1 present.
- 4.5% (672,000) said 2 presents.
- 3.8% (564,000) said 3 presents.
- 3.1% (462,000) said 4 presents.
- 5.3% (785,000) said 5 presents.
- 3.1% (461,000) said between 6 to 9 presents.
- 2.8% (420,000) said between 10 to 14 presents.
- 1.2% (185,000) said 15 plus presents.

If there are children aged 10-14 living in your household, how many Christmas presents, on average, is each child likely to receive from all members of the household?

- 2.6% (393,000) said 1 present.
- 2.9% (432,000) said 2 presents.
- 2.8% (422,000) said 3 presents.
- 2.1% (310,000) said 4 presents.
- 2.5% (369,000) said 5 presents.
- 2.1% (313,000) said 6 to 9 presents.
- 2% (298,000) said 10 to 14 presents.
- 0.6% (88,000) said 15 plus presents

How much money on average are you likely to spend for Christmas on a loved one such as your spouse, partner, fiancé, boyfriend/girlfriend?

- 4% (591,000) spend between \$1 and \$25.
- 2.4% (358,000) spend between \$26 and \$49.
- 13.3% (almost 2 million) spend between \$50 and \$99.
- 20.3% (3 million) spend between \$100 and \$149.
- 5.4% (798,000) spend between \$150 and \$199.
- 11.3% (1.68 million) spend between \$200 and \$299.
- 4.7% (699,000) spend between \$300 and \$499.
- 5% (741,000) spend between \$500 and \$999.
- 2.2% (326,000) spend over \$1,000.

This compares with the shocking experience of Salvation Army clients. Major research we did with clients showed 60% of respondents surveyed went without buying a gift for family/friends at least once a year.

Approximately how much does your household spend on food for Christmas Day?

- 3.5% (526,000) spend \$0.
- 12% (1.78 million) spend \$1 to \$50.
- 3.9% (583,000) spend \$51 to \$99.
- 17.3% (2.56 million) spend \$100 to \$149.
- 10.4% (1.54 million) spend \$150 to \$199.
- 14.1% (2,089,000) spend \$200 to \$249.
- 4.5% (662,000) spend \$250 to \$299.
- 7.8% (1.1 million) spend \$300 to \$349.
- 4% (599,000) spend \$350 to \$499.
- 3.7% (550,000) spend \$500 to \$749.
- 1.3% (188,000) spend over \$750.

Which of the following best matches what your family spends on food for Christmas Day?

- 39.7% (5,866,000) buy too much food for Christmas Day.
- 51.8% (7,684,000) buy about the right amount of food for Christmas Day.
- 2.3% (342,000) don't buy enough food for Christmas Day.

This compares with disturbing Salvation Army research carried out in May 2015 with clients with clients showing 25% of respondents surveyed went without at least one substantial meal a day, 34% without fresh fruit and vegetables and 18% without three meals a day.