

# Media Release

**EMBARGOED AND NOT FOR USE PRIOR TO  
WEDNESDAY 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2016**

**The Salvation Army's 5th National Economic and Social Impact Survey (ESIS) surveyed more than 1600 Salvation Army clients across Australia.**

**It found that children are hugely impacted by moving house multiple times a year, moving schools and missing out on medications, dental checks and even access to the internet due to extreme poverty with single parent families living off less than \$16.00 a day after accommodation expenses.**

**The report also shows people from regional towns/rural areas are clearly over-represented in the survey, as are Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people.**

## **KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE:**

### **Housing:**

- \* 68% of clients are now suffering extreme housing stress.
- \* Family violence is the leading cause of housing transiency with children at significant risk of social exclusion due to housing instability. 64% of respondents who moved due to family violence say their children had to change schools as a result. 40% of people who were surveyed have moved house an average of three (2.7) times in just 12 months.

### **Deprivation:**

- \* 86% of clients (and 58% of households with children) report severe deprivation and now go without 5 or more basic items, for example; medical treatment or three meals a day.
- \* Numerous clients live off just \$16.96 a day (to pay for *everything* after housing /accommodation is paid for.)
- \* Some clients on Newstart Allowance are having to survive off just \$15.29 a day.

### **Impact on children:**

- \* 20% (one in five) cannot afford medical treatment or medicines that are prescribed for their child and 42% (two in five) cannot afford a yearly dental check-up for their child.
- \* More than half of all parents surveyed (6 out of 10) cannot afford an internet connection for their child. This places children at significant risk of social exclusion and hinders their ability to fully participate in schooling.

## **STORY IN FULL:**

The Salvation Army is calling on both sides of politics to make poverty a key Federal Election issue after releasing disturbing new statistics on the level of poverty in Australia.

“The key findings of a horrific new report paint a bleak picture of what real life is like for Australians on the breadline,” says The Salvation Army’s Territorial Communications and Fundraising Secretary, Major Bruce Harmer. “We cannot keep putting a band-aid on disadvantage. We need serious funding to develop innovative solutions to the complex issues of entrenched poverty.”

Now in its fifth year, The Salvation Army’s Economic and Social Impact Survey (ESIS) surveyed more than 1600 clients across Australia.

It found that a massive 68% of clients living in private rental properties or paying off a mortgage experience extreme housing stress - using nearly two thirds of their disposable income on housing/accommodation.

Nearly 1 in 5 are either homeless or living in temporary accommodation – of these almost 1 in 3 previously privately rented. “What this tells us is that private rentals are not a secure form of housing for those living on the breadline,” says Major Harmer. “One small change to an individual or family’s income, or an unexpected bill or expense can lead to a tenancy being lost and a family becoming homeless.”

The 2016 ESIS Report reveals family violence is the leading factor in housing transiency. In fact, respondents affected by family violence were most affected by extreme housing stress. “We see very clearly from this research that many children are at significant risk of social exclusion because of generational poverty, unemployment and housing instability,” says Major Harmer. “Having to move, sometimes numerous times a year, affects a child’s schooling, their ability to make and maintain friendships and their confidence.

The Report reveals:

- Respondents affected by family violence were most affected by extreme housing stress. And family violence is the key reason why women (37%) moved in the past 12 months.
- 64% of respondents who moved due to family violence said their children had to change schools when their family moved.
- 40% of people who were surveyed had moved house – on average – almost three (2.7) times in 12 months.
- Nearly 1 in 5 (17%) are either HOMELESS or living in TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION. (1 in 3 previously rented privately).
- 37% of people responding who are homeless had experienced persistent homelessness for 2 years (1 in 10 had moved six times in the past 12 months).
- A massive 86% of clients and 58% of households with children report severe deprivation and go without five or more basic items.
- Numerous clients live off just \$16.96 a day after housing/accommodation is paid for.
- Some clients – on Newstart – survive off just \$15.29 a day after housing/accommodation is paid for.
- 6 out of 10 respondents cannot afford an internet connection for their child.

1 in 5 cannot afford medical treatment or prescribed medicine for their children and 2 in 5 cannot afford a yearly dental checkup for their child.

Major Harmer says, "We need leadership and action from all levels of Government. The results of this extensive survey of 1632 people are utterly shameful. It shows the real level of struggle taking place in our 'lucky country'.

"Now, more than ever, it's time for Australia to reclaim our great Aussie spirit - of neighbours who care for their neighbours. The Salvation Army is committed to working with all levels of government, the private sector and other service providers to develop innovative solutions to inter-generational poverty.

"Because when we walk beside people, it's for the long haul. We believe hope is for everyone."

The Salvation Army is calling on Australians to support its 2016 Red Shield Appeal so that it can direct more funding to its domestic violence and family support services. "Our crisis accommodation services for women and children are constantly full," says Major Harmer. "We need the support of Australians through the Red Shield Appeal in order to open up more beds for families in need and to implement early intervention and innovating social enterprise schemes so that people in poverty can break the cycle.

"It's very hard to change your circumstances when you're trying to survive on \$15 a day after your accommodation is paid for," says Major Harmer. "A donation to The Salvation Army will help us walk alongside families and individuals for the long haul. Your donation will lead to lasting change."

**The weekend of the big Red Shield Appeal Doorknock nationwide is Saturday May 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016.**

**People wanting to volunteer should simply call 13 SALVOS (13 72 58) or register on line at [salvos.org.au/volunteer](http://salvos.org.au/volunteer).**

**You can donate to the Red Shield Doorknock by calling 13 SALVO (13 72 58), online at [salvos.org.au/donate](http://salvos.org.au/donate), in person at any Westpac branch or Salvos Store or by posting a cheque to PO Box 9888 in your capital city.**

**Media enquiries to: Ross Woodward and the Media Key team on 03 9769 6488  
Ross can also be called on 0409 420 112**

**We will help you in any way possible and we do appreciate the help from media in covering this issue for very obvious reasons.**