



21st January 2026

EMBARGOED AND NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL 12.01AM, 21st JANUARY 2026

9.7 million Australians starting 2026 in debt, 45% feeling pressure to spend more than they can afford ***Salvos encourage financial health check this Moneycare Week***

Most Australians have never heard of one of the most effective forms of financial support available to them — and The Salvation Army says that needs to change.

As new research reveals that more than 9.7 million Australians (44%) will start 2026 in debt and almost nine in ten (89%) feel the same or more stressed about their finances than last year,* The Salvos are urging the nation to uncover a resource that could transform their financial wellbeing: **Moneycare**, the organisation's free and confidential financial counselling service.

Moneycare has been described as “one of Australia's best-kept secrets”, despite providing more than 48,000 sessions of care last financial year alone. The service supports people to get on top of debt, create realistic budgets, navigate financial stress and build long-term stability — all at no cost.

Kristen Hartnett, The Salvation Army's Head of Moneycare, says the research shows Australians are carrying heavy financial burdens, often in silence.

“This Moneycare Week, we want people across the country to do a financial reset. The New Year is the perfect moment to take control of your financial situation, and Moneycare is here to help you do that. Financial counselling is free, confidential and incredibly effective — but many people don't realise it exists.”

The Salvos' national survey of 2,005 people found:

- 45% feel pressure to spend more than they can afford. Of those, 43% say embarrassment about their financial situation drives that pressure and 31% cite cultural or societal expectations
- 24% find it difficult to create a budget
- 20% struggle to prepare a tax return
- Among those starting 2026 in debt, 52% have credit card debt and 26% have Buy Now, Pay Later debt
- 23% never speak to family or friends about their financial situation
- 32% feel uncomfortable discussing money at all with their family or friends

One community member supported by Moneycare said the service changed their life:

“The help you've given me has given me a reason to get out of bed and get moving. The financial side of things is no longer in the forefront of my mind and I can't thank you enough for that.”

Hartnett says this is exactly why Moneycare exists.

“Whether you need help creating a budget, support getting out of debt, or someone to talk to about realistic money plans, Moneycare is here for you. You are not alone, and there is no shame in reaching out.”

If you or someone you know needs support from The Salvation Army's Moneycare, please visit salvationarmy.org.au/moneycare or call 1800 722 363.

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For more information, please contact The Salvation Army's Media Relations Department on (02) 94663143

*A Pureprofile survey for The Salvation Army surveyed 2,005 people in a nationally representative sample size and this has been



extrapolated to reflect the general Australian population. Extrapolated numbers are based on the estimated Australian population aged 18 and older, 22,189,796 based on ABS data as seen here <https://www.ibisworld.com/australia/bed/population-aged-18-and-older/15015/>

