

1. POVERTY

Over 2.2 million people in Australia are estimated to be living in poverty

- 75% of these people are in a household where no-one has paid work.
 - 25% of single adults are living in poverty.
 - Approximately 12% of children in Australia are living in poverty.
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- Australia spends only 3.2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on income support, while the OECD average is 6.5%.
 - Since 2000, rents have increased by 46.5%.
 - The median rent for a single bedroom flat in Sydney is now \$400 a week; in Melbourne it is now \$289 a week.

The gap between the haves and the have-nots is increasing

- The most recent ABS Household Income and Income Distribution survey found that:
 - For households with middle or high income levels (those with household income in the middle fifth, or quintile; and the highest fifth, or quintile), wages and salaries were the main source of income; for low-income households (those with household income in the second and third tenths, or deciles; the ABS definition of “low-income”), pensions and allowances are the main source of income.
 - In low-income households, there are on average 0.7 persons employed.

- In 1994-5, 10.8% of total equivalised (adjusted to a scale in order to compare different size households) household income went to low income households, 17.7% to middle income households, and 37.8% to high income households.
- By 2007-08, low and middle income households had slightly less overall income, and high income households slightly more: 10.1% of total equivalised household income went to low income households, 17.0% to middle income households, and 40.5% to high income households.
- For people on low incomes, average equivalised disposable household income grew by 12% between 2005-06 and 2007-08; for middle income households, the rise was 14%, and for high income households, the increase was 20%.

2. INCOME SUPPORT

The difference between the Newstart Allowance and the Age Pension# is now \$126.95 a week.

- The Newstart Allowance is \$237.45 a week for a single person.
- The Youth Allowance, for those aged 18 and over and living away from their parents' home is \$194.35 a week.
- The Age Pension has increased by approximately 75% since 2000. It is now \$335.20 a week for a single person, with a further \$58.40 Pension Supplement increasing this to \$364.40. During this same period, the Newstart Allowance has increased by only 40%, and the Youth Allowance by 39%.
- Between January and February 2011, the long-term unemployment rate increased by more than 5,900 or 3.3% – from 180,232 to 186,195.

Including Pension Supplement

3. COST OF LIVING

Cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by 34 % since 2000.

- Meanwhile, the largest increase in cost of living was the price of water and sewerage, which rose by 90%, followed by electricity, which rose by 87.4%.
- The CPI studies the price changes of various groups of common goods and services in the major cities and arranged within the following categories: Food, Alcohol and Tobacco, Clothing and Footwear, Housing, Household Contents and Services, Health, Transportation, Communication, Recreation, Education, Financial and Insurance Services.
- Each of these categories contains subcategories; for instance, the Housing category contains subcategories such as Electricity and Rent.

Table 1: CPI, 2000 – 2010

Year	Mar quarter	June quarter	Sept quarter	Dec quarter	Annual
2000	125.2	126.2	130.9	131.3	128.4
2001	132.7	133.8	134.2	135.4	134.0
2002	136.6	137.6	138.5	139.5	138.1
2003	141.3	141.3	142.1	142.8	141.9
2004	144.1	144.8	145.4	146.5	145.2
2005	147.5	148.4	149.8	150.6	149.1
2006	151.9	154.3	155.7	155.5	154.4
2007	155.6	157.5	158.6	160.1	158.0
2008	162.2	164.6	166.5	166.0	166.2
2009	166.2	167.0	168.6	169.5	167.9
2010	171.0	172.1	173.3	174.0	172.6
Change	45.8	45.9	42.4	42.7	44.2
% change	36.5%	36.3%	32.4%	32.5%	34.4%

Table 2: CPI categories, 2000 – 2010

Annual	Food	Clothing Footwear	Housing	Education	Health	Transport
2000	131.3	109.3	104.3	187.2	161.4	133.6
2001	139.9	111.8	109.3	195.4	166.4	137.3
2002	149.4	113.2	112.9	204.9	175.1	138.8
2003	150.2	113.1	117.8	214.9	187.8	141.3
2004	153.8	111.9	121.3	227.4	196.7	142.9
2005	157.5	110.1	127.1	246.0	208.7	150.3
2006	169.6	108.1	131.3	259.1	218.9	157.7
2007	172.9	109.1	136.7	269.9	228.1	159.8
2008	181.8	109.3	145.2	282.0	239.2	168.2
2009	188.5	111.4	153.1	297.0	250.9	162.0
2010	191.4	107.8	161.5	314.0	263.6	165.8
Change	60.1	-1.5	57.2	127.0	102.2	32.2
% change	45.8%	-1.4%	54.8%	67.8%	63.3%	24.1%

Since 2000, the main CPI index has increased by 34.4%. Within this, the largest increases were in the subcategories of water and sewerage (90.0%), and electricity (87.4%). Both of these subcategories are part of the housing category, which itself increased by 54.8. However, the main category increase was that of education, which increased by 67.8%; followed by health at 63.3%.

Table 3: CPI subcategories, 2000 – 2010

Annual	HOUSING						HEALTH	
	Rents	Utilities	Electricity	Gas and other household fuels	Water and sewerage	Childcare	Dental	Pharmaceuticals
2000	127.3	127.8	123.8	141.2	107.3	139.7	164.4	134.5
2001	131.4	135.0	132.4	142.7	109.6	133.3	172.1	137.6
2002	134.5	140.6	137.1	150.5	113.9	144.0	180.8	139.3
2003	137.1	158.2	145.1	159.8	118.6	163.9	190.6	143.6
2004	140.5	153.0	147.9	168.8	123.1	184.1	200.9	146.3
2005	143.7	158.7	152.1	177.5	128.3	204.1	212.3	153.7
2006	148.3	165.4	156.4	185.5	136.7	230.4	224.1	157.8
2007	156.4	173.0	163.5	193.0	144.2	212.4	234.4	160.3
2008	168.6	189.4	179.9	208.6	158.0	161.4	246.0	163.4
2009	179.9	211.6	201.5	226.5	179.9	149.0	256.5	167.3
2010	187.7	239.9	232.0	246.8	203.9	158.7	266.3	169.7
Change	60.4	112.1	108.2	105.6	96.6	19	101.9	35.2
% increase	47.4%	87.7%	87.4%	74.8%	90.0%	13.6%	62.0%	26.2%

1.1 million Australian families are living in housing stress

- As at 2007, there were over 1,100,000 Australian families in housing stress, meaning they paid more than 30% of their income on recurrent housing costs.
- Those families in housing stress comprised 10% of Australian families.
- Housing stress varies by tenure:
 - renters in the private rental market comprised over half of the families in housing stress in Australia in 2007;
 - 47.5% of low-income households in the private rental market in Australia were in rental stress in 2007–08;
 - 46.6% of low-income households with a mortgage were in mortgage stress across Australia in 2007–08.
- Nationally, in 2007–08, those paying more than 30% of their gross income in housing costs included:
 - 445,000 private renters with incomes in the lowest 40% of the income distribution;
 - 117,000 private renters who were wholly depending on government income support;
 - 312,000 mortgagees with incomes in the lowest 40% of the income distribution; and
 - 27,000 mortgagees who were wholly depending on government income support.

4. COMMUNITY SERVICES

An increasing number of people are being turned away from community services.

1 in 16 people were turned away from community services in 2008-09.

- In 2008-09, people received information, advice and referral from community services 6,700,000 times.
- In 2008-09, individuals and families received support from community services in 4,600,000 cases.
- Over half a million people are employed by the community sector:
 - The majority of these people are employed by not-for-profit organisations.
 - 81% of those employed in the Community Sector are women.
 - 325,440 volunteers worked in the Community Sector in 2008-09.

5. HEALTH

The number of people receiving Disability Support is increasing

- In June 2010, there were 792,581 people receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP).
- This is a 4.7%, or 35,463 increase from the previous year.
- Disability Support recipients made up 5.2 per cent of the total working age population at June 2010.
- The majority (80%) of DSP recipients receive the maximum rate of payment.

People living in rural and remote Australia have less access to health care

- People living in regional and remote areas have less access to primary care and specialist and diagnostic services.
- In 2006-07, people in regional and remote areas had in total 12.6 million fewer medical services.

The Better Access Scheme is not reaching enough people

- The Better Access Scheme – designed to improve access to mental health services - is not reaching enough people, particularly those living in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia, and those living in rural and remote Australia.
- The majority of people who used Better Access to Mental Health Services – 65.5% in 2009 – live in capital cities.
- People in the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas use the Better Access services 10% less than people in the broader population.

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