

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rising costs cause concern for teens' financial futures

More than 90 per cent of Australian parents have concerns about the rising cost-of-living and its impact on their teenagers' financial futures, according to new research from [Financial Basics Foundation \(FBF\)](#) – one of Australia's leading financial literacy education charities.

The survey – supported by Suncorp Bank – found that almost a quarter (24.9%) of parents said their teenagers had low or very low financial literacy or understanding of personal finance and money matters, and only half (51.2%) learned about money at school.

FBF Chief Executive Katrina Samios said the survey of over 1,000 Australian parents of teenagers highlighted the startling impacts of the current cost-of-living crisis on families and the urgent need to improve the financial literacy skills of Aussie teenagers.

“Now is the time to make meaningful changes to how personal finance is delivered in secondary schools,” Ms Samios said.

“The Australian financial landscape is evolving and increasing in complexity with growth in services like personal financial apps and micro-investing platforms.

“Financial literacy is not addressed in any Australian state and territory curriculum as a standalone course – and many parents said it was one of the biggest challenges to improving their teen’s understanding about money and building their financial capability.”

Suncorp Bank Executive General Manager, Everyday Banking, Nick Fernando said finding new and innovative ways of teaching young people about finance was essential.

“The world of finance is fast-moving, so having adaptable financial skills is critical for young people, to grow confidently into the future,” Mr Fernando said.

“Providing practical ways of learning is essential to this. It allows young people to develop skills that can be applied in real life and really cements that learning.”

Ms Samios said FBF, in partnership with Suncorp Bank, is launching its national ESSI Money Challenge on Monday, 21 August giving students the opportunity to practise personal financial skills in ‘earning’, ‘saving’, ‘spending’ and ‘investing’ (ESSI) in a realistic virtual world.

“More than 26,000 students have competed in the challenge since 2017, with students across Australia competing for their chance to win part of over \$13,000 in prizes for themselves and their school,” she said.

Mr Fernando said interactive tools like ESSI Money, helped young people engage with the content and build important skills.

“ESSI Money has gamified the financial interactions and challenges that we experience in real life – including things like credit cards and scams so it helps build real financial capabilities in a safe and fun environment,” he said.

Yatala’s [Rivermount College](#) has taken part in the [ESSI Money Challenge](#) for the past few years - with students topping the state leader board last year.

“In an ever-changing financial environment, it’s beneficial for young people to develop an understanding of the basics of finances and savings at an early age,” Rivermount College Principal, Mr Richard Young said.

“The Suncorp Bank ESSI Money Challenge is an excellent tool for combining entertaining game time with financial literacy education, allowing students to better understand how their choices affect their financial situation.

“It challenges their analytical skills in a fun and rewarding manner. Learning good habits at an early age helps to set us up for life.”

The ESSI Money Challenge runs from Monday, 21 August, to Friday, 1 September 2023. Australian secondary school teachers can register their class and students via the [Financial Basics Foundation's website](#) from Monday 31 July.

Other findings from the research included:

- Almost 13 per cent of parents said their teenagers were now contributing some of their income to pay for household expenses.
- Over half of Australian parents (57%) said the cost-of-living crisis has impacted their teens' earning and spending habits.
- Over 30 per cent of parents reported reducing social activities and staying home during holidays to save money.
- One in five families (20.7% respondents) reported the cost-of-living crisis had negatively impacted conversations about money at home.
- One in ten parents said their teen had fallen victim to a scam or fraud, resulting in a loss of money.
- A growing cashless environment, increasing complexities of financial systems, and barriers to access to personal finance education at school were flagged by parents as key reasons for the low financial literacy of their teenagers.

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More about the Financial Basics Foundation (FBF) and the Suncorp Bank ESSI Money Challenge

* Registration for the Challenge opens on Monday 31 July. Teachers must register their students to compete in the Challenge.

* Where to enter: <http://www.financialbasics.org.au/essi-money-challenge/how-to-enter>

* Suncorp Bank ESSI Money Challenge runs from Monday 21 August – Friday 1 September, terms and conditions are available at: <https://financialbasics.org.au/educator-hub/essi-money-challenge/terms-and-conditions/>

Prizes:

- Three highest scoring students win prizes ranging from \$500-1500.
- Two winning schools win \$1000 each.
- State winners win \$200 EFTPOS gift cards.
- 16 students win a \$100 EFTPOS gift card.

Founded in 2002, FBF is an independent charity providing free financial literacy teaching resources to thousands of Australian secondary schools, educators, and students.

Key statistics

- As of August 2022, 77% of Australian schools had registered to access FBF resources and 8,625 teachers hold a membership.
- 10,000 educators from more than 2,000 Australian secondary schools access the Foundation's free financial literacy resources.
- 147,000 secondary school students have played ESSI Money since 2017.
- 93% of students say playing ESSI Money helped them learn about managing their finances.
- 75% of students say that they have applied concepts learned in the game in their own lives.

FBF and Suncorp Bank are committed to ensuring a better financial future for young Australians, their families, and the wider community. Through the ESSI Money Challenge and ongoing initiatives, they strive to empower young Australians to become financially resilient individuals.



To learn more about the ESSI Money Challenge and register your students, visit <https://financialbasics.org.au/educator-hub/essi-money-challenge/how-to-enter/>

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