



Perceptions of poverty in Victoria – a snapshot



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

Let's make
change
that lasts



**73% of
Victorians
believe poverty
can make it
harder to live
a safe and
secure life.**

What Victorians know

- Low wages/lack of secure work, living with chronic illness or disability, and lack of education opportunities can contribute to ongoing poverty.
- A person can experience poverty because they lack access to health care, employment services, and education and training.
- Poverty limits people's choices and makes it harder to live a safe and secure life.
- Poverty is not the fault of individuals but out-of-date, unjust systems.

What needs to be done

Victorians want governments to support people experiencing deprivation and give everyone access to safe housing, fair pay and the other things needed to live a meaningful life and break the cycle of poverty.

Background

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) is reimagining how poverty is defined and measured in Australia. We want to look outside monetary measures and capture a more complete picture of poverty.

In February 2025, BSL commissioned researchers at 89 Degrees East to conduct a national survey of 1,629 diverse community members aged 18 years and older. These findings are from the 420 respondents living in Victoria with the sample being representative of age, gender and location.

The survey results show that Victorians understand the challenges facing people experiencing poverty and want to see systemic change that will support all Victorians to live lives they value.

Key findings



Awareness of poverty

6 in 10 Victorians (**59%**) think poverty is a major issue affecting many people in the community.



Experience and exposure to poverty

40% of Victorians have experienced poverty themselves or seen loved ones affected by it.



Support for opportunity and fairness

7 in 10 Victorians (**71%**) think no matter where people start in life, we all deserve access to safe housing, fair pay and the things needed to live a meaningful life.



Cost-of-living pressures

Over the past two years, **77%** of Victorians have been impacted by cost-of-living pressures.



Support for addressing poverty

More than **8 in 10** (**83%**) Victorians believe it is especially important to support people experiencing poverty during a cost-of-living crisis.



Poverty solutions

75% of Victorians believe government should simplify access to services for people with disability, invest in early childhood education for all families and provide more tailored support for people to find a job.



What the research tells us

Victorians believe poverty is an important issue that needs to be addressed and they recognise this can be done in many different ways. As well as increasing basic household incomes (through higher income support payments and wages) this includes government providing more tailored supports to make it easier for people to find a job, along with greater investment in early childhood and disability services.

BSL has been working for 95 years to address poverty in the community. Despite improved living conditions and opportunities for much of

the population, large numbers of Victorians are still living in poverty. This research highlights strong support from the community for government and non-government organisations to do more to address both monetary and non-monetary dimensions of poverty, even at a time when record numbers of households are experiencing their own cost-of-living crisis.

BSL develops and delivers innovative and effective solutions to poverty in Victoria, based on our research, policy and service delivery expertise.

Accreditation

The market research on which this work is based was conducted by Holly McCarthy, Connor Touhey and Dr Rebecca Huntley from 89 Degrees East.
