



Good360  
BRINGING GOOD TOGETHER



# Hygiene poverty in Australia

Impact Report August 2025

*Imagine facing the impossible choice between  
heating, eating or keeping clean daily*

EVERYONE  
DESERVES  
HYGIENE



# What is hygiene poverty?

Hygiene poverty is not being able to afford everyday personal hygiene products that many of us take for granted. Many people experiencing hygiene poverty face the impossible choice of heating, eating or keeping clean daily.

**4 million Australians face the impossible choice of heating, eating or keeping clean daily.<sup>1</sup>**



# Overview



Over four million Australians are currently living in 'hygiene poverty'.<sup>1</sup>



The cost of living crisis is ongoing and continues to leave a staggering number of Australians unable to afford hygiene essentials.<sup>1</sup>



Women and younger people are most concerned about and impacted by hygiene poverty.<sup>1</sup>



Charitable organisations play an important role in supporting people in hygiene poverty. In the first 6 months of 2025, we have connected over 390,000 brand-new hygiene items to communities doing it tough.<sup>1</sup>

# Hygiene poverty: one year on

In 2024, Good360 Australia revealed a confronting truth: more than 4 million Australians were experiencing hygiene poverty, going without essential hygiene and cleaning products. Too many people were being forced to make impossible choices between heating, eating, and keeping clean.

A year on, our latest findings confirm what our charity and school partners see every day: **hygiene poverty is still a harsh reality for many people in Australia.**

In 2025, the same number of Australians report they are worried they won't be able to afford basic hygiene or cleaning items in the near future. Despite widespread coverage claiming the end of the cost of living crisis, it remains ongoing and continues to stretch household budgets past their limits.

**Despite the scale of the issue, we've witnessed a concerning 43% decline in hygiene product donations by businesses across FY24-25.**

This drop has real consequences, reducing the number of people we're able to support with the essentials that help them participate in school, work and everyday life with dignity.

Hygiene poverty means going without one or more hygiene products because you cannot afford them, including:

- › Toothpaste
- › Toothbrushes
- › Shampoo
- › Soap
- › Deodorant
- › Period care
- › Toilet paper
- › Nappies
- › And much more

Hygiene poverty is more than a lack of soap or shampoo. It erodes a person's sense of self, health, and inclusion. It means missing out on school, work, or community events, not because someone lacks motivation or opportunity, but because they can't afford deodorant or period products.

At Good360, we've seen the difference these products can make. Since 2015, we've connected more than 26 million hygiene items to people in need, and in the first six months of 2025, we've distributed over 390,000 items through our network of charities and disadvantaged schools. But demand is rising faster than supply.

Good360 calls on businesses, funders and decision-makers to step up. Hygiene poverty is no longer invisible; it's a national issue affecting people in every postcode. When we work together to get essential products into the hands of people who need them most, we can restore dignity, confidence and hope.





Over 5 million  
Australians *are*  
*worried* about  
not being able to  
afford hygiene  
and cleaning  
products in the  
future<sup>1</sup>

Over 3 million  
Australians have  
*skipped buying*  
hygiene/cleaning  
products to  
afford other  
essentials<sup>1</sup>







## Who is going without?

Right now, **3.5 million Australians** are struggling to afford personal hygiene products, and more than **3 million have had to go without altogether, just to make room in the budget for other essentials like food, rent, or power bills**. When times are tough, hygiene is often one of the first things to be cut.

Young people aged 18 to 24 are feeling the strain more than most. **Almost 1 in 3 (30%) are worried they won't be able to afford hygiene or cleaning products in the near future**. That's well above the national average (19%). A quarter have already found it difficult to keep up with the cost of household cleaning products, with

mental well being identified as the top impact of hygiene poverty.

We're also seeing differences across the country. In South Australia, people are particularly concerned about being able to afford the basics in the future. In Western Australia, affordability issues are already taking a toll on physical health. And in Victoria, many people have had to skip buying cleaning products altogether so they can cover other costs.

What this tells us is simple: **hygiene poverty is a nationwide issue**. No community is immune, but some are feeling the pinch more sharply than others.

# The impact of hygiene poverty

Hygiene poverty has the ability to affect so many parts of a person's life, from how they feel about themselves to how they show up in the world around them.

For over 1.6 million Australians, the impact is felt deeply on a mental level. **Struggling to afford basic hygiene items has left many people feeling embarrassed, ashamed, and with lower self-esteem.** When you don't feel clean or confident, it's easy to withdraw from social situations and start feeling isolated.

But the effects don't stop there. More than 1.3 million people say their physical health has been affected too, whether that's skipping dental care, letting go of skincare routines, or avoiding exercise and other personal care habits that help them feel good day to day.

Hygiene poverty is disrupting over 1 million people's ability to take part in daily life. That might mean missing out on social events, avoiding school or work, or pulling away from community activities, simply because they don't feel they can show up as their full selves or worried they'd be shamed for their poor hygiene.

All of this adds up to more than just short-term discomfort. Over time, hygiene poverty can chip away at a person's confidence, wellbeing, and connection to others. Without support, it can lead to even bigger challenges, locking people into cycles of exclusion and inequality that are much harder to break.

12% of people living in Australia are *struggling to afford* personal hygiene and cleaning products for the first time<sup>1</sup>

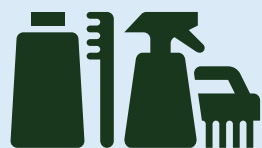




When asking the general public about their experiences affording hygiene products, we found:



**21% of women (1 in 5) are worried they won't be able to afford essential hygiene or cleaning products in the near future compared to 16% (1 in 6) of men.<sup>1</sup>**



**Over 2 million women (17%) have struggled to afford essential personal hygiene or cleaning products in the last 6 months.<sup>1</sup>**

## The gender gap in hygiene equality

Hygiene poverty doesn't impact everyone equally, and women are bearing the brunt of it.

More than 1 in 5 women (21%) are worried they won't be able to afford essential hygiene or cleaning products in the near future, compared with 16% of men. In just the last six months, over 2.3 million women (17%) have struggled to afford household cleaning products, and women are also more likely to have skipped buying these essentials to cover other basic needs like food or bills (13% of women vs 10% of men).

These numbers reflect bigger, long-standing inequalities. Women are more likely to be living below the poverty line and make up 53% of people in poverty<sup>2</sup>. They also continue to face a persistent wage gap, earning, on average, 16% less than men in full-time roles<sup>3</sup>.

When women are earning less, doing more unpaid care work, and paying more for personal health products, it's not surprising that so many are being pushed to the edge when it comes to hygiene access.

Period poverty is another pressing issue, and tends to hit women harder and especially already marginalised communities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with a disability or chronic condition, and gender-diverse Australians. The impact of period poverty is far-reaching: missing school, skipping work, avoiding social interaction, and experiencing anxiety and shame, all simply because they couldn't access the products they need.<sup>5</sup>

*"We plan a special Mother's Day event every year to support women in domestic violence shelters, and we're always looking for comforting hygiene products to include. Items like hand cream, haircare, or facial products help promote self-care and a sense of dignity during a difficult time."*

**Request from Good360 School Member**





## Donor spotlight: Ego Pharmaceuticals



Ego Pharmaceuticals has played a vital role in helping communities maintain their health and dignity through access to essential skincare. To date, they have donated more than \$516,000 worth of products, distributing 90,905 items to support 5,165 individuals doing it tough. These donations include much-needed skincare products suitable for the whole family, helping people of all ages feel clean, comfortable and cared for.

"Everyone deserves to feel clean, comfortable and cared for, but for many Australians facing hardship, even basic hygiene products can be out of reach. At QV Skincare, we believe healthy skin is fundamental to overall well-being. Through our partnership with Good360, we've helped provide gentle, dermatologically tested skincare essentials to people doing it tough. We're proud to support a model that ensures these products reach the families and communities who need them most, restoring not just skin health, but also confidence and dignity."

**Simone Thomassen, Head of Global Marketing and Sustainability Committee Chair, QV Skincare**

"We Care Connect provides free clothing, bedding, baby equipment, and other essentials to Central Coast and Hunter kids living in poverty. But we know that means their parents (often sole parenting mums) are in great need too, so we love the toiletries and personal care products from Good360 and Ego which help out the whole family. They mean so much to families with a newborn and no way to afford everything they need. We are very thankful for your generous support."

**We Care Connect, Good360 Network Member**

*Image courtesy of Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Centre*

# Good360's member network

Good360's charity and disadvantaged school members play an important role in supporting people in hygiene poverty. They provide shame-free access to products to help meet immediate needs and often act as a gateway to wider support.

**Our member network  
has connected  
26,509,680 hygiene  
items to people in need  
since 2015, supporting  
2,337,847 individuals.**

*"As a worker in the homeless field with past life experience of being homeless as a teenager, I know how much it means to oneself to be able to brush your hair and clean your teeth when not privileged to showering facilities. It makes you feel at least half human in the world of homelessness.*

*Sometimes it's the simple things in life that build confidence for the homeless people that we work with. We found they were very happy to be able to get access to toothpaste and other basic hygiene essentials.*

*One client commented, 'It allows me to talk to people with a smile on my dial.'*

**Good360 Network Member**

## Our donors

Special thank you to our generous product donors, whose kindness has meant vulnerable communities can access much-needed hygiene essentials, providing hope and dignity.



CLARINS



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scJohnson



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Sugar



White  
Glo



# What can be done?

While our network has made an incredible impact in connecting hygiene essentials to communities in need, there are still so many going without, impacting their physical and mental health and reducing their ability to engage with work, education and social opportunities. It is clear that this is not a short-term crisis, but a long-term problem we cannot allow to become the new normal. We're calling on businesses, charities and public bodies to join us and protect the human right to hygiene.

*"I am the school-based youth health nurse in a very low socioeconomic area. We are finding a lot of students don't even have access to soap or deodorant and despite regular education with students, they are continuing to tell us these items are actually a luxury. We would love to be able to help out our students with the basic necessities for good hygiene."*

**Good360 School Member**

## We all can play a role in tackling hygiene poverty in Australia:



### Donate hygiene products

Retailers, manufacturers and brands with new hygiene products to donate can [visit our website](#) or contact Good360 Australia: [corporatepartnerships@good360.org.au](mailto:corporatepartnerships@good360.org.au)

In 2024 alone, \$648 million worth of brand-new toiletries and \$40 million in surplus cleaning supplies went to waste, a 35% and 33% increase since 2021.<sup>4</sup> If your business has excess hygiene stock, don't let it go unused. Donate it to Good360 and help provide dignity, health, and hope to people doing it tough.



### Join our network to access hygiene products

Charities and disadvantage schools can join our network for free to access hygiene products to support local communities. [Register at:](#) <https://good360.org.au/get-the-goods/>



### Donate money

to help alleviate hygiene poverty, because everyone deserves access to life's essentials. [Donate today via https://give.good360.org.au/impact-area-hygiene/](https://give.good360.org.au/impact-area-hygiene/)



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# Help us close the hygiene gap, what items are needed?

In 2024, approximately \$648 million worth of brand-new toiletries and \$40 million in surplus cleaning supplies went unused, a 35% and 33% increase since 2021. While surplus stock remains an important resource, businesses also have the unique opportunity to use their buying power to purposefully support Australians experiencing hardship. These are some of the most requested items from our members, along with other essentials that can make a difference in easing hygiene poverty in communities.

## Personal Hygiene

Body Wash / Soap  
Body Wipes  
Conditioner  
Deodorant  
Face Wash  
Feminine Hygiene Products  
(pads, tampons, liners,  
menstrual cups)  
Hair brushes / combs  
Hair care  
Hand Sanitiser  
Lice treatment  
Lip Balm  
Makeup  
Moisturiser / Lotion  
Nail care  
Razors  
Shampoo  
Shaving Cream / Gel  
Skin care  
Toilet Paper  
Toiletries Bag / Kit  
Toothbrushes  
Toothpaste  
Travel size items

## Baby & Toddler Care

Baby Shampoo & Body Wash  
Baby Wipes  
Barrier Cream / Nappy Cream  
Children's Toothbrushes &  
Toothpaste  
Nappies (all sizes)  
Nappy Bags  
Toddler Toilet Training Supplies

## Disaster Relief & Emergency Clean-up

All-Purpose Cleaner  
Bleach  
Disinfectant Wipes  
Face Masks  
First Aid Kits  
Gloves (disposable or reusable)  
Hand Sanitiser  
Heavy-duty Garbage Bags  
Mops & Buckets  
Paper Towels  
Toilet Cleaner  
Towels & Washcloths  
Water Bottles /  
Purification Supplies

## Household Cleaning

Air Fresheners  
All purpose cleaners  
Bin Liners / Garbage Bags  
Broom / Dustpan  
Cleaning cloths  
Dishwashing Liquid / Powder /  
Pods  
Disposable Gloves  
Duster  
Face Masks  
Floor Cleaner  
Glass Cleaner  
Mop  
Rubber Gloves  
Sponges / Scrubbers  
Towels / Hand Towels /  
Facewashers  
Surface Spray / Disinfectant  
Vaccuum Cleaners

## Laundry

Bucket  
Clothes Airers / Drying Racks  
Clothes Pegs  
Fabric Softener  
Ironing Boards  
Laundry Baskets / Hampers  
Laundry Detergent (liquid,  
powder, pods)  
Laundry Sanitiser  
Washing Machines



# A note from our Founder and Managing Director



"While some commentators have declared that the cost of living crisis is over, our research has uncovered the heartbreaking reality that millions of Australians are struggling to afford everyday basics such soap, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, household cleaning products and feminine hygiene products such as tampons. The impacts of hygiene poverty are wide-ranging, with our research showing it takes a devastating toll on people's mental and physical well-being. Eliminating hygiene poverty isn't just about ensuring people have access to toothpaste and deodorant, it's about helping people to live a dignified and healthy life."

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Alison Covington AM'.

**Alison Covington AM,**  
**Good360 Australia Founder & MD**

## Sources:

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## About Good360 Australia:

Good360 Australia is the largest digital marketplace in Australia for the retail industry to donate unused and unsold consumer goods to people in need. Good360 is a connector, we distribute millions of new, unsold consumer goods like clothes, homewares, computers, appliances, furniture, toiletries and toys that have been donated by over 600 partners, to a network of over 4,800 charities and disadvantaged schools across Australia supporting people in need. The result is a Circle of Good that reduces need and waste in our communities, helping both people and our planet.

## Donate to Good360 to help alleviate the impact of hygiene poverty



\$25 can give \$500 worth of essential baby items to families escaping domestic violence



\$50 can provide \$1,000 of hygiene products to people experiencing homelessness



\$100 can deliver \$2,000 of cleaning products to older Australians on low incomes



**Be part of the Circle of Good.**

For more information visit [www.good360.org.au](http://www.good360.org.au) or follow us @good360au

