

The Impact of the \$550/fortnight Coronavirus Supplement

550 Reasons to Smile Survey Results

This survey was conducted by the [National Council of Single Mothers and their Children](#), in conjunction with their campaign [550 Reasons to Smile](#), in order to highlight the impact the \$550 per fortnight Coronavirus Supplement has had on families. The results were collated and then analysed by [Anti-Poverty Week](#).

In this document, three of the five questions have been represented graphically:

1. How has the extra \$550 affected you?
2. How have you spent the extra \$550/fortnight Coronavirus Supplement?
3. How important is it to keep the coronavirus supplement of \$550 per fortnight?

Additionally, select quotes from the survey are in the last four pages of this document.



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How has the extra \$550 affected you?



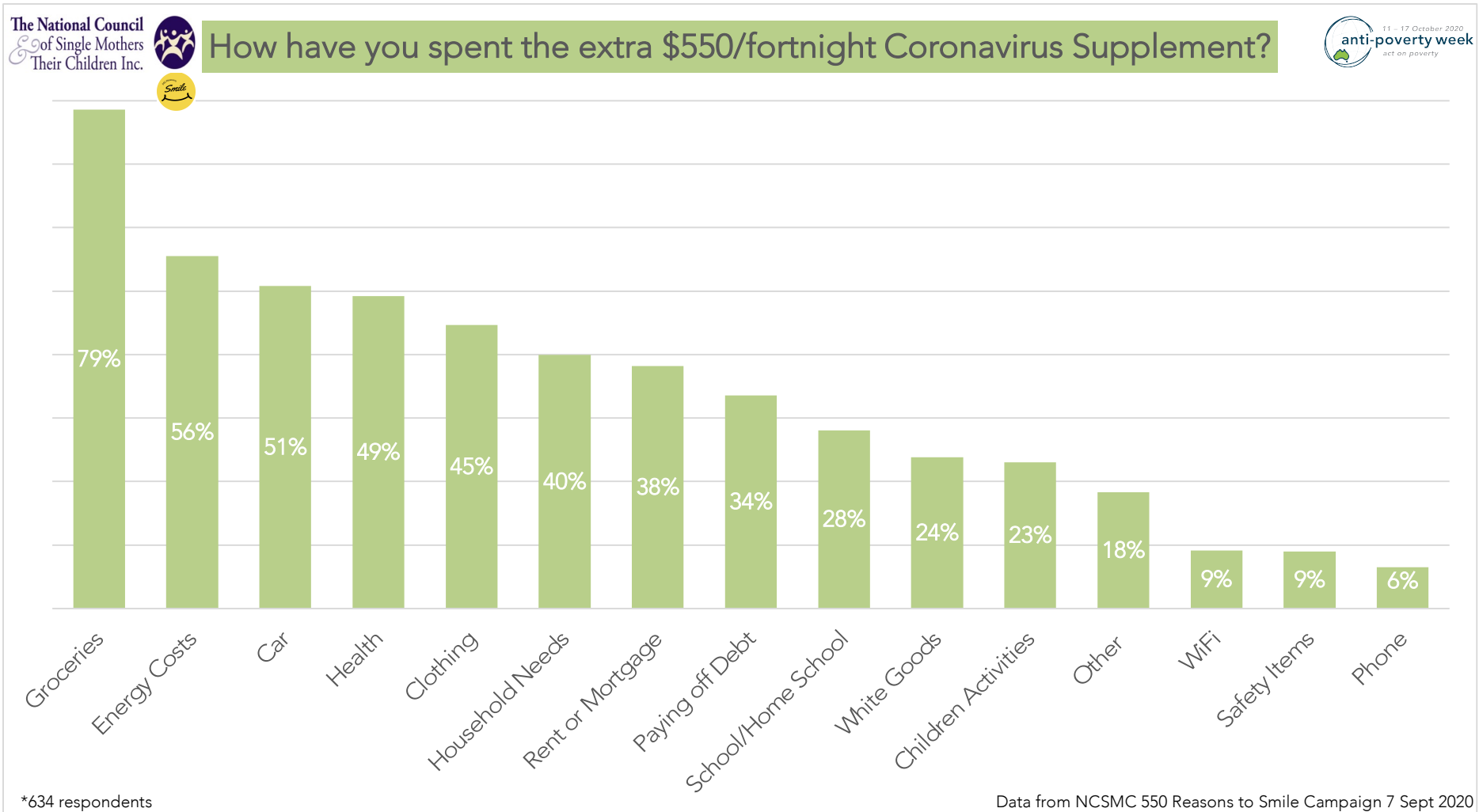
Impact	Responses
Reduced stress and anxiety as we can pay our household bills	88%
Our family is healthier due to having enough food to eat and healthier options	69%
Sleeping better, not waking up due to money stress	64%
Healthier as we can stay warm in winter and cool in summer	53%
Less conflict as we have less financial stress in the house	47%
Stigma has reduced as we can afford clothing e.g. a coat for the winter, shoes that fit	43%
Our family is healthier due to filling scripts, accessing medication	40%
Less isolated as we have a car on the road and can buy petrol	37%
Feeling proud: better grooming, hair appointment, dentist etc.	31%
Happier as we can attend social events like other families e.g. birthday parties	28%
We are safer due to increased security in the house	13%
Other	11%
Our family is happier and we can now afford a family pet	9%
No affect or change	2%

*634 respondents

Data from NCSMC 550 Reasons to Smile Campaign 7 Sept 2020

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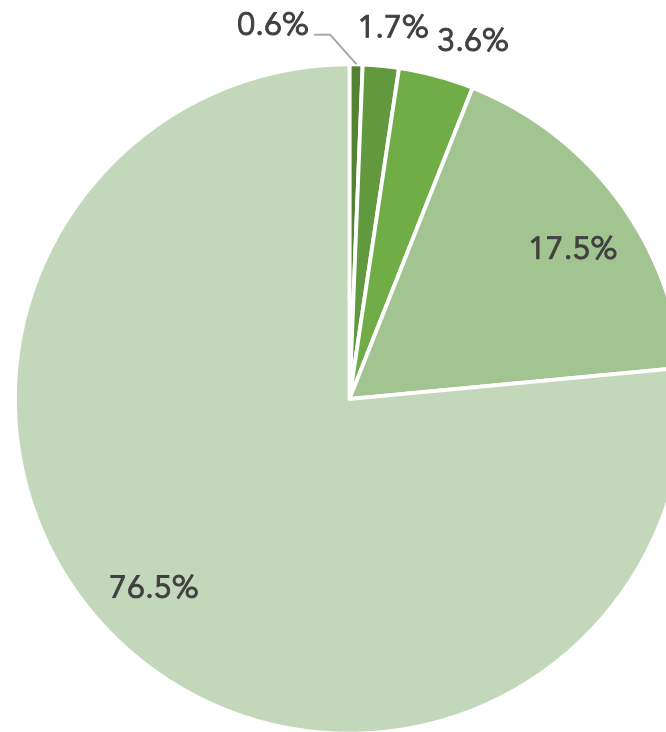
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How important is it to keep the coronavirus supplement of \$550 per fortnight?



■ Not important ■ Somewhat important ■ Important ■ Very important ■ Critical

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Select Quotes Received in September from Single Parents Receiving the \$550 Coronavirus Supplement

Why it Needs to Stay Above the Poverty Line

"I would just like to say Thank you. This money means more to people like me than you'll ever know!! If this extra money keeps going it will help us single parents on Newstart to raise happy, healthy, well- adjusted children that turn into happy, healthy, well-adjusted adults and we need more of those in the world these days."

"Thank you for the supplement, I'd be lost without it."

"I can't fully express the full impact of this money, as I don't know where we would be without. It's allowing me to keep my three children safe from violence. It's allowing me to get us all the professional mental health care we need."

"This money means that when one of my children says they need new shoes I don't sit and cry because I have to choose between shoes, the small amount I have for food or rent."

"Please keep the higher, livable rate of jobseeker so vulnerable people are more likely to aspire to and achieve a better life."

Mental and Physical Health

"Having the extra money has definitely improved my mental health."

"I suffer from anxiety and depression which has been helped by having some financial stability. One of the things that attribute to my stress is never having the money to cover the basics and the constant juggling act to find the money to make sure my kids are fed and have their basic needs met."

"I am really worried about how my son is going to deal with things going back to poverty after tasting another life. The pressure is going to be massive if the payment goes back to what it was. I am already really stressed thinking about the Sept 25 cut."

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"I've had chronic illness for 20+ years, I now have enough to see specialists."

"The biggest relief was being able to buy myself and my kids glasses. They were struggling with reading and starting to slip behind at school and I was feeling very anxious about the longterm impacts, and I have a neurological condition that has required me to get new glasses every 6 months as my eyesight is deteriorating."

"I think the \$550 supplement should stay on because it removes the stress of living fortnight to fortnight wondering if you're going to have enough money to pay your bills or put food on the table there has been times that I myself have gone days without a meal so my child could eat and I could afford the utility bills."

"Dignity. Self respect. Feeding my kids healthy meals. Petrol to take kids on a day out. Filling a script before my medication runs out, instead of going without. The stress lifting while we all sleep better knowing that we have food and bills being paid."

"I no longer run out of essentials, and haven't had to use afterpay for presents for birthdays etc, as I can put a bit aside for them...also I am less stressed, knowing I can afford more fruit, and healthier options for my children."

Housing

"I live in Tasmania. This supplement means rentals are now more affordable for me and I can find a rental I can afford. Unfortunately once this ends I will struggle again. And most likely have to give my rental up. (We were all couch surfing with friends and family until this supplement.)"

"With rents so high how do people rent a house as getting a government house is so hard being homeless with kids is a real worry. And you can't just move, that costs a lot of money."

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Dread when the \$550 is Reduced

“The stress of never having enough money to cover the bills, unable to refinance and no super after a separation, being a solo mum unable to cover rent/mortgage and get heating, clothes and food is debilitating. The extra money has helped me level out the bills, buy heating and splurge on new clothes and home school equipment. I can also buy better foods and mental health has improved.”

“When the \$550 ends I dread living like before again. I dread the kids going without. I dread the hunger, and fear of homelessness.”

“In recent weeks I have been dreading September arriving in pure fear of my finances changing significantly & being left short or not able to afford my rent, to keep my car on the road & my fridge completely full, the thought that this money will drop it be removed has me in a constant state of anxiety, triggering my depression & worry in regards to how I will get by & provide the basic needs for my son.

Even the reduction to \$250 per fortnight will have a drastic effect and bring back budget stress on families.”

Work-Related

“I have spent the extra money on everything I needed to get employed. I spent it on important checks, such as Working with Children check. I have spent it on my vehicle so I can travel to job interviews. I have spent it on food so that I am healthy and can maintain employment when achieved. I've spent it on internet to help with being connected for job interviews over communication avenues such as Zoom. I've also spent it on clothing so that I look more professional when I'm attending a job interview, whether it is online or face-to-face.”

“I was able to buy a new laptop which meant I could access better ways to build my business...My microwave had become rusty on the inside. I worried about using it. I have been able to buy a new one. I have been able to purchase a desk so my son can complete his studies. He used to sit on the floor.”

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“Being a single parent, having sole care, working is tricky for me having to juggle child care with being available to accept last minute, casual work. As a casual relief teacher and swimming instructor, my work opportunities stopped due to COVID, and have been slowly coming back the past month. The \$550 has been a god send, given that my work completely stopped. I still have had to withdraw from Super, to help with debts and my mortgage, yet having a consistent fortnightly income provides security and reduces stress. My mental health has improved during this time, regardless of the impact of COVID. The financial security has lessened the additional stress that we would have otherwise been experiencing as a result of this pandemic.”

“I lost my job through no fault of my own through COVID lockdown and will not get be getting it back unfortunately... without the CVS I would not be able to afford everyday living expenses and I am concerned about what will happen when it finishes...”

Importance of Supplement as Single Parent Mum Who Receives no Support from the Child's Father

“As a single mum (with no financial help from the father) I was able to afford my son's multiple specialist appointments. I have also been able to afford a full service on my car recently and I am ahead on all my utilities bills. Our rented home is very cold without the heat on in winter and I've been able to afford to have it on more when needed.”

“The supplement has been life-giving. I left family violence 6 years ago and rebuilding after this has been a long struggle. This supplement has sped that up. And it's meant seeing my kids have the things they need (very little support from their father). The result - a brighter future of continuing health... and more possibilities in regard to work and creating long term self-sufficient security.”

“If I received any child support at all for my children, maybe the supplement wouldn't be so critical.”

“We receive no child support, and even though I work, I lost one of jobs due to not being able to work at multiple sites. This supplement has been life changing. I fear without it we will again be suffering without enough money for decent food, heating and being able to run the car. To be honest, I am quite scared.”