

MEDIA RELEASE

## Teaching financial literacy in schools has an immediate impact on students: report

24 July 2023

A nationwide program launched with the ambitious aim of bridging the persistent financial education gap in schools has delivered promising results in its first year.

Ecstra Foundation's [Financial education in schools Impact Report 2022](#), shows that the Talk Money program has made an immediate and positive impact on the financial literacy, knowledge and confidence of over 100,000 school students across Australia.

Caroline Stewart, Ecstra Foundation's CEO says "Talk Money is an evidence based, curriculum aligned program that teaches students foundational financial literacy skills such as healthy saving habits, managing spending, setting goals and financial decision making, with the overall aim of building financial wellbeing.

"We know that financial wellbeing is aligned to the economic and social goals set out in the Government's new *Measuring What Matters – Australia's First Wellbeing Framework*. However, achieving outcomes across many economic and social indicators may prove difficult if the worsening gap in financial literacy and capability across all age groups in Australia is not addressed.

"Young people aged 15 – 24 fare the worst, with many leaving school without much needed practical financial decision making skills as they undertake further study and work, and grapple with the cost of living pressures of housing, transport and student debt.

An important and obvious practical first step is to provide dedicated financial education in schools," Ms Stewart says.

Where students previously lacked knowledge and skills in the basics of saving, spending, earning and goal setting, the evaluation data showed impressive uplifts after attending the Talk Money workshops, including

- 85 per cent of Year 5 and 6 students can now identify different ways to save (42 per cent increase)
- 78 per cent of Year 7 and 8 students now understand the importance of saving to achieve their goals (45 per cent increase)
- 88 per cent of Year 5 and 6 students believe they can learn to save and spend money well (29 per cent increase)
- 95 per cent of all students say they learnt something in the workshops they can use.

"For example, a Year 5 Victorian school student said the "super saving strategy" taught in the workshop would help them save and learn more about how to make their financial goals a success. In a Year 9 & 10 Northern Territory workshop students realised their pay had been wrongly calculated resulting in underpayment, and they were provided with the tools to raise this with their employer," Ms Stewart said.

On workplace outcomes, 75 per cent of Year 9 and 10 students stated that they now know how to manage work administration including their tax and super, up from 34 per cent prior to attending the workshops - a remarkable 122 per cent increase.

Additionally, 87 per cent of students now understand their rights at work (80 per cent increase), 86 per cent know where to seek information and support about their rights at work (92 per cent increase) and 76 per cent feel capable of discussing this with their employer (69 per cent increase).

"With Australian youth employment rates at a record high, teaching students the financial fundamentals of earning such as calculating and reading payslips, tax, superannuation and understanding their rights at work as they get their first job is absolutely crucial to help them succeed in the workplace," she said.

Teacher support and feedback has been instrumental in ensuring the program's effectiveness and rapid expansion into a range of schools. In a crowded curriculum, providing schools with access to the workshops, up to date resources and tools to support effective learning in classrooms and at home is essential.

"The feedback is very strong with 91 per cent of teachers reporting improved financial knowledge among students after participating in the workshops, and 100 per cent of teachers saying the workshops are relevant to their students' lives. 69 per cent of teachers also said their confidence in teaching money management improved due to participating in the workshop."

The program encourages students to engage outside of schools with their parents, caregivers and employers about money matters, and provides links to important government services, including the Fair Work Ombudsman, ASIC's Moneysmart, the ATO and the ACCC.

In 2022, the Talk Money program reached 105,972 student bookings across 3,096 workshops in 527 schools, with a presence in all Australian states and territories. A significant proportion of schools in lower socio-economic areas (29%) and regional and rural locations (21%) benefited from the program. Talk Money bookings are on track to double in 2023, an outstanding result for a new program.

To read the report click [here](#).

### **About Ecstra Foundation:**

*Ecstra Foundation is an independent charitable foundation committed to building the financial wellbeing of Australians within a fair financial system. Ecstra works to ensure that more Australians are confident making money decisions today and planning for the future.*

*Ecstra launched Talk Money with Ecstra Foundation, a free national financial education program teaching young Australians money lessons for life, in February 2022. The program is provided at no cost to schools across all sectors, and is funded by Ecstra as part of their commitment to help ensure greater access to financial education for all at key life stages.*

Schools can learn more or register for Talk Money workshops across Australia at [www.talkmoney.org.au](http://www.talkmoney.org.au)

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