

95% kids benefit from financial ed program: Report

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A free youth financial education program, Talk Money, has achieved a substantial jump in financial literacy rates among more than 100,000 school-aged kids, including a 75% improvement amongst high schoolers in managing their taxation and superannuation accounts, according to a report by the program's founder, the Ecstra Foundation.

The *Financial education in schools Impact Report 2022*, released today, reported that 95% of all students in Ecstra's Talk Money program had taken away practical financial skills from the workshops.

Among the elder cohort, 87% now understand their rights at work (an 80% increase since prior to the workshop), 86% know where to seek information and support about their rights at work (a 92% increase), and 76% feel capable of discussing this with their employer (a 69% increase).

The Talk Money program, which has an overall remit to improve financial well-being among younger Australians, is largely focused on boosting foundational financial skills, including improving saving habits, expenses management, financial goal-setting and decision-making.

"The feedback is very strong with 91% of teachers reporting improved financial knowledge among students after participating in the workshops, and 100% of teachers saying the workshops are relevant to their students' lives," said Ecstra Foundation's chief executive Caroline Stewart.

She added: "69% of teachers also said their confidence in teaching money management improved due to participating in the workshop."

According to the report: 85% of Year 5 and 6 students in the program can now identify different ways to save (a 42% increase); 78% of Year 7 and 8 students now understand the importance of saving to achieve their goals (a 45% increase); and 88% of Year 5 and 6 students believe they can learn to save and spend money well (a 29% increase).

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.

According to Ecstra, a significant proportion of schools in lower socio-economic areas (29%) and regional and rural locations (21%) benefited from the program.

“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*,” Steward said.

“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.

According to Ecstra, the resounding success of the 2022 Talk Money program has seen bookings for 2023 “on track to double”.

Founded in 2018, the Ecstra Foundation was formed as part of the Federal Government’s \$23 million National Financial Capability Strategy.

The organisation is funded by Community Benefit Payments made under the terms of ASIC’s Enforceable undertakings actions with financial institutions and individuals.

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