NAPPY STRESS IN VICTORIA
COLLECTIVELY WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO MUCH

Introduction
PAGE 04

What is nappy stress and what causes it?
PAGE 08

What are the solutions and what is the role of The Nappy Collective?
PAGE 21

What is the size of the problem?
PAGE 14

Conclusion
PAGE 26
Purpose of this report is:

› To define nappy stress as families not having enough nappies to change their children as often as they need to. They are likely to cut back on other essentials in order to afford enough nappies

› To raise awareness within the Victorian community of the nature and extent of nappy stress

› To better understand the social needs and support gaps currently faced by families experiencing nappy stress

› To start a discussion in the community about how to better address this problem.

This report was produced by The Nappy Collective (TNC) with the support of Social Ventures Australia (SVA) Consulting

This report was funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services

To inform the report, consultations were carried out with key stakeholders such as charity partners, donors and funders. In addition, analysis was conducted of broader social issues as key inputs in understanding the extent of the nappy stress problem.

Professional Disclosure Statement:

SVA has prepared this document in good faith on the basis of our research and information available to us at the date of publication (“Information”) without any independent verification. SVA does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness or currency of the Information.

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We have learnt about the larger need for nappies across many groups experiencing disadvantage and the implications of nappy stress. These include significant health risks for babies, impact on mental health and wellbeing of parents and the cost burden of providing nappies to one, two or even in some cases three children, which can amplify the causes of disadvantage.

Over the past five years The Nappy Collective has grown to support over 230 charity partners and is supported by communities right across Australia who through collective giving are helping to address this need. We know nappies are always in high demand for the families our charity partners support and that we never have enough supply to meet this demand.

We are grateful for the support of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services for supporting The Nappy Collective commission this report on nappy stress across Victoria. We would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the support of The Nappy Collective community, the charity partners, donors and other stakeholders who gave their valuable time and insights to contribute to this report.

We would also like to acknowledge the staff, committee and volunteers of The Nappy Collective as well as the greater Nappy Collective community right across Australia for contributing to what we have been able to achieve to date.

Nappy stress appears to be a persistent problem in Australia. We hope that this report will raise awareness of the impact of nappy stress and assist the community to provide a greater response to this need.
What is nappy stress and why is it critical to solve?

Families who are living below the poverty line or find themselves in crisis can struggle to provide an adequate supply of nappies for their children.

This can have serious negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of parents and children and affects the families financially and socially.

Nappy stress is defined as families not having enough nappies to change their children as often as they need to. They are likely to cut back on other essentials in order to afford enough nappies.

How big is this problem?

Nationally, approximately 250,000 children live in families that experience nappy stress.

In Victoria alone, around 62,000 children in 35,000 families experience nappy stress.

These children require approximately 95m nappies per year, which equates to between $31-48m in spending on nappies per year.

Demographic groups which are more at-risk of experiencing nappy stress include:

› People who are unemployed or whose main income source is government allowances or pensions
› Those living in public housing
› Children in sole parent households.

Who is The Nappy Collective?

The Nappy Collective provides families experiencing disadvantage with essential material aid for the most vulnerable members within that family unit, the children. It is the only Australian organisation focused on collecting and distributing nappies to families in need.

The Nappy Collective runs bi-annual collectives across Australia to raise donations of leftover, unused nappies which otherwise may be thrown out.

It redistributes these nappies through charity partners (a variety of non-profit organisations) who work with families experiencing disadvantage. To date, The Nappy Collective has distributed over 2.6m nappies across Australia.
The Nappy Collective is on a mission to divert leftover, unused, disposable nappies to families in crisis. The Nappy Collective holds Deductible Gift Recipient status and is focused exclusively on collecting and distributing nappies.

It does this by:
- Running bi-annual collectives for donations of leftover, unused nappies
- Redistributing nappies to charity partners who work with families experiencing disadvantage
- Playing a specific role in the broader system of wrap-around support.

### The History of the Nappy Collective

- **2013**: The Nappy Collective is founded
- **2014**
  - Distributed > 220k nappies to date
- **2015**
  - Collecting nappies in > 30 towns and cities
- **2016**
  - Distributed >1.7m nappies to date
- **2017**
  - Collecting nappies in > 50 towns and cities
- **2018**
  - Distributed >2.6m nappies to date
WHAT IS NAPPY STRESS AND WHAT CAUSES IT?

Definition of nappy stress

In this report:

› **Nappy need** is an estimate of the total number of nappies required by a family to change their children

› **Nappy stress** is defined as families not having enough nappies to change their children as often as they need to. They are likely to cut back on other essentials in order to afford enough nappies.

Nappy stress is driven by three main factors:

1. A lack of income, or income poverty
2. High cost of living
3. Broader social disadvantage

Measure of disadvantage

The number of children and families experiencing nappy stress will vary widely according to the measure of exclusion, poverty or deprivation that is used.

In this report, the assumption is that children and families living at or below the poverty line may experience nappy stress.

The poverty line (50% of median income, after housing costs) for a single adult is $353 a week.¹

Key assumptions

To quantify the size, trend and cost of the problem this report makes the following assumptions:

› **Children aged 0 to 48 months** wear nappies

› On average children (0-48 months) require **4.23 nappies per day**, noting that on average babies 0-3 months use 6.05 nappies a day and children 37-48 months use 2.4 nappies per day²

› **Average unit cost per nappy** in Australia is estimated at 50c for those who cannot afford or are not able to buy in bulk or at sale prices. This report also provides estimates using a lower average cost of 32c that applies to those who can buy in bulk or at sale prices.³

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² Disposable nappies and nappy-pants – Kimberly Clark Baby Care Usage Diary, Fifth Dimension, 2018;
WHAT CAUSES NAPPY STRESS?

1. **Income**
   - **Employment income**: Income inequality and a lack of regular or reliable employment income means that many Australians struggle to afford sufficient nappies for their children.

2. **Costs**
   - **General living costs**: Increasing cost of all basic material goods means that families have limited disposable income.
   - **Housing costs**: Increasing housing costs, including renters and those managing mortgages.

3. **Social environment**
   - **Prevalence of crisis**: Experiencing crisis events such as mental ill health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse can lead to families experiencing nappy stress.
   - **Social isolation and financial resilience**: Social isolation and a lack of access to wider social supports mean that many Australians cannot access social, emotional and financial support when faced with a crisis.

Financial resilience is the ability to access and draw on internal capabilities and appropriate, acceptable and accessible external resources and supports in times of financial adversity. Lower income earners are often not financially resilient.

Source: SVA analysis
UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE CAUSES OF NAPPY STRESS

Three potential causes or drivers of nappy stress have been identified. Research suggests that over the past 10-15 years these drivers are mostly getting worse for many lower income Australian families resulting in nappy stress being a persistent and growing social problem.

It is worth noting that these drivers are not exhaustive nor entirely mutually exclusive. For example, someone’s social environment can itself be a driver of income poverty, or an increase in the cost of living can lead to a personal crisis.

It is also important to recognise the complexity of these drivers as macro socio-economic and political factors that make specific forecasts about nappy stress and indeed rates of poverty challenging.

What we do know is that despite a prolonged period of economic growth in Australia, lower income earners face persistent disadvantage and many are experiencing a range of financial and material hardships including nappy stress.

While nappy stress is fundamentally driven by a lack of income, high cost of living, and broader social disadvantage, interviews with The Nappy Collective’s charity partners highlighted specific circumstances which can spark nappy stress.

› Fleeing family violence
› Unexpected costs or large bills
› Illness (of parent or child)
› Unexpected premature baby
› Experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness
› Children returning home suddenly through court process
› Experiencing issues with mental health or alcohol and other drugs.

Source: SVA analysis; Stakeholder consultations October and November 2018

Our client was 21 years old and had a newborn baby. She was couch surfing and was down to her last nappy and wipe.

The Nappy Collective charity partner

Single parents on a low income with multiple children are my client group which is most in need of nappies.

The Nappy Collective charity partner
Employment income

Despite sustained economic growth in Australia, income inequality is getting worse\(^1\), and for lower income earners poverty rates have remained entrenched at a high level\(^2\).

Social security payments

Unsurprisingly, those experiencing poverty at the highest rates are those relying on government allowances – Youth Allowance (64%) and Newstart (55%).\(^3\) However, welfare expenditure did increase between 2006–07 and 2015–16, with an average annual growth rate of 3.4% in real terms.\(^4\)

General living costs

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows the cost of life’s basics such as fuel and transport are rising at their fastest pace and well above growth in wages. For example, the cost of living rose 2 per cent last year – the strongest pace of growth in 3.5 years.\(^5\)

Housing costs

House prices have risen faster than income since the mid 1990s.\(^6\) From 2007 to 2015, average (equivalised) housing costs for recipients of various social security payments increased at a higher rate than the 27% rise in overall median housing costs over the same period.\(^7\)

Prevalence of crisis

Some data suggests a decline in the rates of family violence in the last 12 months\(^8\), although rates remain alarmingly high. Meanwhile, the prevalence of mental illness has grown at 2.9% (1997 – 2015), greater than population growth (1.4%), with 4m people experiencing mental illness in Australia in 2015.\(^9\)

Social isolation and financial resilience

Many Australian children are socially excluded, they are experiencing disadvantage on multiple fronts and are unable to participate fully in their community. A local community’s risk of child social exclusion is highly persistent over time.\(^10\)

Up to one in six Australians does not have meaningful access to financial services to see them through in the face of an incident like a large mobile phone bill.\(^11\)

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\(^{1}\) Based on SVA assessment of source data. Broadly considers a 10–15 year period.
\(^{3}\) Ibid Poverty in Australia (2018);
\(^{4}\) Ibid;
\(^{5}\) ABC News Fact Check, ‘Is Newstart spending growth lower under the Coalition and are recipients moving off it faster?’, viewed 6/12/18;
\(^{6}\) ABC, ‘Rising cost of living leaving many people struggling to pay for basic essentials’, viewed 6/12/18;
\(^{7}\) Grattan Institute, Housing Affordability Re-imagining the Australian dream, (2018) p16;
\(^{8}\) ACOSS, Poverty in Australia (2018), p 14;
\(^{9}\) AIHW, Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia (2018), p 23;
\(^{11}\) ‘Child Social Exclusion, Poverty and Disadvantage in Australia’ (2018) NATSEM;
WHY IS IT CRITICAL TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF NAPPY STRESS?

Health and wellbeing

› Children stay in soiled nappies for longer as families do not have an adequate supply of nappies to change their children as often as they need to
› Keeping children in soiled nappies longer is associated with nappy dermatitis and urinary tract infections¹
› Because children experience nappy dermatitis and urinary tract infections, they may show signs of irritation, experience discomfort, cry more and be difficult to manage²
› Having children in soiled nappies longer may result in parents feeling highly stressed and anxious, in turn putting children at greater risk of social, emotional and behavioural problems¹
› A lack of adequate nappies is significantly associated with poor maternal mental health – an inadequate supply of nappies may increase “parenting stress and create a reduced sense of parenting competency”.³

Financial

› Families cannot afford to pay for other essential items (e.g. food and bills)
› Families cannot afford to buy nappies in bulk (which would be cheaper per unit).

Social

› Children cannot attend some childcare centres if they do not have their own adequate supply of nappies
› If children cannot attend childcare, they miss out on social and educational opportunities and parents may have to miss work²
› Parents feel embarrassed and ashamed
› Parents feel reluctant and fearful to ask for help as they are concerned that child protection may become involved.


Stakeholder consultations October and November 2018

My client was escaping from a family violence situation. She had a small bag and nothing else. She was overwhelmed and very stressed that she couldn’t provide something as simple as a nappy for her baby.

The Nappy Collective charity partner
IMPACT ON DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

When families experience nappy stress, government can face increased costs in down-stream service provision in critical areas such as health. In addition to this, government may face extra pressure in dealing with multi-faceted problems such as homelessness. While experiencing homelessness may spark nappy stress for a family, it may also make it more difficult for a family or individual to break the cycle of homelessness.

Potential impacts on health and wellbeing

- Children need nappies to be clean and healthy
- Parents feel stressed and anxious and may experience poor mental health
- Without adequate nappies children experience skin and urinary conditions
- Children and parents are at greater risk of social, emotional and mental health problems
- Government faces increased cost associated with health, social and family violence services

Source: Stakeholder consultations October and November 2018

IMPACT ON SOCIAL PURPOSE ORGANISATIONS

Nappy stress also places significant pressure on social purpose organisations such as The Nappy Collective’s charity partners, to whom it distributes nappies.

These charity partners consider nappies as material aid, in the same category as food and other essential items. By providing nappies to their clients they can help to ensure that families have enough money for food.

If a charity partner does not have an adequate supply of nappies from The Nappy Collective the following can result:

- Clients go without an essential item
- Organisations are limited in their ability to purchase nappies directly – government funding is often tied to specific programs or services and not discretionary expenses like nappies
- Some frontline workers purchase nappies out of their own pocket
- Organisations seek to secure nappies from, or make referrals to, other organisations.

We would really struggle to support our families without The Nappy Collective.

The Nappy Collective charity partner
WHAT IS THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM?

THE PREVALENCE OF NAPPY STRESS AND COST OF THE NAPPY NEED

- More than 23m people live in Australia
- They spend around $490m on 1.5b nappies per year\(^1\)
- 3.05m Australians live below the poverty line (13.2% of the total population)\(^2\)
- 739,000 (17.3%) children (under 15 years of age) live below the poverty line.\(^3\)

In Australia, around 250,000 children in 140,000 families experience nappy stress.\(^4\)
- They require an estimated 383m nappies per year\(^5\)
- Which equates to an estimate of between $122-191m of nappies per year* as the total nappy need for these families.

In Victoria, around 62,000 children in 35,000 families experience nappy stress.\(^6\)
- They require an estimated 95m nappies per year\(^7\)
- Which equates to estimate of between $31-48m spent on nappies per year* as the total nappy need for these families.

Total nappy need: an estimate of the total number of nappies required by a family to change their children.

Nappy stress: when families do not have enough nappies to change their children as often as they need to. They are likely to cut back on other essentials in order to afford enough nappies. Families experiencing nappy stress may be short on nappies, or have none at all.

\(^1\) National Measured + Aldi Estimate + Chemist Warehouse. IRI, MAT 16/09/18;
\(^2\) ABS 2016 Census; Davidson, P., Saunders, P., et al (2018) Poverty in Australia, 2018. ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No. 2, Sydney: ACOSS. From the Survey of Income and Housing (SIH) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted every two years. The key income variable used in this analysis is household disposable (i.e. after-tax) income;
\(^3\) Ibid;
\(^4\) Estimate utilising ABS data 2016;
\(^5\) Based on average of 0.23 nappies per day, Kimberly Clark Baby Care Usage Diary, Fifth Dimension, 2018;
\(^6\) Estimate utilising ABS data 2016;
\(^7\) as per * above;
* Total price range depends on whether an average unit price of 32c or 50c is used.
STATE BY STATE ANALYSIS OF NAPPY STRESS AND NAPPY NEED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>VIC</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>TAS</th>
<th>ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of families (with children 0-4 years old) in poverty</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of children (0-4 years old) in poverty</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total nappy need per year (for 0-4 years old in poverty)</td>
<td>380m units</td>
<td>95m units</td>
<td>120m units</td>
<td>75m units</td>
<td>40m units</td>
<td>27m units</td>
<td>3m units</td>
<td>8m units</td>
<td>6m units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated cost of total nappy need*</td>
<td>$191m</td>
<td>$48m</td>
<td>$61m</td>
<td>$38m</td>
<td>$20m</td>
<td>$13m</td>
<td>$1.8m</td>
<td>$4.2m</td>
<td>$3.2m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimates for States and Territories do not always total estimates for Australia, due to rounding. * Using 50c average price / unit.

THE GROWTH AND PERSISTENCE OF NAPPY STRESS

Nappy stress appears to be a persistent challenge in Australia with child poverty rates hovering between 14.3% and 18.1%. In terms of the number of children living in families that experience nappy stress, this is estimated to have gone from around 208,000 in FY05/06 to around 250,000 in FY15/16, an increase of 20% over ten years. Based on our research into the key drivers of nappy stress, there is reason to believe that without significant new investments, changes to government policy (such as stronger social security support), child poverty rates will persist and nappy stress will grow in line with population growth.

Sources: ACOSS and UNSW Sydney, Poverty in Australia report (2018), poverty data here uses 50% poverty line (pre 2007 measure) that has more longitudinal data available. ABS, 2018, Australian Historical Population Statistics (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001), viewed 29/11/18. * Noting the difference from the 240k figure above is due to small statistical differences in this time series data set (ie uses pre-2007 measures vs post-2007 measures).
WHAT NAPPY STRESS MAY LOOK LIKE FOR A FAMILY

Nappy stress can be experienced by families in many different ways. Families experiencing nappy stress may be short on nappies, or have none at all. This may be an ongoing situation, or a one-off crisis. In many instances, families may have to cut back on other essentials to ensure they have enough nappies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nappy stress level</th>
<th>How many nappies do I have?</th>
<th>How does this feel for my family?</th>
<th>What circumstances am I in?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extreme nappy stress</td>
<td>Do not have enough money to purchase most of the nappy need (ie. 2 or more nappies short per day per child).</td>
<td>Sally is a sole parent. She lives under the poverty line and cannot afford enough nappies. She often goes without other essential items like food for herself so that she can purchase nappies.</td>
<td>Sally is reliant on social security payments and has ~$350(^1) per week for all essential items after housing. If she purchases all of her nappy need this represents &gt; 8% of her disposable income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate nappy stress</td>
<td>Only have enough money to afford approximately half of the nappy need (ie. 1-2 nappies short per day per child).</td>
<td>Jin is a sole parent. She lives on the poverty line. She is often short on nappies and has to stretch fewer nappies across the day (for example, changing nappies less often, using paper towel to extend the life of a nappy).</td>
<td>Jin is reliant on social security payments and has ~$560(^2) per week for all essential items after housing. If she purchases all of her nappy need this represents &gt; 5% of her disposable income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild nappy stress</td>
<td>Have enough money to purchase most of nappy need but not all (ie. 0-1 nappies short per day per child).</td>
<td>Geoff and Kareem live on the poverty line. They ordinarily purchase all of the nappy need but cannot afford it sometimes, for example when receiving a large unexpected bill (for example, a heating bill that is larger than usual).</td>
<td>Geoff and Kareem have ~$740(^3) per week for all essential items after housing. Kareem works part time and the family is otherwise reliant on social security payments. If they purchase all of their nappy need, this represents ~4% of their disposable income.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumptions

› Families have two children under 4 years old, both in nappies
› The total nappy need per family per week is ~ 60 nappies
› This usually costs ~$30 per week.

\(^1\) Davidson, P., Saunders, P., et al, Poverty in Australia (2018). ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No. 2, Sydney: ACOSS. Poverty line for a sole parent with two children at 50% of median income after housing costs is $565.26 per week. The average poverty gap (the difference between the relevant poverty line and the disposable income of the household living below it) is 38%;
\(^2\) Ibid. Poverty line for a sole parent with two children at 50% of median income after housing costs is $565.26 per week;
\(^3\) Ibid. Poverty line for a couple with two children at 50% of median income after housing costs is $741.90.
DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS MOST AT RISK OF NAPPY STRESS IN VICTORIA

Data on poverty in Australia highlights that specific demographic groups are more likely to experience nappy stress as they face an elevated risk of poverty compared to the overall rate of 13.2% in Australia1.

Specific demographic groups more at-risk2 include:

› People in households where the reference person* is unemployed (67.8% of this group is living below the poverty line) or where the main income is Government pensions and allowances (34.5% of this group is living below the poverty line)
› People living in public or community housing – 48.9% of this group is living below the poverty line
› Children in sole parent households – 39.4% of this group are living below the poverty line.

In Victoria, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people are more at-risk than the general population as 25.4% of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people live below the poverty line3.

Qualitative research for this report also highlighted that the following cohorts are also more likely to experience nappy stress4:

› People experiencing family violence who leave their homes, often quickly, with very few belongings
› People experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of homelessness (for example, couch surfing).


GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS MOST AT RISK OF NAPPY STRESS

Across all regions in Victoria, there are areas which fall into the highest quintile of child poverty rates in the state. The SA2s* with the highest child poverty rates in Victoria are clustered in the Northern part of Victoria: Robinvale, Campbellfield–Coolarara, Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA2</th>
<th>Child Poverty Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mooroorpa</td>
<td>42.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yea</td>
<td>41.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrtleford</td>
<td>39.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour</td>
<td>38.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moira</td>
<td>38.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benalla</td>
<td>36.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numurkah</td>
<td>36.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra Valley</td>
<td>36.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>34.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangaratta</td>
<td>33.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1 = 20% lowest rate (0 – <15.78%)
Q2 (15.78% – <20.95%)
Q3 (20.95% – < 25.905%)
Q4 (25.905% – <32.4%)
Q5 = 20% highest rate (32.4% – 73.161%)
Inadequate data

* SA2 is Statistical Area Level 2 as determined by the ABS.
Southern Victoria – SA2s in the highest quintile of child poverty rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA2</th>
<th>Child Poverty Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doveton</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandenong</td>
<td>52.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springvale</td>
<td>50.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morwell</td>
<td>45.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallam</td>
<td>45.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble Park – West</td>
<td>44.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Park – Lynbrook</td>
<td>42.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandenong North</td>
<td>41.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orbost</td>
<td>40.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moe – Newborough</td>
<td>39.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA2</th>
<th>Child Poverty Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frankston North</td>
<td>39.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale</td>
<td>39.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranbourne</td>
<td>38.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble Park North</td>
<td>37.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarram</td>
<td>37.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narre Warren – South West</td>
<td>36.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Entrance</td>
<td>36.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble Park – East</td>
<td>36.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonthaggi - Inverloch</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SA2 is Statistical Area Level 2 as determined by the ABS
Western Victoria - SA2s in the highest quintile of child poverty rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA2</th>
<th>Child Poverty Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Braybrook</td>
<td>39.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delahey</td>
<td>39.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton</td>
<td>39.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat - South</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delacombe</td>
<td>38.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoppers Crossing - South</td>
<td>36.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairnlea</td>
<td>36.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton West</td>
<td>36.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Park - Derrimut</td>
<td>35.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colac</td>
<td>35.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ararat</td>
<td>35.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flemington</td>
<td>35.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellog Downs</td>
<td>34.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton South</td>
<td>34.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine</td>
<td>34.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>34.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altona North</td>
<td>33.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corangamite - North</td>
<td>33.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portarlington</td>
<td>33.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton (Vic.)</td>
<td>33.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Arnaud</td>
<td>33.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsham</td>
<td>32.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyne - East</td>
<td>32.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoppers Crossing - North</td>
<td>32.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otway</td>
<td>32.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* SA2 is Statistical Area Level 2 as determined by the ABS.
What is the size of the problem?

Northern Victoria – SA2s in the highest quintile of child poverty rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA2</th>
<th>Child Poverty Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robinvale</td>
<td>73.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbellfield – Coolaroo</td>
<td>66.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow Heights</td>
<td>65.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadows</td>
<td>60.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh Park – Somerton</td>
<td>52.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Gully – Eaglehawk</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomastown</td>
<td>47.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathcote</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough (Vic.)</td>
<td>44.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockington – Gunbower</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>42.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawkner</td>
<td>41.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>41.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>41.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura – North</td>
<td>40.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merbein</td>
<td>40.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigieburn – South</td>
<td>40.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gannawarra</td>
<td>38.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigieburn – Central</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>38.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamarine</td>
<td>38.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heidelberg West</td>
<td>38.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>36.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buloke</td>
<td>35.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushworth</td>
<td>35.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough Region</td>
<td>35.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo Flat – Golden Square</td>
<td>34.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epping – West</td>
<td>34.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Hill Region</td>
<td>34.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cliffs</td>
<td>33.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservoir – East</td>
<td>33.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Park – South</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura – South</td>
<td>33.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerang</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echuca</td>
<td>32.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenroy</td>
<td>32.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hadfield</td>
<td>32.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mildura Region</td>
<td>32.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craigieburn – North</td>
<td>32.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epping – East</td>
<td>32.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* SA2 is Statistical Area Level 2 as determined by the ABS.
WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS AND WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE NAPPY COLLECTIVE?

AUSTRALIA’S MATERIAL AID ECOSYSTEM

In order to better understand how the community plays a part in reducing nappy stress, it is important to consider the broader ecosystem that provides families experiencing disadvantage with support. The material aid ecosystem in Australia includes government, funders and supporters, community based support and service providers, family, friends and carers. Despite the work that these players do in supporting families, it is not enough to alleviate nappy stress. The Nappy Collective, being Australia’s only organisation that focuses solely on providing nappies to families experiencing disadvantage, is one specific but important part of this ecosystem.

Extended family, friends and carers
- Families experiencing disadvantage
- For example, The Nappy Collective, Share the Dignity, SecondBite and St Vincent de Paul Society.
  - Provide material aid to families such as nappies, food, food vouchers
  - Provide ongoing or crisis support and wrap around services.
- Lend or give money and material aid
  - Provide emotional, social and other support.
- For example, corporate funders or sponsors, philanthropists and individual donors.
  - Support – financial or in kind – to community based support and service providers.
- Government departments
- Community based support and service providers
- Funders and supporters

Material aid: can be defined as support and assistance for practical, essential items such as food, clothing or money.
THE NAPPY COLLECTIVE’S CRITICAL ROLE IN ALLEVIATING NAPPY STRESS

The Nappy Collective (TNC) collects donations of leftover, unused nappies and diverts these nappies, through charity partners, to families experiencing disadvantage.

Cumulative total of number of nappies donated to TNC

Many of the 2.6 million nappies that have been donated would have been thrown out without The Nappy Collective. The Nappy Collective also believes that a significant proportion of the 1.5b nappies purchased every year are also unused and thrown out.

Why are there leftover nappies?

- Babies or toddlers outgrow a nappy size before the packet is finished
- There are leftover nappies after toilet training
- There is an unsuccessful trial of a different nappy brand
- Parents discover outgrown, unused nappies in an obscure place, such as an old bag, in the car or a spare room, etc
- Parents receive lots of nappy gifts from friends and family.

I donate nappies to The Nappy Collective because of the beautiful simplicity of what they do.

Donor to The Nappy Collective

Over 2.6 million nappies have been donated through The Nappy Collective since 2013, which equates to an estimate of $1.3m of much needed material aid.

Donations of leftover, unused nappies from individuals has grown from 1.5k nappies in the first collective in 2013 to ~190k in the October 2018 collective.

The Nappy Collective has also been able to secure ad hoc corporate donations of nappies

100% of donors were excited to be part of the May 2018 collective.

The Nappy Collective has ~ 500 registered volunteers.

Note: “Individual” donations includes nappies that have been able to be purchased with financial donations from individuals. Sources: The Nappy Collective data; May 2018 donor survey; Stakeholder consultations October and November 2018.
THE NAPPY COLLECTIVE’S CHARITY PARTNERS

The Nappy Collective distributes nappies to over 230 charity partners which work directly with families experiencing disadvantage. The charity partners vary in size, and over 60% of charity partners are located in Victoria and NSW.

Number of charity partners, by State

- VIC 33%
- NSW 28%
- QLD 16%
- WA 7%
- SA 6%
- TAS 6%
- NT 2%
- ACT 1%

Size of The Nappy Collective’s charity partners

- Large 36.8%
- Unknown 27.6%
- Small 25.0%
- Medium 10.5%

Being able to provide young families with nappies in times of need allows families to focus their finances to other areas such as food, bills, and medication.

The Nappy Collective charity partner

The Nappy Collective’s provision of nappies has become integral to the support we are able to provide women with babies escaping domestic violence. It is one support need that can be addressed efficiently and with dignity.

The Nappy Collective charity partner

STORIES OF IMPACT

As my client was moving interstate, she found out that she was pregnant as a result of an assault. Coupled with that trauma, she had a history of mental health issues.

When we completed our assessment, we identified that this mother needed everything that was essential for a new baby.

We provided her with enough nappies from The Nappy Collective for her son until he was toilet trained. She was so grateful for everything – sometimes crying when we would drop off another bundle of nappies. Through these donations she learnt how to budget. She would tell me how she could now buy dinner with her spare money.

Through our assistance, our client received counselling and mental health support and her son was referred to the enhanced maternal health nurse, play group and a pediatrician. We were also able to link the family into housing and they are now living in a house with a back garden.

The Nappy Collective charity partner
My client is a wonderful single mother residing in a two bedroom unit in state housing. The mother is trying her best to meet her family’s needs in an environment that is impacted by historic family violence and financial hardship due to the financial control displayed by the children’s father. The mother, aged 25, has the sole care of her unborn baby, 9 month old baby and her 3 year old child.

The mother informed workers that she was feeling helpless and hesitant to ask for help as she did not want to be seen as an unfit mother. On one occasion the mother told workers ‘all the love in the world can’t assure a happy life’.

Thankfully, workers were able to assist the family with their basic needs such as food vouchers provided by St Vincent’s, nappies by The Nappy Collective, clothing and toys by St Kilda Mums, financial support by Centrelink and therapeutic support by workers.

Helping the family by providing basic needs helped remove the immediate stressors for the mother and enabled workers to assist the family through their experienced trauma by providing counselling. It allowed time for ground work to be done to enable a positive future without family violence and financial hardship.

MORE STORIES OF IMPACT

My client was a 22 year old single Mum with a 12 week old baby. She has recently had a period of homelessness where she was staying at friends’ houses and storing belongings in her car. She has just moved into a property supported by our organisation and due to moving costs among other things she was struggling to have enough nappies on hand.

My client was feeling completely overwhelmed and unsure of what to do or tackle next. She has no local support apart from our service. Once bills, rent, food and baby formula are deducted from her Centrelink payments, she has little money left to purchase nappies.

I was able to supply my client with enough nappies from The Nappy Collective to get her through the next fortnight so she didn’t have to worry about finding the money for them.

I am also helping her with referrals to health services and for baby clothing and equipment.

My client spoke about the great help the nappies were and how much freer this made her feel.

OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES ASSISTED BY THE NAPPY COLLECTIVE’S SERVICES

The outcomes for families and children of receiving nappies are very positive and not just related to physical wellbeing.

Qualitative research for this report demonstrated that children are changed more often and are more settled. Parents feel grateful, relieved and more calm.

Linking to the drivers of nappy stress, qualitative research also highlighted an impact on:

- **General living costs**, with parents able to afford to pay for other essential items, such as food and bills
- **Social environment**, with parents feeling emotionally supported. It also showed that parents who have overcome their hardship often give back to the community.

Many clients have told me that they don’t know what they would have done that week without the nappies.

Source: Stakeholder consultations
October and November 2018
EXAMPLES OF SIMILAR INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS WHICH ARE OPERATING AT SIGNIFICANT SCALE

Organisations in the United States have also identified the specific problem of nappy stress (referred to as ‘diaper need’) and have developed models to provide nappies to families experiencing disadvantage.

The US experience suggests that a strong commitment from corporates (nappy manufacturers and retailers) as well as engagement from Government is important to scaling the solution.

US National Diaper Bank Network (NDBN)

- National not-for-profit working to meet the basic needs of all children and families living in the United States
- Network of community-based diaper banks which distribute diapers to partner agencies
- Raises awareness of ‘diaper need’, strengthens community-based diaper banks, and generates donations of dollars and diapers so that “babies remain clean, dry and healthy”
- Developed in partnership with the Basic Needs-Informed Curriculum – a training program to expand the mindset of professionals to consider addressing gaps in basic needs as they support families and children in poverty.

NDBN 2017 Facts

- 64.9m diapers distributed annually
- Worked with 205 diaper banks and 3,708 partner agencies
- Serving 225,037 children monthly
- Diaper banks located in 47 States and Washington, DC
- Support from Huggies as founding sponsor, including donations of > 20m diapers per year.

Selected other initiatives and models

- US: JetCares is a program where non-profits can access diapers and other essentials with exclusive discounts – an initiative announced by the White House in 2016
- Canada: The Diaper Bank of Toronto collects donated diapers and cash donations for purchase of diapers that are distributed to low-income households through existing service providers
- Canada: One Diaper Canada provides cloth diaper kits to families in need.

1 nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org, viewed 29/11/18;
2 jet.com, viewed 29/11/18;
3 thediaperbank.ca, viewed 29/11/18;
4 onediaper.org, viewed 29/11/18.
CONCLUSION

Nappy stress is a significant issue in Victoria, with an estimated 62,000 children experiencing nappy stress. This report has identified that nappy stress has an impact on families and children as well as government resources and broader society.

This report highlights that nappy stress is driven by three main factors: a lack of income (income poverty), high cost of living, and broader social disadvantage. Over time, these factors appear to be remaining the same or getting worse. This means that low income earners in Australia face persistent disadvantage and many are experiencing a range of financial and material hardships including nappy stress.

The Nappy Collective has been able to provide relief to many families experiencing disadvantage by collecting and distributing over 2.6 million nappies since 2013. And while other organisations are also supporting families with different types of material aid and assistance, this is not enough to meet the need.

It is hoped that this report will raise awareness of the nature and extent of nappy stress in Victoria to provide more assistance to families experiencing disadvantage, especially those demographic groups most at risk of experiencing nappy stress.

HOW CAN WE GET INVOLVED WITH THE NAPPY COLLECTIVE?

Individuals
- Donate your leftover nappies during a collective
- Donate funds to support our work in diverting nappies to families who need them most
- Volunteer your time and skills.

Businesses
- Become a drop point and help us benefit more families
- Offer in-kind support to help us further our impact in your local community.

Partnerships
- Partner with us to boost our ability to collect leftover, unused disposable nappies across Australia and divert them to families in crisis.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Wouldn’t cloth nappies be a more sustainable option?

The Nappy Collective’s nappies are distributed to families experiencing disadvantage who are often in crisis situations and do not have private laundering facilities. Plus, the nappies donated by The Nappy Collective’s wonderful donors may otherwise be thrown out.

Is this just a ‘band-aid’ response to a bigger problem?

The Nappy Collective’s mission is clear – to collect leftover, unused nappies and divert them to organisations that work directly with families in crisis. In this way, The Nappy Collective supports these organisations to focus on their core program delivery. This is one targeted method of reducing the impact of disadvantage. The model complements broader services and solutions.

Why doesn’t The Nappy Collective distribute other baby-related items like wipes and clothes?

The Nappy Collective focuses on collecting leftover, unused nappies and redistributing them to organisations which support families experiencing disadvantage. It identified that nappies were a specific need for families experiencing disadvantage which was not being met, and has chosen to focus its resources and efforts on doing its part in meeting this need.

How does the drop-off and distribution process work?

Individuals donate their leftover, unused nappies at drop points around the country during two collectives throughout the year. Drop points may be at shops, health services, childcare centres, libraries or any other organisation or business where parents are likely to go. All the donated nappies from The Nappy Collective’s drop points are collected and sorted at key distribution points by The Nappy Collective’s volunteers. Charity partners collect nappies from the distribution points and distribute to their clients.