



**BELONG BLUE MOUNTAINS INC | KATOOMBA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE (MAIN OFFICE)**

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## **Money worries?... You're not alone.**

If you're feeling overwhelmed by money or personal issues, it can be hard to know where to turn. One in three Australians find dealing with money stressful and overwhelming. The COVID pandemic and the end of Jobkeeper has meant that many of us are finding it harder than ever to make ends meet. But you don't have to go it alone.

If you don't know where to start, you can always call your local Neighbourhood Centre. In an emergency, there are services that can help with food, housing and bills. There are also services available that can help you get on top of your money worries including financial counsellors and community loan providers. When unexpected expenses happen, sometimes a small loan can help. But you do need to be aware of dangerous credit traps with high interest, fees and other charges that can make a stressful situation much worse.

Belong Blue Mountains Community and Neighbourhood Services offers 'NILs' No Interest Loans for individuals and families on low incomes. Loans of up to \$1500 are available for essential goods and services such as fridges, washing machines, car repairs and registration, driving lessons, educational expenses, school uniforms, musical instruments, sports equipment, medical, dental and optical expenses and more. Repayments are set at an affordable amount over 12 to 18 months with no interest and no fees, ever. And the process of applying for a No Interest Loan with Belong Blue Mountains can help you work out a budget that is manageable and identify regular expenses that you can save money on. There are also 'NILs 4 Cars' loans available now for up to \$5000.

NILs No Interest Loans work through a process called 'circular community credit'. This means when a borrower makes a repayment to NILs, the funds are then available to someone else in the community. It is worth considering a NILs loan first before seeking other expensive options for credit. For more information on NILs No Interest Loans, call Pauline at Belong Blue Mountains on 0478 239 113.

If you would like some help to manage your debts and get your finances back under control, a financial counselling service could be what you need. The 'National Debt Helpline' offers a free financial counselling service that is confidential and independent. It's a not-for-profit, community-based service that's available to people in Australia experiencing financial difficulty. The National Debt Helpline number is 1800 007 007 and is open Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 4:30pm. You can find more information on their website [www.ndh.org.au](http://www.ndh.org.au)

The 'Moneysmart' website [www.moneysmart.gov.au](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au) is another helpful resource. Moneysmart offers guidance and information, as well as simple tools, tips and calculators to help people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes to get in control of their finances and build a better life.

If you are, or someone you know is, experiencing a personal crisis, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 for personal support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Stock Image: One in three Australians find dealing with money stressful and overwhelming.

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