

Coles and Woolworths supermarket profits could have fed over 1.5 million kids every year for the last 7 years - that's every kid living in poverty in Australia, and more

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Analysis by the Green Institute has found that in 2026, Coles and Woolworths' profits in their supermarket divisions totalled \$5.3 billion. Meanwhile, the total food costs of every kid living in poverty in Australia for a year ranges between \$2.5 billion and \$3.3 billion depending on the measure of child poverty.

Since 2020, Coles and Woolworths' supermarket profits could have fed over 1.5 million kids every year: that's every child living in poverty in Australia and more.

Over the same period, Coles and Woolworths have together amassed \$32 billion in supermarket profits, which would more than pay for the \$25 billion in capital costs required to establish 624 Fair Go Grocers [public supermarkets](#).

Methodology

Coles and Woolworths Supermarket profits

Coles and Woolworths report their profits as earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) by each division of their operations, including supermarkets. EBIT measures the underlying profit of a business by accounting for all operational and non-operational income and expenses, prior to tax and finance costs.

In 2026, Coles made \$2.37 billion in profit and Woolworths \$2.95 billion in profit from their supermarket businesses, amounting to a total \$5.3 billion in profit across the duopoly.

How much does it cost to feed a child every year in Australia?

The Australian Institute of Family Studies found that in 2016, the respective weekly costs of feeding a 6 year old girl and 10 year old boy were \$32.62 and \$44.69. Taking the higher of those numbers and indexing it by food and non-alcoholic beverages CPI each year between 2016 and 2026 means that the cost of feeding a child in 2026 is \$61.31 a week.

By comparison the website Finder found that total yearly food costs for an Australian child was \$3,305. That equates to \$63.56 a week, roughly commensurate to the Australian Institute of Family Studies' data. To be conservative this report uses the slightly higher Finder figure for 2026.

How many kids are living in poverty in Australia?

The internationally accepted poverty line, used by ACOSS and others, is drawn at 50% or below of median household income. There is no official figure for child poverty in Australia, though several organisations make estimates using income and household data sourced from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey and the ABS.

Most recently, a report by the ACOSS and UNSW-led Poverty and Inequality Partnership used 2022/23 HILDA data to find that 757,000 children were living below the poverty line.

A separate 2025 Curtin University report, also using HILDA data from 2022/23, used projected population growth, Corelogic rental inflation, and ABS income projections to find that 950,000 children in Australia were living in poverty. The report warned that by 2026 over 1 million children would be living in poverty.

Fig. 1 Number of children that could be fed by aggregate Coles and Woolworths' supermarket profits 2020-2026

Supermarket Profit (Earnings before tax and interest) (\$million)	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Coles	\$2,365	\$2,108	\$2,018	\$1,765	\$1,715	\$1,702	\$1,618
Woolworths	\$2,953	\$2,721	\$3,110	\$2,865	\$2,420	\$2,413	\$2,232
Total	\$5,318	\$4,829	\$5,128	\$4,630	\$4,135	\$4,115	\$3,850
Number of children fed with total profits	1,609,077	1,559,288	1,708,518	1,594,014	1,511,156	1,610,591	1,524,301

Appendix 1: Data sources

Category	Amount	Source/Methodology
Children living in poverty in Australia (ACOSS)	757,000	https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/poverty-in-australia-2026-who-is-affected/
Children living in poverty in Australia (Curtin University)	1,000,000	"Should this trend continue, we risk seeing over 1 million children living in poverty in Australia in the next year (2026) or so" p. 16
Coles Supermarket Profits (EBIT) 2026 (million)	\$2,365	Coles Annual Report 2026, p18
Woolworths Supermarket Profits (EBIT) 2026 (million)	\$2,953	Woolworths Annual Report 2026, p. 31
Total Coles and Woolworths supermarket profits (million)	\$5,318	
Cost of feeding a child per week in Australia in June 2016	\$44.69	Australian Institute of Family Studies: New estimates of the cost of raising children in Australia (2018)
Food inflation since June 2016	37.19%	Consumer Price Index, Australia (Food and non-alcoholic beverages), Australian Bureau of Statistics
Cost of feeding a child per week in Australia in June 2026	\$61.31	Cost of feeding a child per week in Australia in 2016 with food inflation added
Weekly cost of feeding a child in Australia as per Finder	\$63.56	Finder's 'The cost of raising children in Australia report' , which found that the total yearly food costs for an Australian child was \$3,305
Total yearly cost of feeding every child in poverty (ACOSS figure) (\$million)	\$2,502	Total number of children living in poverty multiplied by the cost of feeding a child per week in 2026 then multiplied by 52 weeks
Total yearly cost of feeding every child in poverty (Curtin University figure) (\$million)	\$3,305	Total number of kids living in poverty multiplied by the cost of feeding a child per week in 2026 then multiplied by 52 weeks
Number of kids fed with total profits over time	See Fig. 1 above	Australian Institute of Family Studies cost of feeding a child per week in Australia (\$44.69) indexed to food and non-alcoholic beverage CPI - except 2026, which substitutes in the higher 2026 Finder figure