

## TOP 5 TIPS FOR GETTING OUT OF DEBT

1. Pay your smallest debts first.
2. Pay off credit card debts with savings. You will only receive 8 per cent interest on savings while being charged on average 17 per cent on credit card debt.
3. Brown bag it! – buying lunch every day could be costing you up to \$3650 a year, so make a sandwich.
4. Work out what it's worth. The next time you buy something ask if it's worth that many hours of your life at work.
5. Seek help, talk to a debt consultant or a financial adviser. Read and educate yourself.

Debt distribution in Northwest Brisbane Post Code	Percentage of clients	Average amount of debt (\$)
4055	15%	25,000
4054	13%	30,500
4053	40%	34,000
4037	2%	10,000
4035	8.3%	30,000
4051	15%	45,000
4055	15%	25,500
4520	5%	45,000



### briefly

#### Two-day show

THIS weekend's Samford Show promises two days of non-stop fun with first-class entertainment, arts and crafts. Radio presenters from 99.7FM will also broadcast live from the showgrounds. The show will be held on Saturday, July 19, and Sunday, July 20, at the Samford Showgrounds on Mt Glorious Rd.

#### League grant

THE Telstra Foundation is supporting Stafford's Brothers Junior Rugby League Club with a \$1200 grant. It will be used to buy new training equipment for the players. Under Telstra's Kids Fund, Telstra employees nominate a not-for-profit organisation in which their child, sibling, niece, nephew, grandchild, step-child or foster child is involved.

#### Top trainer

NORTHSIDE training provider Brisbane North Institute of TAFE (BNIT) was nominated as a finalist in the Best Registered Travel Industry Training Institution category of the annual National Travel Industry Awards for Excellence 2008. BNIT offers certificate and diploma level travel and tourism courses at the Ithaca campus in Red Hill. For more information, phone BNIT on 131 248 or visit their website at [www.bn.tafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.bn.tafe.qld.gov.au).

#### Blood needed

AUSTRALIAN Red Cross Blood Service blood stocks are dangerously low. The service urgently needs donors to come forward and donate blood. Donated blood can be used to help people who suffer traumatic incidents, such as accidents, burns, or in surgery. For details, phone 131 495 or visit [www.donateblood.com.au](http://www.donateblood.com.au).

#### Memorial day

A memorial service for families who have lost children through miscarriage, adoption or accident will be held at the World Harvest Church in Bald Hills on July 26. The short ceremony will be followed by morning tea and a balloon launch. Phone 3261 4555.

# Debt distress on rise

By TARYN DAVIS

NORTHWEST residents are feeling the pinch from higher interest rates and an increasing personal debt.

A Stafford-based debt mediation business said they are being inundated with calls from Australians in financial crisis.

"We've experienced a 34 per cent increase in inquiries from the northwest area in the last 12 months indicating rising levels of stress," Debt Mediators senior debt consultant Ben Paris said.

"Australia has really hit a perfect storm for financial stress, and we're experiencing a 150 per cent increase in inquiries nationally in 2008. Northwest residents on average have 34 per cent more unsecured debt than the average Australian, with \$34,500 in credit card and personal loan debt."

Mr Paris said the number-crunching showed the 4053 postcode made up the largest northwest client segmentation while Samford, Enoggera and Alderley had the greatest average debt of \$45,000.

He cited the lack of financial education and increasing economic pressures as reasons behind the dramatic increase in debt. Alderley Salvos store manager Graham Lerch said the charity store had seen an increase in customers recently.

"More people are struggling with increasing petrol prices and interest rates, and we are seeing an increase in customers, who wouldn't normally shop with us, from higher wage brackets," Mr Lerch said.

"Our store funds welfare services, so if someone is in dire need of help they can go to one of our welfare centres and receive financial help, food vouchers and vouchers for the stores."

Call the Salvation Army care line on 1300 36 36 22.

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