

Key data from the August 2022 Household Affordability Index

The August 2022 Household Affordability Index, which tracks food price data from 44 supermarkets and 30 butcheries, in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD and Mtubatuba), Cape Town (Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Philippi, Langa, Delft and Dunoon), Pietermaritzburg and Springbok (in the Northern Cape), shows that:

- **In August 2022:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket is **R4 775,59**.
- **Month-on-month:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R26,72 (0,6%)**, from R4 748,87 in July 2022 to R4 775,59 in August 2022.
- **Year-on-year:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R534,47 (12,6%)**, from R4 241,11 in August 2021 to R4 775,59 in August 2022.

Note: The year-on-year data shows a moderation in comparison to months coming before August 2021, because the July 2021 unrest caused food prices to spike unprecedentedly thereafter in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Joburg.

Month-on-month data is showing a lowering of inflation on the total basket price for the second consecutive month. We are seeing inflation on fewer foods within the basket compared to previous months, viz. August saw 21/44 foods increase in price – this is notably lower than previous months: July 31/44, June 29/44, May 28/44, and April 35/44.

It needs to be cautioned that whilst the monthly price increases do appear to be lowering, the household basket is still increasing, albeit at a slower pace. We are not yet seeing any significant climb down in prices which would bring down the total cost of the household food basket in a substantial way and alleviate pressures on households. With no climb down yet in sight and with the higher taxi fares now effected and, for many prepaid users, high tariff increases – well beyond the regulated 7,47% - women are struggling.

Progress in addressing the jobs crisis is too slow and wages for those who do have a job, and for people who are able to access some form of social grant, are still far too low, and are being decimated by higher costs of transport, electricity, and food.

The high cost of food remains a major crisis for millions of South African families and continues to frustrate peoples need to live a full productive life, to be able to afford proper nutritious food, and be healthy and well and in control of their future.

This month, we are hearing women saying that they feel the streets are becoming markedly more unsafe. More people are getting robbed. There is a feeling that more people are in trouble and desperate and willing to steal to survive. There is a tension, a bad feeling in the air. Women do not feel safe on the street and in their homes.

Food baskets increased in Joburg, Springbok and Pietermaritzburg, and decreased in Durban and Cape Town.

The Joburg basket **increased** by R117,02 (2,5%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R557,37 (12,9%) year-on-year, to **R4 888,50** in August 2022. **26/44** foods in the Joburg basket increased in price.

The Durban basket **decreased** by R44,11 (-0,9%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R519,27 (12,1%) year-on-year, to **R4 807,78** in August 2022. **19/44** foods in the Durban basket increased in price.

The Cape Town basket **decreased** by R23,63 (-0,5%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R543,90 (13,3%) year-on-year, to **R4 624,63** in August 2022. **17/44** foods in the Cape Town basket increased in price.

The Springbok basket **increased** by R13,18 (0,3%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R367,49 (8,1%) year-on-year, to **R4 932,31** in August 2022. **16/44** foods in the Springbok basket increased in price.

The Maritzburg basket **increased** by R105,40 (2,3%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R577,34 (14,1%) year-on-year, to **R4 670,34** in August 2022. **25/44** foods in the Maritzburg basket increased in price.

Maize meal prices continue to climb across all areas. Flour prices also increased in all areas except Durban. Cooking oil continued to increase in Joburg, this month by a further R7,08 or 3% taking a 5L bottle to R246,91. Cape Town also saw an increase. Joburg and Pietermaritzburg saw very high increases on bread (4% WB and 8% BB, and in Pietermaritzburg 9% WB and 11% BB). Joburg saw high increases across most meats tracked, with beef increasing by 7%. Frozen chicken prices increased everywhere except Springbok. Tomatoes, butternut, and green pepper prices drove higher prices in vegetables, across most areas.

Household domestic and personal hygiene products

The August 2022 Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index shows an increase of **R23,84 (2,7%)** month-on-month. Year-on-year the household domestic and personal hygiene products index increased by **R152,35 (20,4%)** bringing the total average cost of basic household domestic and personal hygiene products to **R900,45 in August 2022**. (See page 5 of August 2022, Household Affordability Index).

The cost of basic hygiene products is high. These products compete in the household purse with food. These products are essential for good health and hygiene.

Workers

The National Minimum Wage is **R23,19** an hour and **R185,52** for an 8-hour day. In August 2022, with 22-working days, the maximum National Minimum Wage for a General Worker is **R4 081,44**.

The August 2022 cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons is **R3 212,97** (See page 6 of August 2022, Household Affordability Index).

In July, municipalities increased the price of prepaid electricity, on average by **7,47%**. In Pietermaritzburg, 350kWh of prepaid electricity increased by **R56**, from R731,50 to R787,50 (from R2,09/kWh to R2,25/kWh). However, indications are that annual prepaid electricity tariff increases, for many families, across the country, have risen well beyond the **7,47%**.

August further has seen taxi fare increases across the country. Fare prices have increased from R2-R3 and even by as much as R5 per local trip. In Pietermaritzburg, local fares increased by R2, with a one-way short trip now costing an average of R18 (up R2 from the previous R16). This is a **12,5%** increase.

On our calculations, using Pietermaritzburg-based figures for electricity and transport, and the average figure for a minimum nutritional basket of food for a family of four (in August this is R3 212,97), puts electricity (the 7,47% increase on paper) and transport (the 12,5% increase), now taking up **58,1%** of a worker's wage (R2 371,50/R4 081,44). Food is bought after monies for transport and electricity have been paid for or set aside (leaving only R1 709,94 – for food and everything else), and so in August 2022, PMBEJD calculates that workers' families will **underspend on food by a minimum of 46,8% (having a maximum of R1 709,94 left after transport and electricity, and with food costing R3 212,97)**.

Women and children

In August 2022, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet was **R820,26**. Over the past month, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **decreased** by **R3,87** or -0,5%. Year-on-year, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R72,96** or 9,8%

*In August 2022, the **Child Support Grant** of **R480** is **23%** below the **Food Poverty Line** of **R624**, and **41%** below the average **cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet (R820,26)**.*

The everyday violence of not being able to feed your children properly, to keep them clean, warm, and safe is an aspect of gender-based-violence which is not given enough attention. It is a violence which women are forced to absorb with their bodies and minds. Women sacrifice their own nutritional needs so their children can eat better. The strain of having to constantly find means out of seemingly impossible situations to care for children and keep homes functioning is physically and mentally exhausting. There is no respite from this stress and anxiety, and it gnaws and scrapes and chews at women, and there is no peace.