

### **Key data from the September 2024 Household Affordability Index**

The September 2024 Household Affordability Index, which tracks the prices of 44 basic foods from 47 supermarkets and 32 butcheries, in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, Hammarsdale and Pinetown), Cape Town (Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Philippi, Langa, Delft and Dunoon), Pietermaritzburg, Mtubatuba (in Northern KwaZulu-Natal), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape), shows that:

- **In September 2024:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket is **R5 255,68**.
- **Month-on-month:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R28,54 (0,5%)**, from R5 227,14 in August 2024 to R5 255,68 in September 2024.
- **Year-on-year:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R99,91 (1,9%)**, from R5 155,77 in September 2023 to R5 255,68 in September 2024.

### **The cost of the core foods still too expensive relative to low wages and social grants.**

*The core foods, or foods which women tell us they prioritise and buy first, remain expensive. These foods ensure that families do not go hungry whilst also being the primary basis for meals (the starches of maize meal, rice, flour, samp, potatoes, bread), and inputs so that meals can be cooked (e.g. oil), and palatable (e.g. salt, onions, stock cubes, sugar). **These 17 foods cost R2 860,84 in September 2024, and increased month-on-month.** In relation to the value of social grants and minimum wages, families struggle even to afford these basic foods, and basic hygiene products. For a healthy populace, it is important that the cost of these foods is affordable, as this may allow women to include more nutritious foods into their family baskets viz. eggs, maas, vegetables and fruits, and meat. (See page 3 of September 2024, Household Affordability Index).*

### **Food pricing trends in September 2024.**

In September 23 foods increased in price, and 21 foods decreased in price.

**Foods in the basket which increased in price in September 2024 by 5% or more**, include: maize meal (5%), potatoes (11%), tomatoes (10%), carrots (5%), butternut (5%), bananas (11%), and apples (5%).

**Foods in the basket which increased in price in September 2024 by 2% or more**, include: cake flour (2%), samp (3%), cooking oil (3%), curry powder (2%), tinned pilchards (2%), and brown bread (3%).

**Foods in the basket which decreased in price in September 2024, by 5% or more**, include: onions (-17%), salt (-5%) and chicken livers (-7%).

**Foods in the basket which decreased in price in September 2024, by 2% or more**, include: rice (-2%), frozen chicken portions (-2%), soup (-2%), eggs (-3%), beef liver (-2%), fish (-3%), spinach (-2%), cabbage (-3%), canned baked beans (-4%), oranges (-2%), and apricot jam (-3%).

See page 2 of September 2024, Household Affordability Index.

### **Statistics South Africa's latest Consumer Price Index.**

Statistics South Africa's latest *Consumer Price Index* for August 2024<sup>1</sup> shows that **Headline inflation was 4,4%**, and for the **lowest expenditure quintiles 1-3 it is 5,7%, 5,2%, and 4,7%** respectively. **CPI Food inflation was 4,1%** (for CPI Food & NAB it was 4,7%, we use the figure excluding non-alcoholic beverages). STATS SA's *Producer Price Index* for August 2024<sup>2</sup> shows **agriculture was 7,3%**.

<sup>1</sup> STATSSA (2024). **Consumer Price Index August 2024**. Statistical release P0141. 18 September 2024. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P4, 7. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141August2024.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> STATSSA (2024). **Producer Price Index August 2024**. Statistical release P0142.1. 26 September 2024. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P12. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P01421/P01421August2024.pdf>

### ***Inflation on the food baskets per area tracked.***

*In September 2024, food baskets increased in Joburg, Durban, Springbok, Pietermaritzburg, and Mtubatuba. The Cape Town food basket decreased marginally. (See pages 10-15 for area specific data, in the September 2024, Household Affordability Index).*

The Joburg basket **increased** by R53,28 (1,0%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R231,75 (4,4%) year-on-year, to **R5 482,65** in September 2024.

The Durban basket **increased** by R10,02 (0,2%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R219,58 (4,4%) year-on-year, to **R5 226,74** in September 2024.

The Cape Town basket **decreased** by R28,76 (-0,6%) month-on-month, and **decreased** by R132,23 (-2,6%) year-on-year, to **R5 040,18** in September 2024.

The Springbok basket **increased** by R51,59 (1,0%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R31,66 (0,6%) year-on-year, to **R5 480,69** in September 2024.

The Maritzburg basket **increased** by R24,98 (0,5%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R72,29 (1,5%) year-on-year, to **R5 015,23** in September 2024.

The Mtubatuba basket **increased** by R134,29 (2,5%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R72,61 (1,4%) year-on-year, to **R5 402,05** in September 2024.

### ***Women and children***

In September 2024, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet was **R941,51**. Over the past month, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R1,89** or **0,2%**. Year-on-year, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R34,08** or **3,8%** (See page 6 of September 2024, Household Affordability Index).

In September 2024, the **Child Support Grant** of **R530** is **33%** (a third) below the **Food Poverty Line** of **R796** (adjusted upwards for 2024), and **44%** below the average **cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet (R941,51)**.

### ***Workers***

The National Minimum Wage is **R27,58** an hour and **R220,64** for an 8-hour day. In September 2024, with 20 working days, the maximum National Minimum Wage for a General Worker is **R4 412,80**. Workers work to support their families. The wage workers earn is not just to sustain themselves alone, it is used to support the entire family. For Black South African workers, **one wage typically must support 4,1 people. Dispersed in a worker's family of 4 persons, the NMW, is R1 103,20 per person – this is below the upper-bound poverty line of R1 634 per person per month.**

The September 2024 average cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons is **R3 692,09** (See page 6 of September 2024, Household Affordability Index).

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, puts electricity, and transport, taking up **59,9%** of a worker's wage (R2 642,97/R4 412,80). Food is bought after monies for transport and electricity have been paid for or set aside (leaving **R1 769,83** – for food and everything else), and so in September 2024, PMBEJD calculates that workers' families will **underspend on food by a minimum of 52,1% (having R1 769,83 left over after transport and electricity, and with food costing R3 692,09). In this scenario there is no possibility of a worker being able to afford enough nutritious food for her family. If the entire R1 769,83 all went to buy food, then for a family of 4 persons, we are looking at R442,46 per person per month. This is below the food poverty line of R796** (See page 8 of September 2024, Household Affordability Index).

### ***Household domestic and personal hygiene products***

The September 2024 *Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index* shows a **decrease** of **R23,96 (-2,3%)** month-on-month. Year-on-year the household domestic and personal hygiene products index **increased** by **R21,35 (2,1%)** bringing the total average cost of basic household domestic and personal hygiene products to **R1 018,18** in September 2024 (See page 5 of September 2024, 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.*