

## **Big clans on stricter budgets**

### **Jamie First**

Large Victorian families are spending less on housing than smaller families so they can feed their children.

Those with four or more kids living at home spend \$15,200 per year on food and \$16,400 on housing.

But families with only two children spend more than \$5000 extra on housing and \$11,400 on food, according to the BT Australian Financial Health Index.

Utilities for both smaller and larger families account for a further \$8400 to \$10,500.

BT general manager Deanne Stewart said bigger families are cutting costs where they can.

“Housing and utility bills are relatively smaller while food bills for this group reflect the extra mouths to feed,” Ms Stewart said.

Bev and Guy Topolansky, and their children, Jenna, 16, and Kaylee, 12, from Bentleigh East, spend half their \$8000 monthly budget on their home, \$1200 on food and \$500 on utilities.

“We are not excessive spenders, but when there is something we need, we get it,” Mrs Topolansky said.

Ms Stewart said making a budget, keeping track of spending and setting goals was important.

But she said: “Our index reveals 60 per cent of people do not complete regular budgets.” The Topolansky family is one of them.

“I don’t properly monitor my spending ... We have thought about writing up a budget, but it’s just too difficult, so we’ve never gone through with it,” Mr Topolansky said.

Another significant finding from the index is that 29 per cent of the state’s population live from pay cheque to pay cheque.