

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 24 September 2020

MAKING FOOD RELIEF COVID SAFE FOR VICTORIANS IN NEED

The Victorian Government is strengthening food relief services across the state to ensure healthy food reaches Victorians in need, as safely as possible.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan today announced over \$11.3 million to boost food relief activities for vulnerable Victorians.

A new \$5 million *Community Food Relief Fund* will provide one-off grants of up to \$75,000 to support local community organisations supplying food to Victorians in need during the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will assist with a range of challenges – like helping develop innovative food relief delivery models to support COVID safe practices.

We'll also increase capacity at the network of food distribution hubs in regional areas, with \$3.5 million ensuring food gets to where it's needed by strengthening the link between suppliers and those experiencing food insecurity. This builds on \$10 million already being invested by the Government to build new food relief distribution centres in Ballarat and Morwell in partnership with Foodbank Victoria.

The existing emergency food relief program will be extended for Victorians in mandatory self-isolation due to coronavirus – taking the total investment in this important program to \$5 million.

A Food Relief Taskforce will also be established to bring together key industry leaders and representatives from all tiers of government to ensure food supply and distribution is coordinated and targeted to areas most in need.

This package builds on \$7.4 million already announced earlier this year to expand food relief operations and deliver more free and nutritious meals, which is creating 119 new food relief jobs.

The Government provides Foodbank Victoria with over \$3.6 million support each year – this vital funding provides 140,000 Victorians with food every month through more than 470 charity partners.

In addition, our School Breakfast Clubs program – delivered in partnership with Foodbank Victoria – has delivered more than 2.5 million meals in Term 2 and Term 3 to students during the pandemic, with schools taking unique and tailored approaches to providing healthy food to their communities.

The program provides free and healthy breakfasts to students and has been expanded to offer lunches as well as school holiday supplies to students who need them. This ensures that students can learn on a full stomach.

Since beginning in 2016, breakfast clubs have delivered 13.4 million free and healthy meals - helping more than 1,000 schools support their students by ensuring they don't go hungry.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We want Victoria's food relief system to be able to support people when and where they need it, in a COVID safe way."

"Even as our case numbers fall, we are extending the emergency food relief program for Victorians in mandatory quarantine so that people can still safely stay at home and stop the spread of coronavirus."

Quote attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan

"Every Victorian should have access to food and essential items, so it's vitally important we expand our support for food relief programs."

For information about coronavirus visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or call 1800 675 398.