

Media Release

The Hon Luke Donnellan MP
Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Wednesday, 13 January 2021

BOOSTING FOOD RELIEF FOR VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES

The Andrews Labor Government is strengthening food relief services across the state to ensure healthy food reaches Victorians in need.

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan today announced 93 recipients of the \$5 million Community Food Relief Fund grants, which will provide a massive 2 million meals and 180,000 food hampers to vulnerable Victorians.

Grant recipients will tailor local food relief programs to meet community needs, including purchasing things like vans and updating IT software, as well as supporting COVIDSafe practices.

Recipients include The Community Grocer who received almost \$69,000 to expand their fresh food hamper program and develop an innovative new voucher program for people experiencing disadvantage.

Their new voucher program aims to help remove any extra barriers for vulnerable people accessing fresh produce and reduce any stigma associated with using vouchers by making the system more discreet and accessible.

In addition to the grants, the Labor Government is investing \$3.5 million to build regional food hubs to increase the capacity of food relief storage and distribution services in regional Victoria. The hubs will ensure food gets to where it's needed by strengthening the link between suppliers and those experiencing food insecurity.

In partnership with Foodbank Victoria, the Government has selected Albury-Wodonga Regional Foodshare, Bendigo Foodshare, Geelong Relief Centre, Mildura Foodshare and Warrnambool and District Foodshare to provide the new hub services.

The food relief hubs build on \$10 million already being invested by the Labor Government for new distribution centres in Ballarat and Morwell. Once complete in late 2022, the new centres will enable a coordinated food relief response across the state.

The Community Food Relief grants and regional food hubs are part of the more than \$25 million in additional funding the Government has provided since February 2020 to expand food relief operations across Victoria.

In addition, 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.

For more information on the Community Food Relief Fund and to see all recipients, visit dhhs.vic.gov.au/community-inclusion-and-food-relief-coronavirus-covid-19.

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

“Every Victorian deserves access to fresh and healthy food – which is why we’re boosting resources for community-based food relief services and ensuring all families can stay happy and healthy.

“2020 was a year like no other and many Victorians are still recovering from the impacts of the pandemic – our new regional hubs will help ensure better food relief coordination across the state so everyone has what they need.”

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