

Item 3.4

Food Support for Christmas

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

As part of our Covid response program the City spent \$3.1 million in funding and donations to support emergency food relief between 2020 and 2022. City Staff worked with over 60 organisations including NSW Government agencies, the food relief sector, and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to ensure food was getting to those who needed it.

In 2023, the demand for emergency food relief continued to grow. Many people sought food relief for the first time, having to prioritise housing, health and heating instead.

In June 2023, Council unanimously resolved to support my [Lord Mayoral Minute](#) to establish a new 3-year \$4.5 million Food Support Grants program to help organisations distribute food to struggling households as the cost-of-living soars.

Since December 2023, the City has provided \$3.9 million in funding to 29 community organisations who in turn support over 200 agencies. As a result, these organisations provided a total of just over 1 million kilograms of food and \$71,200 in vouchers for food insecure people in our city. The Food Support Grants program is currently funded until 30 June 2026.

In addition to funding, the City has a dedicated staff member working with organisations we are funding to increase their impact and reach through the Food Operations Working Group. This has improved access to fresh produce by facilitating a partnership with Sydney Markets enabling First Nations Response, a local food relief service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to source over one tonne of fresh produce weekly.

According to [FoodBank's 2024 Hunger Report](#), food insecurity in Australia has reached a critical point. Almost half of low-income households have faced food insecurity in 2024. FoodBank estimate 3.7 million households across Australia (33%) are now considered either severely food insecure (19%) – where people are skipping meals or going entire days without eating, sometimes to protect other members of their household – or moderately food insecure (14%).

Christmas is a time when families of all kinds, communities and friends come together to share a meal. But for those struggling to afford the basics, going without a meal can be particularly isolating. Local organisations report that families are pleading for both food support and help with gifts for children over the holidays.

I recommend that Council make donation of \$10,000 each to 16 local grassroots organisations that serve a meal on Christmas day or provide food hampers and gifts to enable food insecure local families and communities in our area to celebrate the holidays.

It is also critical that we investigate opportunities to extend the City's Food Support Grants Program beyond 30 June 2026 to continue to help those in need.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
- (i) during Covid, the City spent \$3.1 million, and worked with over 60 businesses and community organisations, on food relief;
 - (ii) since the establishment of the City's Food Support Grant Program in 2023, the City has provided \$3.9 million in funding to 29 community organisations who in turn support over 200 agencies. These organisations have provided over 1 million kilograms of food, and \$71,200 in vouchers for food insecure people in our city; and
 - (iii) local food relief organisations continue to report increases in demand as the cost-of-living crisis worsens, and that families are pleading for both food support and help with gifts for children over the holidays;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate extending the City's Food Support Grant Program when current funding ends on 30 June 2026 and report back to Council; and
- (C) Council approve a \$10,000 donation to each of the following 16 local community organisations to help with meals, food hampers and gifts over the holiday period, totalling \$160,000 to be sourced from the 2024/25 General Contingency Fund:
- (i) Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited;
 - (ii) Addison Road Centre for Arts, Culture, Community and Environment Ltd;
 - (iii) Asylum Seekers Centre Limited;
 - (iv) The Fact Tree Youth Services Inc;
 - (v) First Nations Response Limited;
 - (vi) Glebe Youth Service Inc;
 - (vii) Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation;
 - (viii) Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council;
 - (ix) Mudgin-Gal Women's Aboriginal Corporation;
 - (x) Redfern Youth Connect (Australia) Limited;

- (xi) Catholic Parish St Canice's Elizabeth Bay as the Operator of a PBI for St Canice's Kitchen;
- (xii) Sydney University Settlement for the Settlement (Darlington);
- (xiii) The Twenty-Ten Association Incorporated;
- (xiv) The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW) for Wayside Chapel;
- (xv) Weave Youth & Community Services Ltd; and
- (xvi) Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care Program Inc.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor