

MEDIA RELEASE



Tuesday 4 August 2026

COLES LAUNCHES COMMUNITY FOOD RELIEF APPEAL TO HELP PUT MORE MEALS ON AUSTRALIAN TABLES

- *Customers can donate at Coles checkouts from 5 August to 1 September, supporting SecondBite and Foodbank charity networks nationwide*
- *The Appeal builds on Coles' daily food rescue program, which has helped provide the equivalent of 377 million meals*
- *New research estimates 3.6 million Australians experienced food hardship for the first time in the last six months*

PHOTOS & VIDEO [HERE](#)

Coles has launched its first Community Food Relief Appeal with SecondBite and Foodbank, giving customers a new way to help provide more meals to Australians facing food hardship.

From tomorrow, Wednesday 5 August, until Tuesday 1 September, customers can donate at any Coles checkout nationally. Funds raised will be distributed to SecondBite and Foodbank Australia to help provide food through thousands of frontline organisations that cook meals, pack hampers and stock community pantries across the country.

The Appeal builds on Coles' longstanding food rescue program which to date has donated the equivalent of 377 million meals to Australians who need it most.

The Appeal comes as new national research¹ commissioned by Coles, SecondBite and Foodbank estimates 3.6 million Australians experienced food hardship for the first time in the last six months.

Many Australians are also reluctant to seek support from food relief charities. Nearly half (48%) say they would not access food relief if they needed to because they believe someone else needs it more, while one in three (32%) say they would be too embarrassed to ask.

The research shows the cost of electricity and gas bills (40%), rising fuel and transport costs (37%), and rent or mortgage increases (24%) are among the biggest pressures in the past six months affecting how much households can spend on food.

¹ All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov. Total sample size was 1501 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd - 28th June 2026. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian adults (aged 18+).

SecondBite Chief Executive Officer Daniel Moorfield said funds raised through the Appeal would help frontline charities respond as more vulnerable households seek support.

"Local charities are seeing demand reach working families, double-income households and people who may never have needed support before. With three in ten Australians saying they would consider accessing food relief in the next six months, that demand is expected to grow," he said.

"Every donation will help get more food to community organisations supporting people locally, so fewer dinner tables are left without a meal."

Foodbank Australia Chief Executive Kylea Tink said the findings show why it is important to remove the barriers that stop Australians from seeking food relief.

"A big part of this Appeal is opening up the conversation around food relief, making it more visible and helping people understand that support is there for everyone who needs it.

"What's most concerning is not only the scale of need, but how many Australians are trying to manage food hardship quietly and alone. It shows how quickly cost-of-living pressures can affect a person's ability to feed their family.

"No Australian should feel they have to wait until they're in crisis before asking for support and this Appeal will help strengthen the ability of charities to provide immediate relief."

Coles Chief Executive Officer Leah Weckert said the Appeal gives customers and suppliers a way to support the work food relief partners do every day.

"We know many Australians are doing it tough. While food relief alone cannot address the broader cost-of-living pressures facing households, it can provide vital and immediate support for people who are going without.

"Every day, our team members set aside unsold, edible food for SecondBite and Foodbank so it can reach local charities and communities where it is needed most.

"Through these longstanding partnerships, Coles has helped provide the equivalent of 377 million meals. This Appeal builds on that contribution and gives customers and suppliers another way to help put more meals on Australian tables."

From Wednesday 5 August to Tuesday 1 September, 11 participating suppliers will donate 20 cents for each eligible product sold at participating Coles stores and online, subject to any applicable donation caps. Eligible products and full details are available at coles.com.au/foodreliefappeal.

Key data from The Food Relief Report:

- An estimated 3.6 million Australians experienced food hardship for the first time in the past six months.
- 41% of Australians have had to choose between buying food and paying for another essential bill in the past six months.
- 80% of Australians say at least one barrier would prevent them accessing food relief if they needed it, most commonly believing others need it more (48%), feeling embarrassed (32%) and not thinking they would be eligible (31%).

- Electricity and gas bills (40%), fuel and transport costs (37%), and rent or mortgage increases (24%) are among the biggest external pressures on household food budgets in the past six months.
- An estimated 3 million Australians have accessed a food relief service in the past six months, and three in ten (28%) say they would consider doing so in the next six months.
- An estimated 3.1 million Australians (15%) say they have skipped meals in the past six months due to cost pressures, including one in ten parents (9%) who have gone without so their families could eat.
- 53% of Australians have cut back on hosting or attending social activities/celebrations in the past six months because they could not afford food costs.
- 85% of Australians have faced pressure on their household budget in the past six months, reducing how much is spent on food.
- 43% of Australians have had to reduce how much they eat takeaway / eat out and plan meals more carefully (39%) in the past six months due to cost pressures.
- 27% of Australians have had to switch to cheaper or lower quality food, reduce fresh food (19%), eat smaller portions (19%) and search for discounted, free or donated food (17%) in the past six months due to cost pressures.

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For further information, please contact

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