

# Media Release

coles | Value the Australian way



Monday, 12 July 2021

## GIVING AUSSIES IN NEED A SECOND BITE THIS WINTER

*New research shows demand for food relief continue to increase as volunteers decline*

This winter, Coles shoppers can help support Aussies hardest hit by COVID-19 by purchasing a \$2 donation card at the supermarket checkout during its annual appeal for food rescue organisation SecondBite.

The national appeal comes as SecondBite released new research<sup>1</sup> today which reveals three out of four community food charities are experiencing higher demand from vulnerable Australians compared to this time last year, particularly from single-parent families and people affected by homelessness and unemployment.

The research also shows that nearly three in ten (29%) food charities continue to experience a decline in volunteer numbers as a result of COVID-19, while more than one in four (27%) continue to experience disruptions to their regular meal services.

SecondBite Ambassador and Board Director Matt Preston said customers who purchase a \$2 donation card at Coles will enable the not-for-profit food charity to provide the equivalent of ten meals for vulnerable Australians this winter.

"The need for food relief is even more urgent this winter due to the impact of COVID-19. Almost 80% of our charity and community partners surveyed saw an increase in demand for their food relief programs compared to last year," he said.

"The biggest increase is coming from unemployed people, single-parent families and people experiencing homelessness. As many charities rely on volunteers to deliver their services, COVID-19 has also impacted their ability to respond. Nearly 30% of our charity partners saw a decline in volunteer numbers and are experiencing ongoing disruption affecting their ability to meet demand."

Coles Chief Sustainability, Property & Export Officer Thinus Keevé said customers can make a genuine difference to someone in need by supporting the winter appeal, with 100% of donations going to SecondBite.

"It's now 10 years since we began our partnership with SecondBite and together we have donated the equivalent of more than 148 million meals<sup>2</sup> to those doing it tough in our communities," he said.

"The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in more Australians needing support to feed their families than ever before. By purchasing a \$2 donation card at Coles this winter, our customers will be helping SecondBite to continue its essential services of supporting community food partners and feeding Aussies in need."

One of the charities supported by SecondBite is The Big Umbrella in Melbourne's inner city who provides meals to vulnerable locals including people on low incomes or affected by homelessness.

The Big Umbrella's CEO and founder Justin Dickinson said the demand for food relief has tripled since the start of COVID-19 in March last year.

<sup>1</sup> The SecondBite survey was undertaken in May and June 2021 and involved 169 community agencies across Australia who provide food relief to vulnerable people such as those who are unemployed, single parent families, people experiencing homelessness and elderly Australians.

<sup>2</sup> As at 31 May 2021

“COVID has really affected how we provide food relief and we’ve constantly had to change our services to meet the demand and abide by different COVID restrictions,” he said.

“Pre-COVID we were providing 150 to 200 meals for people in need which increased to 2,700 meals a week during stage 4 lockdowns. Some 48,000 home cooked meals made from fresh produce donated from the Coles and SecondBite Community Food Program were provided during this period. It’s truly amazing what can be achieved when we all work together.

“When there are no restrictions, we run a buffet style meal service where people can sit down, share a meal and have a chat with our volunteers. But we’ve found it’s much harder now for people who need food relief as they are still anxious about receiving food in crowded areas.”

In addition to providing meals to vulnerable locals, The Big Umbrella also provides emergency food relief services to communities affected by natural disasters such as the 2019-20 bushfires and more recently severe storms in the Dandenong Ranges.

“Our emergency food relief service in Kalorama and Upwey provided over 3,200 home cooked meals and 1,860 kgs of fresh produce and aid relief in just 11 days,” Justin said.

In the past year, nearly 850 Coles supermarkets and delivery centres across Australia donated surplus fresh food via SecondBite to around 1,300 community food programs that provide meals to Australians facing tough times.

Coles is also donating 10 cents to SecondBite for every Coles Kitchen 300g soup sold until 31 October. The donations apply to the Coles Kitchen 300g soup range, including delicious, hearty flavours like Butternut Pumpkin, Chicken and Sweet Corn, and Chicken and Vegetable.

The Coles SecondBite Winter Appeal \$2 donation cards are available at Coles supermarkets nationally until Tuesday, 27 July.



*Matt Preston with volunteer cooks from SecondBite's community partner The Big Umbrella and Coles' SecondBite Winter Appeal donation cards*

**-ends-**

**For further information, please contact**

Coles Media Line (03) 9829 5250 or [media.relations@coles.com.au](mailto:media.relations@coles.com.au)