



MEDIA RELEASE

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SecondBite launches Meals that Matter: An innovative collaboration putting healthy food on empty plates in NSW

Premier of NSW, Mike Baird, and Malcolm Turnbull, Federal Member for Wentworth, launched SecondBite's Meals that Matter program in Bondi.

Meals that Matter is an innovative collaboration between national fresh-food rescue organisation, SecondBite, and Bondi-based community kitchen, Our Big Kitchen (OBK). The program also brings together the business community, other NSW-based community food programs and has the support of the NSW State Government.

The program sees SecondBite's corporate partners cooking meals - using food rescued by SecondBite - at Our Big Kitchen in Bondi under the guidance of OBK staff and volunteers.

Corporate teams, who make a financial contribution to participate, learn about the work of SecondBite and OBK over the meal they've prepared. Then, the majority of the food prepared gets packaged and SecondBite delivers these meals to other community food programs it supports in NSW.

So, those in need get healthy meals, while corporate teams have a fun team-building session; get a better understanding of the issue of food insecurity; and a greater willingness to find other ways to be involved in addressing food insecurity and advocating on behalf of those vulnerable people that SecondBite supports.

Elaine Montegriffo, SecondBite's CEO, said, "Meals that Matter is a wonderful example of the power of taking a collective approach to address the critical societal issue of food insecurity – that is, assisting vulnerable people who can't always access enough nutritionally adequate food for an active, healthy life. No one group can tackle the problem alone."

Coles Liquor, who participated in the pilot of Meals that Matter, can't speak highly enough of the initiative. It was apparent to them that team members came away engaged and reflective. "Sometimes we feel too busy to focus on the things that really matter. A very humbling experience and a great opportunity to bond with work colleagues" said Coles Liquor's Nick Mavraganis.

OBK's Founding Director, Rabbi Doctor Dovid Slavin said, "The Meals that Matter program is a wonderful expansion of OBK's corporate social awareness and team building programs. OBK enjoys a vital relationship with SecondBite which sees food that would tragically go to land-fill instead come to OBK's programs to be converted to nutritious meals for those in need."

The program launched in Sydney with expansion of Meals that Matter into regional NSW on the agenda for 2015/16.

A 2014 NCOSS study states that poverty affects 900,000 people in NSW, and the number seeking food relief is estimated to be around 650,000.

"The Meals that Matter model is very simple but well suited to growth as SecondBite can work with other community kitchens in others parts of NSW.

“In 2014, the NSW Government provided a grant to SecondBite, which allowed us to purchase an additional refrigerated van as a part of the Environmental Protection Authority's Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. This allowed us commence work in the Illawarra.

“Subject to additional funding, we see both opportunities and a need to expand both our broader operations and Meals that Matter into areas of need including Western Sydney, Newcastle, Bathurst, and the Illawarra.” said Ms Montegriffo.

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ABOUT SECONDBITE

Around 2 million people across Australia struggle to put food on the table, while around \$8 billion worth of food goes to waste each year – at a profound cost to the environment.

SecondBite rescues surplus fresh nutritious food from supermarkets, fresh food retailers and other sources and through 1200 community food program partners distributes it to people in need across Australia.

The organisation is committed to providing healthy nutritious food due to its importance for health and wellbeing. This commitment is underpinned by a formal pledge that 95% of the food it collects and redistributes is nutritious in accordance with Australian dietary guidelines and that 75% of the food collected and redistributed is fruit & vegetables.

SecondBite also conducts nutrition education programs to support community food programs and their clients to develop food and nutrition knowledge, cooking skills and connections within their community to maintain a healthy active life.

In 2014, SecondBite redistributed 5.7 million kgs nationally, enough food for 11.4 million healthy meals.

While in NSW, the organisation distributed more than 615,000 kgs of fresh, nutritious food, enough food for 1.23 million healthy meals.
