



29 July 2022

Stepping Up for Homelessness in Ovens Murray and Goulburn regions

Thousands of people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness have sought assistance for themselves and their families so far this year from support agencies across the Ovens Murray and Goulburn regions.

To mark Homelessness Week 1-7 August, the region's homelessness agencies as part of the Ovens Murray and Goulburn Homelessness Network will launch its Pay It Forward initiative at the beginning of the week, with the idea to share good fortune by doing something kind for someone else.

The pay it forward initiative means community members can purchase a coffee or a meal that will be redeemable by a person in need at one of the 34 participating cafes. The idea was being kick-started for homelessness week.

The network's Janine Bussell said the community often expressed that it wanted to help but did not know how.

"Many in the community want to help people experiencing homelessness, but don't know how to reach out. People experiencing homelessness can feel embarrassed and ashamed to ask for food or basic services.

"The focus of this year's Homelessness Week in our region is Stepping Up to End Homelessness, recognising that everyone has a role to play. The pay it forward initiative gives a structured means to helping people living without safe, secure housing while raising awareness and making an impact for people right now," she said.

"The biggest thing is community awareness. A lot of people are doing it tough so if the community show they are willing to help, people experiencing homelessness will feel valued," Ms Bussell said.

According to the 2016 Census, 116,000 Australians identified as being homeless. More than 6,360 individuals and families accessed Specialist Homelessness Services in the Ovens Murray Goulburn region in the 2021-22 financial year.

Poverty, a lack of affordable housing and family violence are the main factors causing homelessness, but other contributing factors include unemployment, mental illness, psychological distress, disability, exiting out-of-home care and prison.

Janine Bussell, representing the Network, said homelessness is a growing crisis in our community.

"The housing affordability crisis has created a dire shortage of affordable options for people on very low incomes. There are families, couples, and single people right across the Ovens Murray and Goulburn region who are doing it tough and are at risk of homelessness," she said.

“Homelessness Week is an opportunity for us to shine a light on the issue and spark important discussions about the issues that are driving homelessness in our part of regional Victoria.”

Ms Bussell said homelessness can happen to anyone of any age and the single biggest cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing.

“Sufficient supply of affordable housing both in the private rental market and social housing is key. We know the provision of long-term safe, secure, affordable housing is critical to ending homelessness.

“What it costs to keep someone housed is significantly lower than what it costs to support someone who is rough sleeping or staying in emergency accommodation,” she said.

The Ovens Murray and Goulburn Region Homelessness Network was established in 1996 and covers the Ovens Murray and Goulburn areas. The network is a partnership of the fourteen Specialist Homelessness Service funded agencies across the regions, who work collaboratively on issues relating to homelessness.

Ways you can step up and join the fight against homelessness

1. Join the Stepping Up for Homelessness Event and grab a tea, coffee or hot meal for yourself and pay it forward for clients of homelessness services in the region, during Homelessness Week. Visit <https://omg-homelessness.weebly.com/homelessness-week-event.html> for a list of participating cafes and restaurants in your area.
2. Find out more about homelessness and the Stepping Up for Homelessness at <https://omg-homelessness.weebly.com>

Media enquiries:

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#OMGPAYITFORWARD PARTICIPATING CAFES & RESTUARANTS
BEECHWORTH
Beechworth Bakery 27 Camp Street BEECHWORTH 1300 233 784
BENALLA
Rustik Café and Foodstore 28 Bridge Street BENALLA 03 5762 4686
BROADFORD
Country Soul 1/70 High Street BROADFORD 03 5784 3004
KILMORE
The Harvest Door Café & Larder Shop 1, 11 - 13 Sydney Street KILMORE 0492 984 651

MYRTLEFORD	
Alpine Gate Café 38 Great Alpine Road MYRTLEFORD 03 5752 1375	
SEYMOUR	
The Brewer's Table Seymour 42 Station Street SEYMOUR	Araminta's Tea Rooms 56A Tallarook Street SEYMOUR 03 5792 2334
SHEPPARTON	
Belcibo & Co 129 Fryers Street SHEPPARTON 0411 878 378	Friars Café 127 Friars Café SHEPPARTON 03 5822 2181
The Milkbar Café 129 Fryers Street SHEPPARTON 0468 858 246	Aussie Hotel 73 Fryers Street SHEPPARTON 03 5821 4011
Pranzo's Pizza & Pasta 88 Fryers Street SHEPPARTON 03 5831 5249	Brother Pablo 109 Fryers Street SHEPPARTON 0498 323 064
Nourish 86 Fryers Street SHEPPARTON 03 5831 7259	Lemon Tree Café 98 Fryers Street SHEPPARTON 03 5822 2300
Baking Dough 251-253 Maude Street SHEPPARTON 03 5831 4166	Bill + Beats 106 McLennan Street MOOROOPNA 03 5825 3695
Tinto Bakery 217 High Street SHEPPARTON 03 5831 7259	Welsford St. Café 159A Welsford Street SHEPPARTON 03 5821 8498
Stellar Café 278A Wyndham Street SHEPPARTON 03 5821 4200	
WANGARATTA	
Madem Espresso 27 Muntz St WANGARATTA 0435 291 111	Clydes on Murdoch 106 Murdoch Road WANGARATTA 03 5791 0000
Tj&Co Blends Bowls Bites 45 Murphy Street WANGARATTA 0401 363 559	Where Is My Coffee? 1/103 Murphy Street WANGARATTA 0436 521 787
Shelley's Bakehouse 67a Reid Street WANGARATTA 03 5722 9211	
WALLAN	
Open House Café 4/51 High Street WALLAN 03 8348 0299	
WODONGA	
Burger Urge 130 High Street WODONGA 02 6056 0202	Henri's Bakery 57 Hovell Street WODONGA 02 6024 1248
The Goods Shed 1/71 Church Street WODONGA 02 6056 8828	Yums Food Bar 3 Elgin Boulevard WODONGA 02 6024 3361

YARRAWONGA

Belle's Café Yarrowonga

76 Belmore St YARRAWONGA

03 5743 3434

Lake Café & Deck

2A Irvine Parade YARRAWONGA

03 5743 3069

Thyme for Coffee

88a Belmore Street YARRAWONGA

03 5743 2893

Yarrowonga Bakery

128 Belmore Street YARRAWONGA

03 5744 2584