

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Thursday, 13 June 2024

NEW BALLARAT CENTRE BOOSTING REGIONAL FOOD RELIEF

The Labor Government is helping more regional Victorians access fresh and healthy food with the new Ballarat Community Food Centre ensuring food relief gets to the people who need it most.

Minister for Carers and Volunteers Ros Spence today officially opened Foodbank Victoria's Ballarat Community Food Centre. The new 2,000 square metre hub will receive, package and distribute a wide range of foods and goods to local emergency relief agencies, charities and schools.

The Labor Government's investment of \$10 million has supported the construction of community food centres in Ballarat and Morwell, delivering much needed food relief to thousands of Victorians and helping to ease cost of living pressures.

The Ballarat Community Food Centre not only provides food to families in need in the Ballarat Grampians region, but also provides important food education programs, vocational training and support for the local community.

A pilot cooking program will be delivered through the centre, teaching university students how to prepare a healthy meal, and later expand into other cooking programs tailored to meet the needs of the Ballarat community.

Onsite kitchen facilities will serve as a training space for people to learn basic food preparation skills.

Food for the centre is sourced via donations from local supermarkets, wholesalers and producers, and distribution is supported by a mixed workforce including volunteers and government-funded vocational training placements.

In partnership with Federation University's Ballarat Campus, Foodbank Victoria has also set up a 'community supermarket' to provide students with access to a range of healthy foods. More than 600 students have already accessed the service.

In addition to this investment in Foodbank hubs, the Labor Government has allocated over \$56 million since 2020 to strengthen the food relief system and deliver more food to Victorians in need. A further \$3.3 million is provided to Foodbank Victoria annually to support its critical operations across the state.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Carers and Volunteers Ros Spence

"Every Victorian deserves access to healthy and fresh food which is why we continue to invest in regional based food distribution hubs like the Ballarat Community Food Centre."

Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

"This foodbank centre is already improving food security across Ballarat and our entire region. Food pantries and neighbourhood houses are benefitting from cheaper and fresher produce from Creswick to Dunolly, and Linton to St Arnaud."

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"I am proud of our investment with Foodbank to help provide food relief for the local community."

Media contact: Georgina King 0419 001 409 | georgina.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle

“We have so many great food support services in the region and Foodbank in Ballarat will make their job easier. With storage and refrigeration, Foodbank and all of our community food support services can offer fresh and frozen food to those in need.”

Quote attributable to Dave McNamara, CEO Foodbank Victoria

“Foodbank Victoria’s partnership with the Victorian Government means we can continue getting food on the table for people experiencing disadvantage in the Ballarat Grampians region.”