

12 June 2025

## NEW OZHARVEST HUB OPENS IN MELBOURNE SOUTHEAST TO SERVICE RECORD LEVELS OF NEED

OzHarvest has opened a new food rescue hub in Hallam to meet soaring demand across Melbourne's southeast – as food insecurity reaches crisis point and more people go hungry than ever before.

The new hub will deliver **6,000 extra meals each week** – taking **12 local charities off the waitlist** across hard-hit communities including Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Knox, Monash and Mornington Peninsula LGAs.

OzHarvest's 2025 Community Needs Survey reveals that there is a national hunger emergency with a 54% increase in people turned away by the 1500 charities OzHarvest serves across the country.

In Victoria:

- 81% of charities OzHarvest supports saw an increase in demand for food relief
- 77% charities need more food to meet demand
- Nearly one-third (29%) of people seeking food relief are doing so for the first time ever

"Food insecurity isn't just about hunger – it's about dignity, health and the impossible decisions people face every day just to survive" said Christine Crowley, Melbourne Manager. "This is the toughest it's ever been and more than a third are reaching out for help for the first time in their lives. Every meal we rescue gives someone the strength to get through the day. With winter approaching, this new hub means we can reach more people, faster, and in the communities that need it most."

"The support from OzHarvest means the world to us," said Sharyn Ling, Community Care Manager at Bless Collective, a charity supported by OzHarvest. "Each week, we provide meals for up to 150 people and run the Bless Pantry, which helps over 200 individuals doing it tough. Thanks to OzHarvest, we can reach more people with dignity, warmth and consistency. It's more than just food - it's hope, connection and care."

The Hallam site is part of OzHarvest's wider expansion plan to better support people in need and has been made possible thanks to funding from the Victorian Government's Community Food Relief program, along with the generous support of OzHarvest's National Partner Woolworths, with dozens of stores across Victoria donating surplus food daily to help feed local communities.

"We know that Victorian families are doing it tough – and that's why we're delivering more funding to expand food relief efforts so local organisations can continue their vital work to feed people in need." Said Minister for Carers and Volunteers, Ros Spence. "OzHarvest's new site in Hallam, backed by \$200,000 in support from the Labor Government, will deliver more food for Victorians who need it most and reduce food waste at the same time."

Woolworths Group Manager in southeast Melbourne, Jaimie Nash, said: "It's heartening to see OzHarvest open this new food rescue hub in Hallam. Our team is committed to supporting OzHarvest by donating surplus food throughout the week from stores across the state, and knowing this new hub will deliver 6,000 extra meals a week and support more local charities is incredibly encouraging. We're proud to be part of the effort to help ensure more food reaches those who need it most right here in Melbourne's southeast."

"There are lots of opportunities for people to get involved and give back to the local community, from volunteer hours in the hub, supporting charity agency collections and jumping in a van with OzHarvest Drivers." said Christine.

# MEDIA RELEASE



OzHarvest Melbourne currently rescues 174 tonnes of food each month, delivering over 350,000 meals to 119 charities across the Melbourne Metropolitan area and beyond.

## **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June**

**Address: SE Hub, Unit 2, 21-22 National Drive, Hallam, VIC 3083**

### **Timings**

- 8.00 Guests arrive, breakfast served
- 8.15 Welcome speeches, acknowledgement of Country
- 8.30 Tour of space

### **Interviews available with:**

- Christine Crowley, OzHarvest Melbourne Manager
- Sharyn Ling, Community Care Manager at Bless Collective

### **Media Contact:**

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### **ABOUT OZHARVEST:**

Founded by Ronni Kahn AO in 2004, OzHarvest is Australia's leading food rescue organisation, collecting quality surplus food from more than 2,600 businesses, including supermarkets, restaurants, cafes, hotels, retailers, airports and retail food outlets. Every week over 300 tonnes of food is saved from going to landfill and delivered to 1,500+ charitable agencies, helping to make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable people across Australia. OzHarvest's education programs include: NEST - tailor made workshops that support people in need with nutrition education and life skills, Nourish - a hospitality training program for 'at risk' youth, FEAST – a curriculum aligned program for primary and high school student. To inspire behavioural change and make it easy to waste less at home, OzHarvest launched their Use It Up tape and campaign. OzHarvest operates nationally in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, NT, Tasmania and in regional communities and to date has delivered over 290 million meals and saved over 90,000 tonnes of food from landfill. Every \$1 donated allows OzHarvest to deliver two meals to people in need [www.ozharvest.org](http://www.ozharvest.org)