

SecondBite: an introduction

SecondBite is a charity which makes a lot of sense to me. Waste is always something I find deplorable but I find food wastage particularly abhorrent and when it is put side-by-side with other people not having enough nutritious food to eat (food insecurity) the madness of some of our culture is exposed. I love how SecondBite addresses this – the elegance of using one problem (food waste) as a solution to another (food insecurity).

They are funded solely by donations and though they had their beginnings as a volunteer-based organisation, now paid staff co-ordinate proceedings and work alongside volunteers. Committed to ensuring access to fresh, nutritious food for people in need across Australia, they collect from farmers, wholesalers, markets, supermarkets, caterers and events. In the early days they used volunteers' own vehicles to do this – now, having grown enormously, they use refrigerated vans.

The food is taken direct to a total of 1,040 community food programs around Australia as I saw personally and locally when I went out with a driver on the food run. We delivered at a St Vincent's food kitchen where the food would be cooked into meals to go out later that night in their soup-kitchen vans to feed people who are homeless. SecondBite has provided the food which has become 19.4 million meals.

We also delivered to a Northern Suburbs community centre where volunteers were waiting to make up food bags. The organisation supports people who are homeless, women and families in crisis, youth at risk, indigenous communities, asylum seekers and new arrivals.

Without the assistance of SecondBite's Community Connect program, Ballarat Community Health APROTCH would not have the opportunity to provide free cooking programs which allow us to educate clients (who have a diagnosis of serious mental illness) on nutrition, budgeting and increase their confidence in preparing meals in their own home. Also we will not be able to provide our clients with fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis.

Vivian Pasani, Ballarat Community Health

A staggering 9,715,622 kilograms of food has been distributed by SecondBite nationally since its inception in 2005.