

"Thank you so much. I can eat without hesitation now." "Overwhelmed with the help, blown away. Thank you so much. It's so thoughtful and I am so grateful and relieved. It's a huge help for me."

"Thank you for the liquid hand soap that was delivered to school."

"Thanks for all the lovely things they are really useful."

"Got my bounty delivered and boy do we feel spoilt, tonight we will be eating what looks like top shelf food."

"Thank you for the parcels. They have been a real blessing this past week. I really appreciate it, thank you so much."

# Share the Food



**PORT PHILLIP  
COMMUNITY  
GROUP RESPONSE  
TO COVID-19**



**PORT PHILLIP  
COMMUNITY  
GROUP**  
Working for  
Social Justice



## KEY SUPPORTERS



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**We acknowledge the Yalukit Willam Clan of the Boon Wurrung as the traditional owners of the lands on which we work.** We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

**We appreciate and welcome diversity** in all its forms, including staff, volunteers and community members. Together, this makes our efforts stronger and more effective.

A copy of this report can be downloaded from [ppcg.org.au](http://ppcg.org.au), by calling (03) 8598 6600 or emailing [info-support@ppcg.org.au](mailto:info-support@ppcg.org.au)

Port Phillip Community Group Limited  
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## INTRODUCTION

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic saw a significant increase in the number of individuals and families contacting the Port Phillip Community Group (PPCG) for support. As people struggled to navigate unemployment, housing insecurity and isolation from support networks, PPCG pivoted its staff and resources to deliver much needed relief and supports to those in need as quickly as possible.

With the support of the City of Port Phillip (COPP) we launched Share the Food (STF) in April 2020 in direct response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We did this as we knew that our partners would have reduced service delivery capacity, that those with the most need would have increased risk of hunger, and a loss of their daily connections through receiving and sharing food. It is a testament to the leadership and responsiveness of the COPP who quickly provided us with their expertise and resources to set up the STF Hub.

This report is a snapshot of Share the Food Program from April 2020 to March 2021. It highlights the outstanding work of the many individuals, community groups, agencies and businesses who worked tirelessly to deliver *Share the Food*.



- a) Lou Campbell (STF Co-ord) + Bernadene Voss (Mayor) + Karen Sait (PPCG EO)  
b) Recipient family of Oz Harvest food hamper  
c) Fresh food donations at the STF Hub.



## OUR AIM

To provide food and essential items to residents of the City of Port Phillip facing hardship or isolation as a result of the COVID pandemic.

During 2020 Victoria faced rolling staged restrictions and lockdowns. The longest lockdown was for 112 days under Stage 4, in metropolitan Melbourne in late 2020. This was at the time the longest continuous Stage 4 lockdown globally.

**Share the Food was developed as an agile and responsive initiative by PPCG, to support the community during the severest restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.** The aim was to provide food staples, fresh food, toiletries and hygiene products as well as COVID information and personal protection items to people facing financial hardship, and to those isolating due to immunity, age or disability.

*"At my time in need, and such an uncertain and lonely time, you gave me not only meals, but also friendly, caring people to deliver them and to ask how I was."*

**Dan**, Share the Food recipient



## HOW WE DID THIS

- > **A “Hub” was established** for donated and purchased food and essential items.
- > **Staff and volunteers sorted and stored all items under strict COVID requirements** and informed by warehouse operations.
- > **Food parcels were prepared according to family size, dietary requirements and accommodation types.** Food parcels met the needs of those now in temporary motel accommodation (previously sleeping rough), residential homes, rooming houses, public housing, supported residential services, backpacker hostels, and student accommodation - the latter two categories had fallen between the cracks of welfare assistance and were now isolated and experiencing food poverty.
- > Food parcels were supplemented with **ready to eat and nutritious meals** for people who for various reasons were unable to prepare meals during the pandemic.
- > **STF volunteers delivered the food parcels via prearranged times and contactless delivery** to homes and other accommodations.
- > **Community organisations’ staff also collected pre-ordered food parcels to distribute** to their client groups as well as bulk fresh foods to cook additional healthy and ready to eat meals. This greatly increased PPCG’s reach.
- > **Individuals and families were referred to STF** by PPCG staff, the DHHS COVID hotline, City of Port Phillip, and via numerous community organisations. Depending on the need and situation, STF responded quickly, often on the same day of the request as well as including after hours and weekends for emergency food support.





# OUTCOMES

With \$220,000 of dedicated funds to purchase food and essential items we delivered \$1,140,888 in value of food and essential items - a return on investment of \$5 for every \$1 spent.

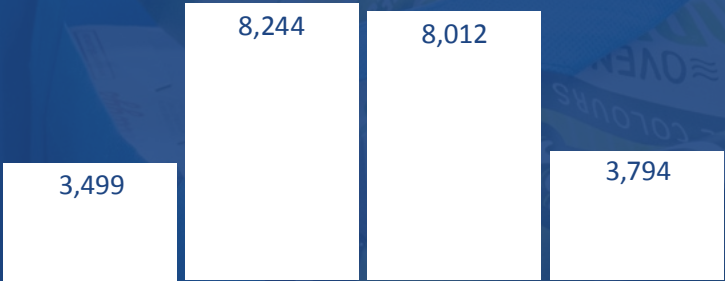


23,549 food parcels and meals were packed and distributed from April 2020 to March 2021 plus bulk and fresh food provided = total value of \$1,140,888.

	Apr – Jun 2020	Jul – Sep 2020	Oct – Dec 2020	Jan – Mar 2021
Total Value Distributed	\$295,703	\$430,957	\$274,334	\$139,894
Bulk Food (Non-Perishable)	\$129,962	\$115,992	\$67,442	\$26,978
Fresh Food	\$30,300	\$35,600	\$65,667	\$43,247



Food Parcels /Meals



# WHO WE ASSISTED

COVID-19 meant that PPCG went from feeding hundreds of people a week to feeding thousands.

*“We typically support people with complex needs underpinned by poverty, family violence and lack of education and support, but now we find the newly-unemployed, students, people on bridging visas and people who are falling through the cracks of assistance programs are coming to us for help.”*

PPCG EO Karen Sait

# MELISSA’S STORY

Melissa was referred by an emergency housing provider during COVID-19 for a food parcel. Melissa is from a CALD background, a single mother of nine children and at that time was living in emergency accommodation due to family violence. STF staff checked in with Melissa about what her and her family food requirements were. It became apparent to STF staff that Melissa was feeling overwhelmed by her situation, struggling with home schooling during lockdown, and other pressing needs. STF immediately dropped off a large food parcel and scheduled fortnightly parcels during lockdown. Parcels included fresh fruit, veggies, eggs, non-perishable food, ready to eat meals and essential items such as toiletries.

*“I am overwhelmed with the help, blown away. Thank you so much as I was drowning. It’s so thoughtful and I am so grateful and relieved. It’s a huge help for me and my family.”*

**Melissa**, Share the Food recipient

STF staff also referred Melissa to PPCG support staff who supplemented the parcels with additional food vouchers and baby and children’s items from St Kilda Mums. PPCG staff supported her to access family violence counselling and support, financial counselling and NDIS for support with one of her children who has a disability. PPCG staff then scheduled ongoing and regular welfare check-ins.



a) Alex from Quat Quatta and Bernadene Voss (Mayor) unpacking donated meals.



b) Andrew from Jerry's Milkbar delivering donated meals.



c) Emma taking delivery of a donation of pet food from Pets of the Homeless.

## MAJOR SUPPORTERS

- > The **City of Port Phillip** contributed funds, venues and site support to set up and operate STF. The program was established at the JL Murphy Pavilion in Port Melbourne in April 2020 and relocated to the Fisherman's Bend Community Centre in October 2020 to accommodate the return of Sports Clubs to JL Murphy.
- > **Community Information Services Victoria (CISVic)** allocated COVID crisis funds.
- > Victorian Government **Working for Victoria Initiative** provided PPCG new roles and job opportunities for 4 staff from September 2020 to March 2021.
- > **Second Bite** donated pallets of food and essential items every week.
- > **Foodbank** assisted with subsidises for much needed food purchases.
- > **Oz Harvest** donated food boxes containing fresh and non-perishable food items.
- > **Coles** prioritised our purchase requests for high demand and dietary food items.
- > **Hare Krishna Melbourne** provided ongoing and exceptional support with transport and deliveries as well as cooked hundreds of meals.
- > **South Melbourne Market** donated surplus fresh market food.
- > **Father Bob's** donated food items and helped set up the hub.
- > **Pets of the Homeless** donated pet food.
- > **RACV** donated chef prepared frozen meals.
- > **Quat Quatta** donated chef prepared fresh meals plus 50 Father's Day Hampers with gifts.
- > **Jerry's Milkbar** donated fresh meals that were also suitable for freezing.
- > **Pinchapoo** donated toiletries and hygiene items.

*"A huge thank you to Port Phillip Community Group whose beautiful community spirit continues to shine".*

CoPP, program supporter

- > **Rinoldi Pasta** donated pallets of pasta and rice during lockdowns when supermarkets were unable to meet this need.
- > **Freemasons** donated Christmas Hampers.
- > **The National Theatre** donated confectionery items providing welcome treats in food parcels.
- > **Baker's Delight** donated bread.
- > **Noisette Bakery** donated bread and pastries also adding variety and treats to food parcels.
- > **DHHS and our local Federal Minister Josh Burns** provided COVID safe resources, masks and information.



Mohan delivering South Melbourne Market donations to STF

## MOHAN'S STORY

A welcome outcome of STF is the positive relationship that PPCG has developed with **Hare Krishna Melbourne**. This has been facilitated and led by **Mohan - Manager of the Hare Krishna Food for Life Team**. Mohan and his team quickly became our "go-to people" for fast bulk food deliveries and collections that were often out of business hours or on weekends. Mohan and his team also cooked and delivered numerous vegetarian meals, and composted fruit and vegetables not suitable for further distribution or cooking.

Through PPCG the Hare Krishna team are now connected directly with the South Melbourne Market and surplus fresh market food continues to be made into delicious vegetarian meals to assist those continuing to experience food insecurity or food poverty.





## VOLUNTEERS

Over 100 volunteers supported STF providing their time, skills, energy, good humour and passion, and were essential to the success of the program.

STF quickly became a series of well functioning teams (in line with COVID restrictions) working together to deliver food and essential items during the pandemic. STF volunteers comprised our regular and committed PPCG volunteers as well as hospitality workers, artists, actors, musicians, business operators and professionals - either working from home, working reduced hours or out of work due to COVID. In addition students, families, couples, business groups, clubs and many other people in the community volunteered at STF. All volunteers shared the same goal of looking for positive and productive ways to respond to the pandemic.

*"We love doing this work. We have come to know the people we support through the STF program."* Program volunteer

- a) Event Craft staff helped set up the hub while their jobs were on hold.
- b) Volunteer Margaret, a semi-retired teacher.
- c) Sam existing PPCG volunteer who helped with the STF program.

### DEAN'S STORY

I initially volunteered with PPCG and then completed a student placement with PPCG in 2019 as part of my Community Services Diploma. During the pandemic I joined the STF team as part of the Working for Victoria Initiative.

I was able to meet locals and hear their stories which gave me an unfiltered account of how different groups of people were impacted by the pandemic, and how we could respond to the needs of the community. From residents of supported residential services to international students – all were thrilled to receive fresh fruit and vegetables as well as face masks, non-perishable items and up to date information about COVID as well as other supports available.

*"I gained so much from working with PPCG. It was a time of great difficulty losing my Mum during the pandemic and looking for work. The position gave me a social outlet and a place to work... which was invaluable for my mental health having a knock-on effect for my family."*

Dean, program worker

Dean happy helping at PPCG







# COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER

**Share The Food quickly and unexpectedly became the major food response for the most vulnerable and isolated in the City of Port Phillip both through direct PPCG support and via agency support.** PPCG's relationship with COPP Council Staff was strengthened and STF became a key part of the city's COVID response. Extensive networking and relationship building resulted in 65 community organisations accessing food and essential items on numerous occasions (often weekly) to distribute to residents. In addition some agencies outside of COPP contacted PPCG for support, particularly those working with international students, and no agency was turned away.

STF sourced and coordinated the distribution of food and other essential items during this unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic. Food and essential items were donated and delivered to the hub by Second Bite, Oz Harvest, South Melbourne Market and over 40 other organisations. Food parcels and much needed fresh meals for those without cooking facilities or the ability to

prepare a meal sustained and comforted people. This was vital during the winter months of 2020 in the midst of Stage 4 lockdowns and associated restrictions.

Food insecurity and food poverty increased during lockdowns. STF was able to connect people and organisations to ensure food and essential items reached those most in need. This increased the leverage of STF and has created lasting community connections such as:

- > Bright Sparq were assisted to distribute their excess perishable food across the COPP.
- > STF connected supported residential services with 7-Eleven and Hectors Café that continue to donate their excess food. Residents are delighted with the delivery of fresh and healthy meals each week.



Volunteers Jess and Lachlan.  
Students on school holidays.





a) Lou, Rose and Matt presenting food parcels  
b) Volunteers packing food parcels

## SUPERMARKET PARTNERSHIP

PPCG fostered a strong and responsive relationship with Coles to purchase key staples, specialist dietary and protein items for STF that were not able to be sourced elsewhere. Coles and Secondbite also launched their appeal to Fight Hunger during Winter 2020 from the STF Hub.

A video for the 2020 Winter Appeal was filmed at STF with food journalist, TV personality, and SecondBite Board member Matt Preston. PPCG staff also participated in information videos to help the public understand the many pathways to homelessness and STF and PPCG client groups.

Coles supermarkets across Australia now donate surplus fresh food via SecondBite to around 1,100 community food programs that provide meals to Australians facing tough times. STF was a key recipient of this food during COVID-19.

## BACKPACKER LOCKDOWN STORY

In July 2020 COPP Council staff requested urgent assistance from STF for a Backpackers' Hostel where several residents had tested positive for COVID. The Hostel was immediately put into lockdown. With only a shared public kitchen and all 60 residents confined to their rooms, both food and support were critical.

STF staff organised the following:

- > Hare Krishna Melbourne and Food without Borders set up their vans outside the Hostel and everyone received a hot meal.
- > Many residents were from countries where tap water is not drinkable and were afraid to drink unbottled water. Bottled water donated by Second Bite, was made available.
- > STF also provided contactless deliveries of other essential supplies and food that could be prepared without kitchen facilities, as well as resources and information for COVID safety, and local supports.

This is a great example of community partnerships at their best with the swift and generous offers of help to get appropriate supplies to this site. This also provided COPP with time to find alternative accommodation and relocate residents until individual health status and support needs could be clarified.

*"Received my food parcel and wanted to say that it is very kind of you. As a backpacker I really appreciate it."* - John, STF recipient





# THANK YOU

PPCG would like to thank all the people who volunteered their time and skills to *Share the Food* between April 2020 - March 2021. The following key volunteers and volunteer groups generously assisted us on a regular basis during this time:

Adelaide Harney	Keke Luik	Sally Osmond
Bella Hume	Kim Twiggs	Sam Stahle
Caitlin Burns	Krystal Christy	Sam Song
Cathie Keenan	Lyndsey Hollywood	Samantha Gowan
Danielle Smith	Margaret Rennie	Sofie Aspinall
Dave Hughes	Margie Read Flavell	Sophie Thompson
Denise Cox	Marina Pisera	Sue Conner
Di Savage	Maryanne Maccagini	Sue Bresnan
Emma Brunella	Meg Spackman	Tach Garcia
Fleur Garcia	Moira Findlay	Tony Cafini
Gary O'Connell	Neville Aphoy	Trudy Cook
Gillian Fawcett	Nicholas Horswood	Zachery Fuller
Hannah Bonney-Gibson	Patrick O'Grady	<b>Agencies and Groups</b>
Jason Rooney	Phillip Savage	Belle Property St Kilda volunteers
Jenny Hann	Rachel Cobb	Elwood mums (25 volunteers)
John Bresnan	Ruby Partland	Eventcraft
Karen Menon		Albert Park Rotary
Kate Dunton		

## YOU CAN HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Give now - make a donation online [ppcg.org.au/donation](https://ppcg.org.au/donation), email [info@ppcg.org.au](mailto:info@ppcg.org.au), call 8598 6600, or drop into our offices.

*Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.*

## AGENCY SUPPORTERS

Aldi St Kilda	Hectors Corner
Alex Makes Meals	Josh Burns, Federal Member for Macnamara
Alfred Health	Logistics
ANZ	Jerry's Milk Bar
Bakers	Many Rooms
Delight	Nappy Collective
Bright Sparqe	National Theatre St Kilda
CCare	Noisette Bakery
Christ Church	Nourish
CISVic	OzHarvest
City of Port Phillip	Passion Foods
Coles	Pinchapoo
DHHS	Project Dignity
Double Tree Hilton Melbourne	Quat Quatta
Elwood Neighbourhood House	RACV
Emma and Toms	Rinaldi Pasta
Father Bobs	Rotary Albert Park
FareShare	Second Bite
Foodbank	Share the Dignity
Freemasons	South Melbourne Market
Harry the Hirer	The Collective
Hare Krishna Melbourne	Woolworths

## ORGANISATION RECIPIENTS

Braybrook and Maidstone Neighbourhood House	Project Dignity
Brigidine Sisters	Public Housing
Asylum Seekers Project	Russian Ethnic Council
CCare	Sacred Heart Mission
Christ Church Community Centre	Servants of the Two Hearts
City of Port Phillip	Souper Kitchen
Emerald Hill Mission	Southport Community Housing
Father Bobs	St Kilda Baptist Church
Food without Borders	St Kilda Community Housing
Galliamble St Kilda	Star Health
Gatehouse St Kilda	Supported Residential Services
Hare Krishna Melbourne	Temple Beth Israel
Holmesglen	The Salvation Army St Kilda
Housing First	Uniting Church - 101
Jerry's Milk Bar	The Hub
Maison	Viva a Vida
Monash Student Nurses	
Peninsula Community Legal Centre	
Private Rooming Houses	





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*STF bread donation to Skinners  
playground South Melbourne*