



Suzanne Orr MLA

Minister for Disability
Minister for Community Services and Facilities
Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety
Minister for Government Services and Procurement

Member for Yerrabi

26 March 2020

Urgent food relief for vulnerable Canberrans

Vulnerable Canberrans will have access to food relief as a result of the ACT Government's food pantry initiative.

Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Suzanne Orr, has today announced that the ACT Government will work together with community partners, including Uniting Care Kippax, Oz Harvest and The Foodbank to provide urgent food and essential items through a food pantry.

The ACT Government will provide \$1.5 million over the next six months to ensure vulnerable people get the food and items they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stage 1 will initially involve supporting the existing crisis and relief centres throughout our community. The Canberra Relief Network will be a central point for procurement and distribution of goods to organisations. This is to enable and empower the organisations to continue meeting the increasing demands of the community during these unprecedented times.

Once the centralised model is established, the CRN will move to Stage 2 – providing direct support to individuals and families who are unable to access existing services. The food pantry will be delivered from a central coordination point supporting vulnerable Canberrans, including people living with disability. Existing foodbank provisions will remain in place until Stage 2 is up and running early next week.

A call centre is also being set up to assist people in isolation or quarantine. People will be able to register through the call centre for access to the food pantry. Once established, the number will be published on <https://kippax.org.au/>.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Suzanne Orr:

“This new food pantry will ensure vulnerable people in our community can access supplies they need for themselves and their families during this challenging time. The message is simple: If you are in isolation, if you are elderly, if you have a disability, if you have lost your job or you’re not sure how you will put food on the table, please get in touch.

“The ACT Government would like to thank Uniting Care Kippax, Oz Harvest and The Foodbank for partnering with us to support Canberrans who are in need of urgent relief.

“As a Government, we are doing what we can to ensure no one is alone or without support during these unprecedented times, which is why we are delivering this food pantry as part of our overall economic survival package.”

Quotes attributable to Mr Steve Coster, Chief Executive Officer, Uniting Care Kippax:

“This is a time when all of our community needs to come together – for a start, let’s stop panic buying. I know this is a community that cares about each other and we see that every day in Uniting Care at Kippax. Let’s think about others and support each other at this difficult time.

In the coming weeks we will be coming out to the community and asking them for food donations, and we will need volunteers. I know Canberrans will rise to the occasion.”

Uniting Care Kippax will advise the community via their website <https://kippax.org.au/> of ways in which donations can occur and when these donations will be accepted.

Statement ends

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