



ST VINCENT DE PAUL FUNDING SUPPORTS GLEN INNES COMMUNITY TO CONNECT AND RECOVER AFTER BUSHFIRE

THE ISSUE

The 2019-2020 bushfires had a devastating impact upon the Glen Innes region following 18 months of intense drought, challenging the community physically, emotionally and financially. The impact of the bushfires saw some people isolating from the community while they dealt with the enormity and intensity of the fires, which was then compounded due to COVID-19 restrictions. Local hospitality businesses also suffered during this time. Years of natural disasters had left the community with limited discretionary funds for luxury items like eating out, and the pandemic led to forced closures and limited operations, as well as travel restrictions that prevented the regular flow of tourists stopping in to spend money.

THE SOLUTION

Funding from St Vincent de Paul allowed GLENRAC to offer 'Fire Break' meal vouchers to the Glen Innes community, a project that financially supported small groups of people to gather together to network and share with each other over a meal at a local hospitality hub in the Glen Innes Severn Shire. The vouchers covered up to \$300 of the cost of the meal (alcohol not included) and provided a much needed opportunity for people in the community to get together and support each other during the challenging time, without having to worry about the financial pressure of doing so. The project also reduced the impact of isolation in rural communities and fostered mental wellbeing and wellness amongst those who participated in an event.

The 'Fire Break' meal vouchers also supported local hospitality businesses as money was being spent in venues, with a flow-on to suppliers and therefore the wider local economy.

THE IMPACT

This funding supported 50 'Fire Break' dinners in the Glen Innes community, with 462 people attending a dinner and one event having more than 60 people in attendance. The hospitality venues supported included the Railway Tavern Bistro, New England Motor Lodge, Hereford Steakhouse, Yim Thai, Dragon Court, Great Central Hotel, The Local, Campbells Butchery, Bruce Family Butchers, Helen Morgan Catering, Town Hall Coffee Shop, The Glen Pie Shop, Smeatons Bakery, Deepwater Brewery and Deepwater Bakery.

"Thank you so much, it was my husbands birthday yesterday. Without this great opportunity we wouldn't get to have a wonderful dinner." - Fire Break recipient.

KEY FINDINGS

- This funding supported 50 'Fire Break' dinners in the Glen Innes community, with 462 people attending a dinner and one event having more than 60 people
- 'Fire Break' dinners also supported local businesses and the economy by relieving the financial burden of patrons
- Providing opportunities for social inclusion and interaction in rural communities is essential to mental wellbeing, particularly after the impacts of drought, fire and COVID-19

PROJECT PARTNERS



June 2021



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