

2019 Financial Year Annual Report

(period covered 01.07.2018 – 30.06.2019)

The East Loddon Food Share Program Inc. (ELFS Program Inc.)

The ELFS Program Inc. is a fully voluntary, self-funded organisation which provides emergency food, personal toiletries and basic household care parcels to families and individuals who are suffering as a result of extreme circumstances.

Extreme circumstances can strike anyone at any time. Natural disasters, such as drought or bushfire, have an enormous impact on the day-to-day lives of people living within the effected zone. Similarly, illness or an unexpected loss of income, can place people in a sudden and very difficult situation.

The East Loddon Food Share Program Committee recognises that everyone needs a hand at some time. Through the distribution of emergency food support provided through the ELFS Program, the committee works to provide some relief to families and individuals when times are tough.

Emergency support includes:

Non-perishable food parcels

Toiletries

Breakfasts for school children

Toilet paper and cleaning products



The work of the East Loddon Food Share Program Inc. is supported by many wonderful volunteers and organisations. It is through their generosity: with donations, time, distribution networks and love that we are able to reach so many people, ensuring support gets to those most in need. Our charity status now means we can provide a tax deductible receipt for any monetary donations received.

Ruth Barkla, Chaplain with Salvation Army Rural Outreach Program, and local CFA Fire Brigade Volunteers play an important role in the distribution of food parcels to families who are needing help in local and surrounding areas. Respecting people's dignity and privacy is of paramount importance to our program's credibility and we understand the standards required so that the recipient doesn't feel judged for their circumstances.

Background information...

EAST LODDON FOOD SHARE PROGRAM

During the prolonged drought of the last decade (1999 to 2009), our East Loddon Community Network Group Inc., started working diligently at a program providing 300 food parcels each month which were distributed by local volunteers to our local area and beyond to support families, going through a tough time, not because of their farming practices but simply because of the weather. This program involved over 40 local volunteers, travelling to the East Loddon Community Centre, unloading food trucks, storage of groceries in a specially set up foodbank, packing days and then distribution. Most of the volunteers were dealing with drought too, but this program worked at providing a sense of connectedness, friendship & hope as volunteers were involved in distributing the food parcels in their own areas. Any concerns were referred on to professional support agencies, Salvation Army for follow-up. Some of the feedback received then was that the groceries were gratefully received but it was the visit and the communication which were paramount, addressing the isolation issues and not feeling alone. Back then, most of the groceries were free so we were able to operate on minimal funding.

We have continued with this program, regulating supply to demand, through the floods of 2011 and now, again, as the weather continues to be unpredictable and global market prices impact on our dairy industry. We are finding an increasing number of people are asking for our help this time. In a nutshell, we have a great group of volunteers, always willing to lend a hand, at the drop of a hat, and while we are very grateful that Victoria Foodbank are available, we now have to buy the groceries, albeit at a reduced rate, but this means that we have to source funding to continue.

Our ELFS Program provides a vital service to our rural communities by providing essential food support to people in need but our challenge remains sourcing the funding to continue purchasing the groceries. At present, we are able to order from Victoria Foodbank on a fortnightly basis, with packing days once a month or as required, then distribution.

We also work in with the East Loddon P-12 College Breakfast Program by providing breakfast to over 100 children twice a week and provide food parcels to the Salvation Army Rural Outreach Program.

In the interests of accuracy, please note that the Food Share activities have been undertaken since 2007 until early 2017, under the organisation East Loddon Community Network Group Inc.

We have now registered the organisation East Loddon Food Share Program Inc. as a separate PBI entity, to solely reflect on the Food Share activities, and this also allowed us to seek Deductable Gift Recipient (DGR) Item 1 Status to support our activities.

2019 F.Y. East Loddon Food Share Program Facts



Stacking the full boxes ready for collection

Over 73,370 individual tins/bottles/packets of food & personal items packed by volunteers.

Helping approx. 506 families in local & surrounding rural areas.

Involving local community volunteers and senior VCAL students from East Loddon P-12 School

2,530 food parcels delivered to local farming families via our partnerships with the Salvation Army and local CFA volunteer fire brigades



East Loddon Food Share Program Inc. Committee: (L to R) Linden Barry-Chairman, Mark Phelan Vice-President, Leanne Welsh-President, Nick Marlow-Treasurer/Secretary



Setting up the meeting room for a packing day. Planning and lots of elbow grease go into the ordering, handling & packing of thousands of tins & packets of food, to fill the food parcel boxes. We like them full!!



Care parcels going out to every family at the local rural East Loddon P-12 College via school buses.



Meeting room set up for an ELFS Program Packing Day! These days are organised every 3 to 5 weeks, to pack between 144-288 food parcels, full of essential items, to be delivered directly to families in need.



Lachlan & Linden Barry with custom made boxes, packed into their van in Melbourne, ready to come up to East Loddon Community Centre for a Packing Day



We are always grateful for the support of other organisations helping with Packing Days, including Bendigo Rotary Club – Strathdale and Kotta CFA Fire Brigade at this session. It is an uplifting experience to know that the food parcels are going directly to recipients.



Ruth Barkla of the Salvo's, just finished packing her vehicle with food parcels, ready to go out on delivery rounds to people needing a hand in our local communities.

East Loddon Food Share Program Inc.

3 Year Activity Summary

2017 to 2019 inclusive



Financial Year	2017	2018	2019	Driven by increased requests
Number of individual tins / bottles / packets of food purchased, packed & distributed	27 225	54 120	73 370	
No. Food Parcel boxes delivered to recipients	825	1640	2530	
Number of families assisted by receiving ELFSP Inc. Food Parcels	165	328	506	
Number of individual people directly supported by receiving a ELFSP Inc. Food Parcel	495	984	1518	

The Next Chapter, moving into 2020

Moving forward, the biggest challenge facing this area into the 2019/2020 financial year, are unpredictable weather patterns and increasing drought like conditions. Our East Loddon Food Share Program Inc. organisation has a dedicated committee of volunteers who are devoted to supporting initiatives and programs which will benefit the long-term prosperity of our community.

Expected outcomes for end of financial year 2020 include:

- * Improving lifestyle/social interaction**
- * Improving personal situations**
- * Promoting health and wellbeing**
- * Promoting a positive community spirit**
- * Providing a platform from which programs promoting community growth can be achieved**

The work of the East Loddon Food Share Program Inc. is supported by many wonderful volunteers and organisations, who help make our program possible. This year, we would like to formally recognise the following patrons for their generosity and thank them for their kindness:

- * Salvation Army - Ruth Barkla – Salvation Army Rural Outreach Chaplain**
- * Bank of Melbourne Foundation**
- * Rotary Club of Bendigo – Strathdale**
- * Feed Melbourne Appeal**
- * Narre Warren North & Pearcedale CFA Brigades**
- * Foodbank Victoria**
- * Country Women's Association of Victoria – Bendigo & Northern Group Clubs**
- * East Loddon P-12 School & VCAL Program**
- * 15 local Volunteer CFA Fire Brigades at: Jarklin, Dingee, Serpentine, Mitiamo, Pyramid Hill, Loddon Vale, Mysia, Salisbury West/Powlett Plains, Kamarooka, Kotta, Pine Grove, Tennyson, Campbells Forest, Yarrawalla Raywood**

We are very proud of what we have been able to achieve with our partnering sponsors, to date, and will continue to work towards supporting rural families, needing a helping hand. We look forward to keeping you updated on our progress.

10th March 2019

Hi Leanne and team at East Loddon Food Share,

I just wanted to say thank you very much for the hamper of goodies which was gifted to us via the Mitiamo CFA but donated by your organisation.

My Husband and I own and operate a dryland farming enterprise which didn't deliver any grain to silo last season due to the dry conditions, therefore this year our budget is very tight and every expense is deliberated carefully, including food purchases.

We have been lucky enough to be the recipients of two Food Share hampers this year and both times we have found the contents to be useful, staple pantry items with the occasional 'luxury' item that is much appreciated. To know that there are basic foodstuffs in our pantry because of your kindness means a lot. So, thank you once again for all of your hard work

Yours Sincerely

Sue T - Mitiamo

13th March 2019 – Today I received a food hamper from you and I would like to thank you for the hamper. It will be used very wisely. Once again, thank you.

John & Sue E - Kotta

Feedback received from very grateful recipients of our care parcels, delivered to farmers in our local rural district.

8th March 2019

Hi ☺, we would like to say a huge thank you for the generous food box placed at our door! It is so heart-warming to know our community is thinking of each and every one of us and putting a much-needed smile on our very hard-working farmers. We remain positive and hopeful looking into the future for all of those on the land. Thank you again for your kind generosity. Craig A - Pine Grove/Kotta

6th March 2019

Hi there! I just wanted to say thank you for the generous box of goods given to us through the East Loddon Food Share Program to those volunteering in the rural fire brigade. That was very thoughtful and a very kind gesture. Keep up the good work.

Leanne C - Durham Ox

13th April 2019

Dear East Loddon Food Share volunteers

Thank you for giving us the lovely hamper box that arrived the other day. It was most helpful, as the cleaning products are the most expensive items that people need to purchase, so it was very much appreciated. So once again, a very big thank you to all that help put the boxes together and deliver them. Yours sincerely Dot H – Calivil

4th May 2019

Hi there.

We wanting to send my appreciation on receiving a hamper of foods and cleaning products. In this hard time, it means a lot knowing there's always something in the cupboards.

Definitely helps 100%

Thank you again

Regards Brian W & Meeka W – Serpentine

4th May 2019

Hi

On behalf of the Pine Grove Fire Brigade I would like to thank you for the boxes you have given us.

I delivered approximately 90% of the first round of 'food' boxes in our district. All families were very appreciative of the boxes and were touched that they were thought of. I found it a perfect opportunity to check in on them, some of whom I knew did not have much contact with other neighbours and were really struggling at the time.

I have now just delivered the second round of 'cleaning' boxes. The feedback has been fantastic. They all said that the first box was filled with 'real' food that they could use - a perfect selection for a family. All were very happy to receive the cleaning products, one of the most expensive items on the shopping list. Many do not use the internet and have asked me to pass on their thanks to you all.

Again, thanks from the Pine Grove community for the wonderful work you do.

Regards

Wendy Sims

Communication Officer

Pine Grove Brigade.

Current contact details for:

East Loddon Food Share Program Inc.

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Website: www.eastloddonfoodshare.com.au

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