

GIVE WHERE  
YOU LIVE FOUNDATION

Community Choice

# ANNUAL REPORT

**The Community Choice Voucher Program continues to provide food, pharmacy and material aid to the Geelong region during the 2024 financial period.**

**Thanks to Shine On's assistance we are able to ensure our voucher program supports agencies of the Geelong region, providing them with approximately over \$192,672 worth of vouchers. The vouchers are an extension of the overall supports and services these agencies can provide to support our community.**

In January 2024 to reflect the rise in the cost of food the Community Choice food vouchers increased to \$25.

This \$25 allows people in need to redeem their voucher from local merchants, providing them with food that allows for the dignity of choice. The \$25 voucher also is able to be redeemed for up to \$140 worth of groceries at the Geelong Food Relief Centre, while also expanding their purchasing capacity in cafes around our region - providing people with the dignity of choice.

*For a further snapshot into the increased need in our region please see last page relating to food security in the region.*



## Community Benefits

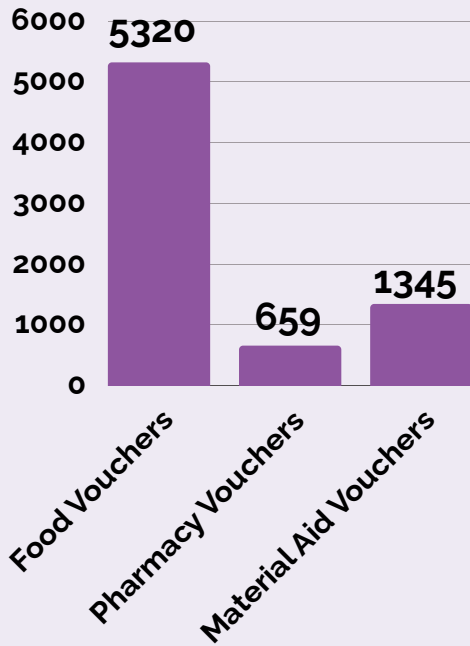
Our Community Choice Program works with agencies in the Geelong region who distribute out Food, Pharmacy and Material Aid Vouchers. As well as with Merchants who redeem these vouchers.

The benefits of the Community Choice Food and Pharmacy Voucher program to the community are:

- Helps boost the local economy, as we have multiple merchants over the Geelong region that are able to redeem our vouchers.
- Provides dignity of choice to community members, and offers a range of food options, and across multiple Geelong regions.
- Supports the Geelong Food Relief Network.
- Provides data to help us see where the largest need in the community is - and helps us see beneficiary data, such as what caused community members to seek assistance (cost of living, disability, mental health and more)

# COMMUNITY CHOICE REDEMPTION DATA

## No of Redeemed Vouchers



## TOTAL \$ Amount REDEEMED:

# \$192,672

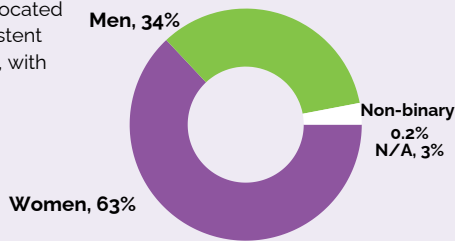
Over the past twelve months **over \$125,000 worth of food and pharmacy vouchers** have been redeemed as part of Give Where You Live's Community Choice program.

While most beneficiaries choose to redeem their food vouchers at the **Geelong Food Relief Centre**, others do choose food retailers including the Corio Bay Roadhouse and Labuan Square Commons to receive meals.

# COMMUNITY CHOICE BENEFICIARY DATA

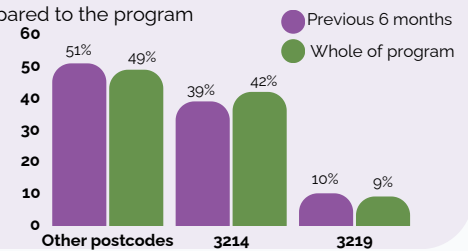
## Gender

The gender of those being allocated vouchers has remained consistent across the life of the program, with the majority being women



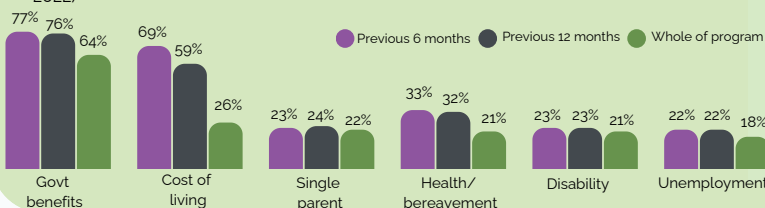
## Postcode

Slightly more people in the 3214 postcode (Corio, Norlane, North Shore) were allocated vouchers in the last 6 months compared to the program overall



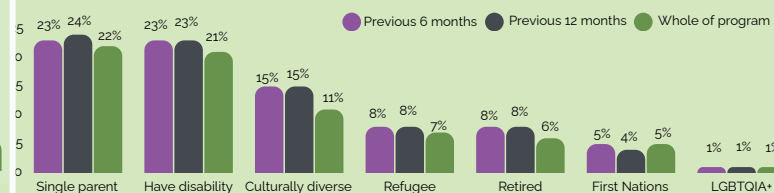
## Beneficiary challenges (top 6)

The proportion of people seeking support due to **cost of living pressures** continues to grow. In the last six months, 69% of beneficiaries were experiencing challenges due to the rising cost of living, compared to 26% across the life of the program (i.e. since January 2022)



## Beneficiary cohorts

The profile of beneficiaries across the last 12 months has changed slightly compared to the profile across the life of the program. Over the last 12 months agencies have reported an increase in beneficiaries seeking support who are **culturally diverse, single parents, and/or have disability**.



### Note on time periods:

Previous 6 months: Jan - June 2024

Previous 12 months: July 2023 - June 2024

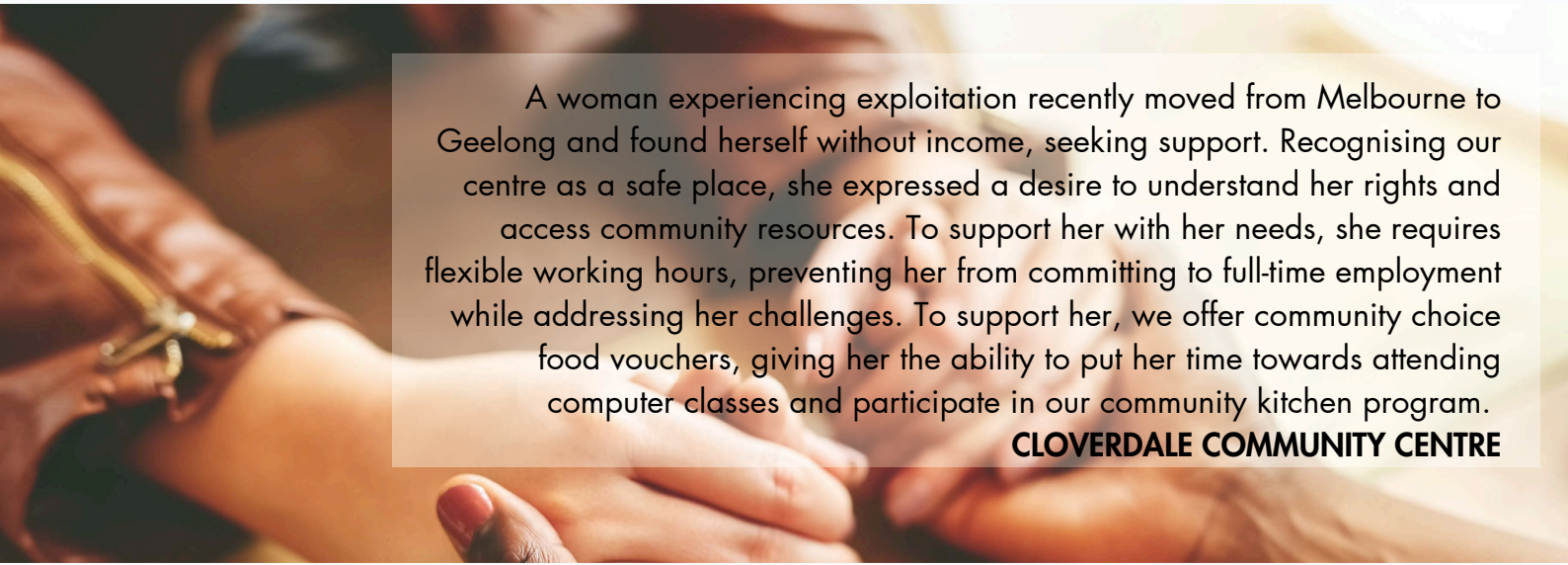
Whole of program: January 2022 - June 2024

## IMPACT STORIES

*Through our Community Choice Program we have been provided with impact stories through the applications from agencies who hold our community choice vouchers. You can see below some of the stories - and how our Community Choice Voucher Program is making a direct impact in our community.*

Allissa, an indigenous woman, who is a pregnant mother with children had to vacate their home and live with her mother who is a pensioner. No access to her finances, and her grandmother unable to financially provide food. Community Choice Food Vouchers were handed to participant so she could feed her children until further supports were put in place.

**KILLARA FOUNDATION**



A woman experiencing exploitation recently moved from Melbourne to Geelong and found herself without income, seeking support. Recognising our centre as a safe place, she expressed a desire to understand her rights and access community resources. To support her with her needs, she requires flexible working hours, preventing her from committing to full-time employment while addressing her challenges. To support her, we offer community choice food vouchers, giving her the ability to put her time towards attending computer classes and participate in our community kitchen program.

**CLOVERDALE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

A young single mother phoned St Vincent de Paul Welfare Centre requesting help with food for her three young children for the rest of the fortnight. So that her son "didn't miss out" & could join in with his classmates in being recognised as a Year 6 student, she had spent \$60.00 of her food budget on his Year 6 (non-compulsory?) windcheater. We were able to supply her with a GWYL voucher for use at the Geelong Food Relief Mini Mart where she was able to buy fresh fruit & vegetables and groceries valued at over \$100.00.

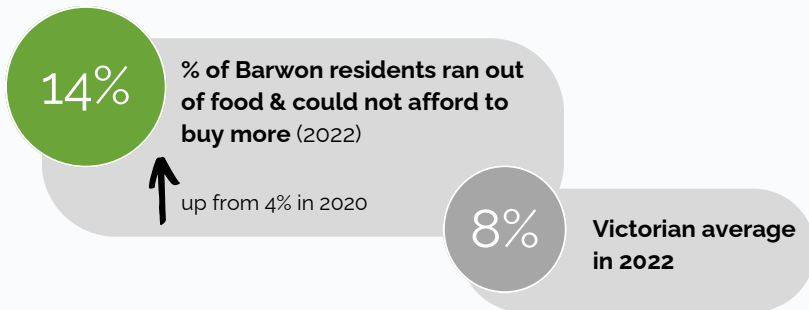
**ST VINCENT DE PAUL**



Food insecurity is largely driven by an inability to afford food, signified by **incomes failing to keep pace with the cost of living**. Analysis of data on socio-economic drivers of food insecurity paints a picture of **increasing vulnerability in the G21 region**. The regions of Newcomb – Moolap, Bell Park, Corio, Whittington, and Norlane face amongst the highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage in Victoria.

**“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”<sup>i</sup>**

Residents across our region experienced **significantly higher levels of food insecurity** compared to the Victorian average<sup>ii</sup>:



## Financial Stress



The **risk of food insecurity is increasing**. Economic vulnerability has increased over recent years in the G21 region, due to continuing impacts of COVID-19 and **compounding cost of living** factors. Research undertaken by ACOSS found that 73% of people receiving income support are **eating less or skipping meals** due to the rising cost of living,<sup>iii</sup> while recent CPI figures suggest prices for bread, cereal and dairy products have continued to rise over the past 12 months.<sup>iv</sup>

The proportion of G21 residents considered to be **‘struggling’** financially almost quadrupled between March 2020–March 2024.<sup>v</sup>



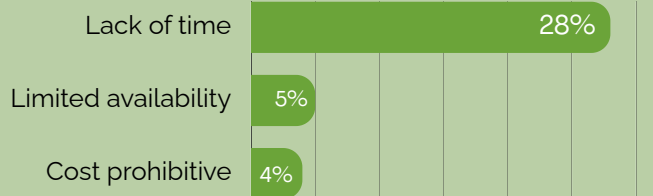
The proportion of G21 residents who are able to **raise funds (\$2,000) in an emergency** has been declining since 2019:<sup>vi</sup>



## Access to healthy foods<sup>vii</sup>



Reasons for not meeting recommended intake:



## Food for Thought research<sup>vii</sup>



Reasons for accessing food relief in Geelong:



**Sources:**  
 i. Yii, V., Palermo, C., & Kleve, S. (2020). Population based interventions addressing food insecurity in Australia: A systematic scoping review. *Nutrition & Dietetics*, 77(1), 6–18.  
 ii. Victorian Agency for Health Information. (2018–2022) Victorian Population Health Survey 2018 to 2022  
 iii. Australian Council of Social Service. (2023) Research report: It's Not Enough\*: Why More is Needed to Lift People Out of Poverty.  
 iv. Australian Bureau of Statistics (March 2024), Consumer Price Index, Australia, ABS Website, accessed 29 May 2024.  
 v. Roy Morgan. (2024) ANZ Roy Morgan Financial Wellbeing Indicator unpublished data for Geelong region (note: the estimated sample size provided by ANZ is between 500–700 residents).  
 vi. City of Greater Geelong (2021) Geelong Preventative Health Survey 2021: LGA Summary Report  
 vii. Give Where You Live Foundation (2023) Food for Thought: Research Report 2023