

March 2020

SMARTMEALS SERVING UP SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS CHARITIES & HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

National charity against homelessness, StreetSmart Australia, has today announced its brand new pilot initiative “SmartMeals” which is utilising local cafes & restaurants devastated by the COVID-19 crisis to provide meals for their local overstretched homeless community groups.

“We are leveraging our 18 years of partnership with the hospitality industry to provide much needed food services to frontline homelessness organisations and groups. This is providing a practical and local solution to support as many people as possible through this pandemic,” said Geoff Hills, Chief Operations and Fundraising, StreetSmart Australia.

StreetSmart has been working around the clock to get this program up and running quickly to help solve the food security problem that is emerging for homeless and disadvantaged people, with the dual benefit of being able to support hospitality businesses and workers.

The pilot is being trialled across three partnerships in Melbourne, with plans to expand across the country if the impact is real and funding is found. StreetSmart can also focus on outer suburbs and regional centres where they have partnerships already established.

- First Step - St Kilda x Earl Canteen
- Uniting Prahran x Earl Canteen
- St Mary’s House of Welcome x Ladro Gertrude St

“There is an urgent demand to the most vulnerable people and it’s great for us for now to be able to make a meal contribution to the lives of clients who we know are struggling right now, whether they walk into our service or it is provided to them safely in a drop off. This is such a quick turnaround, from a conversation with StreetSmart about the issues we faced, to a food drop off by Earl Canteen a few days later,” Patrick Lawrence, CEO, First Step.

The pilot program is being funded through donations raised in StreetSmart’s 2019 DineSmart campaign. The annual event sees participating restaurants and cafes ask their diners to chip in a small donation with their meals to help local homeless organisations.

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Photo caption: Patrick Lawrence, CEO, First Step receiving the drop-off of StreetSmart SmartMeals from Earl Canteen.

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StreetSmart Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation that raises funds to support and provide grants to grassroots community groups which focus on homelessness in Australia. StreetSmart keeps it local by connecting businesses with their neighbourhood shelters, action groups and projects, so funds raised directly help people in their own community. The core belief of StreetSmart is that everyone should have a safe and secure place to call home and aims to raise funds and awareness to bring about change for people experiencing homelessness or at risk. Since it was founded in 2003, StreetSmart has distributed more than \$6 million to over 600 local organisations all across Australia.