

CUSTOS

july 2026



Where it all began... Ipswich turns 70!

Page 16-17



Meals on Wheels™

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Rice Pudding 5



Crème Caramel 4



Strawberry Jelly 4



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MEALS ON WHEELS™ RECIPE RESOURCE

PEAR, SULTANA & CUSTARD TARTS



SERVINGS 20

INGREDIENTS

6 medium-size, ripe pears (approximately 800g), cored, halved and thinly sliced
3 tbsp lemon juice
200ml maple syrup
500ml thickened custard
200g wholemeal flour
10 sheets puff pastry
160g sultanas
1.25L cream, to serve

PREPARATION 20mins

METHOD

1. Preheat fan-forced oven to 220°C (230°C for conventional oven). Line a large baking tray with baking paper.
2. Arrange the thin pear slices out on a separate tray.
3. Mix the lemon juice with half of the maple syrup and pour the lemon-maple mix evenly over the pear slices. Set aside.
4. In a bowl, combine the custard and flour. Set aside.
5. Slice each pastry sheet in half and place one half on top of the other to form a double layer.
6. Using a 12cm diameter cutter, cut out two circles from each pastry stack and place on the lined tray. Completely cut through both layers and discard the excess pastry.
7. Using a 9cm diameter cutter, carefully cut into each pastry circle, through the top layer only, to remove the inner top layer.
8. Spoon the custard evenly into the inner circle of each pastry round. Layer with the pear slices and sprinkle sultanas around the pear slices.
9. Bake for 20 minutes or until the pastry has puffed and is golden brown in colour.
10. Serve with cream and the remaining maple syrup.

COOKING 25mins

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COMPANY SECRETARY

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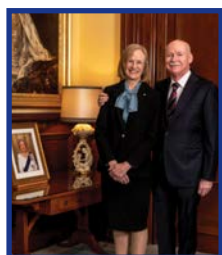
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Lea Readdy

SECTOR SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Jasmine Johansen



MOWQ Patrons

Her Excellency The Honorable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland and Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD

MEALS ON WHEELS™ QUEENSLAND LTD

Unit 16, Cameron House, Strathlink

27 South Pine Road, Brendale, QLD 4500

PO Box 2393, Strathpine Centre, QLD 4500

P | 07 3205 5588

E | info@qmow.org

W | qmow.org

Volume 57 #2

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NB: The CUSTOS is produced three times a year. Editions will be published in March, July and December.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I often hear that phrase 'we live in interesting times'. For me it hardly 'scratches the surface' to describe the challenges that members all face in sustaining our vital service. It's timely to reflect on what makes us such a strong brand and a trusted community member. Our people and the pride with which we light up a person's day by being there and having a chat, whilst delivering a truly nourishing meal to community members who rely on our service.

Your Board and MOWQ have been very focused on these competing challenges, and we have recently undertaken a mid-term review of our 3-year Strategy. Recognising the wonderful achievements by the MOWQ team with you and the need to remain contemporary in our priorities, particularly as the world changes around us.

Next month the Board and senior management from MOWQ will come together to shape and where required recalibrate the MOWQ Strategy. We all will be eager to gain more clarity as we try and determine what is in place for CHSP funding moving forward. The recent Senate Committee report was heartening and show that your efforts do not go unnoticed, but we need early certainty as we plan for our next 70 years. The Board and MOWQ are united in creating momentum around this through our own efforts and those of MOWA (more on this later in my report).

SEASONED WITH CARE

A key focus of our 70th anniversary celebrations has been the development of our commemorative publication, Seasoned with Care, which is now beautifully taking shape.

This project captures the true essence of Meals on Wheels by bringing together seven decades of stories, recipes and memories from the people who have shaped our Queensland network. It will stand as a lasting record of care and connection, reflecting the voices of the volunteers, clients and communities who continue to define our service. I sincerely thank everyone who took the time to share what makes Meals on Wheels so special.



We are grateful to our media partner **612 ABC Brisbane**, who played an important role in amplifying the storytelling campaign throughout April. Through on-air promotion, live reads and statewide engagement, ABC Brisbane helped extend the reach of our 70-year story and encouraged broad community participation.

Thank you also to the book sponsors whose generous contributions will help keep the publication price accessible for our members and volunteers. At the time of writing, I would like to acknowledge the Queensland Government as our official Anniversary Partner, Opella as our Major Book Sponsor, and our Supporting Book Sponsors: the Reuben Pelerman Benevolent Foundation, Polixen and AustBrokers Comsure.

The publication will be officially launched at our upcoming Gala Dinner, marking a significant milestone in our anniversary year. I encourage all members to consider how they can utilize this book for local fundraising or recognition purposes.

Seasoned

with care

Meals on Wheels in Queensland's 70TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

26 August 2026



Meals on Wheels[™]
Queensland



70TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

One of the most anticipated moments on our anniversary calendar will be the **70th Anniversary Gala Dinner**, to be held on National Meals on Wheels Day, 26 August 2026, at the Queensland Art Gallery.

The evening will bring together volunteers, members, partners, supporters and stakeholders from across Queensland to celebrate seven decades of service and the collective effort that continues to sustain Meals on Wheels in communities statewide.

We are pleased to recognise the vital support of our valued partners and sponsors, whose contributions have enabled this milestone celebration to take place. Thank you to our official Anniversary Partner, the Queensland Government; our Event Premium Partner, Inlusee; and our Supporting Sponsors: Value Added Meats, Ord Minnett, Gourmet Meals, The Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, Fresh Meats, BDO and Refrigeration House of Queensland.

The Gala Dinner will provide a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our shared history, celebrate the strength of our network and recognise the enduring impact of Meals on Wheels over the past 70 years.



SSD FUNDING EXTENSION

The Federal Budget provided the welcomed news of an extension to Sector Support and Development Funding to MOWQ (and over 200 other providers) for a further 12 months. Thank you to Members who provided targeted advocacy on our behalf. The importance of this funding is recognised in its ability to provide members with access to capability MOWQ holds that they would otherwise need to source and pay for themselves or take the risk of simply going without.

What this advocacy has demonstrated is the importance of working together and engaging on the issues that impact you as providers, and Meals on Wheels as a collective. This engagement and advocacy are only going to become more important as we look to the looming timeframe for the CHSP merging with Support at Home..."no earlier than 30 June 2027..." and the electoral cycle of 2028, where, in all likelihood, the Federal, State and Local elections will all be held in the one year. The MOWQ Board is currently reviewing the Strategic Plan 2024 -2027 and understand how important engagement with you is on the here and now, but also the mid to longer term plans in a rapidly changing and contestable environment. We look forward to reaching out to you all over the next months to begin what are very important discussions together.

Stay safe and confident in the knowledge that our community needs us. Hope to see you at our 70th Gala Anniversary Dinner.

Michael

CEO'S REPORT

The 2025/26 financial year is now in the rear-view mirror, and so we look to the up coming period full of reporting, acquittals and reflections. The most significant of these reflections will be recognised through our 70th year celebration of Meals on Wheels in Queensland which will take place on the 26th of August 2026 – National Meals on Wheels Day. This recognises the first meal prepared and delivered in Queensland in Ipswich through the inspiration of the late Rhoda Cameron. This acknowledges what has grown into a statewide network of providers delivering much needed support to vulnerable people in our communities through the service of Meals on Wheels.

MEALS ON WHEELS 70TH CELEBRATIONS

As we have created communications and different pieces of public engagement to mark these celebrations, I can't help but be struck by the consistent theme and message behind the longevity of Meals on Wheels. It's sustained by human kindness. The countless volunteer hours to collect and deliver meals to the community, check in and report back where more assistance is needed, the social connections created with each of those deliveries. That is the core of the service and what people love to do. And it is rightly so we place special emphasis on this throughout the great state of Queensland. This is the true reason Meals on Wheels endures, and we are pleased to be able to recognise this through the anniversary publication. Highlighting a variety of meals alongside the true stories of human kindness and their impact is a beautiful way to commemorate this remarkable occasion. The publication will represent a time capsule of human kindness that I can only hope will serve to inspire people for future generations to volunteer and give to their community.

PROVIDER GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

Preserving and growing Meals on Wheels has been one of the core objectives of Meals on Wheels Queensland throughout my tenure here, and this has manifest in various forms. Building localised Hubs to create stronger local Meals on Wheels has been well publicised over the past 5 years, and we see this work continue with Cairns Meals on Wheels and their recent work with Innisfail and



Mission Beach, and overflow meal delivery support to Atherton. This demonstrates again where sustainable governance needs to meet and fit with effective and efficient meal operations. And the sustainable governance is where we consistently see challenges within our own network. This is not because people don't want to maintain their local service. It is more a matter of finding people locally to continue the vital governance roles as part of the legislative obligations. This is an ever present challenge. Combine that with the need to identify and manage risk and have some form of strategy in place to guide the work – it's a lot for someone new to take on, which is why we see succession more and more difficult to do well.

MOWQ MEAL OPERATIONS

As part of our State-wide role, MOWQ has continued to offer a solution to these issues through a variety of ways. This includes sector support and capability development made possible through our commonwealth and state grants, and over the past 4 years through our expansion of meal operations directly managed through MOWQ. The development of this capability within our organisational structure has been driven out of the necessity to ensure Meals on Wheels doesn't disappear from a location purely because the essential governance arrangements can no longer be sustained. The strain on sustaining governance arrangements is a trend we are working to overcome more and more with Members and will always be our focus to maintain these arrangements locally wherever practicable. Though it is good for members to know that we have built an internal capability to maintain service delivery with the essential governance arrangements now built into our organisation.

CHSP SSD AND ALLIANCE

The growth in MOWQ managed meal operations has required a restructure of our internal resources and recently I wrote to Members advising of these changes. This is an important move for MOWQ as it allows for greater focus on Sector Support and Development (SSD) separate to the meal operations. SSD has been caught up in the uncertainty of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), and once again I thank the Members that wrote to their local Federal MPs to demonstrate their support for this vital piece of funding which has been extended out to 30 June 2027. The reality is should the SSD funding no longer continue it will restrict the capacity of MOWQ to provide the guidance and support to Members as you know it today. The future of SSD does tie in overall to the future of the CHSP, which is being championed by the CHSP Alliance led by the Chair of MOWA. This is an important time to engage with what is happening with commonwealth home care programming as it is fundamental to how your Meals on Wheels may operate into the future. It will be critical that your voice is heard throughout what the government may propose beyond 30 June 2027, so please stay connected with our communications on this over the coming months.

SEASONED WITH CARE

MOWQ is also really excited to complete and launch the new Seasoned with Care digital assets as part of our on-going commitment to marketing Meals on Wheels across Queensland. Our focus is very much about positioning these assets within the socials and amplifying the meals you supply with the value of the social connection with every delivery. We have seen a spectacular jump in “impressions” with the launch of these assets. Impressions is a technical term used to track views or eyeballs, that look at the social posts we provide through the great work of our Marketing and Communications Lead. We look forward to working with Members on what is possible with utilising these assets to market your Meals on Wheels very much at a local level into the future.

Seasoned
with care

ROSTERFY ON-LINE VOLUNTEER ON-BOARDING

The Rosterfy solution is now two years in operation as an online onboarding solution for new volunteers to Meals on Wheels. From our perspective, this has been a great success and is now combined with an “always on” Seek advertisement to volunteer in Meals on Wheels and interfaces with the online onboarding. This is continuing to attract on average 50 new volunteer enquiries each and every month. However, it is only as good as the ability of members to follow up with the person once they have taken their precious time to complete the onboarding component. We appreciate this is generally completed in a timely fashion, however I would like to emphasise how important it is for all of us that each and every person who makes their way through the onboarding, receives a call from the local Meals on Wheels as soon as possible. This is important because it acknowledges we value them, and even if you don’t have an immediate shift to commence them with, you can start a conversation with them and keep them connected to your Meals on Wheels. We know how important the role of volunteers are to Meals on Wheels, and the growing scarcity of time for people to do this, so please ensure you are following up on any new volunteer we send through to you.

Thanks again to all the hard work of staff, committees and of course the volunteers as you keep the service to the community going through these winter months. I look forward to catching up with as many of you as I can in the near future.

Evan Hill



MOWA CHAIR REPORT

There was a strong sense of optimism at the 2026 Meals on Wheels Australia (MoWA) National Conference in Adelaide. That optimism has now been reinforced by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee, whose report on the future of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) represents a significant endorsement of the work Meals on Wheels services undertake every day.

The Committee's central recommendation is clear: CHSP should remain a stand-alone, block-funded program rather than be absorbed into Support at Home. It also recommended extending CHSP funding beyond July 2027 to allow time for proper consultation, co-design and evaluation before any future structural changes are considered.

For Meals on Wheels, this is more than a policy recommendation. It is recognition that community-based, preventative services are fundamental to Australia's aged care system.

Throughout the Senate Inquiry, evidence consistently highlighted CHSP's ability to help older people remain independent, reduce pressure on hospitals and delay entry into more intensive and costly care. Meals on Wheels exemplifies that approach. A nutritious meal is only part of the service. Regular wellbeing checks, social connection, volunteer engagement and early identification of emerging issues are equally important outcomes that are difficult to replicate through purely individualised funding models.



Those themes echoed throughout the Adelaide conference. Under the banner Stronger Together, delegates explored leadership, innovation, volunteering, partnerships and the future of community care. One recurring message was that connection remains the foundation of effective support for older Australians. Another was that collaboration across the sector will be essential as aged care reform continues.

The conference also marked the launch of the CHSP Alliance website and new position papers, reinforcing the growing national coalition advocating for a strong, modernised CHSP, led by MoWA. That advocacy has shaped the national conversation. The Senate Committee's recommendations closely align with many of the issues raised by providers, consumers and sector organisations during the Inquiry.

The work is far from finished. The Committee acknowledged that CHSP requires reform, sustainable funding, workforce investment and better planning. Maintaining the status quo is not the objective. Strengthening a program that already delivers strong outcomes is.

For Meals on Wheels services, the message is encouraging. The values celebrated in Adelaide, community, prevention, partnership and local responsiveness, are no longer simply aspirations. They have now been recognised by the Parliament as essential ingredients of Australia's future aged care system.

Paul Sadler



Celebrating 70 years of Meals on Wheels

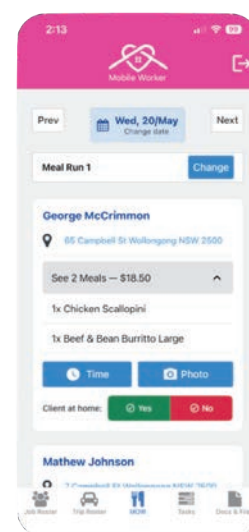
Polixen is a complete software solution for Meals on Wheels and their volunteers

Why Polixen?

Polixen shares the same values as Meals on Wheels, the name Polixen comes from the founder's grandmother Polixeni (often referred to as Polly) who had passed away in a residential facility unable to receive in home care. We believe in enabling people to stay in their homes for longer and working with Meals on Wheels with their amazing volunteers does exactly that.

The Polixen software allows Meals on Wheels to manage their clients, setup meal plans and schedule deliveries with their volunteers. Polixen is committed to modernising Meals on Wheels operations by introducing new technologies such as an online meal ordering system where clients and their families can make orders and keep track of deliveries and payments.

The Polixen app lets volunteers navigate to client's homes using turn by turn navigation with details on what is to be delivered and real time updates to identify when a client is not home and to notify family members when a delivery has been completed.



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SEASONED WITH CARE

A CELEBRATION OF SEVENTY YEARS



CAPTURING THE STORIES

As Meals on Wheels in Queensland approaches its 70th anniversary, one of the most meaningful parts of our celebrations is now taking shape: the creation of our commemorative publication, **Seasoned with Care**.

This publication brings together seven decades of stories, recipes, reflections and memories that capture what Meals on Wheels has always been built on: **people showing up for their communities**.

A LEGACY TOLD THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Over recent months, we invited volunteers, clients and services across Queensland to share their stories and recipes as part of our 70th anniversary storytelling campaign.

The response was incredibly generous.

From **heartfelt reflections** to **treasured recipes** and everyday moments of **humour** and **kindness**, these contributions have helped bring to life what Meals on Wheels truly means across generations and communities.

While the storytelling campaign is now closed, we extend our sincere thanks to everyone who took the time to contribute. Each story, memory and recipe has become part of a shared legacy that will help tell the Meals on Wheels story for years to come.

HONOURING THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MEALS

At the centre of this publication are the volunteers who have shaped Meals on Wheels for over 70 years, drivers who know every street, kitchen teams who prepare meals with care, and volunteers who bring friendship and reassurance to every doorstep.

This publication is, above all, a recognition of those people. The ones who have quietly built connection into everyday life, one visit, one meal, one conversation at a time.

A GIFT THAT GIVES BACK

Alongside the creation of the publication, our **Gift a Book campaign** ran throughout National Volunteer Week and the following weeks, giving people the opportunity to recognise and thank volunteers through the donation of a commemorative book.

This campaign saw generous support from individuals and organisations who chose to gift a book in honour of a volunteer or local service, helping ensure this publication also becomes a gesture of recognition and gratitude.

We extend our sincere thanks to all **gifting partners** who supported this initiative, including:

- Alaya Care
- Councillor Sarah Hutton
- Councillor Steven Huang
- Iceepak
- Jess Pugh MP
- Leah Marshall-Marmulla: Honouring Life Ed.
- McCullough Robertson
- Milton Dick MP
- Natalie Marr MP
- Northside Cleaning & Packaging Supplies
- Phuture Technology
- Promotion Products
- Tom Smith MP
- Adam Baillie MP
- Luke Richmond MP
- Anika Wells MP

Your support helps ensure volunteers across Queensland are recognised for the difference they make every day.

OUR PUBLICATION SPONSORS

We also extend our sincere thanks to our **book sponsors**, whose support has helped bring this publication to life:

70th Anniversary Partner:

- Queensland Government

Major Book Sponsor:

- Opella Healthcare

Book Sponsors:

- Austbrokers Comsure
- Polixen
- Reuben Pelerman Benevolent Foundation

Your commitment plays an important role in preserving and sharing the story of Meals on Wheels in Queensland.

A STATEWIDE VOICE FOR 70 YEARS OF STORIES

We are proud to acknowledge the support of our media partner **612 ABC Brisbane**, who played a key role in bringing these stories to life across the airwaves as part of a statewide radio campaign.

Running from 13–30 April, the campaign featured dedicated live reads across flagship programs including Afternoons with Kat Feeney and Evenings with Kelly Higgins-Devine, both broadcast across Queensland.

Across the campaign, ABC Brisbane provided strong and consistent support in encouraging listeners to get involved, share their stories, and reflect on the importance of Meals on Wheels in their communities. Regular on-air conversations, live reads and talkback segments helped drive statewide engagement and amplified the call for story submissions across every broadcast.

This partnership played an important role in extending the reach of the 70th anniversary storytelling campaign, connecting with Queenslanders across the state and helping ensure these stories were shared far beyond this publication.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH

The Seasoned with Care publication will be officially launched at the 70th Anniversary Dinner on National Meals on Wheels Day, Wednesday 26 August 2026, held in the Watermall Room at the Queensland Art Gallery.

Books will be available for preorder on the website soon. You can register to be notified when this occurs by scanning the QR code below.



If your Service would like to pre-purchase 20 or more books now and require an invoice, contact Tim at tim.hayden@qmow.org.

Thank you to everyone who has helped shape this story.

Meals on Wheels in Queensland's 70TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

26 August 2026



Meals on Wheels[™]
Queensland



As Meals on Wheels in Queensland celebrates **70 years of service**, one of the most significant moments in our anniversary program will be the 70th Anniversary Gala Dinner, to be held on National Meals on Wheels Day, Wednesday 26 August 2026, at the Watermall Room, Queensland Art Gallery.

This landmark event will bring together volunteers, supporters, partners and friends from across the state to reflect on seven decades of community care, and to look ahead to **the future of Meals on Wheels** in Queensland.

AN EVENING OF IMPACT AND CELEBRATION

The Gala Dinner will feature the **official launch of our 70th anniversary commemorative publication**, *Seasoned with Care*, a collection of stories, recipes and memories that capture the heart of Meals on Wheels across generations.



Guests will enjoy a **three-course dinner** and **four-hour beverage package**, alongside an evening designed to celebrate the people and partnerships that have shaped the organisation's journey.

The evening will be hosted by Master of Ceremonies Kat Feeney, 612 ABC Brisbane personality, and will include reflections from our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeanette Young AC PSM, alongside Meals on Wheels Queensland Board Chair Michael Homden. The Queensland Government will be represented by The Honourable Amanda Camm MP, Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services

PARTNERING FOR PURPOSE

This milestone event would not be possible without the support of our **valued partners and sponsors**, whose commitment helps strengthen Meals on Wheels services across Queensland.

We are proud to acknowledge **612 ABC Brisbane** as our Media Sponsor, playing a key role in sharing and amplifying the stories of Meals on Wheels across the community.

We are incredibly grateful to **Print Connect**, our Print Sponsor, for generously producing the entire suite of event materials that make this historic celebration so special.

We also extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors, as without their support this event would not be possible.

70th Anniversary Partner:



**Queensland
Government**

Premium Event Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsors:



ORD MINNETT



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A MOMENT OF SHARED PRIDE

The 70th Anniversary Gala Dinner is more than an event; it is a moment to **pause and reflect** on the extraordinary impact of Meals on Wheels over seven decades.

From a small beginning in **Ipswich** in **1956** to a statewide network supporting thousands of Queenslanders every day, this milestone is a celebration of the volunteers, staff, donors, partners and supporters who have carried the mission forward.

As we come together on this special night, we honour not only the past 70 years, but the future of care, connection and community that continues to grow across Queensland.

We look forward to celebrating with you.

**RESERVE
A SEAT**



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

IPSWICH MEALS ON WHEELS CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

It was a typical Ipswich late autumn day in the great West Moreton, where the cool wind was blowing, offset by the brilliant sunshine. This is what greeted the large crowd of volunteers and supporters at the Ipswich and Districts Meals on Wheels celebration of 70 years of service to the community. **Representing the oldest service in Queensland**, Ipswich is where it all began in May 1956, through the inspiration and hard work of Mrs Rhoda Cameron and her friend Mrs Therese Russell, who began this incredible community movement, now 140 locations strong.

The celebratory luncheon was held at the iconic Ipswich Turf Club at Bundamba, drawing a full house of guests eager to celebrate. With the right mix of warmth and good humour, MC and Service Manager Bec Dakin kept the crowd engaged all afternoon.

The highlights included moving speeches from the Mayor and Federal Member, both of whom paid tribute to a remarkable 70 years of community service.

The day was capped off with the launch of the **Jane White Roll of Honour**, which recognised 25 lifetime members, honoured for more than 30 years of continuous volunteering and service to their community. It was a privilege to witness this with the involvement of Jane's family, who continue to lead the way in this great community.

Congratulations to the committee, hard-working staff and the volunteers of Ipswich and Districts Meals on Wheels. It was a pleasure to share it with so many members of the community, and long may you continue to be a beacon for the vulnerable and all that is good in the human spirit.





70 YEARS OF MEALS ON WHEELS IPSWICH



CELEBRATING 60 YEARS AT SANDGATE

A PROUD HISTORY OF COMMUNITY CARE

Sandgate & District Meals on Wheels recently celebrated a remarkable milestone, marking **60 years** of caring for and supporting the local community. Following the organisation's Annual General Meeting, volunteers, committee members, staff, and supporters gathered for a quiet afternoon tea to acknowledge and celebrate this significant achievement.

The special occasion provided an opportunity to reflect on six decades of dedicated service to the Sandgate district and surrounding communities. While the celebration was modest in size, the significance of the milestone was certainly not lost on those in attendance.

Established in 1966, Sandgate & District Meals on Wheels has grown into a **vital community service**, providing nutritious meals and social connection to older Australians and those needing support to remain living independently in their homes.

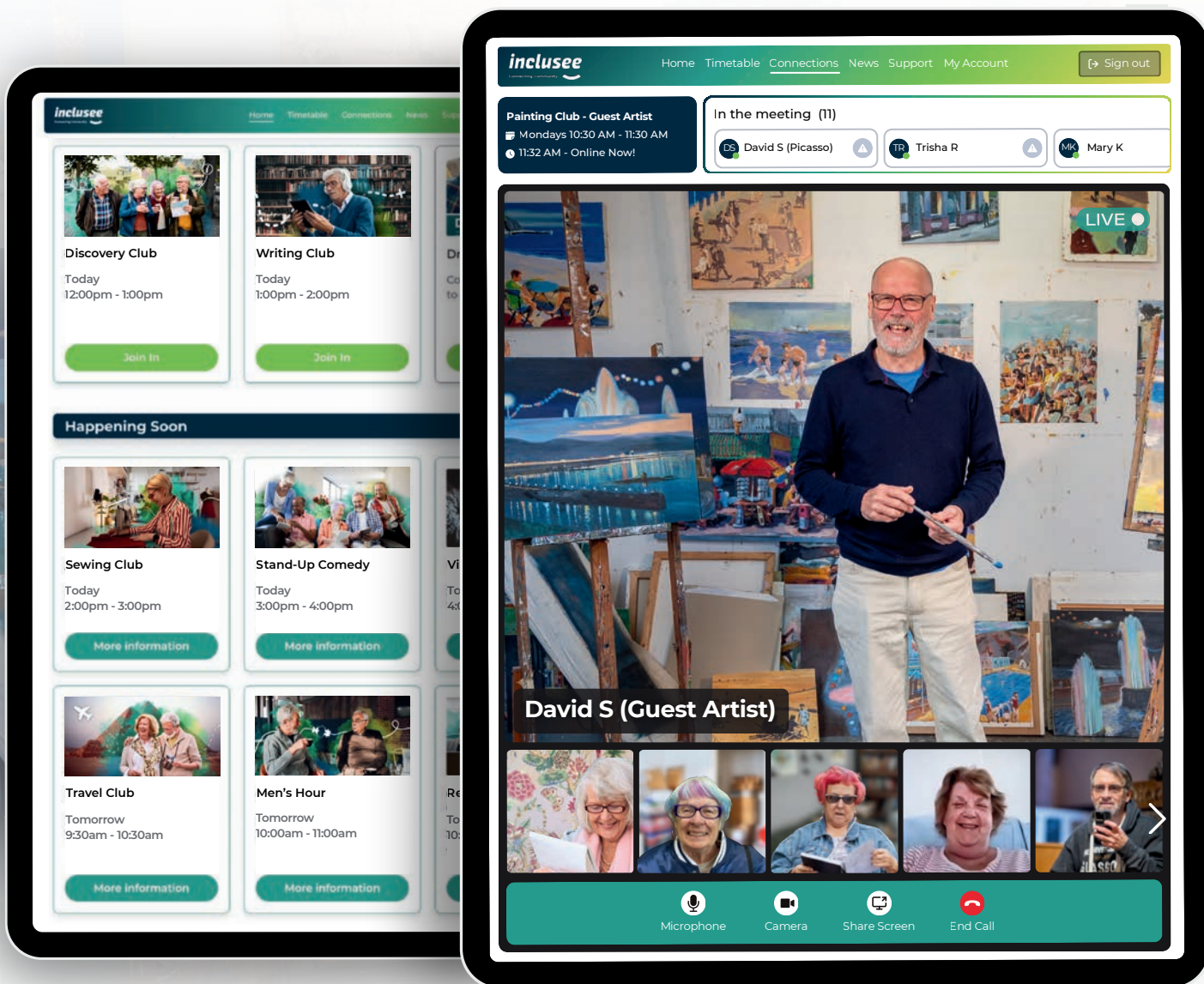


Over the years, the service has become **much more than just meal delivery**. For many clients, the friendly face at the door and regular welfare check provided by volunteers has become an important source of **companionship** and **connection**.

Attendees at the afternoon tea acknowledged the countless volunteers, past and present, whose generosity and commitment have **shaped the organisation** over the past six decades. Their dedication has ensured the service continues to thrive and adapt to the changing needs of the community.

The anniversary also provided an opportunity to reflect on the **evolution** of Meals on Wheels services across Queensland and the important role local services continue to play in supporting ageing Australians with dignity, care, and compassion.

As Sandgate & District Meals on Wheels looks toward the future, the organisation remains committed to continuing its proud tradition of delivering not only nutritious meals, but also **kindness, connection, and community spirit**.



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A SWEET CELEBRATION FOR GYMPIE

Gympie Meals on Wheels recently celebrated an incredible milestone, marking **55 years** of dedicated service to the local community.

The celebration brought together volunteers, committee members, staff, and supporters for a **special high tea** to recognise more than five decades of providing nutritious meals, social connection, and care to residents throughout the Gympie region.

Since commencing operations in **1971**, Gympie Meals on Wheels has played an important role in supporting older Australians and community members requiring assistance to remain living independently in their own homes. Over the years, the organisation has evolved to meet the changing needs of the community while remaining firmly committed to its **core values** of compassion, dignity, and support.

While meal delivery remains at the heart of the service, the organisation's **impact extends far beyond food**.

For many clients, the daily interaction with volunteers provides reassurance, friendship, and an important connection to the community.

The anniversary high tea provided an opportunity to reflect on the dedication of the many volunteers who have contributed their time, care, and energy to the service over the past 55 years. Their commitment has helped build a **strong and trusted organisation** that continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of local residents every day.

Attendees also acknowledged the support of committee members, staff, local businesses, and the wider community who have helped ensure the longevity and success of Gympie Meals on Wheels throughout the decades.

As the organisation looks ahead to the future, Gympie Meals on Wheels remains committed to continuing its proud tradition of supporting the community through the delivery of meals, care, and connection.





10 years of service

FOOD GIFTS 82,572 meals served

A BIG HELP

DONATIONS of all types of foodstuff have played an important part in maintaining the costs to acceptable limits during the 10 years of operation of the Meals Service.

During this past decade, Meals on Wheels has received many donations of meat, milk, vegetables, fruit and fish.

In particular the Service is appreciative of the large donations of food which are donated from the displays at the Gympie Show each year.

The Supervisor, Mrs. Hazel Gilby, said that the service depends very heavily on these donations as a major part in balancing the budget.

She said that any donations are always welcome and can be left at the kitchen at the rear of the Civic Centre any Monday, Wednesday or Friday morning.

\$20,000 needed for kitchen

PROPOSED extensions to the Meals on Wheels kitchen in the Civic Centre will cost the Service an estimated \$20,000.

The kitchen will be enlarged to meet the growing needs of the service. A waiting room and store room will be added and additional equipment including a new stove, steam cooker and warming oven will be purchased.

Plans have been approved by Gympie City Council and the Service is ready to proceed as soon as the Council gives the go-ahead.

Donations to the Building Appeal are tax deductible and can be forwarded to the Treasurer, P.O. Box 115, Gympie, 4570.

Who needs Meals on Wheels?

MEALS on Wheels should be available to any person who cannot otherwise obtain a nutritional meal, regardless of their age or financial status.

People may need Meals on Wheels because they are too old, too sick, too incapable or too lonely to feed themselves adequately.

At Gympie Meals on Wheels, every request is investigated by a personal visit to prospective recipients.

If you know of anyone who may need Meals on Wheels, please contact "Meals on Wheels", Box 115, Gympie, 4570.

HELP MEALS ON WHEELS

YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED FOR JUST ONE HOUR

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KITCHEN HELP - 8.30am to 11.45am

DRIVERS (OWN CAR) - 11.00am

DRIVER'S ASSISTANT - 11.00am

DISH WASHER - 12.10pm

ANY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY OR FRIDAY MORNING

CAN YOU HELP?

CAN WE PLACE YOUR DONATION?

A. & M. J. KISS FURNITURE

MRS. GILBY Meals on Wheels secretary.

MR. TOM STEAD

CAPALABA'S 50-YEAR JOURNEY

REFLECTING ON A HISTORY OF FRIENDSHIP, DEDICATION, AND CARE



On Saturday, 7 March, Capalaba District Meals on Wheels celebrated an incredible milestone: **50 years** of serving the Redlands community, with a special anniversary luncheon at the Lions Hall in Capalaba.

The hall was filled with past and present volunteers, committee members, supporters and friends of the service, all coming together to reflect on five decades of dedication to ensuring local residents can remain independent through the delivery of nutritious meals and **friendly social contact**.

It was a privilege to serve as Master of Ceremonies for the afternoon and to share the remarkable history of the service, which officially commenced in 1976 after a dedicated group of local volunteers and the Capalaba Lions Club recognised the need for a community meal service. In its very first week, just **15 meals** were delivered to **five clients**, laying the foundation for what has become an essential community organisation supporting **hundreds of local residents** over the past 50 years.

The celebration was made even more special with the attendance of several **inaugural members**, including Joy Bonney, whose memories and commitment helped bring the early years of the service to life. Their presence was a wonderful reminder of the vision, determination and generosity that established the organisation and continues to inspire volunteers today.

A unique keepsake from the occasion was a framed photograph of the original Holland Street premises, which was signed by everyone in attendance. The photograph now serves as a lasting tribute to the many volunteers, staff and supporters who have contributed to the success of Capalaba District Meals on Wheels over the past five decades.

Guests also enjoyed a delicious traditional roast lunch, arguably the perennial favourite on any Meals on Wheels menu, which provided the perfect opportunity to reconnect, reminisce and celebrate friendships formed through years of volunteering.

As the service looks towards its next 50 years, the anniversary was not only a celebration of its **rich history** but also a testament to the enduring spirit of community service that continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of local people every day. Congratulations to everyone who has been part of the Capalaba District Meals on Wheels journey. Here's to the next chapter of supporting independence, nourishing lives and strengthening the community together.



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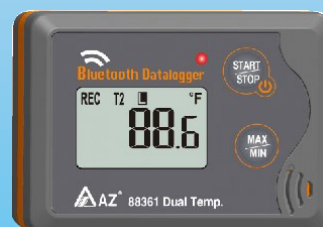
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SCAN ME

HALF A CENTURY OF HEART IN PITTSWORTH

FROM A 1975 LIONS CLUB VISION TO 50 YEARS OF LOCAL HEART



More than 100 volunteers, supporters, community leaders and special guests recently gathered to celebrate an incredible milestone: **the 50th Anniversary of Pittsworth Meals on Wheels.**

The luncheon was a heartfelt reflection on five decades of delivering not only nutritious meals, but friendship, compassion and wellbeing checks to the Pittsworth community.

Guests were welcomed by committee members and volunteers, alongside representatives from Meals on Wheels Queensland and the Toowoomba Regional Council. Special acknowledgement was also given to the many volunteers and committee members, past and present, whose dedication has ensured the service continues to thrive after 50 years.



Messages of support were shared throughout the celebration, including kind words from Pat Weir, who thanked the committee and volunteers for their **“kindness, generosity and meaningful contributions over the years,”** noting that their dedication continues to make a significant difference within the community.

The event also reflected on the humble beginnings of the service. In November 1975, the Pittsworth Lions Club organised a public meeting to investigate the possibility of establishing a Meals on Wheels service in Pittsworth. A passionate committee of local residents quickly formed, determined to create a service that would support older residents and those unable to prepare meals independently.

That dream became a reality in March **1976** when the first meals were delivered from the Senior Citizens Rooms kitchen by volunteer drivers on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. At the time, a three-course meal cost just **75 cents**. Historical records from local newspaper The Sentinel even revealed that recipients required a doctor's certificate and volunteers completed questionnaires, an early precursor to today's volunteer screening processes.

Over the years, the service has continued to evolve while maintaining its strong community spirit. One special memory shared during the celebration came from current Meals on Wheels recipient Bill Keely, who recalled helping fabricate a kitchen trolley as a member of the Lions Club back in 1976.

Throughout the luncheon, guests enjoyed a nostalgic photo presentation showcasing both historical and current images of the service, sparking many fond memories and conversations among attendees.

A highlight of the celebration was the generous support of the Smith family and staff from **IGA Pittsworth**, who donated the anniversary luncheon. Initially approached to provide roast meats, the Smith family instead generously supplied the full meal, including vegetables, condiments and desserts, a gesture warmly appreciated by everyone present.



The cake cutting was performed by long-standing volunteers **Jo Saal** and **Ann Stallman**, recognising their years of commitment and service to the organisation.



As the celebrations concluded, attendees reflected on the enormous contribution Pittsworth Meals on Wheels has made to the local community over the past five decades. The event served as a reminder that Meals on Wheels is about **far more than meal delivery**, it is about connection, care and ensuring community members feel supported and valued.

With a proud history behind them and a strong volunteer spirit continuing today, there is little doubt that Pittsworth Meals on Wheels will continue creating **a lasting impact** for generations to come.



GENERATIONS OF GENEROSITY

SHAILER PARK MARKS 30 YEARS OF SERVICE



On 10 June, the Shailer Park Meals on Wheels community came together at the KP Centre to celebrate a remarkable milestone: their **30th anniversary**. While the winter rain fell steadily outside, it did absolutely nothing to dampen the warmth and enthusiasm indoors as volunteers, clients, supporters, and local dignitaries gathered to honour three decades of dedicated service.

The heart of the celebration was a beautifully prepared morning tea. The Shailer Park team outdid themselves, presenting a wonderful spread that kept everyone on their feet, mingling, and enjoying the delicious food. It was a **perfect reflection** of the hospitality and care the service has extended to the community every day for the last 30 years.

Among those in attendance to show their deep appreciation for the vital service were several local leaders, including **Mick de Brenni MP** (Member for Springwood), **Miriam Stemp** (Division 10 Councillor), and **Darren Power** (Former Mayor of Logan City). Their presence underscored the profound impact that Shailer Park Meals on Wheels has had on the region, providing not just nutrition but an essential lifeline and connection for local residents.

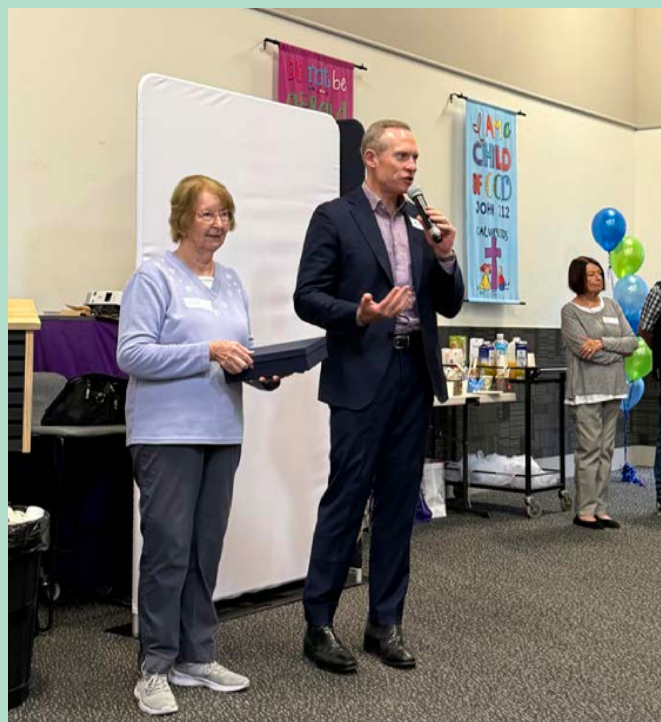
To officially mark the occasion, Shailer Park Meals on Wheels **President Carol Hampson** and **Vice President Diane Johnson** stood alongside the official guests to cut the anniversary cake together.

Adding an extra layer of energy to the day, the celebration coincided with The **Push-Up Challenge**, a nationwide initiative dedicated to raising awareness and vital funds for mental health. In the spirit of the challenge, Mick de Brenni MP stepped up to take on one of Shailer Park's beloved volunteers, Barry, in a friendly push-up face-off. It was a valiant effort by the Member for Springwood, but the crowd agreed that Barry safely claimed the gold, bringing plenty of laughter and cheers to the room.



Moments like these are a beautiful reminder of what makes **Meals on Wheels so special**. Beyond the essential meals delivered, it is the joy, the vibrant community spirit, and the meaningful human connections that truly define the organisation. Congratulations to the entire Shailer Park team on 30 incredible years of nourishing and strengthening your community.





FROM PASSION TO PURPOSE

AN APPRENTICE CHEF'S JOURNEY AT MEALS ON WHEELS TOWNSVILLE



At just 21 years old, apprentice **chef Tyler** is turning a lifelong love of food into a rewarding career at Meals on Wheels Townsville. Inspired by a family of good cooks and a passion for creating and sharing meals, the apprenticeship has provided the opportunity to develop culinary skills while making a meaningful difference in the community. From mastering large-scale meal production to receiving heartfelt thanks from clients, the experience has been both professionally and personally rewarding.

What inspired you to become a chef, and how did you come to your apprenticeship with Meals on Wheels?

I've always been interested in cooking and eating. I'm a 21-year-old guy, so I eat a lot! Growing up in a family of good cooks helped spark my interest in food, and during high school, I discovered how much I enjoyed creating new dishes and refining them until I was happy with the result.

I love seeing ideas come to life, and food is something that brings people together and can always be shared with others. I actually stumbled into my apprenticeship at Meals on Wheels Townsville. After spending more than 12 months working in a pub environment, I was on a break from another host employer and applied for a kitchenhand position to keep my skills fresh. Instead, our Catering Manager and Manager offered me the opportunity to continue my apprenticeship with Meals on Wheels, where I could gain valuable experience preparing meals on a larger scale for a diverse range of clients.

What skills have you developed most since starting your apprenticeship?

Since starting my apprenticeship, I've significantly improved my food preparation and cooking skills. I've also developed stronger communication and time management skills and learned how to work effectively under pressure.

One unexpected benefit has been improved fitness. Working in a busy kitchen certainly keeps you moving, not running, but definitely walking very fast with purpose!

What has been the most challenging part of the role so far?

The biggest challenge was adjusting to the early starts. However, those early mornings are essential to ensure we can prepare our menu options and have meals ready for delivery to clients on time.

How does it feel knowing the meals you prepare are going directly to people in the community who rely on them?

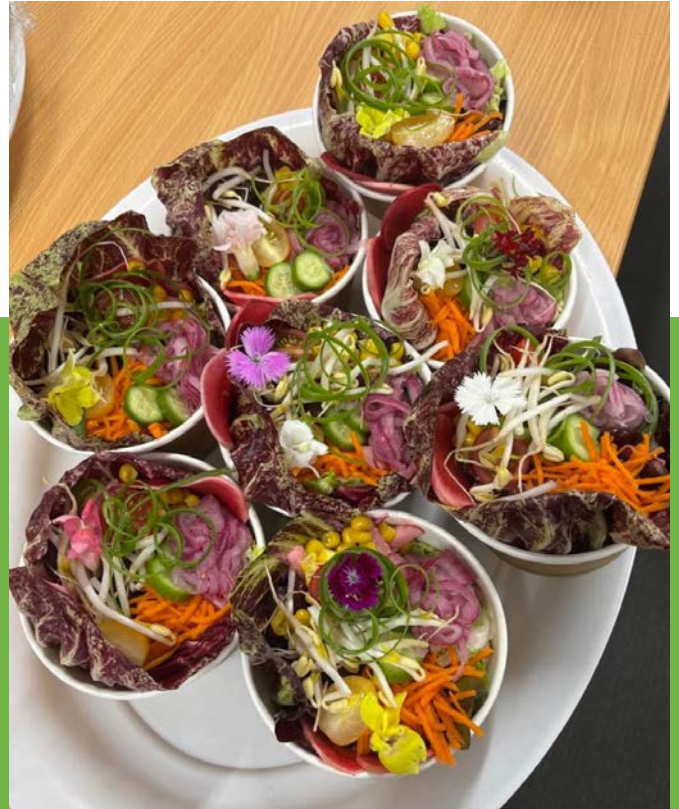
It's great to know that we're directly making a difference in the lives of people who may not have alternative support. High-quality, nutritious meals are important for everyone's health and wellbeing, so helping ensure people have access to them is incredibly rewarding.

Have you had any moments that made you realise the impact of your work?

When clients send in handwritten notes thanking us for the meals, it really makes you stop and think. Those moments remind you that the work we do genuinely impacts people's lives and that something as simple as a meal can mean so much to someone.

What has surprised you most about working in Meals on Wheels?

The variety of meal options available has been a real surprise, along with our ability to cater to special requests and individual needs. I've also been amazed by the incredible range of desserts produced by the team, which really highlights the skill and creativity of the chefs I work alongside every day.



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COOKING WITH PURPOSE

ISABELLA'S JOURNEY AT WYNNUM MEALS ON WHEELS

For apprentice chef Isabella, cooking has always been about more than just preparing food, **it's about bringing people together.**

"I've always enjoyed cooking and the way food brings people together," Isabella says. "That's what inspired me to pursue a career as a chef."

That passion led her to begin an apprenticeship with Wynnum Meals on Wheels, where she has the opportunity to develop her culinary skills while making a **meaningful difference** in the lives of people throughout the local community.

Since starting her apprenticeship, Isabella has gained valuable experience in a busy commercial kitchen environment. She has strengthened her **food preparation techniques**, improved her **time management skills**, and learned the **importance of teamwork** in delivering hundreds of nutritious meals each week.

"The skills I've developed the most are food preparation, time management and teamwork," she explains. "I've also learned how to work efficiently in a busy kitchen."

Like many apprentices, Isabella has faced challenges along the way. Adapting to the fast-paced nature of the kitchen while maintaining strict food safety standards and consistent meal quality has required dedication and focus.

"The most challenging part has been keeping up with the fast pace of the kitchen while maintaining high standards of quality and food safety," she says. "But it's helped me become more organised and confident."

What makes the role particularly rewarding for Isabella is knowing that every meal prepared has a direct impact on someone in the community.





“It’s very rewarding to know that the meals I prepare are helping people in the community and making a positive difference in their day.”

One of the most powerful lessons Isabella has learned during her apprenticeship has come from hearing the feedback of clients who rely on the service.

“Hearing positive feedback from clients and learning how much they appreciate the meals has really shown me the importance of what we do and the impact it has on their lives.”

The experience has also given her a deeper appreciation for the work that happens behind the scenes at Meals on Wheels.

“What has surprised me most is how much of an impact a simple meal can have on someone’s life,” Isabella reflects. “I’ve also been surprised by

the amount of teamwork and care that goes into making sure every meal is prepared and delivered to a high standard.”

As Isabella continues her apprenticeship journey, she is not only building a career in the hospitality industry but also helping ensure that older Australians and other vulnerable members of the community receive nutritious meals and regular social connection.

Her story is a reminder that sometimes the simplest acts of care, a freshly prepared meal, a friendly delivery, or a helping hand, can make the biggest difference.



Meals on Wheels™
Wynnum Manly & District

CAIRNS WELCOMES FEDERAL POLITICIANS

The team at Cairns Meals on Wheels (CMOW) recently had a valuable opportunity to showcase the vital impact of our frontline services when they hosted a special visit from the **Minister for Aged Care**, Sam Rae, alongside the **Honourable Member for Leichhardt**, Matt Smith, just a week following the federal budget announcement.



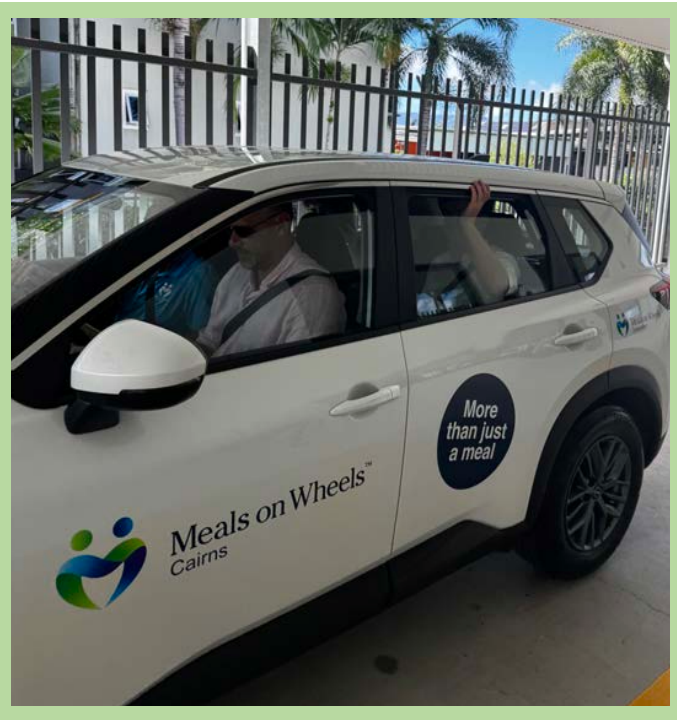
The high-profile visit provided a perfect platform for CMOW's committee, staff, and volunteers to demonstrate exactly what the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) looks like in action. Accompanied by Matt Smith, the Minister was taken out on a local **meal delivery run**, experiencing firsthand how a simple knock on the door delivers **nourishment**, **social connection**, and a **vital wellness check** to older Queenslanders.

With the long-term future of the CHSP remaining an ongoing conversation across the sector, grassroots **advocacy** like this is more critical than ever. Having our member services directly engage with decision-makers allows us to fiercely advocate not just for the Meals on Wheels model, but for the preservation of the CHSP framework and the profound, preventative benefits it delivers to older Australians wishing to age gracefully at home.



The visit also allowed the Queensland network to formally extend its gratitude to both Minister Rae and Mr. Smith for their ongoing advocacy, which recently helped secure a crucial 12-month extension for **CHSP Sector Support and Development funding**.

As we look ahead, Meals on Wheels Queensland remains committed to opening our doors to leaders, showcasing the incredible dedication of our local services, and ensuring the underlying, community-wide value of the CHSP remains firmly on the national agenda.





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QUEENSLAND DAY SPOTLIGHT

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS AT ASHGROVE MEALS ON WHEELS



In the lead-up to Queensland Day, Ashgrove Meals on Wheels was selected as the setting for a special Queensland Government spotlight feature celebrating what makes this state unique: its people, its communities, and the volunteers who quietly strengthen both every day.

The visit, filmed in mid-May, brought together Queensland Day media crews and local Meals on Wheels volunteers to showcase the everyday impact of community connection in action. And there was no better backdrop than Ashgrove, where volunteering is not just something people do, it is part of who they are.

QUEENSLAND SPIRIT, LIVED EVERY DAY

At the heart of the feature was volunteer **Catherine Lamb**, who spoke openly and warmly about what volunteering means to her.

Catherine has been volunteering since she was a teenager, driven by a strong sense of community and a belief in giving back. For her, volunteering is about simple, human connection and the feeling that comes from helping others in a meaningful way.

As Catherine shared: **“It’s about the simple things, how good you feel doing something good, and how much it means to the person on the other end.”**

That sentiment sits at the core of why she continues to volunteer, and why she is now passing that same example on to her own children, who join her during school holidays. It is a quiet legacy of care that reflects the true Queensland spirit, showing up for others and paving the way for the next generation to do the same.

A NATURAL CULTURE OF GIVING BACK

Also featured in the spotlight was volunteer Julie, who reflected on how naturally volunteering fits within Queensland communities.

For Julie, the act of helping others is simply part of everyday life. Whether it is checking in on someone, delivering a meal, or sharing a conversation at the door, she described volunteering as something Queenslanders instinctively do.

It is this shared sense of responsibility and connection that brings Meals on Wheels services like Ashgrove to life.

BEHIND THE SCENES

A sincere thank you to Carolyn Draper, Service Manager at Ashgrove Meals on Wheels, for her support in making this feature possible. Carolyn helped coordinate volunteers and ensured the filming team had everything they needed to capture the heart of the service.

A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Queensland Day is about celebrating identity, pride and the people who shape our communities, and this spotlight captured all three.

As the Queensland Day feature highlighted, this is what makes the state strong: people who step forward, support one another, and create connection where it is needed most.

This is Queensland. This is Meals on Wheels.

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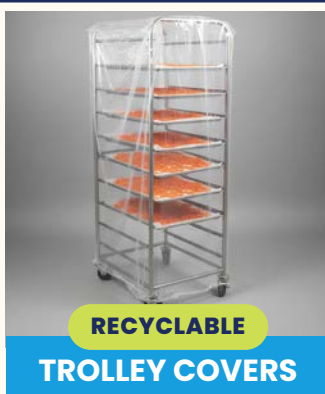
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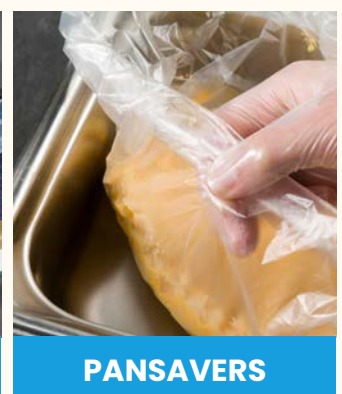


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RECOGNISING THE HEART OF MEALS ON WHEELS

National Volunteer Week, held from 18–24 May 2026, offered a meaningful opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the extraordinary contribution of volunteers across the country.

This year's theme, "Your Year to Volunteer", celebrated the contribution of existing volunteers, whose ongoing commitment continues to shape and strengthen Meals on Wheels, while also paving the way for others to discover the meaning and impact of volunteering in their own communities.

APPRECIATION ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Meals on Wheels services took the opportunity to recognise and thank their volunteers in ways that reflected their own communities. From morning teas and shared meals to handwritten notes, small gifts and community gatherings, each moment was a genuine expression of appreciation for the people who give so much of themselves.



A sweet thank you at Cleveland

What stood out most was not the format of the celebrations, but the feeling behind them, deep gratitude and pride in the volunteers who make connection possible every day.

From regional towns to metropolitan centres, the message was shared everywhere: **thank you for showing up, caring deeply, and being a constant source of connection in people's lives.**

MORE THAN A MEAL DELIVERY SERVICE

Meals on Wheels volunteers are often the most familiar and trusted point of contact for many Queenslanders. Through regular visits and familiar conversations, they do far more than deliver a meal; they offer reassurance, friendship, and a watchful, caring presence.

These everyday moments help reduce social isolation, support wellbeing, and ensure older people remain connected to their communities in meaningful ways.

It is this quiet consistency, week after week, year after year, that transforms Meals on Wheels into something far greater than a service. It becomes part of the everyday rhythm of community life.

WITH HEARTFELT THANKS

To the more than 6,300 Meals on Wheels volunteers across Queensland, and to our volunteers in Ballarat, thank you.

Your time, kindness and commitment create connection where it is needed most. You are the reason Meals on Wheels continues to be not just a service, but a community of care.

Thank you for everything you do.



Marlin Coast Meals on Wheels celebrates with a volunteer BBQ



Firing up the BBQ at Capalaba



Three cheers for Marlin Coast volunteers!



Smiles all round at the Capalaba volunteer celebration!



James Martin MP, Service Manager Karthik Loddia, and Julie-Ann Campbell MP celebrating local heroes



James Martin MP with Sunnybank volunteer Judy



Big smiles from the Sunnybank kitchen crew

HONOURING ONE OF OUR OWN

CAROL HAMPSON RECEIVES PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARD



The heart of Meals on Wheels has always been our people, the dedicated individuals who understand that our service is, and always has been, **more than just a meal**. On Wednesday evening, 10th June, that dedication was shining brightly at Club Beenleigh as the local community gathered to celebrate the **2026 Pride of Workmanship: Vocational & Community Service Awards**.

We are absolutely thrilled to share that Carol Hampson of Shailer Park Meals on Wheels was officially honoured on the night, taking home the prestigious **Pride of Workmanship (Community Service) Award**.

Proudly presented by the Rotary Clubs of Beenleigh, Logan, and Loganholme, and supported by Logan City Council, the annual event recognises individuals across the City of Logan who consistently demonstrate exceptional professionalism, excellence, and a deep commitment to customer and community service.

A RICHLY DESERVED RECOGNITION

To everyone who works alongside Carol at Shailer Park, this recognition comes as no surprise. She has been an indispensable part of the team for over 9 years, consistently going above and beyond to ensure our clients are supported, cared for, and connected.

Carol's day-to-day impact as President is profound, and she is never afraid to roll up her sleeves. From answering phones and managing meal orders to assisting with deliveries and overseeing governance, she approaches every task with an **infectious positive energy** that defines the spirit of the service.

Thank you, Carol, for exemplifying the core values of Meals on Wheels and for pouring so much heart and soul into the Shailer Park community. You are an inspiration to us all, and this award is so richly deserved!

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2. Remind them to Nominate Your Service

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3. Get Paid

We handle the admin and route the 50% share directly back to you.

Need Help?

Call or email Tim to brainstorm how to promote this locally in your newsletter or social media.

Tim Hayden:

P: 0447 572 968 E: tim.hayden@qmow.org



Disclaimer: Meals on Wheels™ QLD acts as a referrer only. Consider the PDS/FSG before purchasing. PassportCard Australia Pty Ltd (AFSL 551057) acts under binder from Guild Insurance Ltd (AFSL 233893).

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Lemon Cheesecake

Crafted for Indulgence, Made for Foodservice.

Introducing a bright new addition to the Sara Lee Cheesecake range – Lemon. This deliciously smooth Sara Lee Lemon Cheesecake features a light vanilla sponge, layered with creamy French vanilla cream cheese and topped with a vibrant lemon curd made with real lemon, finished with French vanilla cream cheese piping. A refreshing, crowd-pleasing flavour that delivers classic cheesecake indulgence with a zesty citrus lift.

Why You'll Love Them:

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NAVIGATING CHANGE TOGETHER

MEMBER SERVICE FORUMS: INSIGHTS AND COLLABORATION

DARLING DOWNS AND SOUTH WEST FORUMS

Travelling across the Darling Downs and South West region recently provided a valuable opportunity to connect directly with local Meals on Wheels services and hear firsthand about the **challenges** and **successes** being experienced across the sector.

The journey began with a visit to Clifton Meals on Wheels before continuing on to Goondiwindi Meals on Wheels and concluding with the Darling Downs and South West Aged Care Planning Region Forum, where a number of services from across the region came together to **share insights, discuss sector changes and strengthen local connections**.

A key focus of the discussions was the transition to the **new Support at Home program** and the increasing compliance requirements being placed on services and their management committees.

For many smaller rural and regional services, these changes are creating **additional pressure**, particularly as committee members are volunteers and not paid employees. Many committees are also ageing, highlighting the importance of **succession and continuity planning** to ensure these vital community organisations remain **sustainable** into the future.

Meals on Wheels services play an essential role in supporting older people to remain connected, independent and living at home in their communities.

There is a strong commitment across the region to ensure these services continue, with communities recognising the importance of not losing Meals on Wheels in towns where the support is needed most.



Senior Area Manager Kath Neilsen visiting Angus Wilson's 'Smoko in the Meadow' installation in Goondiwindi



Senior Area Manager Kath Neilsen connecting with local service representatives at the Darling Downs Forum.

Throughout the visits, it was encouraging to hear how appreciative services are of the ongoing assistance provided through **Sector Support and Development (SSD)**. The SSD team continues to play an important role in supporting services to navigate reform, understand compliance obligations and build confidence during this period of significant change.

There was also welcome news for the sector recently, with **SSD funding extended** until 30 June 2026. This extension provides certainty for services and ensures continued support for organisations as they prepare for and transition into the new aged care environment.

The forum highlighted the strength, resilience and collaboration that exists across the region, with services sharing ideas, experiences and solutions to support one another through the **evolving aged care landscape**.

MACKAY & FITZROY FORUMS

Rachael and Lea recently embarked on a three-day journey across the Mackay & Fitzroy Aged Care Planning Region, meeting with Meals on Wheels services and volunteers to discuss the transition to the new Aged Care Act and share ideas, experiences and practical strategies for the future.

Our first stop was Mackay, where it was wonderful to see the region so well represented, with both Proserpine Meals on Wheels and Mackay Meals on Wheels attending the forum.

One of the most encouraging outcomes from the day was hearing that both services had implemented the **Transition Checklist** introduced during our Aged Care Transition Meetings last October. It was evident that significant work has already been undertaken, with both organisations making excellent progress towards compliance with the new Aged Care Act and associated provider obligations.

From Mackay, we travelled to the Gemfields to meet with CEO Lee and the dedicated team. As the leader of a multi-service organisation, Lee has an exceptional understanding of the challenges facing regional service providers. It was invaluable to hear firsthand about the unique opportunities and obstacles experienced by organisations delivering multiple community services in **rural** and **remote** communities.

These conversations continue to strengthen our understanding of the support our members need as the aged care reforms continue to roll out.

Our final day saw us return to Rockhampton for the Fitzroy Regional Forum. Once again, the region was well represented, with attendees from the Mount Morgan committee, Rockhampton Meals on Wheels staff and committee members, and the Yeppoon team. The discussions throughout the day highlighted the commitment of local services to delivering high-quality support while navigating one of the biggest reforms the aged care sector has seen in decades.

A very special thank you must go to the incredible kitchen staff and volunteers who catered for the Rockhampton forum. Their warm hospitality and delicious food ensured everyone was well looked, creating a welcoming environment for meaningful discussion and collaboration.

These regional forums continue to demonstrate the **strength of the Meals on Wheels network** across Queensland. It is inspiring to see services sharing knowledge, supporting one another and proactively preparing for the future. We sincerely thank everyone who attended and contributed to the discussions and look forward to continuing to work alongside our members as they implement the requirements of the new Aged Care Act.

STRONGER TOGETHER

2026 MEALS ON WHEELS AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE



In the final week of May, more than 200 delegates from across Australia gathered in Adelaide for the 2026 Meals on Wheels Australia National Conference, united under this year's theme: **Stronger Together.**

For Meals on Wheels Queensland, the conference was a powerful opportunity to connect with colleagues from right across the country, share in important conversations shaping the future of aged care and community support, and reflect on the shared purpose that unites our network: supporting older Australians to live well, stay connected and remain independent in their own homes.

A MEANINGFUL START GROUNDED IN CULTURE AND CONNECTION

The conference opened with a deeply moving Welcome to Country by Senior Kaurna Man, **Uncle Mickey O'Brien**, who reminded delegates of the importance of culture, community and connection to place.



Conference Chair Justina Gardiner formally welcomed attendees, setting the tone for several days of learning, reflection and collaboration. Delegates also heard from South Australian Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well, Katrine Hildyard, who acknowledged the vital role Meals on Wheels services play in communities across Australia.

Meals on Wheels Australia Chair Paul Sadler opened the program with advocacy updates and launched the new CHSP Alliance website, reinforcing the importance of a strong, coordinated voice in shaping the future of aged care services.

From the outset, the message was clear: **the strength of Meals on Wheels lies not just in what we do, but in how we do it, together.**



CHALLENGING THINKING AND SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CARE

Across three days, the program brought together leading voices in aged care, community services, food security, volunteering and human connection.

Keynote speaker Mia Handshin challenged delegates to rethink leadership and creativity, reminding the sector that “the future of leadership in any sector, above all else, requires creativity.”

Day two explored the future of care and community in depth, with thought-provoking sessions on loneliness, volunteering, and the neuroscience of human connection.

Moirá Were AM described Meals on Wheels as “empathy at scale” and volunteers as “social infrastructure, not a workforce”, a powerful reminder of the essential role volunteers play in strengthening communities and reducing social isolation.

Foodbank Australia’s Sarah Davis highlighted the growing challenge of food insecurity across Australia, while Dr Fiona Kerr closed the day with a compelling exploration of how human connection shapes wellbeing and resilience.



Throughout the conference, the message remained consistent: Meals on Wheels is far more than a meal service; it is a vital network of care, connection and dignity

QUEENSLAND ON THE PROGRAM: COLLABORATION IN ACTION

For Meals on Wheels Queensland, one of the key highlights was seeing our own **Tim Hayden**, Director of Fundraising, Engagement and Partnerships, take part in a Friday morning panel discussion focused on **collaboration in action**.



The session explored how partnerships across sectors can strengthen impact, improve sustainability and ensure community services remain responsive to local needs. Tim’s contribution reinforced the importance of practical collaboration and shared purpose in delivering meaningful outcomes for older Australians across Queensland and beyond.

CONNECTION BEYOND THE CONFERENCE ROOM

Alongside the formal program, the conference provided countless opportunities to reconnect with colleagues, share experiences, and strengthen relationships across the national network.

These informal conversations, over coffee, between sessions and across exhibition spaces, were just as valuable as the stage discussions, reflecting the lived reality of Meals on Wheels: local relationships powered by a national movement.



A NIGHT OF CREATIVITY AND CELEBRATION

One of the standout moments of the week was the Conference Dinner at the National Wine Centre, proudly supported by Diamond Sponsor Agile Care.

Under the creative theme **“Create Your Masterpiece”**, delegates embraced the opportunity to step away from the formal program and express themselves through colour, creativity and costume. From imaginative outfits to shared laughter and storytelling, the evening celebrated the spirit of the network in a relaxed and memorable setting.

The Meals on Wheels Queensland team certainly didn't shy away from the theme. With a strong tradition of embracing a good dress-up night, the team brought the art world to life, literally. Lea Readdy delivered a standout performance as **Van Gogh**, taking home second place in the dress-up competition, while the rest of the Queensland table became a walking gallery of **iconic masterpieces**, including the Mona Lisa, The Scream, and Girl with a Pearl Earring.



It was a room full of living artworks, and a fitting reminder that connection is not only built through discussion and debate, but also through shared experiences, creativity and moments of joy.



STRONGER TOGETHER, MOVING FORWARD

Closing the conference, Chair Paul Sadler thanked speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, volunteers, MC Michael Pope and the Conference Steering Committee for their contribution to a successful and impactful event.

As delegates returned to their communities, they carried with them new ideas, strengthened relationships and renewed energy to continue the work of supporting older Australians.

For Meals on Wheels Queensland, the conference reinforced what we see every day across our services: when communities come together, remarkable things happen.

Stronger Together was more than a theme, it was the lived experience of this conference, and a reminder of the collective strength that drives our mission forward.





FAIRFAX COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARDS

COOLUM BEACH MEALS ON WHEELS RECOGNISED

Peter Cooper, who has been the backbone of kitchen operations for over **13 years** at Coolum Beach Meals on Wheels, was recognised at the 2026 Fairfax Community Volunteer Awards. Peter was presented with an **Individual Achievement Volunteer Award** by Volunteering Queensland CEO Jane Hedger and Federal Member for Fairfax Ted O'Brien.

The **Community Group Achievement Award** for **outstanding service** and **commitment** to volunteers was presented to Coolum Beach Meals on Wheels. The award was accepted by President Pat Pashley on behalf of the team of over 200 volunteers who support the service week in and week out.



40 YEARS ON SANTA MONICA AVE

A MAJOR MILESTONE FOR COOLUM BEACH MEALS ON WHEELS



Coolum Beach Meals on Wheels recently celebrated a significant milestone, marking **40 years** of service from its **Santa Monica Avenue facility** and recognising the people who have helped shape the organisation into the vital community service it is today.

The celebration brought together volunteers past and present, staff, committee members, and special guests to reflect on four decades of dedication to supporting older and vulnerable residents across the Coolum region. Among the attendees was founding President Dr Wyn Lewis, whose vision in the early 1980s helped establish the service alongside local resident Sandra Daffy and a dedicated group of community pioneers.

The service delivered its **first meals on 31 May 1982** from the Coolum Uniting Church Hall. Volunteers prepared and delivered meals three days a week using donated kitchen equipment and borrowed resources. What began as a small community initiative serving just nine clients quickly grew in demand.

By 1985, the service was supporting 22 regular clients, and it became clear that a **purpose-built facility was needed**. Through the support of the local community, government funding, and

countless fundraising efforts, including raffles, art shows, toad races, and the memorable “mile of coins” campaign, the organisation raised the funds required to establish its permanent home.

The facility at 17 Santa Monica Avenue officially opened in March 1986 and was thoughtfully designed to blend into the surrounding residential neighbourhood. Since then, it has remained the heart of the service’s operations.

Over the past four decades, Coolum Beach Meals on Wheels has continued to grow and evolve. A kitchen extension and cold room facilities were added in 1998 to support increasing demand. Today, the service delivers approximately **700 meals each week** to more than 200 clients throughout the region.

While much has changed over the years, the organisation’s commitment to caring for the community has remained constant. Supported by an incredible team of more than **200 volunteers**, Coolum Beach Meals on Wheels provides far more than nutritious meals.

As Coolum Beach Meals on Wheels looks to the future, it remains committed to continuing its mission of supporting older Queenslanders to live independently, while strengthening the sense of community that has been at the heart of the service for more than 40 years.



VALE LOLA WERNOWSKI

We remember **Lola Wernowski**, founding President of **Boonah District Meals on Wheels™**, who passed away on 8 March at the age of 95. Lola devoted **45 years** of her life to supporting her local community, embodying the care, connection, and compassion at the heart of Meals on Wheels.

In 2015, Lola was recognised with the **Mary Lowe Living Legend Award**, one of Queensland Meals on Wheels' highest honours, celebrating her decades of service and leadership.

Throughout her years with Boonah Meals on Wheels, Lola ensured that clients received more than just nourishing meals, they received a friendly visit, a warm smile, and a vital link to their community. Her leadership inspired volunteers, strengthened the service, and left a lasting legacy of dedication.

Lola Wernowski's life reminds us of the profound difference one person can make in the lives of many. Her extraordinary service and commitment to her community will continue to inspire everyone involved with Meals on Wheels.



Award to a Living Legend

Founder of the Queensland Meals on Wheels (MoW) Living Legends Award, Mary Lowe (pictured left) was among the guests at the Boonah District Meals on Wheels Christmas Luncheon last week to personally present local MoW President Lola Wernowski with the 2015 Living Legends Award. Lola's 38 years of service to the organisation was applauded by guests who included Queensland MoW Board member, Tony Charlesworth, Mayor John Brent and former Shire Clerk of the Boonah Shire Council, Charles Grant.

Photo PETER TRUER

CELEBRATING MILESTONES

Meals on Wheels Anniversaries in 2026

70 Years of Service (Established 1956)

IPSWICH MEALS ON WHEELS

21 MAY 1956

60 Years of Service (Established 1966)

BUNDABERG & DISTRICT MEALS ON WHEELS

17 OCTOBER 1966

50 Years of Service (Established 1976)

BRISBANE SOUTH MEALS ON WHEELS - ACACIA RIDGE

1976

CAPALABA DISTRICT MEALS ON WHEELS INC

8 MARCH 1976

GAYNDAH MEALS ON WHEELS

1 NOVEMBER 1976

LOGAN CENTRAL MEALS ON WHEELS

11 OCTOBER 1976

MEALS ON WHEELS MORETON BAY - PINE RIVERS

3 AUGUST 1976

PITTSWORTH MEALS ON WHEELS

31 MARCH 1976

ROMA MEALS ON WHEELS

1 OCTOBER 1976

MEALS ON WHEELS QUEENSLAND

1 JULY 1976

40 Years of Service (Established 1986)

ALPHA MEALS ON WHEELS

5 JUNE 1986

ARAMAC MEALS ON WHEELS

28 FEBRUARY 1986

BILOELA MEALS ON WHEELS

6 MAY 1986

BOYNE TANNUM MEALS ON WHEELS

1 JULY 1986

GLASSHOUSE COUNTRY CARE MEALS ON WHEELS

14 AUGUST 1986

INGLEWOOD MEALS ON WHEELS

3 SEPTEMBER 1986

IPSWICH MEALS ON WHEELS - BRISBANE VALLEY

1 SEPTEMBER 1986

IPSWICH MEALS ON WHEELS - INALA

7 OCTOBER 1986

IPSWICH MEALS ON WHEELS - LOWOOD

17 NOVEMBER 1986

PROSTON MEALS ON WHEELS

3 NOVEMBER 1986

SPRINGSURE MEALS ON WHEELS

1986

SURAT MEALS ON WHEELS

5 AUGUST 1986

30 Years of Service (Established 1996)

SHAILER PARK MEALS ON WHEELS

3 JUNE 1996

AFFORDABLE MEALS, STRONGER CONNECTIONS

Meals on Wheels Queensland is proud to announce a new partnership with **St John Queensland** that will help make it easier for more people across Brisbane and Wide Bay to access nutritious, affordable meals and stay connected to their community.

From May 2026, St John Queensland's Community Connections Transport (CCT) service will support community members to travel safely to selected Meals on Wheels locations, where they can choose from a wide range of freshly prepared, home-style meals at affordable prices starting from just \$10.

This collaboration brings together **two long-standing community organisations with a shared commitment** to care, dignity, and independence. St John Queensland has supported communities for more than 140 years, helping people stay mobile, connected, and independent. Meals on Wheels Queensland has been serving communities for seven decades, delivering millions of meals each year to thousands of people across the state.

Together, the partnership strengthens access to one of life's most important essentials: **good food**.

Meals on Wheels Queensland currently delivers over 2.9 million meals annually to more than 23,000 individuals across the state.

Meals are prepared fresh in accredited kitchens using quality ingredients, with a menu that includes nourishing mains, hearty soups, breakfast options, and desserts designed to bring comfort and enjoyment.

Through this new initiative, community members will be able to travel with St John Queensland to participating Meals on Wheels locations, select meals in person, and enjoy the convenience of return transport: all in one simple, coordinated experience.

The initiative places a strong focus on **choice, independence, and accessibility**, allowing individuals to select meals that suit their preferences and needs, while **removing barriers** related to transport and cost.

"This partnership reflects what we are all about, supporting people to live well, stay connected, and enjoy good food in a way that is practical and dignified," said Evan Hill, Meals on Wheels Queensland CEO.

"In collaboration with St John Queensland, we are helping to extend the reach of our services and ensure more people can access affordable, nourishing meals in their community."





In addition to standard meal access, eligible community members may also be able to access subsidised meals through programs such as the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), Support at Home, or the NDIS. The Meals on Wheels Queensland team encourages individuals to reach out to learn more about available support options.

This initiative will also be closely monitored to assess community uptake, with the potential for future expansion across additional locations if successful.

Meals on Wheels Queensland is proud to be working alongside St John Queensland on this initiative, making it easier for more people to stay connected, get out into their community, and access good, affordable food when they need it.

At its heart, this partnership is about people: helping remove everyday barriers, supporting independence, and making sure more Queenslanders can enjoy simple things like a good meal and a friendly connection along the way.



Iceepak Australia

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BRISBANE NORTH GROUP FORUM

FOCUSING ON REFORM READINESS AND FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

Representatives from Meals on Wheels services across the **Brisbane North Aged Care Planning Region** recently came together for an informative and collaborative forum focused on sector reform, governance, and the future sustainability of community-based service delivery.

The session provided attendees with **valuable updates** and **practical guidance** as the aged care sector continues to navigate significant reform and operational change.

A key discussion point was the **Shared Services model**, with an overview provided on how collaborative approaches could help strengthen the Meals on Wheels brand while supporting services in areas such as marketing, governance, and day-to-day operations. Various future operating models were explored, including fully independent services, shared service arrangements, and hub models with centralised management.

Importantly, Meals on Wheels Queensland reinforced that there is no preferred model, with the priority being to ensure services are **thriving rather than simply surviving**, ultimately supporting the thousands of elderly and vulnerable clients, as well as volunteers, across local communities.

Attendees also received an overview of the recently developed Meals on Wheels Queensland Governance Training Program.

The program has been specifically designed to equip Management Committees with a stronger understanding of their obligations under the Aged Care Act and to support services in maintaining strong governance practices into the future.



Sector reforms remained a strong focus throughout the forum, with practical discussions held around current progress and actions services should be taking to ensure they remain on track and prepared for upcoming changes.

An update was also provided on the Government Provider Management System (GPMS), including implementation progress and where providers should currently be positioned as part of the rollout process.

As part of ongoing support initiatives, Meals on Wheels Queensland advised that several key checklists and “playbooks” are currently being developed for member services. A Risk Management Checklist was shared with attendees, with committees and service managers encouraged to review the document against their existing policies and procedures.

The forum once again highlighted the **strength of collaboration** across the Meals on Wheels network and the sector’s shared commitment to delivering high-quality support to older Australians within their local communities.



THRIVING AGAINST THE ODDS

HOW JORGE CASTRO FOUND A NEW PURPOSE



As the administration officer and receptionist at Cairns Meals on Wheels (CMOW), **Jorge Castro** has quickly become a beloved member of the family. Known across the service for his **bright smile**, **cheeky sense of humour**, and **infectious positive energy**, he is the welcoming frontline face for clients, volunteers, and staff alike.

But behind his confident presence is an **extraordinary story of resilience**. Originally from Peru, Jorge moved to Australia at 26, building a dynamic life as a talented chef, baker, and avid outdoor adventurer. However, his world changed in an instant in August 2023 following a devastating motorbike accident on the Cook Highway. Jorge survived the **near-death experience**, spending the next 11 months in hospitals and intensive rehabilitation to adapt to life as a paraplegic in a wheelchair.

“You realise you’re in this situation, you thrive or you die,” Jorge shares. “It’s just about an opportunity that life gives you, you’ve gotta take.”

Determined to rebuild, Jorge taught himself digital skills like data entry and marketing. Despite his drive, finding employment proved incredibly difficult until a chance introduction by CMOW Treasurer Judith Brown brought him into the Meals on Wheels network.

Initially starting at just one day a week, Jorge’s talent and vibrant personality immediately shone through. General Manager, Chris Van Dorssen, soon offered him a permanent, full-time position. Today, Jorge is completely independent, driving an adapted car and living in his own modified home, milestones he credits heavily to the stability and purpose his work provides.

“When Jorge first arrived, his confidence was low,” reflects Chris Van Dorssen. “But he’s a cheeky bugger, and this role has helped him big time. All the clients absolutely love him. He’s a real character and he has truly blossomed.”

“I feel blessed,” Jorge says of his place in the network, and for Cairns Meals on Wheels, the feeling is entirely mutual.

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Office Address: Unit 16 | Cameron House | Strathlink
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