



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Case Study on Local Government Innovation and Collaboration

Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA), as consortium partner of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG), recently released 'Community Chef: A Case Study in Local Government Innovation'. The written and complementary case study tells the story of Community Chef, how it came about and what lessons were learned along the way.

Community Chef is a local government owned social enterprise with a state-of-the-art environmentally sustainable commercial kitchen facility in Melbourne's south-western suburbs. It is a collaborative joint venture between councils in Victoria, but operates as a separate arms-length business and contracts to member councils and other clients to deliver cook-chill or snap frozen, high quality, nutritious meals ready for use by elderly, frail and disabled community members.

The Community Chef project has been widely acclaimed as an outstanding example of local government collaboration and resource sharing, with councils working together to deliver quality service outcomes under an innovative social enterprise structure. Whilst the focus of the Community Chef project is on the delivered meals function, the key lesson to be taken from this case study is that, as an example of best practice, its potential is far greater. As Bill Jaboor, a Community Chef Board member and CEO of Brimbank City Council, has said "Community Chef is a project that is a great example of local governments and communities working together to do things better. Let's see how else this fantastic model can be applied to improve service outcomes for the community in other areas and ways."

The core message from the case study is that the Community Chef model can be adapted and applied in any number of other government service areas and functions, both within local government and beyond, such as aged care, child care, housing, and youth services.

One of the intentions of the case study is to inspire and encourage those involved in the local government sector to consider and pursue different, innovative and collaborative solutions to the complex challenges they face. Lauren Oakey, CEO of LGMA said, "We wanted to shine a spotlight on this exemplary local government collaboration and to show how it came about so that other councils could be inspired by some of the outstanding work being done in the sector by councils working together for a common purpose."

ACELG Chairperson, Margaret Reynolds said: "Councils are increasingly looking to each other for solutions to common issues and challenges, and the ACELG consortium has sought to help the sector with this through this useful Case Study on the Community Chef model produced by the LGMA. This resource will be exemplary for councils looking for innovative solutions, and links to recent ACELG work about councils learning from each other. I recommend this case study for all councils."

Today, Community Chef prepares over 12,000 meal items daily, or just over one third of Victoria's total requirements for Meals on Wheels. From the outset, it was built with social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes in mind. It came about as a result of an identified local problem, became a reality because an innovative solution was found, and became a success because the participating councils worked together to drive the project and bring it to fruition, with the passion and dedicated long-term commitment necessary to overcome the obstacles they encountered along the way.

The written and video formats of the case study can be downloaded at:
<http://www.lgma.org.au/community-chef.html>

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