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# Go Jindabyne

## The Soul Food Community Kitchen is breaking records in Jindabyne

The Jindabyne Op Shop at the Alpine Uniting Church has had their busiest week yet since the season started.

While the Op Shop is always a popular spot to retrieve unique items the Soul Food Community Kitchen operates year-round on a Wednesday evening. They have had an overwhelming attendance already from May with the arrival of the winter staff.

On Wednesday June 26 the Community Kitchen was unprepared for the amount of mouths to feed as the line went out the door and spanned across the driveway while people patiently waited for a hot meal. More than 250 meals were served that night, the most the kitchen has ever served.

With the record breaking amount of community members attending the kitchen last Wednesday - July 3, the volunteers were ready for another huge attendance of people and had prepared enough food to get them through for the evening.

With all hands-on deck the Op Shop and Community Kitchen have more than 30 volunteers working to ensure everyone gets fed and everyone is kept warm and cosy.

The income from sales at the Op Shop goes towards the costs of running the Soul Food Community Kitchen at the Alpine Uniting Church where more than 3,000 meals were provided last year; with this year the number is expected to be much higher.

"Through generous donations from the community and small businesses to the Op Shop we are able to facilitate this much-needed service to those struggling in the area", volunteer co-ordinator for the Alpine Uniting Church Op Shop, Gordon Wilson, said..

While many gather in the hall for a warm, home cooked meal on these

freezing winter nights, others come to meet new people and use the opportunity to socialise.

An alternative meeting place to the pubs around town, the volunteers want to create a safe place for all to gather, enjoy a meal, meet new people and a place to get away from the negative 'party' lifestyle that some live during these busy months.

It is very common to see groups of people come to each Soul Food Community Kitchen night who spend the winter season living in their vehicles.

"As Jindabyne is getting busier each season, we see more and more people struggling to find places to live so they have to live in their car," Gordon said.

"Whether it's because they can't afford to pay the high rents, are not getting enough hours at work or a number of other reasons, these people are doing it tough and come here to escape their cold cars and enjoy a bit of socialising."

As more and more people struggle to find accommodation or struggle to get enough hours at work to pay the rent, Jindabyne is seeing an increase of people sleeping in cars during each winter season and the volunteers want to do all they can to help those doing it tough.

Before each community meal the food bank in the hall is restocked with goods, volunteers purchase essential items so they can be supplied for free to those who are in need.

Non-perishable items are on offer including pasta, diced tomatoes, muesli, cans of spaghetti and baked beans and many more to keep people fed this winter.

"The Soul Food Community Kitchen would not be up and running if it weren't for the kind donations and generosity from the Jindabyne community and small businesses in

the area", Gordon said.

"It is a very important thing that we do here at the Alpine Uniting church Op shop and Soul Food Community kitchen. Our mission here means we are an extended family to the community and tourists and provide practical support for our winter staff. Folk often take advantage of the free Wi-Fi and computer/printer facilities during the Op Shop open hours."

The volunteers would like to thank Nimmitabel Bakery for donating their treats and The Market Jindabyne for donating their vegetables for last week's Community Kitchen meal.

All are welcome and encouraged to come along to the Soul Food Community Kitchen to partake in a hot meal, socialising and browsing the Op Shop each Monday and Wednesday afternoon/evenings.

Open Mondays, Op Shop from 5pm to 7pm with the Soul Food Community Kitchen offers up soup and bread, and Wednesdays the Op Shop from 2pm to 8pm with the Soul Food Community Kitchen offers up a hot meal from 6pm.

The Op shop is also open Saturdays from 10am to 1pm with a free sausage sizzle; the Food bank is freely available whenever the Op Shop is running.

Christmas in July is on July 17 this year at the Op Shop where Santa Claus will be around to take some photos and special treats are provided for a truly Aussie Christmas experience.

To keep up to date on events at The Soul Food Community Kitchen, Alpine Uniting Church and Op Shop visit their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/The-OP-SHOP-Jindabyne-1541231149461729/> and for information on how you can become a volunteer contact Gordon on 0412 433 431.



The Soul Food Community Kitchen Volunteers Kerri, Kushila, Louise, Jacinta and Michael.



The line up to receive a hot meal from the Soul Food Community Kitchen.

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