



Media Release

Foodbank donors step up to provide food relief during the QLD and VIC disasters

Sydney, 1 March 2011: Foodbank, Australia's largest hunger relief organisation, had its resources put to the test in recent months in the face of the natural disasters in Queensland and Victoria. However, outstanding support from Foodbank's food and grocery industry partners played a valuable role in the response effort, ensuring food and other household supplies are available wherever and whenever they are most needed.

Only days into the New Year a call for help was made to Foodbank's industry donors in response to the devastating floods in Queensland. In line with lessons learned from previous disasters such as Cyclone Larry and the Black Saturday bushfires, the request was for specific items to be received in staged deliveries. The response was immediate and overwhelming, with all the companies approached offering unreserved assistance.

John Webster, CEO of Foodbank Australia comments, "We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the food and grocery companies. To date, the commitments have totalled 1,500 pallet loads of product valued at over \$5.5 million which, if delivered together, would require a convoy of 75 trucks," he says.

Until the rising flood waters threatened its own Brisbane warehouse, Foodbank Queensland disseminated food and other essential items to welfare agencies in the country areas of Queensland first affected by floods. These supplies were aimed at the second wave of assistance for flood victims returning to their devastated homes to help them begin the cleanup process.

With the arrival of the floods in Brisbane, the distribution focus turned closer to home where agencies, such as the Salvation Army, knew they could rely on Foodbank for supplies for the suburban emergency evacuation centres.

Major Bryce Davies from the Salvation Army said at the time, "Foodbank has been excellent and definitely the best way to get supplies because we know we can source what we need when we need it."

With the advent of floods in Victoria, some of the donated product was diverted to VicRelief Foodbank as it swung into action as part of the Victorian State Government's State Emergency Plan response team. Emergency relief packs of food, water and personal hygiene products (enough to support a person/household for up to five days) were packed and distributed to over 1500 families living in the worst of regional Victoria's flood affected and isolated communities. Over 24,000kgs worth of food and aid has been disseminated to date.

This was quickly followed by making donated products available to the communities in Far North Queensland affected by Cyclone Yasi with the first trucks delivering products as soon as the roads were open.

Due to the ripple effect of these disasters throughout the broader community, Foodbank knows from experience that there will be an increased call on its services for many months and even years to come. So, with the unwavering support of its industry donors and volunteers, it is rolling up its sleeves to assist community rebuilding which is just beginning.

Foodbank would like to thank the following national donors for their generous support during the recent disasters:

Campbell Arnott's, Cerebos, Coca-Cola Amatil, Ferrero, Fonterra, George Weston Foods, Goodman Fielder, Heinz, Johnson & Johnson, Kellogg's, Kimberly-Clark, Kraft Foods, Manassen Foods, McCain, Mars Food Australia, Menora Foods, National Foods, Nestlé, Orgran, Oriental Merchant, P&G, PZ Cussons, Rinoldi Pasta, Sanitarium Health & Wellbeing Company, Sara Lee, Schweppes, Simplot Australia, SPC Ardmona, Smith's Snackfood Company, Stuart Alexander, Sugar Australia, Sunbeam, SunRice, Unilever, Valcorp.

Donations received to date include:

- 258 pallets of breakfast cereal
- 154 pallets of long life milk
- 253 pallets of pasta, noodles, rice and sauces
- 153 pallets of canned fruit, vegetables and meals
- 89 pallets of bread, biscuits and spreads plus additional bread deliveries every day
- 64 pallets of tea, coffee and sugar
- 120 pallets of snack foods
- 59 pallets of drinks
- 331 pallets of toothpaste, soap, shampoo, hygiene, nappies and toilet paper.

Further assistance was provided by Toll and others in the form of warehousing and trucking. In addition companies sent teams of staff volunteers to help out in Foodbank warehouses around the country.

John Webster concluded "Our heartfelt thanks to the food and grocery companies for your truly exceptional support – you should feel immense pride for the selfless assistance you have shown for those in need. The current crises may have brought out the worst in Mother Nature but they have certainly brought out the very best in Australian spirit – nowhere is this better reflected than through your help."

For more details about Foodbank Australia and to make a donation, visit www.foodbank.com.au

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About Foodbank

Foodbank is the largest hunger relief organisation in Australia. It is a national non-denominational organisation with distribution centres in six states, the Northern Territory and eight regional centres. In partnership with food industry, the corporate sector, governments, charities and volunteers, Foodbank tackles the problem of hunger in Australia wherever it arises.

Foodbank acts as a conduit between the food and grocery industry's surplus food and the welfare sector's need. Food companies deliver their donations to Foodbank warehouses around the country – last year alone they provided 19 million kilograms of food and groceries. Over 2,200 charities collect the donated food and distribute it to people in need. The food rescued by Foodbank feeds on average 70,000 people a day.

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