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University of Sydney and Foodbank partner to eliminate hunger in Australia

Sydney, 3 August 2011, The University of Sydney Business School has joined forces with not-for-profit agency, *Foodbank Australia* to help them achieve their goal of eliminating hunger in Australia.

Participants of the University of Sydney's innovative Global Executive MBA (EMBA) program have worked with *Foodbank* to tackle the enormous issue of how to feed millions of Australians that currently go without food on a regular basis.

Foodbank is Australia's largest hunger relief organisation, with affiliates in six states and the Northern Territory. It acts as a pantry for the welfare sector as it sources and distributes food and grocery industry donations to 2,500 charities across the country.

Having committed to the ambitious goal of increasing the amount of food that the organisation provides nationally from 21 million to 50 million kilos a year by 2015, *Foodbank Australia* CEO, John Webster, approached Global Executive MBA Program Director, Nick Wailes, requesting strategic business advice. This followed the successful completion of a similar project by an EMBA group in 2010 for Foodbank NSW.

The challenging hands-on project again formed part of the EMBA course assessment but, as with the group project last year, quickly became a labour of love for participants. As part of the project the group visited the *Foodbank* warehouse at Wetherill Park, suppliers and other relief agencies to understand the challenges facing the organisation and how they could help them grow in a sustainable way.

Each of the EMBA participants is a senior executive at a leading Australian organisation and they were able to draw on their own business experience to add value to this not-for-profit initiative.

At the culmination of the project, the group of 16 presented a comprehensive business plan to John Webster, Foodbank Australia Chairman, Enzo Allara and Chairman Foodbank NSW, Ern Pope, with a number of recommendations. The group was very impressed with the current business capability demonstrated by Foodbank and is confident that the organisation has the capacity to implement key opportunities that the group identified to improve inventory control, workplace capability planning and marketing.



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John Webster said: "We are delighted that the University of Sydney has partnered with us to help combat the hidden problem of hunger in Australia. The recommendations from the EMBA group are strategic, innovative and will be sure to help us grow our capability to reach our goal of 50 million kg of food by 2015."

One of the course participants, Senior Manager, Corporate Communication, Louisa McKay, said: "We had some idea about what to expect but it is still astonishing to learn that more than 2 million people – half of them children – rely on food relief during the year to survive. Many of these people suffer in silence so it is a very gratifying part of the program to be able to think about ways to get more food to more people and raise the profile of Foodbank."

"We didn't really know what to expect when we began the project but it has had an effect on all of us. It has now become a really important motivator for this group to leave a legacy."

Global EMBA Program Director, Nick Wailes, said: "It is not an easy thing to open your organisation to a group of people you don't really know so we are very grateful *Foodbank Australia* allowed us a second opportunity to be involved in another aspect of their business. Clearly this was very much a mutually beneficial experience.

"The standard of the work this group has done is magnificent and continues the high level set by the previous cohort," he said.

For more Information visit:

EMBA: www.sydney.edu.au/business/globalEMBA

Foodbank: www.foodbank.com.au

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