



United Way Glenelg

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **COLD-WEATHER READY: WINTER SCHOOL SHOE PROGRAM ROLLS OUT IN LOCAL SCHOOLS**

A Winter School Shoe Fund has been established with the purpose of offering suitable footwear, to remove barriers that may hinder students' attendance during the winter months.

This new initiative provides support to vulnerable students in need of new shoes, ensuring they have the necessary resources to thrive and succeed.

United Way Glenelg, in partnership with AWA Alliance Bank, rolled-out the Winter School Shoe Fund last month with ten schools in the Glenelg Shire taking up the opportunity on behalf of their students.

Executive Officer United Way Glenelg Nicole Carr said that providing warm, comfortable, and durable footwear will enable students to navigate the cold and wet weather conditions while attending school.

"We are thrilled to introduce the Winter School Shoe Fund as a means of addressing the urgent need for appropriate winter footwear among vulnerable students."

"This initiative embodies our commitment to creating educational opportunities and promoting equal access to education for all individuals and families in need."

Eligible students will receive a \$100 voucher to spend at a designated local shoe supplier, which includes Gunnas Surf & Sport & Sportspower in Portland and Sports & All, Casterton who are all offering discounted prices to families.

Local schools have identified students who meet the criteria.

"This includes students from low-income families, those experiencing homelessness, and those in foster care. The program is also open to students with disabilities and those from marginalised communities who may face additional obstacles in accessing appropriate footwear," said Ms Carr.

Gavin Heathcote, Chief Executive Officer AWA Alliance Bank said it was important to support families who may be struggling to afford new shoes for their children.

"The Winter School Shoe Fund aims to ease their financial responsibilities during the winter season. Each student will receive financial assistance on a per-student basis, covering the cost of one pair of new shoes."

"It represents an important step towards supporting vulnerable students during the winter season," stated Mr Heathcote.

"We are proud to partner with United Way Glenelg in this endeavor, as it aligns with our vision of contributing to an improved and sustainable future for our members and local communities."

For families seeking alternative options, the State School Relief website offers the opportunity to purchase high-quality shoes at an affordable price. Skate sneakers are available for just \$45 per pair, providing families with a convenient and cost-effective choice.

The program aims to run annually, with applications opening in May and allocations being made before the start of the second semester holidays. A total of \$5,000 in funds is available for the Winter School Shoe Fund.

Through collaborative efforts and community engagement, United Way Glenelg and AWA Alliance Bank hope to make a lasting impact on the lives of these students.

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