

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 4 September 2026

Glenelg businesses help locals Pay It Forward

A simple act of kindness is making its way across the Glenelg Shire, with local cafés and eateries joining United Way Glenelg's new **Pay It Forward** initiative.

Delivered in partnership with Glenelg Shire Council, the program allows customers to donate any amount towards a future meal or food purchase for someone who may need a little extra support.

Customers make a donation at a participating business, complete a voucher for the donated amount and place it on the Pay It Forward board. Anyone who needs support can take a voucher and present it at the counter, with the voucher's value deducted from their purchase.

There are no applications, referrals or eligibility checks and no questions asked.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Carr said the program was built around trust, dignity and community kindness.

"People have asked us how we know the 'right' people are accessing the vouchers. The honest answer is, we don't," Ms Carr said.

"We don't always know what is happening in someone's life or why they may need a little help that day. Pay It Forward is about trusting people, removing judgement and allowing someone to quietly accept support when they need it."

Glenelg Shire Council Mayor Karen Stephens said Council was pleased to partner with United Way Glenelg on an initiative that made it easy for community members to support one another.

"Pay It Forward reflects the generosity and community spirit we see throughout the Glenelg Shire," Cr Stephens said.

"A small donation can make a meaningful difference to someone experiencing a difficult time, while allowing them to access that support with dignity and without judgement.

"We thank United Way Glenelg, our participating businesses and every community member who has contributed to the program."

The initiative has received a strong response from local businesses, with more than ten cafés and eateries already joining across Portland, Heywood and Casterton.

Participating businesses include:

- **Portland:** Twelve-Fold, Harbour Lights, Main Street Café, Port of Call, Barclay Street Shop, Funky Hearts, Ric's Pizza, Metro Fuel Station, Shore n Store, Portland Fish and Chips and Admella's Orchard.
- **Heywood:** Bondy's Pizza and Heywood Bakery.
- **Casterton:** Top Shop, Hey Jude and Pearls Café/Glenelg Inn.

Further venues are also joining the growing network.

"We have been thrilled by how quickly local businesses have embraced the idea," Ms Carr said

"There is no cost to participate and very little administration involved. Businesses simply provide a small space for the vouchers, accept donations and make the redeemed amount available to the customer."

United Way Glenelg provides participating businesses with posters, vouchers, window signage and starter vouchers to help establish their Pay It Forward board.

The organisation is also working towards expanding the initiative into Dartmoor and Casterton.

"Someone might donate \$2, \$5 or enough to cover an entire meal. Every contribution matters," Ms Carr said.

"A voucher may mean a warm drink, something to eat or simply the reassurance that somebody in the community cares."

Community members can support the initiative by visiting a participating venue, making their own purchase and adding a Pay It Forward donation at the counter.

Local cafés, bakeries, takeaway businesses and other eateries interested in becoming a Pay It Forward venue are encouraged to contact United Way Glenelg.

Cafes and eateries have been mapped <https://maps.app.goo.gl/DVsv8eZQ777Unjsr8>

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