



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by Mr James Milligan MLA on 14 November 2023: Ms Perkins took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard proof transcript 14 November 2023 [PAGE 15]

In relation to: Food relief - funding spent on freight costs

Ms Perkins: Thanks, Minister. Thanks, Catherine. In addition to the network that the minister has just referred to, the work that Volunteering ACT is undertaking includes the development of a food relief database. That is being developed to provide and enable evidence-informed decision-making for food relief in the ACT and provide the opportunity to have robust data collection. Volunteering ACT has been working with the pantries to bring them into that network and to support them in providing that information into the database.

Volunteering ACT has also been developing a communications strategy to provide further information to the community about food relief and food pantries, and an important part of that is to destigmatise people accessing food pantries. It is a very collaborative effort with Volunteering ACT, community groups and pantries across the ACT, and we are looking forward to having further evidence to understand what that demand is looking like, with robust data to support that.

In addition to that work with Volunteering ACT is the further funding that was provided in this year's budget for food relief activities. There was an additional \$230,000 made available for the Food Assistance Program, and that was in response to the really significant demand on our food pantries that we are experiencing from the cost-of-living pressures. There is an existing annual allocation that is provided to support food relief freight funding. Annually, that is around \$62,500. That is to bring food on freight from Foodbank in Sydney down to the ACT. In addition to that ongoing funding, there was an additional \$117,500 provided to Foodbank to support the increased freight to the food pantries, as well as an additional \$112,000 that has gone to OzHarvest to support their food rescue activities, again in response to the increased demand that both of those organisations have seen in supporting Canberrans.

THE CHAIR: Out of that \$180,000 that it comes to—the \$112,000 and the \$62,000—how much has been spent so far on freight costs for food relief?

Ms Perkins: I would have to take that on notice, but we essentially have a contract in place with Foodbank. For this year, it is around \$180,000 in total—that is the \$62,497 that is the annual funding

plus \$117,500 this year. It is an annual grant that we provide to them. It is not that they issue us a different invoice as we go throughout the year.

Ms Emma Davidson MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The amount spent on freight costs from 1 July 2023 to 16 November 2023 is \$84,289.32. This figure does not include GST.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature: *Emma Davidson*

Date: 28 November 2023

By the Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Ms Emma Davidson MLA