



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Maggie Beer Foundation brings first-of-its-kind community meals training to Bundaberg**

*Bundaberg & District Meals on Wheels selected as pilot site for new national program to lift nutrition and food quality for older people living at home*

**BUNDABERG, QLD** — The Maggie Beer Foundation has this week launched its Community Meals Pilot Training Program at Bundaberg Meals on Wheels, delivering three days of intensive hands-on training to kitchen staff and volunteers — the first time this training has been delivered to a community meal provider anywhere in Australia.

Bundaberg & District Meals on Wheels is one of only three providers nationally selected to participate in the pilot, which has been developed specifically for kitchens preparing and delivering meals to older people living at home under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Support at Home framework.

The program, supported by the Australian Government's *Improving Food in Aged Care through Education and Training* initiative, covers nutrition for older people, cooking techniques for flavour and protein, menu planning, kitchen workflow and volunteer support — practical skills designed to be applied immediately in community meal kitchens.

"A meal delivered to an older person's home is never just a meal," said Jane Mussared, CEO of the Maggie Beer Foundation. "It is a moment of care, a connection to community, and a real opportunity to give joy and support wellbeing through good food. This program exists to give the wonderful teams making and delivering those meals the tools, confidence and knowledge to make every meal count."

Bundaberg & District Meals on Wheels prepares and delivers meals to over 1200 older Queenslanders each year. The service, like many across regional Australia, relies on a dedicated team of paid staff and volunteers who work under increasing pressure to meet growing demand with limited resources.

The Foundation's Community Meals Training Program was developed following a national research phase that included consultation with providers across every state and territory and a survey of more than 60 meal delivery organisations.



"What we heard from providers was clear," said Susie Riggall, Chef Trainer at the Maggie Beer Foundation. "Providers and chefs care deeply about the people they serve, and we want to support them with practical, kitchen-ready training. This program has been built around that. We want to be in the kitchen with teams, cooking alongside them, and leaving them with tools they can use the very next day."

The three-day pilot at Bundaberg Meals on Wheels runs 23–25 June 2026 and is led by Foundation Chef Trainers Susie Riggall and Matt Roman. Chefs and volunteers from both Bundaberg and Childers sites are participating in the training. Outcomes from the pilot will inform a nationally scalable program designed to reach community meal providers across Australia.

The timing of the program aligns with significant changes in aged care. New requirements under the Aged Care Rules 2025 and the *Guidance for In-Home Meal Requirements* released by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing in August 2025 have raised expectations for providers — including annual dietitian review of menus and a quality assurance framework for continuous improvement. The Foundation's training program is designed to equip providers to meet and exceed those expectations.

### **About the Maggie Beer Foundation**

Access to good, nutritious, enjoyable food that supports health, dignity, connection and wellbeing is fundamental to ageing well. The Maggie Beer Foundation was established in 2014 to promote good food opportunities for older people, wherever they live, in collaboration with older people, carers, researchers, foodies, aged care teams and clinicians.

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