



Brophy Announces Closure of Tasty Plate Social Enterprise in Warrnambool

WARRNAMBOOL, 8th Jan 2024 — It is with a heavy heart that Brophy announces the closure of its social enterprise, Tasty Plate. Tasty Plate, a niche catering and café service based in Warrnambool has provided training opportunities for people with disabilities, working towards their integration into open employment.

Since the onset of the Covid pandemic, and despite Tasty Plate's and Brophy's best efforts and the community's support and patronage, Tasty Plate has continued to struggle to maintain its financial viability as a social enterprise.

The key issue for Tasty Plate is related to its NDIS funding base. Tasty Plate's business model is reliant on two forms of revenue. One is NDIS funding to support its participants and the second is the catering revenue to cover operational costs.

The NDIS participant-funded packages have continued to diminish in number and funding amount over the past three years. Our significant investments especially over the past 18 months to recruit new participants have not materialised, and the participant pool has declined to less than 20 part-time participants.

Sadly, participant-funded packages are also being reduced. With more choices for participants in a maturing market, Tasty Plate is no longer the destination needed during this prolonged Covid transition.

In addition, Tasty Plates' operational expenses have been significantly impacted by inflation and workforce conditions. The cost of goods has soared, and so too have wages and conditions.

Unfortunately, Tasty Plate is not an isolated case. The recently published report by the National Disability Service, State of the Disability Sector Report 2023 paints a bleak picture for the sector with 34% of providers having posted deficits for the previous financial year, as did Tasty Plate.

It is important to note that Brophy's other funded services remain fully operational and unaffected due to its different funding sources.

Brophy has been strongly committed to Tasty Plate and its participants for many years. In 2017, Brophy purchased a home for Tasty Plate in Fairy St through its reserves. With the generous support of several philanthropic trusts and individual donors, Brophy also invested in renovating the premises as a purpose-built home for Tasty Plate. This gave Tasty Plate a strong foundation upon which to grow without the worry of leases and rent. Furthermore, Brophy has supported Tasty Plate financially, covering some of its operational costs throughout the Covid period.

Tasty Plate and Brophy would like to thank the many regular catering customers who have supported Tasty Plate each year as their way of supporting Tasty Plate's mission. Thanks also to those community members who bought takeaway meals and their lunches from Fairy St.



We thank the philanthropic trusts and donors for their support in this journey over a long time, through highs and lows, and their courage to invest in Tasty Plate and its participants.

We thank the 19 staff for their passion and the quality of their service over the years. Staff members have been very proactive in building their qualification base both in disability support and hospitality, providing a strong tailored, and quality service. They can be extraordinarily proud of what they have achieved and the spirit they have shown in the most challenging of times and circumstances.

And most of all, Tasty Plate and Brophy would like to thank the participants and their families for their involvement in Tasty Plate. We will continue to support them in their journey to transition safely to their next endeavours, as they take some of Tasty Plate's beliefs in people, opportunity, and growth with them.

Thank you all for your support,

On behalf of Tasty Plate and Brophy Board

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