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Stockland funding boost for Gateway Care to support Sunshine Coast families

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Stockland Aura has recently given \$50,000 to one of the Sunshine Coast's leading community organisations, Gateway Care, as part of its community grants program. The grant has been used to expand Gateway Care's service to provide more discounted food items to local families doing it tough and struggling to put food on the table.

Based in Caloundra West, Gateway Care supports over 1,700 low income and vulnerable families each week with low cost or no cost groceries, emergency meals and access to a safe and welcoming environment where they can meet with local crisis care agencies.

Stockland Aura Senior Environment and Community Development Manager, Mark Stephens said he was delighted that Stockland was able to assist Gateway Care in reaching more people with this invaluable service and creating such a positive impact in the region.

"Gateway Care is a great example of a local organisation who is addressing the high cost of living, particularly with the current housing crisis. Gateway Care's team and volunteers are doing a fantastic job in helping those facing challenging times, not only through the services they deliver but also by providing a safe and welcoming environment," said Mr Stephens.

Gateway Care Managing Director, Tom Lew thanked Stockland for the vital funds which supports low income, vulnerable and at risk members of the Sunshine Coast community.

"The Gateway Food Distribution Centre is the largest food rescuer on the Sunshine Coast, with more than 40,000kg of food rescued each week from Foodbank Queensland, Second Bite, local supermarkets, and primary producers," said Mr Lew.

"These funds are making our dream a reality, converting our current 600 square metres warehouse facility to be upgraded to a 1,500 square metre outlet. We have also been able to purchase new shelving and additional refrigeration units for chilled food storage to help meet community need."

About 300 families a day are supported with food that Gateway has been able to rescue from supermarkets. This also includes low cost groceries, so that community members have essentials including meat, fruit, and vegetables.

“I love the Sunshine Coast and I hate to think that there are people that are doing it tough in our community. Gateway Care is a community hub. We connect with people, and we care about community wellbeing,” said Mr Lew.

“It is a magic feeling to see a person’s face light up when they receive a roast meat or a special treat in their groceries when they haven’t been able to feed their family with these ‘luxury’ items.”

Gateway Care staff member Natasha Wayling knows all too well how hard times can be and came to the organisation originally as a volunteer.

“As soon as I walked in the door, I knew that this was a very special place where people were not discriminated against and they could find some solace,” said Ms Wayling.

“I was so happy to be able to give back to the community through volunteering and now it is amazing to have the opportunity to be in permanent employment with Gateway.

“Gateway Care is a safe and caring environment for our customers and a great place for anybody in the community to come and connect.”

The Stockland Aura Community Grants Program has so far delivered a total of \$1.5 million in funding to community groups on the Sunshine Coast.

For more information about Gateway Care and the programs and services on offer to bring people together and alleviate hardship, visit: www.gatewaycare.org.au.

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