

Community Support

A truck in time

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Rotary Club of Wellington North, NZ

A \$10,000 donation to Kiwi Community Assistance by the Rotary Club of Wellington North, NZ, has facilitated the purchase of a refurbished chiller truck to help the local charity in its work with communities in need.

Founded by Tracy Wellington and her husband Phil Davies, Kiwi Community Assistance is a 'foodbank with a difference', distributing not just food parcels, but clothes, appliances, blankets and kitchenware, all donated by individuals, businesses and community groups.

The truck, which can carry two tons of stock and volunteers for a range of tasks, such as sorting out donated goods and making up consignments, prominently displays the Rotary Club of Wellington North's logo, along with the ANZ Bank logo, which generously donated the extra \$20,000 for the truck's purchase.

With the onslaught of COVID-19, the truck has come into its own, with KCA proving busier than ever.

"At the start of COVID-19 we noticed a significant drop in the volume of food being rescued from supermarkets due to panic buying," Tracy said. "Then the Sunday Johnsonville Farmers Market had to close down and KCA was able to rescue that food."

PICTURED: Tracy Wellington in the side door of the truck.

With the support of supermarket operators, Kiwi Community Assistance has been deemed an essential service, and is thus allowed to continue operating during the nationwide lockdown.

In the last week of March, KCA was contacted by various food producers that did not have supermarket supply contracts to say they had pallets of stock available to rescue.

In the first days of lockdown, KCA's skeleton crew of volunteers rescued and redistributed nearly 10 tons of food, the bulk of which was donated to Soup Kitchen Wellington, Wellington Night Shelter, Wellington City Mission and a top up for Kaibosh. The latter is another food rescue organisation which, in addition to supermarkets, had been relying on end of day surplus food

from lunch bars and other takeaways. KCA also sent six trucks full of food to The Salvation Army after it made a call out for supplies.

With traditional markets closed, growers from as far away as Manawatu, 150km to the north, have offered fresh produce for free, which would otherwise go to waste. KCA has been able to take full advantage of the opportunities.

During the lockdown, distribution in Wellington has been centralised into three organisations, The Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul and The Wellington City Mission.

The decision by the Rotary Club of Wellington North to support Kiwi Community Assistance in the purchase of the chiller truck came at just the right time given the COVID-19 lockdown, which followed the truck's launch.

