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# Hampers helping shire's homeless

## COMMUNITY

BY CLAIRE FENWICKE

Bowral

HOW much money do you spend per week on groceries?

For some people, paying for food is the difference between being able to pay rent and sleeping on the street.

Members of the Highlands Business Circle donated food hampers to the Pathways program at Southern Highlands Homelessness Services to assist those in need.

Member Gary Ponder has been donating to the service for the past four years through the Business Circle, and said members' fees helped pay for the hampers.

"We're a bunch of business people who are able to give back the community, and we consider this type of commitment as giving back," he said.

"We saw helping as a natural progression."

Case worker Jodie Keeley said the hamper, which contained pasta and sauce, cleaning products, toilet paper, noodles, soups and tuna, could make a real difference to those who could become homeless.

"We are in constant need of food and we are most grateful of this donation," she said.

"It's great that local business owners are prepared to help disadvantaged residents in this way, as many sometimes have to choose between having something to eat or having a roof to sleep under."

The hampers will be dis-



GRATEFUL: Case worker Jodie Keeley accepting a food hamper donation from Highlands Business Circle member Gary Ponder. Photo: Claire Fenwicke

tributed to residents living in temporary emergency housing accommodation and transitional properties.

Pathways is a program for single women and children who are homeless or are at

risk of being homeless.

The service has recently launched the 'Rapid Rehousing Project', where case workers are working with real estates to negotiate and support tenancies of vulnerable

people who could be in danger of becoming homeless.

The priority of the program is to assist women and children who have experienced domestic violence or are currently experiencing

domestic violence and want to leave.

Southern Highlands Homelessness Services is located in the St Vincent de Paul's office and is open for appointments Monday to

Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm, at 44 Bowral Street, Bowral.

For more information in regards to Pathways, visit [https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find\\_Help/NSW/Housing/Pathways/](https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/NSW/Housing/Pathways/).

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