

FACT SHEET: Meals on Wheels in NSW

What does Meals on Wheels do?

- Meals on Wheels provides a nutritionally balanced meal to frail, aged people, people with a disability, and their carers. The service is not means tested.
- Meals on Wheels enables people to be independent in their own homes for longer. Most people prefer to live at home, but in many cases they need support to do this. Without Community Services such as Meals on Wheels clients are at risk of premature admission to aged care.
- Meals on Wheels seek to actively educate clients and reduce the high risk of malnutrition in older people. Improving nutrition reduces falls and other associated health risks in older people.
- Often a Meals on Wheels meal is the highest source of nutritional content for a client who would otherwise exist on tea and toast.
- Meals on Wheels volunteers are often the only daily point of contact for recipients, serving to decrease their social isolation and assist in monitoring their health and well being.
- Taste, visual appeal and meeting cultural needs of CALD (Culturally And Linguistically Diverse) clients is also a priority. Special diets (e.g. gluten-free) are catered for.

How does Meals on Wheels operate?

- In NSW, most Meals on Wheels services receive funding from the Australian Government Department of Health to cover administrative costs.
- Meals on Wheels, as with all community services, is made possible by the significant contribution of volunteers who deliver the meals. It is estimated volunteering contributes the equivalent of \$200 million funding nationally.
- Meals on Wheels meals are provided at production cost to clients. The cost of food and producing meals is escalating due to an increase in food costs and compliance costs (Food Safety, Risk Management, WH&S) not matched by an increase in funding or an increase in CPI indexed pensions (many Meals on Wheels recipients are pensioners).
- The NSW Meals on Wheels Association works to support its member services with resources, advocacy, and sharing of information and good practice. It also provides an insurance scheme and undertakes fundraising raffles to supplement government funding.

Meals on Wheels statistics for NSW

No. of Meals on Wheels services	Total clients per day	Total meals per year	Total volunteers	Metropolitan clients	Regional clients	Meal price
190	15,000	4.5 million	35,000	32%	68%	\$4.50 - \$9.00