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MEDIA RELEASE

Community coat drive needs your support

Picture caption: Pristine Drycleaners manager Jane Townsend and Bendigo Community Health Services CEO Kim Sykes with the first coats to arrive for the Bendigo Community Coat Drive 2016.

The Bendigo Community Coat Drive 2016 needs your support.

Bendigo Community Health Services is running the coat drive in partnership with Pristine Drycleaners and 93.5 3BO until June 4.

BCHS CEO Kim Sykes said the Bendigo community donated 1839 coats, jackets, blankets, scarves, beanies, gloves and socks last year.

“The coat drive continues to build into an amazing community effort with 800 items donated in 2011 and 1839 last year showing the willingness of people to keep helping those in need,” Ms Sykes said.

“The coat drive shows what communities can achieve by working together.”

Ms Sykes said the coat drive was becoming increasingly important as larger sections of the community struggled to make ends meet.

“All 1839 items were given to people in need last year,” Ms Sykes said.

“Many people take it for granted that if you're cold you buy a coat or blanket, but it's clear that more and more people are finding this a struggle.”

Ms Sykes said Bendigo's high rate of disadvantage was highlighted by Australian Bureau of Statistics research.

“The ABS uses a Socio-Economic Index For Areas to rate disadvantage in local government areas and the last report showed Bendigo in the bottom 50 per cent of all Victorian LGAs.

“If we break that down further, 69 per cent of areas in Greater Bendigo sat in the lowest 50 per cent of SIEFA scores for Victoria with 23 per cent of these areas in the bottom 20 per cent for the state. This shows the desperate situation facing many people in Bendigo.

“Poor social and economic circumstances affect health throughout life and Bendigo Community Health Services is determined to change that trend by striving for equity in our community.

“There is no quick fix and until we make permanent change we need to provide support to those in immediate need. The Coat Drive is one way we can all help do this. If you have something spare in the wardrobe, we would love for you to support this community effort.”

Ms Sykes said the Coat Drive was fortunate to again have the support of Pristine Drycleaners and 93.5 3BO.

“Pristine Drycleaners staff clean every donated item at no cost – it’s a wonderful community-minded effort that makes a real difference,” Ms Sykes said.

“We are also hugely thankful of the support provided by 93.5 3BO who jump on board each year to raise community awareness of the coat drive.”

Coat drive donations can be made at the following points until June 3...

Pristine Drycleaners, 141-161 High Street, Bendigo.

Bendigo Community Health Services sites:

Central – 171 Hargreaves Street.

Kangaroo Flat – 13 Helm

Eaglehawk – 3 Seymoure Street.

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