

Funding to provide dignity for children and young people

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Thread Together collects end-of-line brand new stock from fashion retailers around the country which are sorted and redistributed to people in need through a national network of charities and social service agencies.

Retailers have warehouses full of clothing they have not been able to sell – and all too often, that clothing ends up in landfill or is destroyed.

To address the environmental concern as well as provide dignity to vulnerable people, the Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation is supporting a world-first Australian organisation that rescues surplus new clothes and redistributes them to children and young people in need.

The Foundation has committed \$300,000 over three years to Thread Together, which collaborates with major retailers as well as registered charities and welfare agencies.

The 'Supporting Disadvantaged Children and Young People in Victoria' initiative is expected to directly benefit 18,000 people. Regions with the highest poverty levels for children and young people will be the priority.

Thread Together CEO Anthony Chesler said there was an urgent need for clothing support among disadvantaged communities. More than 50 per cent of Victorians struggled to afford a basic standard of living, meaning clothing was usually not at a priority, he said.

“Sadly, people judge at such a young age and children and young people especially can be isolated when they stand out for not wearing new and contemporary clothes – and from then, the cycle of poverty is perpetuated,” he said. “Unfortunately, local charities and welfare

agencies often lack the resources to provide adequate clothing assistance – so we aim to fill this gap.”

Founded more than 10 years ago, Thread Together’s model is increasingly recognised as the most ethical solution to managing the issue of surplus end-of-line clothing stock.

“Our strong partnership model makes our program unique,” Anthony said. “We collaborate with more than 2500 registered charities and welfare agencies that have deep roots in the communities they serve. The agencies understand the unique needs of their communities, allowing us to deliver targeted support effectively.”

The new project will identify target areas, analyse need and agencies across Victoria, apply selection criteria, and ensure the agencies’ authenticity and effectiveness.

“We will then onboard and engage the new agencies, develop tailored strategies, present partnership opportunities, and run roadshows to foster community involvement and enhance awareness,” Anthony said.

Thread Together works with many major retailers, including David Jones, Myer, Athlete’s Foot, Under Armour, Forever New, and underwear and footwear labels.

“The brands let us know what they have and request collections, so we know what’s coming to us – nobody dumps anything on our doorstep,” Anthony said.

Clothing is taken to Thread Together’s warehouse in Sydney, near the airport, and thousands of volunteers sort and categorise the items into sizes and categories. Donations include the full gamut of clothing, from play and active wear to casual, office, and formal.

“We never sell any clothing that’s given to us – it is always given to those who need it through our trusted charity and agency partners,” Anthony said. “Caseworkers are in the communities and know who needs what – from refugee organisations to homeless shelters.

“This project means children and young people can have new wardrobes, with quality underwear, several pairs of good shoes, and the right clothes for their climate.”

The first Victorian areas that will benefit from the project are Brimbank, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Hume, Whittlesea, Casey, Bendigo, Geelong, Shepparton, Mildura, and Mitchell.

Anthony said he met Anita Hopkins, CEO of the Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation, through a mutual contact in 2023.

“This support they are providing is substantial,” he said. “The communication has been excellent and we’re very appreciative.”

Anita said the Foundation was delighted to support Thread Together.

“They are doing incredible work supporting disadvantaged Victorians,” she said. “It is also important that while the number of direct beneficiaries will be about 18,000, entire families will also benefit through reduced financial stress and improved wellbeing.

“The broader community will also reap rewards from the increased social inclusion, enhanced self-esteem, and improved mental health of the direct beneficiaries.”

<https://threadtogether.org/>