



THE PANTRY

Engaging with the community through food

Gail Kenning

in conjunction with Sue Pedley and Addison Road Community Organisation
funded by Sydney Local Health District



THANKS

With special thanks to Sue Pedley, Rosanna Barbero, Mina Bui Jones and the staff and volunteers at Addison Road Community Organisation (Addi Road). Many thanks to the Diversity Programs & Strategy Hub at Sydney Local Health District for supporting The Pantry Art Project, and a special thank you to all those people who talked to us about their experiences, who shared their stories about their life and food, who shared their recipes, and who engaged in creative activities with us.

All images were created by artists and participants involved in The Pantry Art Project or are courtesy of John Janson Moore

Gail Kenning

Image © John Janson Moore.

INTRODUCTION

Mina Bui Jones

Programs Manager, Addison Road Community Organisation

Food brings people together. It's the motivation, excuse, and 'lubricant' for so many occasions of social interaction. It's a vehicle for the transmission of tradition and an expression of care, culture and community. But food also divides us, perhaps more strikingly than any other human need. Differences in access to food reflect vast and tragic differences in financial security, social status, health and wellbeing, not only around the world but also within our local neighbourhoods.

People with limited access to food are also, so often, people who experience exclusion or marginalisation, racism or other forms of discrimination, people who have migrated for work or fled from conflict, who are isolated or under-represented.

Here at Addi Road, we believe that access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food is a human right. As an independent organisation with a rights-based approach to community development, we have been tackling inequality in relation to food for many years.

Back in 2015, Addison Road Community Organisation started a small pilot project – a low-cost grocery store run out of a shipping container one morning a week, in response to community need. Local people, particularly seniors and people with children, were saying they were skipping meals to save money for 'fixed' costs like rent, mortgage payments, electricity or transport. It was unacceptable that in a country as wealthy and stable as Australia, people should be going without food.

We knew that thousands of tonnes of food were being destroyed, thrown into landfill as waste, an immoral situation that also contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, fueling climate change.

This pilot project, we called the Food Pantry, was boosted by our 2016 report, *Mind the Gap*: an inquiry into the increasing inequalities faced by CALD members of the Marrickville local government area. It rapidly grew to become the Addi Road Food Pantry Marrickville, open five days a week and the Addi Road Food Pantry Camperdown, open four days a week.

Then in 2020, in response to the dramatic and terrifying impacts of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable people in our communities, we built



Access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food is a human right.

on this work to create, almost overnight, an Emergency Food Relief Hub. Last year we worked with over 70 other community groups to provide food at low or no cost to around 250,000 people and diverted 200 tonnes of food from landfill.

Addison Road Community Organisation was established more than 40 years ago by dedicated volunteers and grassroots community groups including ethnic welfare organisations, artists' cooperatives and environmental activists.

It's part of the reason we approach the issue of food security a little differently to most charities. For us, it's about culture and choices, about nutrition and health, and also the joy of food and the pleasure in sharing. We have Halal and vegan foods in the Food Pantry, for example, and as much fresh bread, meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables as possible, as well as treats like chocolates or ice cream.

Everyone is welcome at the Addi Road Food Pantries and our customers shop for whatever they want. Our Emergency Food Relief Hub popped up to help when other services were closing and non-citizens were told to 'go home', in the thick of a global pandemic.

Our work is not just about 'providing food' to those who need it, it's also about working together with businesses, customers and volunteers to prevent food from being wasted, and looking out for each other. It's about making space and time for



conversations, finding and providing support, and the dignity of shopping and stopping for a chat as equals. This approach recognises the rich and complex ways food is involved in many aspects of our lives, from who we share it with to how we are feeling when we prepare it. It's an approach that is ripe for being combined with creative projects like this one.

That's why we were grateful to be entrusted with funds from Sydney Local Health District to run the Pantry Art Project – a community - wellbeing art project based around our food security work and the subject of this beautiful book by artist Gail Kenning. Without the understanding and support of the Diversity Programs & Strategy Hub, Population Health at Sydney Local Health District, this project would not

have been possible. Gail also worked with fellow artist Sue Pedley, Addi Road staff, volunteers, Food Pantry customers and Food Relief Hub beneficiaries, to explore the themes of food and wellbeing. We are grateful to everyone who contributed by sharing something of themselves. Thanks especially to Stepping Out, Community

Cultural Connections, Ethnic Community Service Cooperative and United for Colombia for including their clients and members.

I hope you will enjoy this book, the journeys it reflects and records, journeys made by food, and journeys made by people in search of food, who have also made and found homes of many kinds here at Addi Road.





THE PANTRY ART PROJECT

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY THROUGH FOOD

This creative engagement project recognises that not only can we not live without food, but food supports our social and cultural wellbeing. Through food we connect and share, show support and love, are creative and playful.

We talked to many people at Addi Road who were in the midst of crisis and were living through difficult times. We spoke to people who were volunteering their time. We engaged with people working long hours to make a difference.

These are some of the words, stories, recipes, and creative outcomes of the many people who were generous, sharing and caring.

GAIL KENNING

Artist and researcher

HOW WE CONNECTED WITH COMMUNITIES



Talked



Created



Cooked

Crème Caramel

with one litre of milk, eight eggs, 1 cup sugar and (full) tablespoon vanilla (lots)... so then you heat that up like a custard, put in a water bath in oven on 350°F for 40 minutes - it needs to jiggle in the centre.

And then you can put in ramekins

Shared recipes



Shared food

...I have been in Australia since November...I didn't expect something like the bushfires and COVID

Everything is so precious and now it has gone...

Shared stories

'Food is
love'



Image © John Janson Moore

COVID-19

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic began in Sydney in March 2020. It revealed keen inequalities in access to food. The Sydney lockdown of 2020 meant that many people lost their jobs and their income. People who were just getting through were now in poverty. Without financial support, many had to choose between paying their rent and eating.

We came to find a better future. Then COVID happened and we couldn't get any work, until last month. We had no work for four months, no income. My wife cries ...



HAMPERS

Last month we weighed-
in a massive 17 tonnes
of food rescued and
redistributed through
our Food Pantry and
emergency food
hampers!

International students were hit hard as universities and colleges closed, their usual jobs in hospitality disappeared. They were not entitled to any government financial support. Whereas international fee-paying students had been an important part of the economy, they were simply told "it is time to go home". Many could not afford the now-inflated cost of travel, and risked their health going back to their homelands.

I work for the
landlord to pay
for my room.

... I can't pay my school fees... 'cause like you know, as a student I usually work 20 hours but there's not really enough money... and no work.



So amazing, such
great support
and a much
needed sense
of community
in difficult times.

Food parcels
well packed,
thoughtful
and healthy
- thank you-



I miss every normal time
that we are used to ...
Every normal experience.
In here, I don't feel anything
[hand on to heart].



THE JOURNEY OF PEOPLE

People come to Addi Road for many different reasons. They work here, they are customers, clients, members of associations. They come for recreation and entertainment and to buy and source food. They come from all over Sydney, New South Wales and visit from other states. They have journeyed from all over the

world. They arrive as migrants, refugees via Nauru and Manus Island, tourists and travellers and as people exploring the world and making Australia home. For some the journey has been hard, they have experienced racism, poverty and violence. Many have become part of strong supportive communities.

THE JOURNEY OF FOOD

The food at Addi Road Food Pantry and Food Relief Hub is collected from in and around Sydney. The logistics of gaining access to food for rescue are complex and involves developing long-term relationships with suppliers, charities and organisations to ensure a stable supply.

Food that would otherwise have ended up as landfill is collected from supermarkets, factories, restaurants, charities and businesses. This food is perfectly fine to eat, it is simply excess purchase, approaching or just past its best before date, cancelled orders, or generous donations.

Food is either purchased at low cost or collected for free from Addi Road by individuals, families, communities, charities and organisations and distributed to people fighting food waste and people in need.

At the moment we're doing about 1200 people a week through the Food Pantry. Plus, since COVID, we've opened up our emergency response centre. We're doing approximately two-and-half-thousand people through that, directly through charities - NGOs, outreach - with drive-ithroughs.

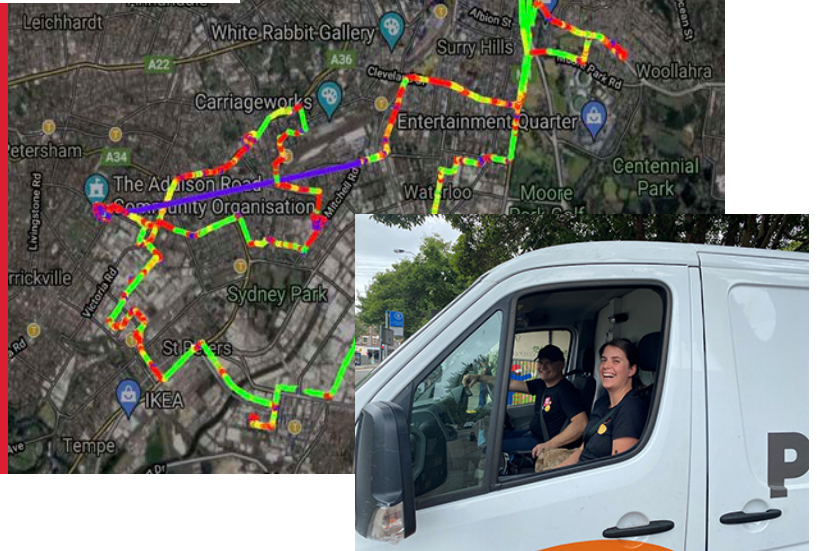


Image © John Janson Moore

COMMUNITY

Cooking for others

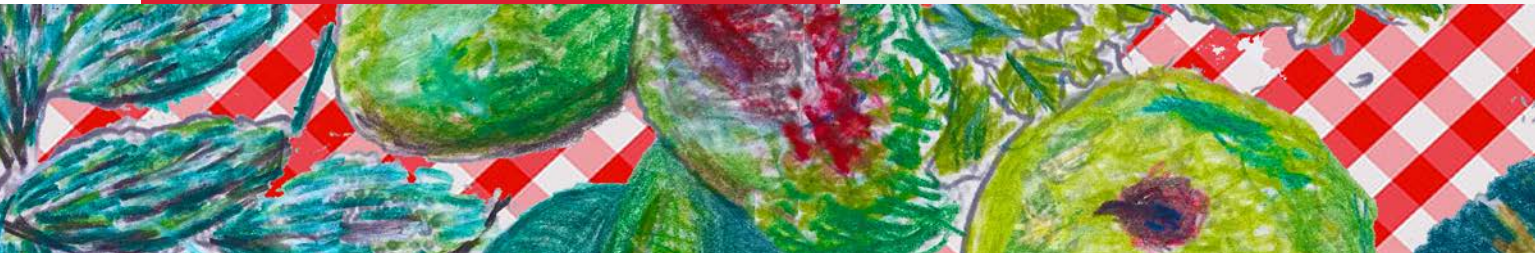
Three women come to the Addi Road Food Pantry every week. They live side by side, they are neighbours and have been the best of friends during COVID, supporting each other.

But one of them is “going on a keto diet, where you just eat meat”.

So she’s off-loading all her sugar and flour and “that sort of thing” on her neighbours; making huge cakes.

They laugh about how they are “changing size”.

They say it has been a lifesaver living close together and sharing food from the Food Pantry.



Another woman - her husband’s, a chef - buys food for the whole apartment. There’s 12 people living there and they have dinners on the roof together.

I don't roast, I do everything in a skillet, I don't know how to use ovens in Australia. You know fan forced?

They had lemons last week, lemons and Brussels sprouts. I don't know whether that is a 'thing'!

Well, today there were Brussels sprouts ... and I've never touched Brussels sprouts before. I've never cooked them so I'm gonna have to Google something for that... but there were also snow peas and carrots, so that's much more easy to tackle, so I'll just make like a stir fry with that.

I learned to cook by myself calling to my mum in Columbia.

How I can do that? How I can do this?

How do I use the pumpkin?
I have a big pumpkin.

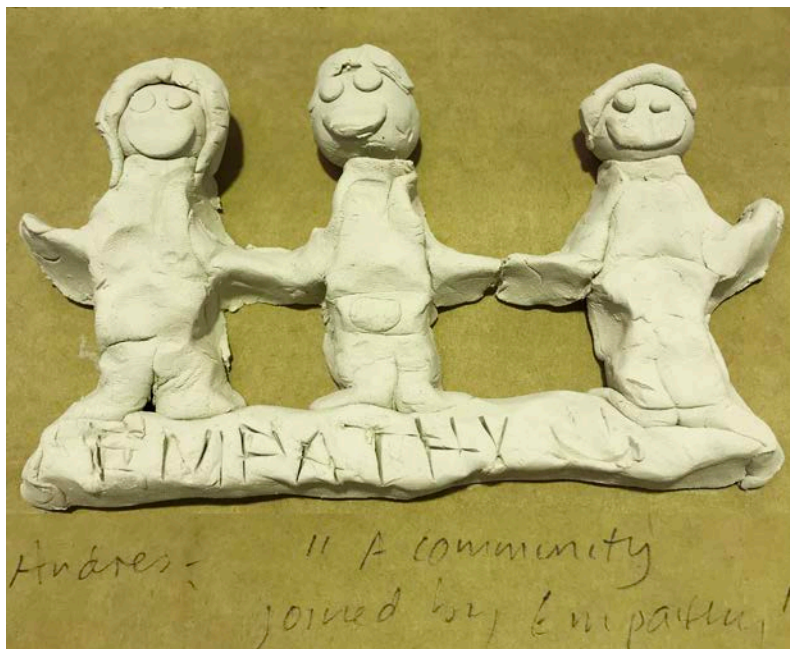
Now I make soup – I 'burn' the pumpkin and put cheese on top and make soup.

Learning to Cook

(new things)

Cheese is the best,
cheese is love!
If you want to pretend to be like
chef, just put cheese on your
recipe and it tastes so good.





A community
joined by
empathy

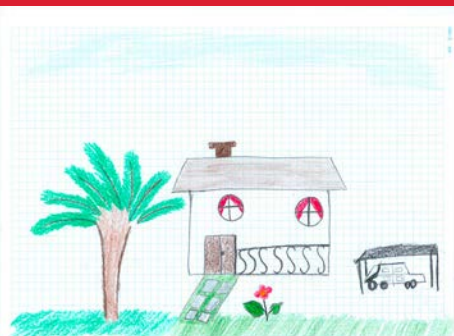
SOUTH AMERICANS

Sydney is host to many vibrant South American communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, many Colombians, Brazilians, Chileans and others visited Addi Road. Many were international students whose educational courses were closed, jobs had disappeared, and they could not go back to their homelands.

There was a strong sense of community as South American musicians, artists, construction workers, all sought help from the Addi Road Food Relief Hub, finding out about it from students and other migrant workers in their communities through their networks and friends.

New friendships were created and existing relationships provided mutual support.

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER



Finding a place to live



Creating jobs for others



Sharing food



Sharing culture



Sharing stories



Building networks



Creative engagement and focusing on food and recipes encourages people to connect and share stories.

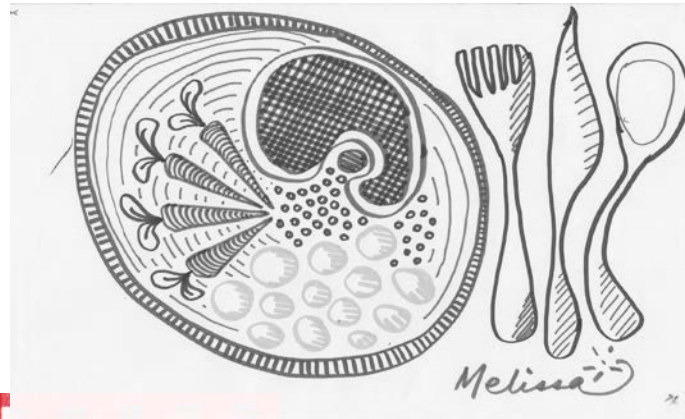
MAKING TOGETHER

CREATIVITY AND FOOD

Creative engagement is important for wellbeing. When people engage in creative activities they can feel a sense of connection with others because of the shared experience. They can feel connected to self, recognising their own preferences, likes and aesthetics. They can feel connected to the act of making, enjoying the movement of the hands, touch of materials, the joy of working with colours and textures. This is the same creativity people take to their cooking. For the Pantry Art Project, people were invited to draw, collage and paint, write recipes, share stories and tell us about their relationship with food.

Cooking

Just for me, I started the cooking because, you know, some people play music for relaxation, some people play sports, some people do yoga. For me, all this is like meditation. It is not like a job. When I need to focus on something or think, I make a new dish.



Creative cooking

I come and see what I can buy ...
... and then create the recipe ...



Food and music go together in my family. We are a mix of Aussie and African ... I love making things.

I am hopeless cook ...
But I'm learning!
I can't draw ...
But I keep trying!

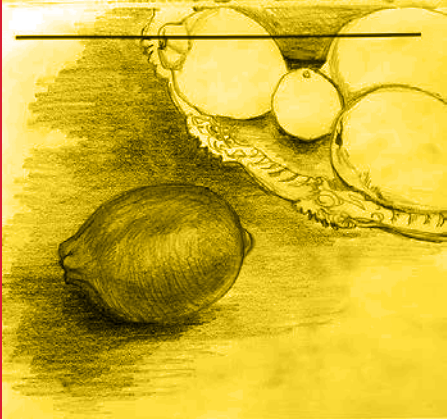


* Lemon butter *

This isn't a secret family recipe for lemon butter! It's just from the internet. I found some recipe site, maybe Taste dot com or something like that, but it's actually better than my old family recipe, because it uses whole eggs instead of separating out the yolk. I doubled the recipe, to use a whole packet of butter. It makes a lot, so of course, you could halve it back, but since making lemon butter takes a bit of work and care, I prefer to make a big batch and give a few jars away - people love lemon butter!

8 eggs
1½ cups of sugar
1 cup of lemon juice
4 tsp of grated lemon rind
250 g butter, chopped

Put eggs + sugar into a heatproof bowl (pudding basin is good) sitting in a saucepan of water on the stove, medium heat. Whisk until sugar dissolves. Add lemon + butter + keep whisking as it cooks over low heat for 15-20 minutes or until it's thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Don't let it boil. Pour into hot, clean jars + seal. Yum Yum Yum!



These lemons came from the Emergency Food Hub at Addis Road. Last week there were hundreds of lemons in a big cardboard box and more than the volunteers could pack into the food hampers. I told some home and my beloved put them onto an old silver platter that I had found on the street a while ago. They looked magnificent on it - the bright vibrant yellow on the tarnished metal. After I did a drawing of them, I found some old jam jars and made lemon butter.

Lemons in the house always make me think of my grandmother. I learned a lot of my cooking from her and a lot about making food look good, even when it's leftovers or something a bit tired and familiar. She and her sister grew up in the Depression in Sydney and they knew all about how to "jazz up" scraps - of furniture, food, clothes and probably, ^{relationships}

RECIPES

Many people's recipes used measures for food such as "some", "a bit", "lots of", "loads of" and "you can never have too much".

Many found it difficult to explain how they made dishes they cooked every week. "I just sort of do it!"

Donuts (Nepal Way) ^{Sanjaya Sharma}
Ingredients
- 2 bowls of white plain flour
- 2 spoons of sugar
- ½ spoons of salt
- ½ spoons of yeast


Now
⇒ Mix all the ingredients and stir.
⇒ Put some water and stir it's with the ingredients till it's a soft sticky dough (not too dry/wet)
⇒ After dough is prepared, put some oil to pour it and then leave dough for at least 2 hours at room 12-16 hours (Don't worry about smell)

⇒ Then make small pieces of the dough and make it in circular shape.

⇒ Then fry the pan with oil and after the oil is hot then deep fry the donuts made from dough.

⇒ Turn the dough upside down for a while and let it change its colour to soft brown or golden.
⇒ It's ready now.

How To Make Egg Curry

1. Boil Egg and Potato
2. After boiling it, peel off the cover. Some egg and potato.
3. Heat the frying pan, put some cooking oil and fry the egg (whole).
4. After frying the egg, take out the egg and put it in a bowl.
5. Boiled the potatoes, slice some onions, tomatoes, chilli, coriander and garlic, ginger paste.
6. Heat the pan, warm the oil, after heating oil, put onions and ginger garlic paste. 
7. After the onions turn golden or brown in colour add the boiled potatoes, after a while put the tomatoes fry it.
8. Add salt, chilli powder, turmeric powder, coriander and cumin powder as per your taste.
9. Add some water, make it boiling hot.
10. Then add sliced egg, dill and coriander and warm for a while.
11. It's ready to eat.

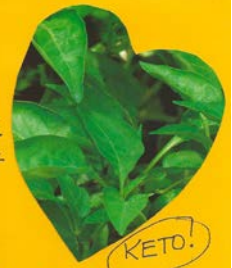
DAAL

Pan	oil	Boil DAAL
	Cumin Seeds	Red Lentils.
	chopped onions	
	Fresh ginger	
	Fresh Garlic	
	Salt	
	Red Golden Brown	
	Mix - Boiled DAAL	
	Karwar Masala	
	(Half Table Spoon) - If you put too much it will be bitter	
	Fresh Chopped Coriander	

Done -
enjoy with Rotti OR Rice.

Pesto Salmon

4 fresh salmon fillets
Smothered in pesto sauce
and baked.
Chuck on a bed of
spinach dressed in
balsamic vinaigrette



KETO!

ONLY 7 INGREDIENTS!



Bon Appetit ♥

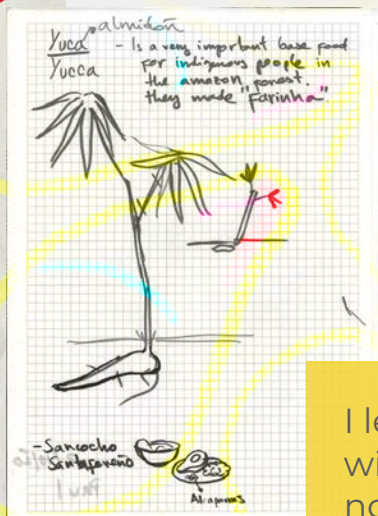
(Indian Dish) by Kriti Ruri Onion Pakoda :

- ⇒ Cut the onions into slices
- ⇒ Add gram flour
- ⇒ Salt for taste
- ⇒ Chilli powder
- ⇒ Small chopped ginger
- ⇒ Mix with water, with little soapy or a soft dough (not too dry or watery)
- ⇒ Not Mix all the ingredients
- ⇒ Make a small pieces of the dough (round) and fry in the hot oil.
- ⇒ Fry, in the hot oil and Cook them for $1\frac{1}{2}$ mins in a medium heat.
- ⇒ Take them out and ready to serve.

Still, Australia is like a holiday show for me, because of course, everything's different. Before I came I was living in the Amazon forest.

I come here because ... in ancient times also we were all a big continent. A lot of animals share the same land but become separated and they evolve differently.

This plant is Yucca; same as used by indigenous in the Amazon to make flour...



I learned to do [dishes] with the pumpkin. I love now to include pumpkin in everything I do. I like pumpkin soup with potatoes, onion, garlic, and rosemary.

Mango?
I love
mango!

ABOUT AUSTRALIA

Many conversations took place about the similarities and differences between Australian food and overseas. Many South Americans talked about similarities with their homelands and particularly the fruits and vegetables, acknowledging our shared history of Gondwanaland.

Discussion often took place about the influence of so many different cultures on Australian food; Greek, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Malaysian, Mexican. Frequently people talked about the good quality of fruit and vegetables available. But for many, the high cost of food was an issue.

**I love Australian
avocados**

**... but in my country
we have avocados as
big as your head!**

I love making curry!

"What type? Indian, Malaysian, Indonesian, Thai?"

Australian... so all of them.

I love watching
'The Cook and the
Chef'.

I have a mindful approach to food,
only using fresh vegetables, no
processed foods - eat simply.



I grow bananas and make banana beer.

STORIES

Community

We engaged with communities of citizens, residents, refugees, newly settled migrants, students, and tourists. We spoke with volunteers, staff and management from Addison Road Community Organisation. We spent time with people who felt privileged to have jobs, houses, an abundance of food and wanted to help. We met professionals volunteering their services to help people navigate visa renewal, talk to the bank, negotiate school fees, find medical services.

Grief and loss

For some, food is a way of dealing with long-term grief and loss. One person told how she would never get over losing a child through suicide, but her life now focusses on planting, tending and harvesting herbs and vegetables. She shares what she grows with as many people as possible.

Racism

People told their stories of becoming part of a community, of feeling they had friends and support. But too many times their stories of life in Australia, whether recent migrants or long-term residents, were punctuated with having been subjected to racism.

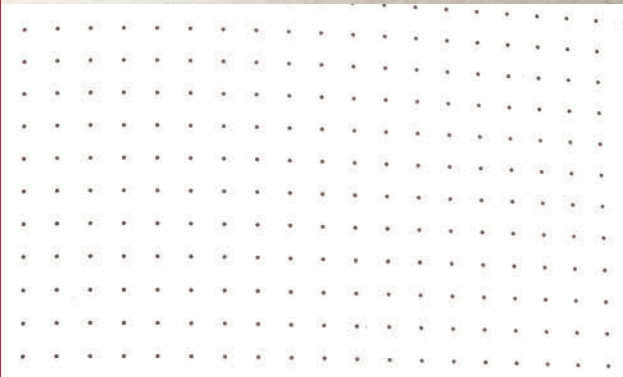
Journey of food

What the journey of food and people to and from Addi Road showed us was the power of people coming together, people's capacity for empathy, the importance of maintaining hope, and helping others find hope when times are hard. We saw the joy of creative activity and the joy of sharing, and the power these can have.

I actually come about once or sometimes twice a week to cook for others as well. There's a halfway house in my neighbourhood. So I cook for them once a week and then for myself. Well there's only eight of them living in the house, so the only restrictions they've given me, is no fish and that it needs to be pre-cooked. And then I serve it in the trays and it goes into the oven. It has to be something to be reheated 'cause they are not able to cook there.

If they are here in The Food Pantry I always get sausages. I've done curried sausages, a lot of potatoes - everything with mash. They love mash.

I cooked today with Brussels sprouts and garlic and bacon. I am trying to convert them, and I'm converting them to other vegetables as well, trying to bring in more and more vegetables



The background of the entire image is a red and white checkered pattern, resembling a picnic tablecloth. A solid red rectangular area is positioned on the right side of the image, containing text.

THE PANTRY

Gail Kenning

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