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MEDIA RELEASE

6 September 2007

Donnison Street Restaurant turns five

Donnison Street Restaurant celebrates its 5th birthday. Providing free meals and crisis support to some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens in our community. The Restaurant is only possible through the support of the Central Coast Leagues Club, corporate support and an amazing unpaid workforce of over 400 volunteers.

Opening in 2002 the Restaurant served just 30 meals a day. It now opens seven days a week and serves between 200-300 meals each and every day. In 2006 the Restaurant served 65,516 free meals.

The Restaurant's major sponsor Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation will serve Birthday lunch on Friday 7th September.

"The Donnison Street Restaurant is a unique and innovative example of a community coming together to support its members" Laurie Maher, Executive Officer of Coast Shelter, stated.

"The Restaurant partners with fourteen local churches and community organisations (including NRMA Motoring + Services) ensures that those who are doing it tough are looked after" he said.

"People who come to the Restaurant are either homeless or at risk of homelessness due to a range of issues which range from loss of employment, family breakdown, mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems, to those who are socially marginalised and disconnected from their family and the community" Maher said.

As well as free meals, people coming to the Restaurant can access hot showers, referrals to other support agencies and Emergency Relief assistance.

Coast Shelter, as a registered charity (CFN: 15695), receives no government funding for the Restaurant and relies on its volunteers, corporate sponsorship, fund-raising activities and donations from local businesses.

The Restaurant is open for breakfast on Sundays between 9.00 am - 10.00 am, lunch Mondays to Saturdays between 11.00 am - 1.00 pm and dinner Tuesday to Friday and Sundays 6.30 pm - 7.30 pm and Saturday nights between 6.00 pm - 7.00 pm.

-ENDS-

**For further details on this media release contact Laurie Maher
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