

Helping to halt hunger

By Eugene Benson

“WASTE not want not” could just about be the motto of Kensington-based charity Second Bite.

The organisation thrives on collecting and distributing leftover produce from markets, corporate events and festivals.

Excess or unsold food from fruit and vegetables to Atlantic salmon is collected by the charity and distributed among 70 agencies across Melbourne to feed those who don't always get a regular meal.

The organisation helps feed Melbourne's homeless and those struggling and on the verge of “falling through the cracks”.

During the Melbourne Cup Carnival alone, volunteers from Second Bite collected more than 2½ tonnes of leftovers from corporate tents at Flemington, to be redistributed to agencies which then direct the food to families where needed.

Second Bite executive director Katy Barfield said much of the food from the carnival was “top tucker” from the Emirates tent, including salmon and gnocchi.

“It's food that has just been sitting in chefs' fridges — we only take unused food that hasn't been on display.”

In recent months, Second Bite has also done deals with the organisers of the Grand Prix and the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, and has a regular presence at Melbourne's wholesale produce markets.

Safeway and Coles have also got on board, passing on apples that don't quite make the grade for the supermarket alleys.

“It also stops all the food going to landfill, which has an environmental benefit,” Mrs Barfield said.

Food program manager Russell Shields said the charity worked closely with Moonee Valley's



Fresh approach: Katy Barfield with Second Bite volunteers Keryn Thomas and Harjot Singh at the Kensington warehouse.

Market gains: Below, Harjot Singh with bok choy from the morning market.

Pictures: Lucy Aulich

Doutta Galla Community Health to supply food for projects in Flemington, but it was keen to spread further into the west, to work with agencies in Maribyrnong and Brimbank.

Despite the charity's success, Mrs Barfield said food supplies had slowed in the new year.

“There's just as many homeless and disadvantaged in January as there were in December, but people go away and there are fewer events.”

“It would be great to get a call-out for some large quantities and to get some more corporates on board.”

To supply food, volunteer or for more information on Second Bite, contact 93763800.

