



# Our Big Kitchen



**Cynthia Cochrane SC**  
5 Wentworth Chambers



**Penny Thew**  
State Chambers

One Sunday morning, on 7 May 2023, barristers from the New South Wales Bar came together at Our Big Kitchen in Bondi to prepare over 130 delicious meals, which were immediately packed into waiting vans and distributed to those in need throughout Sydney.

OBK is a community kitchen that prepares and distributes more than 250,000 meals each year in support of over 30 charities and to feed thousands of people in Sydney.

The Wellbeing Committee is seeking to foster a relationship with OBK, which began when the 2021 Silks made a donation that enabled OBK to buy a new commercial oven.

In the style of MasterChef, barristers (some with children and other family members) formed six teams, were given a range of healthy ingredients to choose from, no recipe, a strict time limit, and were then assessed on just how tasty a meal they had prepared!

The event was hosted by the inimitable George Karounis, OBK's kitchen manager. At the end of the event, George said, 'Who would have thought a group of barristers could make meals as nice as this? You have

helped give dignity with the food you have prepared.' In the tradition of an inspirational storyteller, George also conveyed to us the detail of some of the lives of those we would be touching in preparing these meals: he told us of the children sleeping with their families in cars, in strangers' hallways and on the streets, and of families forced to prioritise paying rent or interest on their mortgage over their need for food.

According to the 2022 Foodbank Hunger Report, about 21% of Australians, or more than 2 million people, experienced severe food insecurity in the past 12 months, an increase on 17% in 2021. As OBK informs us on its website, charities are experiencing an alarming increase in demand, with 31% of Australians experiencing food insecurity seeking food assistance at least once a week in 2020, double the number in 2019.

The Wellbeing Committee promotes giving back to not only contribute to the community but also to enhance a positive experience of life. If you want to volunteer at the next Wellbeing Committee event with OBK, you can bring your kids and family members for an uplifting, educational and invaluable experience. **BN**