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# Bio-fertiliser for Rotary International House

Every year, the kitchens of James Cook University's Queensland campuses sent 50 tonnes of food waste to landfill.

To change this, TropEco installed a Bio-Regen Unit to the Cairns campus refractory. This system grinds waste food and adds water and liquid bokashi (microbes that break down the food).

This mixture is then pumped into a bio-digester tank outside the kitchen building and, after sitting for 28 days, the food is "digested" into a new form for use as a plant growth enhancer, boosting carbon, nutrient and water retention levels.

The thousands of litres of bio-fertiliser produced by the university has been used on the Sunshine Edible Garden community garden plot at Rotary International House, with outstanding results for the produce, as well as the environment.

"The microbes in the product inoculate the soil and allow the natural soil microbial processes (which are often impacted by artificial fertiliser and herbicide use) to work," said James Cook University Environment Manager Adam Connell. "Use of the end-product on our sporting fields and community gardens has yielded excellent results in terms of plant health and growth rates, as well as a reduction in water use from irrigation."

The Bio-Regen unit was originally designed by a local farmer and is manufactured by a Townsville company. It is now used all around the world as one of the most effective ways to convert waste easily and efficiently.

The bio-fertiliser is available for purchase from the university in Townsville or Cairns. For more information about this or the Bio-Regen unit contact [adam.connell@jcu.edu.au](mailto:adam.connell@jcu.edu.au)

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## SecondBite

Rotary has been involved with food rescue charity SecondBite since its very beginnings.

The organisation originated when Ian Carson, the founding partner of PPB Advisory, attended a business function with a huge buffet. At the end of the lunch, a large amount of food remained. Ian asked a waiter what would happen to the rest. They replied it would be all thrown out, and they were not allowed to donate it even if they could.

Ian and his wife Simone decided to investigate what could be done to change this. At first, they began by collecting food from two restaurants in Melbourne that said they were willing to let them take their surplus.

However, Simone, working as a nurse in a children's hospital, knew one of the best ways to provide nutritious food quickly would be through bulk fresh produce. She approached Prahran Market, where she had been shopping for 30 years. Apparently, they used to give food away, but had stopped, like many other food vendors, due to fear of being sued in new, more litigious times.

Thankfully, just around this time, new "Good Samaritan" legislation had been passed in Victoria, driven by the Pratt Foundation, which provides protections for people acting in good faith to help others.

Originally, the Carsons used the back of their station wagon to transport donations, but they just kept getting more and more. They, and the handful of friends and family they had helping out, were struggling to cope.

Bob Glindemann, a member of the Rotary Club of



SecondBite CEO Jim Mullan, left, Coles CEO Steven Cain, right, and SecondBite's longtime Ambassador and recently appointed Director Matt Preston, feature in *The Australian* calling for a national food ministry to fight waste in Australia.



SecondBite founders Ian and Simone Carson were jointly awarded *Melburnian of the Year 2018*.

Melbourne, Vic, was approached by a former work colleague, John Simpson, regarding Rotary support.

"We can't help with cash, but what we do have is a lot of arms and legs – how can we help?" Bob replied. Some 20 members put up their hand when asked if they would help with collections on the weekends.

The stallholders spread the word and soon Victoria Market and South Melbourne Market came on board, with Rotarians helping take carloads of produce to stock the kitchens of charities like the Sacred Heart Mission.

Meanwhile, Ian and Simone met with David Hisco, then head of ANZ's retail banking, and now chief executive of Westpac, who offered them \$15,000 out of their community program. This helped fund a small team to run programs and a number of vans.

A short news article on SecondBite saw Mark Bassett, former fund manager at ISPT, ring up and say his whole office wanted to help, just as the \$15,000 was starting to run out. Mark recognised SecondBite needed a lot more funding to scale up their efforts – particularly unallocated funding, as many government or corporate sponsor donations tend to be limited to specific programs and are limited in duration.

Mark and his team entered quite a few awards as there is a lot of recognition and money to be gained in this space. SecondBite won best partnership with Rotary Victoria, along with other awards, which provided essential capital. ISPT has now helped raised about \$1 million for SecondBite in the past eight years.



## Chicken and Prawn Jambalaya

Jambalaya means jumbled or mixed up, which is a great way to describe this dish as it contains a mix of spice, chicken, prawns, vegetables and rice. You can experiment with different meats and veg, depending on what's in the fridge!

### Serves 4

Preparation time: 35 minutes

**1 tbsp oil**

**200g cooked chicken or turkey, diced**

**250g basmati rice**

**2 tsp Cajun seasoning (this can be purchased in most supermarkets)**

**400g can chopped tomatoes**

**600ml chicken stock**

**150g frozen cooked, peeled prawns, defrosted (optional)**

**100g frozen peas, defrosted**

Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the chicken, rice and Cajun seasoning for 1-2 minutes.

Add the chopped tomatoes. Cover and cook gently for 20 minutes, gradually adding the stock, stirring occasionally.

Stir in the prawns and peas and cook until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender. Season to taste.

### Cooking Tips

- Instead of the chicken, prawns and peas, you can use whatever meat and vegetables you need to use up.
- If you don't have Cajun seasoning, you could use Moroccan or Mexican seasoning. It will taste different to the original dish, but will still be delicious.

*Recipe courtesy of [lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz](http://lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz)*

