

Feeding the nation 'no wasted' cause

By ROSS TYSON

THOUSANDS of kilograms of fresh fruit and vegetables originally condemned to rot in local landfills will now fill the bellies of more than 60,000 needy people across the state.

On Thursday, the NSW Foodbank took delivery of its first consignment of food under the "Waste Not Want Not" program established by Carrathool Shire Council and the Uniting Church.

More than 10,000 kilograms of potatoes, 9000kg of oranges and 1300 pumpkins made the trip from farms primarily in Hillston to the state's capital to help feed many of the two million people who go hungry each year. The produce is perfectly good food rejected by the major supermarket chains due to minor blemishes.

Carrathool mayor Peter Laird was in Sydney for the launch and said he was immensely proud of the Hillston community for the way in which it had embraced the program.

"It's just crazy that in a country like ours that is so affluent and has so much food that there are so many people starving - it's just an absolute tragedy,"



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Members of Griffith East Rotary Club Bob Clegg, farm owner Jim Minato, Joe Cudmore, Frank Trefilo, Roy Stacy, Cyrril Ceddia, Lou Revelant and Roy Rosato pick oranges for the Waste Not Want Not program.

Picture: Anthony Stipo

Councillor Laird said. "This program is going a long way to looking after them and, with the help of us and hopefully other councils along the way, I hope any surplus food we've got can go to those people who need it."

Hillston-based Uniting Church rural chaplain Julie

Greig said the program had captured the imagination of other farming communities.

"It has been such a great initiative that people around the state are asking 'How can we do this,'" Ms Greig said.

"Our next step is to expand this program so that we can add livestock

and have people donating cows and sheep, and we're also looking to get it set up so that at the end of the year people will be able to donate grain."

Cr Laird said he hoped the decision-makers in Canberra would see the program's success and realise the importance of

using water to grow food.

"Without water there wouldn't be this surplus food," he said. "We've got vibrant communities that are doing a job: they're feeding the nation and feeding millions of other people around the world, but all the politicians want to do is crucify us."