



## **CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL AREA- COMMUNITY/HOUSEHOLD FOOD ACCESS PROFILE**

**Introduction & disclaimer** – This profile have been developed by the Heart Foundation Tasmania as part of the Healthy Food Access Tasmania Project. The information highlighted in this profile was gathered in 2014/15 and it provides an overview for the local government area. For any questions or additional information please contact the Heart Foundation.

### **Why does access to healthy food matter?**

Limited or poor access to healthy food has both health and social outcomes for people who are struggling with this issue. There are many health conditions and diseases which are associated or caused by a poor diet which results from poor economic or physical access to healthy food. The diseases include heart disease<sup>1</sup>, diabetes<sup>2</sup>, some cancers<sup>3</sup> and other health conditions such as overweight<sup>4</sup> and obesity<sup>5</sup>. Poor access to healthy food can cause poor physical development in children and impact their learning and attendance at school<sup>6</sup>. For adults who have poor access to healthy food it is often very stressful and causes them to be anxious and ashamed<sup>7</sup>. This often also means they avoid social occasions in their communities and with family so can become socially isolated<sup>8</sup>.

### **How are the residents of Central Coast doing?**

Currently 46.3 % of adults living in Central Coast eat the recommended 2 pieces of fruit per day and 10.8 % eat the recommended 5 serves of vegetables, this compares with 42% and 9.8% state averages<sup>9</sup>. The Central Coast residents are unfortunately eating slightly less fruit and vegetables in 2013 when compared with 2009<sup>7</sup>.

For adults living in the Central Coast Council area 22.2% is obese<sup>7</sup>. Compounding this, 21.6% of local adults report that their health is poor or fair versus (19% for the state average)<sup>10</sup>.

While we don't have results for children at the local government level we do know that rates of overweight and obesity are increasing across Tasmania. The teenage years are when significant changes are observed and up to 29% of young people become overweight or obese<sup>11</sup>.

### **Food Security - How easy is it to access healthy food across the Central Coast Council area?**

Often we hear about people being food insecure across Tasmania. *People who are food insecure do not have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy*

*life*. Across Tasmania about 5-10% of the adult population is effected but it is estimated at between 25-40% in low income households. The Healthy Food Access Tasmania project is focused on improving physical and economic access to fruit and vegetables in communities across Tasmania. When we think about access to healthy food we think about what is available and where, and how affordable is it. Can all residents easily get to the shops?

### **Food Access for Central Coast Residents**

Across Central Coast residents ability to get to the shops is of course impacted by where shops are located and what transport they may have available to them. Recent research conducted by the University of Tasmania<sup>12</sup> showed that there is a good variety of shops across the local government area. In total there are 18 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased, that is a mix of major supermarkets (2 – both in Ulverstone) minor supermarkets (6 – In Penguin (3), Ulverstone, West Ulverstone, and Turners Beach), general stores (5 – South Riana, Ulverstone, Forth, Gawler and Riana) and fruit and vegetables shops (5- Penguin, West Ulverstone, Turners Beach, and 2 in Ulverstone). As a general observation there are unfortunately no shops located in the areas where the average household income is very low. This means for these people getting to the shops to purchase healthy food can be difficult. Some low income households do not have access to a car and may also have inadequate public transport to get them to the shops.

Central Coast has 1 market where local residents can purchase fresh fruit and vegetables. Cradle Coast Farmers Market (weekly on Sundays at the Wharf and is inside if the weather is wet). The *Quality Veggie Box* business is a market participant and also conducts home delivery across the area. *Mooreville Gardens*, also a Cradle Coast Market stall holder, offers a Grab and Go Box scheme at the market. For details about more opportunities to buy fruit and vegetables locally view the interactive maps on this site [www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au](http://www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au)

### **Healthy Food Access Basket Survey – Tasmanian results 2014<sup>13</sup>.**

In March and April of 2014 the University of Tasmania, as part of the Healthy Food Access Tasmania project, conducted a price and availability survey for healthy food across Tasmania. The Healthy Food Access Basket survey collected data on 44 foods which are consistent with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE). The AGHE was developed by the Commonwealth Department of Health and provides recommendations for how Australian's should eat for good health across the lifespan. This survey has been used widely in Australia as measure of the cost of eating well. Data was collected in 142 of Tasmania's 353 stores where fresh food is available. On page 3 there is a summary of the regional results plus local government areas where available. It shows that the cost of healthy foods vary across store types and the varying impost on the household budget depends on household type. The cost of the basket can be up to 40% of the household income depending on which shop type is available where residents live. The survey found that across Tasmania purchasing the fresh fruit and vegetable component of the healthy eating basket was more affordable in fruit and vegetable shops versus other store types.

## COST OF HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS BASKET LOCAL GOVERNMENT DATA – NORTH WEST AND WESTERN REGION

Area	Major Supermarket				Minor Supermarket				General and Convenience shops			
	2+2 family	1+2 family	Male Adult	Elderly Female	2+2 family	1+2 family	Male Adult	Elderly Female	2+2 family	1+2 family	Male Adult	Elderly Female
<b>Tasmania (Average cost)</b>	\$352.01	\$242.34	\$109.24	\$85.98	\$440.25	\$302.42	\$138.04	\$106.60	\$479.67	\$329.33	\$151.24	\$116.05
<b>North West and Western Region (Average cost)</b>	\$355.25	\$244.20	\$111.17	\$86.62	\$448.25	\$308.06	\$140.32	\$108.77	\$497.05	\$341.00	\$156.43	\$120.16
<b>Local Government Area where data is available</b>												
<b>Burnie</b>	\$337.57	\$232.58	\$105.36	\$82.63	\$447.30	\$307.20	\$139.92	\$109.11	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Central Coast</b>	\$345.92	\$237.69	\$108.20	\$83.91	\$435.14	\$300.07	\$135.37	\$105.37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Circular Head</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$531.30	\$365.57	\$167.45	\$129.14	\$493.33	\$339.20	\$156.08	\$119.59
<b>Devonport</b>	\$328.65	\$224.61	\$104.12	\$84.33	\$474.81	\$327.00	\$148.06	\$114.58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Waratah/Wynyard</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$460.25	\$318.34	\$142.05	\$111.45	\$517.19	\$358.05	\$162.43	\$125.39

n/a - data is not available for this store type in this area

Source: S. Murray et al., (2014) Availability, Cost and Affordability of a Basket of Healthy Food in Tasmania. School of Health Sciences. University of Tasmania.

## Which residents in Central Coast may have difficulty accessing healthy food?

In the Central Coast local government area there are 8286 households and 21393<sup>10</sup> residents. The people and households who are likely to find it hard to access healthy food are likely to be:

- Households with a low incomes including residents on Centrelink payments (33 % of the local population are Concession Card Holders; 8 % unemployed)<sup>10</sup> often have a reduced ability to buy sufficient healthy food as there are many other costs such as housing, transport and utilities which drain the household budget<sup>7</sup>.
- Single parents and their children particularly if they rely on Centrelink payments. (there are 348 single parent households<sup>10</sup> & 17 % of children 0-14 are estimated to be living in poverty across the local government area<sup>14</sup>)
- People with a disability or chronic disease (21.6 % of adults report their health as fair or poor and 1328 residents are receiving the disability support payment<sup>10</sup>) because they may have difficulty carrying shopping<sup>15</sup> and their medical expenses may reduce the household food budget<sup>7</sup>.
- Households without a car (6% of households<sup>10</sup>)
- People experiencing housing stress. This is people who have a low income (bottom 40% of income distribution) and who pay more than 30% of their household income on rent or mortgage (23.5% of local households<sup>10</sup>)
- People living in areas which rely on general stores or do not have any shops at all within walking distance limiting their physical access to healthy food<sup>16</sup>.
- People who have inadequate access to public transport<sup>8</sup>

## What can we do about improving access to healthy food for local residents?

While the data about health and residents diets may paint a daunting picture there are some terrific programs and initiatives that are working towards improving outcomes and when a systems approach is used good results can be achieved. Australian research<sup>17</sup> has shown that when several factors occur together for residents they are able to eat well, even if they have a low income. We call these *resilience factors*, which means people can still eat well despite other challenges. To have this resilience it is important to have several factors working to support people to make healthy food choices easy choices. These success factors include:

1. Residents having good personal skills around food preparation, cooking and shopping. Being able to grow some of your own food is also very helpful
2. Growing up or living in a family or community that values healthy eating and sees it as a 'normal' thing to do. Including eating fruit and vegetables.
3. Importantly residents must have access to affordable healthy food, this means it must be available in their community or it must be easy to get to where it is available.

Using these success factors we have compiled some of the characteristics of the Central Coast area to show how strengthening coordination between these factors, organisations and/or program activities that are underway can help contribute towards building a community in which healthy eating is achievable for all.

**Linking and coordinating these factors present in the community will contribute towards making healthy food choices easy choices for Central Coast residents.**

**Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply**

- Cradle Coast Farmers Market provides an opportunity to buy local seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables ; farmgate sales. Box and home delivery offered by local growers
- Central Coast Councils role in facilitating planning around building a connected paddock to plate the Regional Food Economy
- Meals on wheels and home delivery from the supermarkets and other shops helps ensure people who cant get to the shops can still get nutritious food
- Local retailers such as supermarkets, general stores and fruit and vegetable shops
- Agencies which provide fresh fruit and vegetables as part of their food relief for residents who are food insecure

**A culture of healthy eating in a variety of community settings**

Schools and early childcare centres which are part of the Move Well Eat Well program are working towards children, young people and their families regarding healthy eating as normal and important to achieve.

Some workplaces have health and wellbeing programs which promote healthy eating to their workers.

Healthy catering or food at community events assists people to make healthy food choices more often.

Promoting locally grown food

**Individual skills, knowledge to shop, cook, grow and prepare healthy food**

Community House, Schools and community groups and gardens and other community organisations maybe running programs that teach people to cook, grow food, shopping/budgeting and how to eat well and affordably.

Family Food Patch Educator  
Volunteers

## **How can it make a difference when we connect it all together?**

Seeing the resilience factors as a 'system' and ensuring they are linked to each other can have a positive impact on making healthy food choices easy choices for local residents. For example if cooking programs use local seasonal produce available in local shops it is easier for people to purchase affordable healthy food and prepare and eat it. If schools teach children that eating tasty fruit and vegetables are important and 'normalise' it, this makes the family meal more enjoyable for the 'cook' and the whole family. If shops and markets in neighbourhoods and towns have a ready supply of affordable fruit and vegetables this makes it easier even for people on a tight budget to buy it and eat well. If it is locally grown it is also a great boost to the local economy. Making sure that people who need support in times of crisis also receive healthy food such as fruit and vegetables helps them to continue to eat well and maintain their health during challenging times.

Below is a list of the businesses, organisations and groups who have an interest in improving access to healthy food that we are currently aware of.

### **Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply**

- Cradle Coast Farmers Market
- Emergency Relief Food agencies particularly those that distribute fresh fruit and vegetables provided by SecondBite
- Farmgate sales and home delivery and box schemes
- Supermarkets, fruit and vegetable shops & general stores
- Community Transport

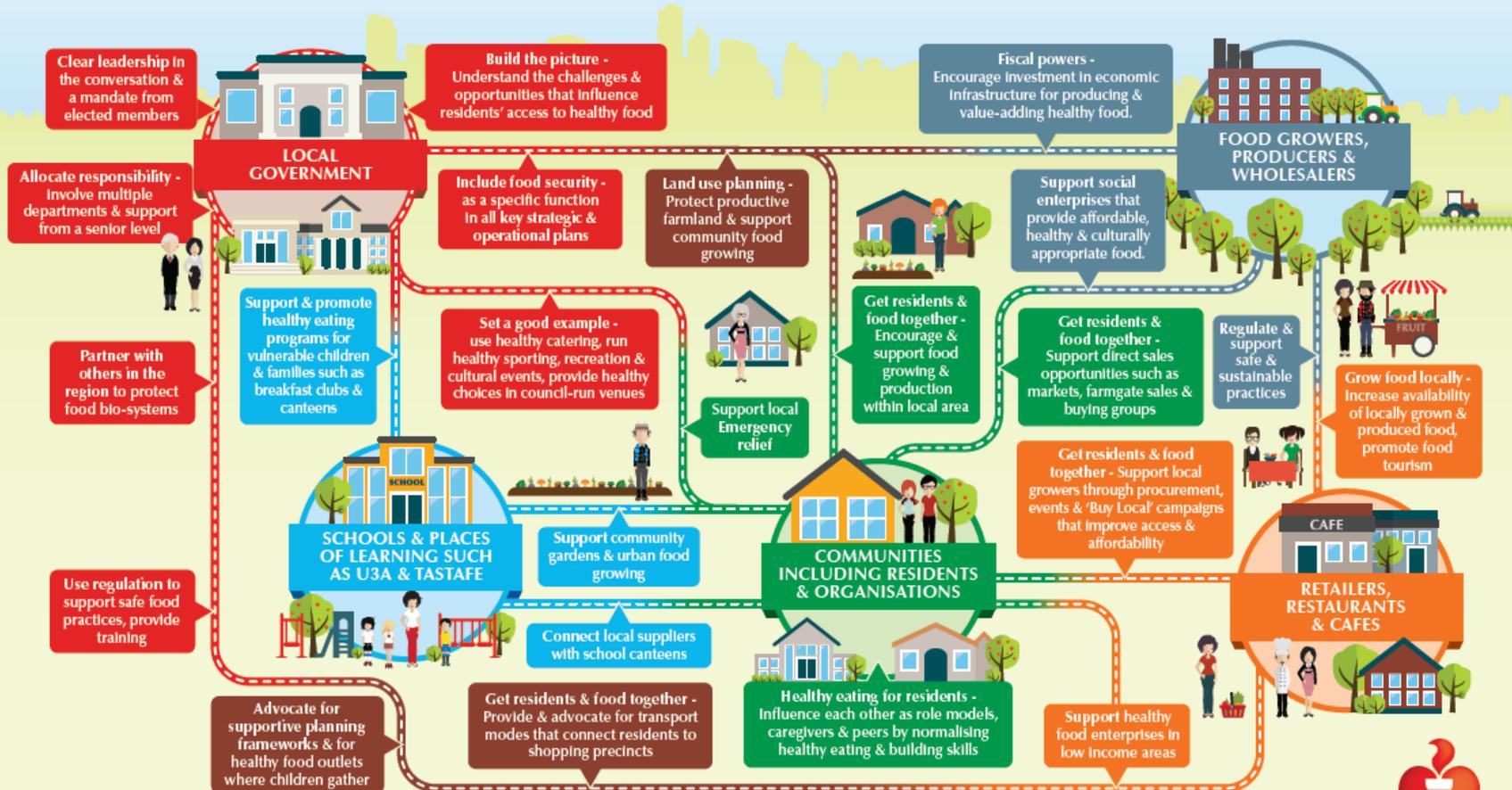
### **A culture of healthy eating in a variety of community settings such as schools and early childcare and community meals programs**

- Move Well Eat Well Schools- East Ulverstone Primary School, Forth Primary School, Leighland Christian School, North West Christian School, Sacred Heart Ulverstone, Sprent Primary School, Ulverstone Primary School, West Ulverstone Primary School
- Move Well Eat Well Education and Care Services - Discovery Early Learning Ulverstone, East Ulverstone Primary Kindergarten, Stepping Stones Children's Centre Ulverstone, Ulverstone Child Care Centre
- Social eating with Friends programs
- Community events that promote locally grown food
- Breakfast programs
- Healthy school canteens - North West Christian School, West Ulverstone Primary School, Penguin District School, Leighland Christian School

### **Individual skills, knowledge to shop, cook, grow and prepare healthy food**

- Central Coast Community House West Ulverstone
- Community & school gardens
- Family Food Patch Volunteers

# What is the role of local government in supporting community food security in Tasmania?



**In the Central Coast local government there are several interesting example of how community members are working together to improve access to healthy food.**

### **Central Coast Council – the role of local government as a leader & facilitator**

Central Coast Council (CCC), through its Strategic Projects area, has been bringing together interested organisations and businesses to explore how a regional approach could be taken to strengthening the local food economy for a couple of years. In 2014 CCC received funding from the Heart Foundation to explore establishing a Food Hub which would make affordable fruit and vegetables more accessible across the Mersey Leven Valley. For more information on the Hub project refer <http://www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au/page.aspx?u=771>

In June 2016 Council endorsed a Local Food Security Strategy. This Tasmanian first local government food security strategy was produced as part of the Mersey Leven Food Hub project funded through Healthy Food Access Tasmania. With strong community engagement during development and a good evidence base it proposes the way forward and clearly defines role of Central Coast Council as a leader and facilitator.



Healthy Food Access  
Tasmania

[www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au](http://www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au)

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- <sup>3</sup> World Cancer Fund, 2007, Food, nutrition, physical activity and the prevention of cancer: a global perspective. Washington DC: *American Institute for Cancer Research*
- <sup>4</sup> Mirza M, Fitzpatrick-Lewis D, Thomas H, 2007. Is there a relationship between food security and overweight/obesity. Ontario Canada: *Effective Public Health Practice*
- <sup>5</sup> Burns C, 2004, A review of literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia. *Victorian Health Promotion Foundation*
- <sup>6</sup> Ramsay, R, Giskes K, Turrell G & Gallegos D, 2011. Food insecurity among Australian children: Potential determinants, health and developmental consequences. *Journal of Child Health*
- <sup>7</sup> King S, Moffitt A, Bellamy J, Carter S, McDowell C & Mollenhauer, 2010. State of the Family Report: When there is not enough to eat. Canberra: Anglicare Australia
- <sup>8</sup> King S, Moffitt A & Carter S, 2010 When the cupboard is bare: food, poverty and social exclusion State of the Family Report: When there is not enough to eat. Volume 1 Essays Canberra: Anglicare Australia ,
- <sup>9</sup> Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania ( 2009 & 2013) Tasmanian Population Health Survey – These surveys are funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health ( 2013 Survey Confidence intervals – Fruit 39.9%, 52.9% and Vegetables 8%, 14.4%)
- <sup>10</sup> <http://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases#xkyDeMRS3JVzvJG7.97>  
The Social Health Atlas of Australia includes data on a range of population characteristics, including demography, socioeconomic status, health status and risk factors, and use of health and welfare services.
- <sup>11</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, 2013. State of Public Health 2013
- <sup>12</sup> University of Tasmania, 2014. Preliminary results; Availability and cost of health food basket Tasmania
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- <sup>14</sup> Phillips B, Miranti R, Vidyattama Y and Cassells R, 2013. Poverty, Social Exclusion and Disadvantage in Australia. NATSEM University of Canberra & Uniting Care Australia
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