



CIRCULAR HEAD 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 disease¹, diabetes², some cancers³ and other health conditions such as overweight⁴ and obesity⁵. Poor access to healthy food can cause poor physical development in children and impact their learning and attendance at school⁶. For adults who have poor access to healthy food it is often very stressful and causes them to be anxious and ashamed⁷. This often also means they avoid social occasions in their communities and with family so can become socially isolated⁸.

How are the residents of Circular Head doing?

Currently 46.9 % of adults living in Circular Head eat the recommended 2 pieces of fruit per day and 7.8 % eat the recommended 5 serves of vegetables, this compares with 42% and 9.8% state averages⁹. Unfortunately adults in Circular Head are eating less fruit and vegetable when compared with how they were doing in 2009, particularly for vegetable consumption which was previously 14.5%⁹.

For adults living in the Circular Head Council area 31.1% is obese⁷. Compounding this, 22.2 % of local adults report that their health is poor or fair versus (compared with 19% for the state average)¹⁰.

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 children and young people become overweight or obese¹¹.

Food Security - How easy is it to access healthy food across the Circular Head 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 Circular Head Residents

Across the Circular Head area 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 Tasmania¹² showed that there is a variety of shops across the local government area. In total there are 13 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased, that is a mix of major supermarket (Smithton) minor supermarkets (2 – Stanley and Smithton), general stores (9 – 2 in Smithton, Edith Creek, Irishtown, Rocky Cape, 2 in Arthur River, Marrawah and Redpa) and a fruit and vegetables shop (1 - Stanley). As a general observation there is 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.

Handmade Makers Market in Circular Head runs once per month and often has home grown produce. For more information about where you can purchase fruit and vegetables in the area refer to the interactive maps on this site.

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Healthy Food Access Basket Survey – Tasmanian results 2014¹³.

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
Tasmania (Average cost)	\$352.01	\$242.34	\$109.24	\$85.98	\$440.25	\$302.42	\$138.04	\$106.60	\$479.67	\$329.33	\$151.24	\$116.05
North West and Western Region (Average cost)	\$355.25	\$244.20	\$111.17	\$86.62	\$448.25	\$308.06	\$140.32	\$108.77	\$497.05	\$341.00	\$156.43	\$120.16
Local Government Area where data is available												
Burnie	\$337.57	\$232.58	\$105.36	\$82.63	\$447.30	\$307.20	\$139.92	\$109.11	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Central Coast	\$345.92	\$237.69	\$108.20	\$83.91	\$435.14	\$300.07	\$135.37	\$105.37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Circular Head	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$531.30	\$365.57	\$167.45	\$129.14	\$493.33	\$339.20	\$156.08	\$119.59
Devonport	\$328.65	\$224.61	\$104.12	\$84.33	\$474.81	\$327.00	\$148.06	\$114.58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waratah/Wynyard	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.

*2 + 2 = 2 adults, 2 children household; 1 + 2 = 1 adult, 2 children household

Which residents in Circular Head may have difficulty accessing healthy food?

In the Circular Head Council area there are 2971 households and 7967¹⁰ 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 (22% of the local population are Concession Card Holders; 5 % unemployed)¹⁰ 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 budget⁷.
- Single parents and their children particularly if they rely on Centrelink payments. (there are 109 single parent households¹⁰ & 19% of children 0-14 are estimated to be living in poverty across the local government area¹⁴)
- People with a disability or chronic disease (22.2 % of adults report their health as fair or poor and 328 residents are receiving the disability support payment¹⁰) because they may have difficulty carrying shopping¹⁵ and their medical expenses may reduce the household food budget⁷.
- Households without a car (5% of households¹⁰)
- 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 (24 % of local households¹⁰)
- 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 food¹⁶.
- People who have inadequate access to public transport¹³

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 research¹⁷ 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 Circular Head area to show how strengthening coordination between these factors, organisations and/or program activities that are underway can help contribute towards to 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 Circular Head residents.

Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply

-Food for All Project - Rural Health Tasmania Service Sow and Reap Community Garden

Seasonal Farmgate sales provide an opportunity for residents to purchase affordable locally grown food direct from growers.

-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

-Supermarkets small and large plus vegetable shops some of which sell and promote locally grown produce.

-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 supports the local economy too.

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

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

Family Food Patch 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

- Emergency Relief Food is available through St Vincent de Paul, Treasure Chest, Wyndarra, Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation
- Local growers offering farmgate sales
- Supermarkets & general stores and fruit and vegetable shops
- Food for All Project – Circular Head Rural Primary Health Service
- 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- Circular Head Christian School, Forest Primary School, St Peter Chanel School, Smithton Primary School
- Move Well Eat Well Early Years Education and Care Centres - Circular Head Children's Services, Giggles Early Learning
- Social healthy eating program through Sow and Reap (contact Rural Health Tasmania 64521266)
- Breakfast programs
- Healthy school canteens - Circular Head Christian School, Smithton Primary School

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

- Circular Head Rural Primary Health Service
- Community & school (St Peter Chanel Primary School, Forest Primary School, –
- Family Food Patch Educator Volunteers

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



In the Circular Head Council area there is an interesting example of how community members have been working together to improve access to healthy food.

Rural Health Tasmania – Sow and Reap¹⁸

The Rural Health Service in partnership with other community organisations has run the Sow and Reap project. This project was funded through the Tasmanian Government Food for All program. Working with the Indigenous community, community centres, charitable and not-for-profit organisations, this initiative established a working garden and propagating orchard in a public housing area of Circular Head. Community members were provided with opportunities to become multi skilled in gardening, harvesting, cooking and the preservation of food. There were also opportunities for sharing a meal and other community activities based around food.

Through the Sow and Reap project, five garden beds and two raised beds have been established to create a working garden where the local community can learn new skills in growing their own food. The Sow and Reap team has been teaching gardening skills to community members, and conducting cooking classes in the house using produce from the garden. Home-made tomato sauce, herb-infused oils and lavender tea have all been popular and the cooking classes have given locals a chance to use produce from the garden, and share a meal together. The cooking classes each week have provided a fun and practical way for people to learn new skills, and have brought locals together.

A group of 15 locals involved in the Sow and Reap garden have enrolled in and graduated from a Certificate I in Horticulture.



Healthy Food Access
Tasmania

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¹ Ford ES, 2013. Food Security and Cardiovascular disease risk amongst adults in the US: findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2003-2005. *Preventing Chronic Disease*

² Seligman HK, Bindman AB, Vittinghoff E, Kanaya AM, Kushel MB. Food insecurity is associated with diabetes mellitus: results from the National Health Examination and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 1999-2002. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*

³ World Cancer Fund, 2007, Food, nutrition, physical activity and the prevention of cancer: a global perspective. Washington DC: *American Institute for Cancer Research*

⁴ Mirza M, Fitzpatrick-Lewis D, Thomas H, 2007. Is there a relationship between food security and overweight/obesity. Ontario Canada: *Effective Public Health Practice*

⁵ 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*

⁶ Ramsay, R, Giskes K, Turrell G & Gallegos D, 2011. Food insecurity among Australian children: Potential determinants, health and developmental consequences. *Journal of Child Health*

⁷ 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

⁸ King S, Moffit 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 ,

⁹ Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania (2009 & 2013) Tasmanian Population Health Survey (This survey is funded by Commonwealth Department of Health: 2013 Confidence Intervals – Fruit 37.4%,56.6% and Vegetables 3.8%,15.5% (caution relative standard error >25% but <50%)

¹⁰<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.

¹¹ Department of Health and Human Services, 2013. State of Public Health 2013

¹² University of Tasmania, 2014. Preliminary results; Availability and cost of health food basket Tasmania

¹³ University of Tasmania, 2014. Preliminary results; Availability and cost of health food basket Tasmania

¹⁴ Phillips B, Miranti R, Vidyattama Y and Cassells R, 2013. Poverty, Social Exclusion and Disadvantage in Australia. NATSEM University of Canberra & Uniting Care Australia

¹⁵ Burns C, Bentley R, Thornton L & Kavanagh A, 2011. Reduced food access due to lack of money, inability to lift and lack of access to a car fro shopping: a multilevel study in Melbourne. *Public Health Nutrition*

¹⁶ Le Q et al., 2013. Tasmanian food access research coalition TFARC; research report. Hobart

¹⁷ Hume et al., 2007. Summary Report: Why doe some women of low socio-economic position eat better than others? Centre of Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University. Melbourne

¹⁸ Information kindly provided by Population health on behalf of the State Government Social Inclusion Unit