



DERWENT VALLEY COUNCIL AREA- COMMUNITY 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 Derwent Valley doing?

Currently 34 % of adults living in Derwent Valley eat the recommended 2 pieces of fruit per day and 12 % eat the recommended 5 serves of vegetables, this compares with 42% and 9.8% for the state averages⁹. The Derwent Valley residents are unfortunately eating slightly less fruit and but more vegetables in 2013 when compared with 2009⁷.

For adults living in Derwent Valley 24.2% is obese⁷. Compounding this, 25 % of local adults report that their health is poor or fair versus (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 young people become overweight or obese¹¹.

Food Security - How easy is it to access healthy food across the Derwent Valley 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 Derwent Valley Residents

Across Derwent Valley 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 small variety of shops across the local government area. In total there are 9 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased, that is a mix of major supermarkets (1 in New Norfolk) minor supermarkets (3 with 2 in New Norfolk and 1 in Maydena), general stores (2 – New Norfolk and Westerway) and fruit and vegetables shops (2 – in New Norfolk and Molesworth). 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.

The Derwent Valley also has a number of independent or community operated points of sale. The Derwent Valley Community Market (once per month) and Bushy Park Market (weekly) both sell fresh seasonal locally grown fruit and vegetables. The Big River market also runs seasonally selling a wide range of local produce.

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.



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COST OF HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS BASKET LOCAL GOVERNMENT DATA – SOUTHERN 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
Southern Region (Average cost)	\$348.82	\$239.96	\$107.93	\$85.74	\$469.90	\$321.13	\$149.02	\$113.41	\$487.11	\$333.99	\$153.51	\$117.72
Local Government Area where data is available												
Derwent Valley	\$413.38	\$284.33	\$129.43	\$100.73	\$436.98	\$298.86	\$137.10	\$106.63	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Glamorgan/Spring Bay	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$439.02	\$302.10	\$137.05	\$105.72	\$464.46	\$317.29	\$147.84	\$112.19
Kingborough	\$391.96	\$273.31	\$117.49	\$96.72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$508.79	\$349.78	\$159.19	\$123.01
Southern Midlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$489.25	\$334.62	\$154.60	\$117.49	\$414.15	\$285.50	\$128.80	\$100.15
Tasman	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$476.35	\$320.81	\$156.35	\$115.84	\$490.33	\$335.24	\$156.19	\$118.83

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

Which residents in the Derwent Valley may have difficulty accessing healthy food?

In the Derwent Valley local government area there are 3672 households and 9688¹⁰ 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 (36 % of the local population are Concession Card Holders; 11 % 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 223 single parent households¹⁰ & 23 % of children 0-14 are estimated to be living in poverty across the local government area¹⁴)
- People with a disability or chronic disease (25 % of adults report their health as fair or poor and 846 residents are receiving the disability support payment¹⁰) because they may have difficulty carrying shopping¹⁵ and their medical expenses may reduce the household food budget⁶.
- Households without a car (8% 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 (29 % 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 transport⁸ . This particularly impacts residents outside of New Norfolk.

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 Derwent Valley 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 Derwent Valley residents.

Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply

- Local growers and seasonal farmgate sales provide an opportunity for residents to purchase affordable locally grown food direct from growers.
- Derwent Valley Community Market , Bushy Park Market & Big River Markets provide an opportunity to buy local seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables
- Transition Molesworth
- Local retailers such as supermarkets, general stores and fruit and vegetable shops; meals on wheels and other delivery services
- 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

The 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.

Eating with friends

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 some 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 agencies particularly those who distribute fresh fruit and vegetables provided by SecondBite.
- Markets - Big River Growers Market; Bushy Park Community Market; Derwent Valley Community Market
- Farmgate sales
- Supermarkets, fruit and vegetable shops & general stores
- Community Transport
- Transition Molesworth

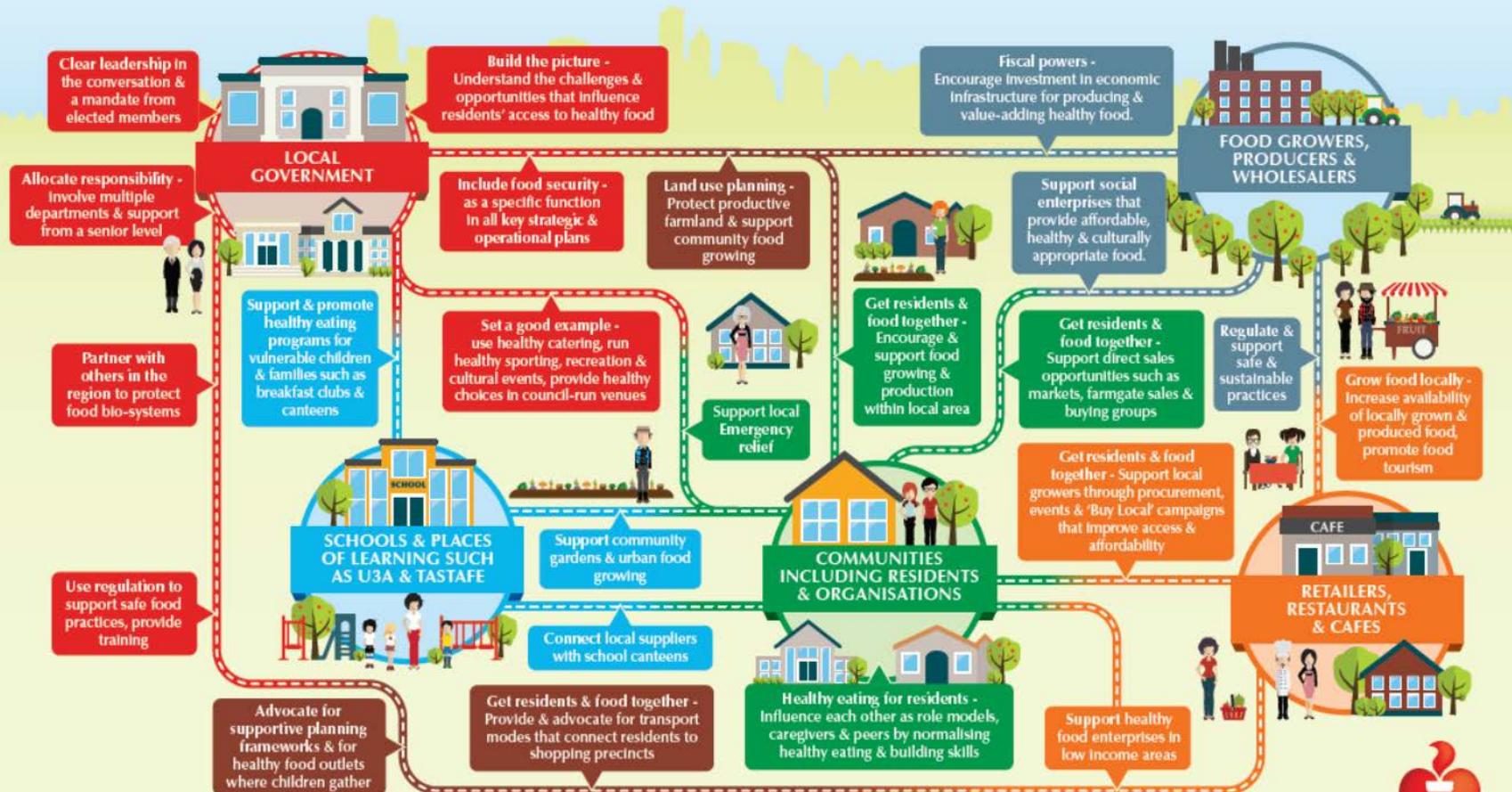
A culture of healthy eating in a variety of community settings such as schools and early childcare and community meals programs

- Move Well Eat Well Schools-Molesworth Primary School, Westerway Primary School
- Move Well Eat Well Early Years Education and Care Centres -Fairview Primary Kindergarten
- Eating with Friends run by the Community House
- Community events that promote locally grown food including the Transition Molesworth community 'feast'
- Breakfast program
- Healthy school canteens - New Norfolk High, New Norfolk Primary School, Glenora District High School

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

- Derwent Valley Community House, New Norfolk
- Community & school gardens – Glenora High School recently hosted a Food For All Project. Many other schools have gardens
- Family Food Patch Volunteers

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



In the Derwent Valley local government area there are several interesting examples of how community members are working together to improve access to healthy food. The project run by Glenora District High School is an interesting example.

Glenora – Grow Cook Eat Food For All Project¹⁸

This project was funded by the State Government Food For All grant program. The Grow Cook Eat Program started with a few keen families eager to learn more about gardening at home. The program has included a number of workshops and has provided support for the whole family. Activities have included: School holiday seed planting; How to start a vegetable garden at home workshop; Pests in the garden and how to control them workshop; Budgeting cooking sessions; Sally Wise preserving sessions; Raised garden bed delivery; Fruit tree Grafting workshops; and a lending library and newsletters.

The outcomes have included - Twenty three households participating raised bed building with 40 in total established; 42 fruit trees have been planted; good quantities of fresh produce grown, prepared and eaten by participants and a lot of information and learning sharing. Nearly half of the families had never gardened before and 20 are continuing to grown food. This is in part because they have a new confidence and skills to grow food and have established networks to call on for support. Encouragingly the children report having new skills and knowledge about food growing and preparation and have discovered a new enjoyment in cooking.

The groups of families have continued to network sharing success stories on Facebook and getting together cooking and sharing seeds.



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www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au

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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*

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- 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
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- ⁹ Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania (2009 & 2013) Tasmanian Population Health Survey (2013 results - confidence intervals for fruit 19.9,50.9 % and for vegetables 4.4%, 28.7%)
- ¹⁰ <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/phidu/maps-data/data/>. 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
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- 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 the Population Health on behalf of the Social Inclusion Unit Tasmanian State Government.