



## **DEVONPORT CITY 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 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 Devonport doing?**

Currently only 43% of Devonport adults each the recommended 2 piece of fruit per day and 7.4% eat the recommended 5 serves of vegetables this compares with 42% and 9.8% state averages<sup>9</sup>. The Devonport Residents are unfortunately eating slightly less fruit and vegetables in 2013 when compared with 2009<sup>9</sup>.

For adults living in the Devonport area 25.8% are obese (state average 23%)<sup>9</sup> and 21% report that their health is poor or fair versus (19% state average)<sup>10</sup>.

While we don't have results for children at the local government levels 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 30% of young people become overweight or obese<sup>11</sup>.

### **Food Security - How easy is it to access healthy food across Devonport City 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 Devonport Residents**

Across Devonport 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 showed that there is a good variety of shops across the area. In total there are 20 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased, that is a mix of major supermarkets (3 – Devonport & Spreyton), minor supermarkets (4 – 2 in East Devonport & 2 in Devonport,), general stores (6- 2 in East Devonport, 2 in Devonport, Spreyton & Don) and fruit and vegetables shops (7- East Devonport, 4 in Devonport, Spreyton & Don). Unfortunately none of these shops are located in 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 rely on public transport.

Devonport also has farmers markets which run weekly throughout the year which is another source of locally grown fruit and vegetables. The markets run in East Devonport and Don Village. The *Quality Vegie Box* business grows and delivers fresh produce boxes to residents and drop of points across the municipality.

### **Healthy Food Access Basket Survey – Tasmanian results 2014<sup>12</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

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 Devonport may have difficulty accessing healthy food?**

In the Devonport local government area there are 9780 households and 24595<sup>13</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 (34% of the local population are Concession Card Holders; 9.7% unemployed)<sup>13</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.
- Single parents and their children particularly if they rely on Centrelink payments. (828 single parent households<sup>13</sup> & 19% of children are estimated to be living in poverty across the local government area<sup>14</sup>)
- People with a disability or chronic disease (21% of adults report their health as fair or poor and 1666 residents are receiving the disability support payment<sup>13</sup>) because they may have difficulty carrying shopping<sup>15</sup> and their medical expenses reduce the household food budget<sup>7</sup>.
- Households without a car (9% of households)<sup>13</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 (29 % of local households)<sup>13</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>7</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 gloomy picture there are some terrific programs and initiatives that are working towards improving outcomes. 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 Devonport City Council area to show how strengthening coordination between these factors 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 Devonport residents.**

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

- Devonport Food Security Network is an Alliance of organisations working to improve access to healthy food and support people in crisis by providing emergency food relief. They have also recently recieved funding for a new food security/ access project
- Farmers markets/ farmgate sales provide an opportunity for residents to purchase affordable locally grown food direct from growers. Home delivery vegie boxes. Some fruit and vegetables shops and supermarkets also sell locally grown food
- Meals on wheels and home delivery from the supermarkets and other shops helps make sure people who cant get to the shops can still get nutritious food

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

Community and neighbourhood houses, schools and community gardens and other community organisations are running programs that teach people to cook, grow food, shopping/budgeting and how to eat well and affordably

**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 rgearding healthy important 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

## **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 Food Relief agencies including programs that distribute fruit and vegetables provided by SecondBite
- Farmers markets - Devonport Farmers Market; Devonport Foreshore Market; Don Village Market
- Farmgate sales and delivery services from growers
- Fruit & Vegetable Shops & Supermarkets
- Devonport Food Security Network- Feeding our future & Heaven's Kitchen Project; The Food Connection project
- Devonport City Council – *The Devonport Food Connection Project*

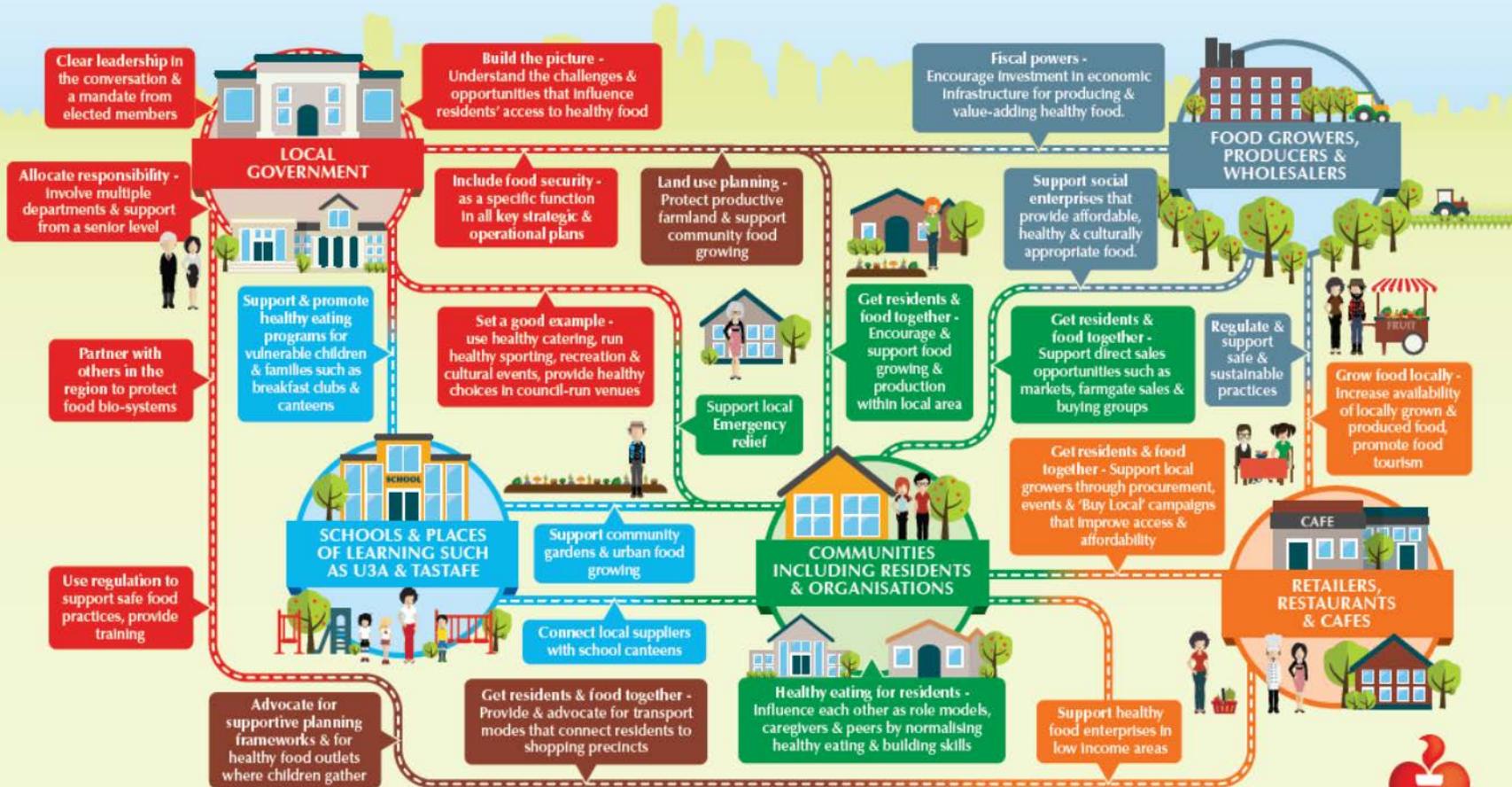
### **A culture of healthy eating in a variety of community settings**

- Move Well Eat Well Schools- Devonport Christian School, Devonport Primary School, East Devonport Primary, Hillcrest Primary School, Miandetta Primary School, Nixon Street Primary School, Our Lady of Lourdes School, Spreyton Primary School
- Early childcare- 1912 Child Care Centre, Elanora's Children's Centre, Malangenna Children's Centre, Mersey valley Day Care, Miandetta Children's Centre
- Healthy School Canteens - East Devonport Primary School, Hillcrest Primary School, Miandetta Primary School, Our Lady of Lourdes School
- Social Eating Programs

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

- Devonport Community House; Eastern Shore Community House East Devonport
- Community & school gardens
- Child and Family Centre in East Devonport
- Feeding our Future and Heavens Kitchen

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



**In the Devonport City Council local government the most relevant examples of how community organisations and members are planning to work together to improve access to healthy food is the new Food Connection Project.**

### **The Devonport Food Connection Project**

The Devonport City Council in partnership with the Devonport Food Security Network commenced a project in July 2014 which will improve the understanding of the determinants of food security, maximise the supply and distribution of affordable locally grown produce and build the skills of community members to access healthy affordable foods and reduce waste improve their connections with others through food. They hope to use policy program and community participation to develop string solutions that last into the future. The project funding finished in June 2016.

This project and council's commitment to their 4 Goals in the Devonport Strategic plan, align well. The strategic goals are to:

**Goal 1.** Live lightly on our environment- including enhancing personal skills to reduce waste

**Goal 2 –** Build a unique city which includes making land use decisions that support and enhance community character and developing solutions that are relevant to local areas and neighbourhoods through 'place making'.

**Goal 3 –** Growing a vibrant economy including enhancing the opportunity of the rich agricultural land surrounding the council are which provides opportunities to further develop food production and processing as well as farmgate activities for local and visitors.

**Goal 4 –** Building quality of life through supporting programs that focus on wellness and enable people to take responsibility and an active role in their own health and Wellbeing outcomes.



Healthy Food Access  
Tasmania

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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

<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

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- <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 ( This 2013 survey was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health – Confidence Intervals – Fruit 36.7%,50.3% and Vegetables 5.2%,10.4%)
- <sup>10</sup> <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.
- <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
- <sup>13</sup> <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
- <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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- <sup>17</sup> Hume et al., 2007. Summary Report: Why do some women of low socio-economic position eat better than others? Centre of Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University. Melbourne