



DORSET COUNCIL AREA- COMMUNITY/HOUSEHOLD FOOD ACCESS PROFILE

Introduction & disclaimer – This profile has 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 leah.galvin@heartfoundation.org.au

Why does access to healthy food matter?

Limited or poor access to healthy food has both health and social consequences. There are many health conditions and diseases which are associated with or caused by a poor diet, as a result of poor economic or physical access to healthy food. These diseases include heart disease¹, diabetes², some cancers³ and other health conditions such as overweight⁴ and obesity⁵. Reduced 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 and which can lead to them becoming socially isolated⁸.

How are the residents of Dorset doing?

Currently 37.5 % of adults living in Dorset eat the recommended two pieces of fruit per day and 8.8 % eat the recommended five serves of vegetables, compared with 42% and 9.8% for state averages⁹. Dorset residents are unfortunately eating significantly less fruit and vegetables in 2013 when compared with 2009 (56 % and 18.8% respectively). For adults living in Dorset 34 % are obese⁹. However less residents, 16.4 % of Dorset adults, report that their health is poor or fair, compared with 19% for the state average¹⁰.

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 particularly significant. Up to 30% of young people across Tasmania are overweight or obese¹¹.

Food Security - How easy is it to access healthy food across the Dorset 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 population¹² can be described as food insecure. However it is estimated to be as high as 25% in low income households¹³.

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 it is? Can all residents easily get to the shops?

Food Access for Dorset Residents

Across Dorset resident's 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 wide variety of shops across the Dorset Council area. In total there are 10 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased. This total comprises a mix of major supermarkets (1 in Scottsdale) minor supermarkets (3 – 2 in Bridport and 1 in Scottsdale), general stores (3- Branxholm, Winnaleah and Gladstone) and fruit and vegetables shops (3-all in Scottsdale). As a general observation in Tasmania, there are few shops located in the areas where the average household income is very low. This means for people living in these areas 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 access to public transport.

Dorset also has a number of independent or community operated points of sale. Bridport CWA Market is held on the first Saturday of every month undercover in the CWA Hall. There is a large range of fresh local fruit and vegetables. Lietinna Market is held on the second Sunday of every third month (March, June, September, December) and can accommodate 22 stalls under cover. Stalls include to fresh local in season fruit and vegetables. The Derby Make and Bake and Grow Market is held on the third Sunday of every month and often includes fruit and vegetables for sale. There is also a market that runs at Ringarooma every second month. Refer to the integrated community map¹ for farmgate and other opportunities to purchase locally produced fruit and vegetables.

Healthy Food Access Basket Survey – Tasmanian results 2014¹⁴.

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.

¹ www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au

COST OF HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS BASKET LOCAL GOVERNMENT DATA – NORTHERN REGION²

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
Northern Region (Average cost)	\$358.50	\$247.17	\$111.31	\$87.18	\$430.40	\$296.10	\$104.15	\$104.15	\$471.62	\$322.00	\$150.25	\$114.06
Local Government Area closet to Dorset that is available												
Launceston	\$351.46	\$243.98	\$107.57	\$85.64	\$448.03	\$308.47	\$139.86	\$108.28	\$489.56	\$334.67	\$155.46	\$119.39
West Tamar	\$352.37	\$241.21	\$110.61	\$86.02	\$407.47	\$279.17	\$128.31	\$98.29	\$502.31	\$343.01	\$160.10	\$121.37

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

Which residents in Dorset may have difficulty accessing healthy food?

In the Dorset local government area there are 2,697 households and 6,805¹⁰ residents. The residents and households who are likely to find it hard to access healthy food are likely to be:

- Households with low incomes including residents on Centrelink payments (33 % of the local population are Concession Card Holders; 8 % 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 budget. The budget for food is often what is left over after all the other bills are paid.
- Single parents and their children, particularly if they rely on Centrelink payments. (there are 105 single parent households¹⁰ and 22 % of children 0-14 are estimated to be living in poverty across the local government area)¹⁵
- People with a disability or chronic disease (16.4 % of adults report their health as fair or poor and 376 residents are receiving the disability support payment)¹⁰ because they may have difficulty carrying shopping¹⁶ and their medical expenses reduce the household food budget⁷
- Households without a car (5 % of households)¹⁰
- 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 (16.2 % of local households)¹⁰
- 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 food¹⁷.
- People who have inadequate access to public transport.⁷

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

While the data about Dorset resident's health and diets may paint a daunting picture, there are some terrific programs and initiatives that are working towards improving outcomes. Australian research¹⁸ has shown that when several particular factors occur together, residents 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.

In order to have the resilience to make healthy food choices easy choices, it is important that a number of the success factors are present where people live in order to give people the support they need. 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**. This includes eating fruit and vegetables.
3. Importantly, residents **must have access to affordable healthy food**. This means it must be readily 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 Dorset Local Government area. We know that strengthening coordination of these factors, as well as the 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 Dorset residents.

Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply

- Seasonal Farmgate sales provide an opportunity for residents to purchase affordable ,locally grown food direct from growers.
- Markets at Bridport, Lietenina and Derby
- Mulching Munchkins Project
- Meals on wheels and home delivery from the supermarkets and other shops helps ensure people who can't get to the shops can still get nutritious food
- Agencies which provide fresh fruit and vegetables as part of their food relief for residents who are food insecure such as Dorset Community House

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

Community House, Schools and community groups and gardens and other community organisatons run programs that teach people to cook, grow food, shop/budget and how to eat well and affordably.

Dorset Health Service
Family Food Patch Volunteers

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

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 will help 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 Agencies particularly those that have fresh fruit and vegetables from SecondBite
- Mulching Munchkins Project
- Markets - Devonport Farmers Market; Devonport Foreshore Market; Don Village Market
- Farmgate sales and Mobile Vegetable sales
- Supermarkets, fruit and vegetable shops & general stores
- Community Transport
- *Delicious Dorset Project* (Dorset Community House and Dorset Council)

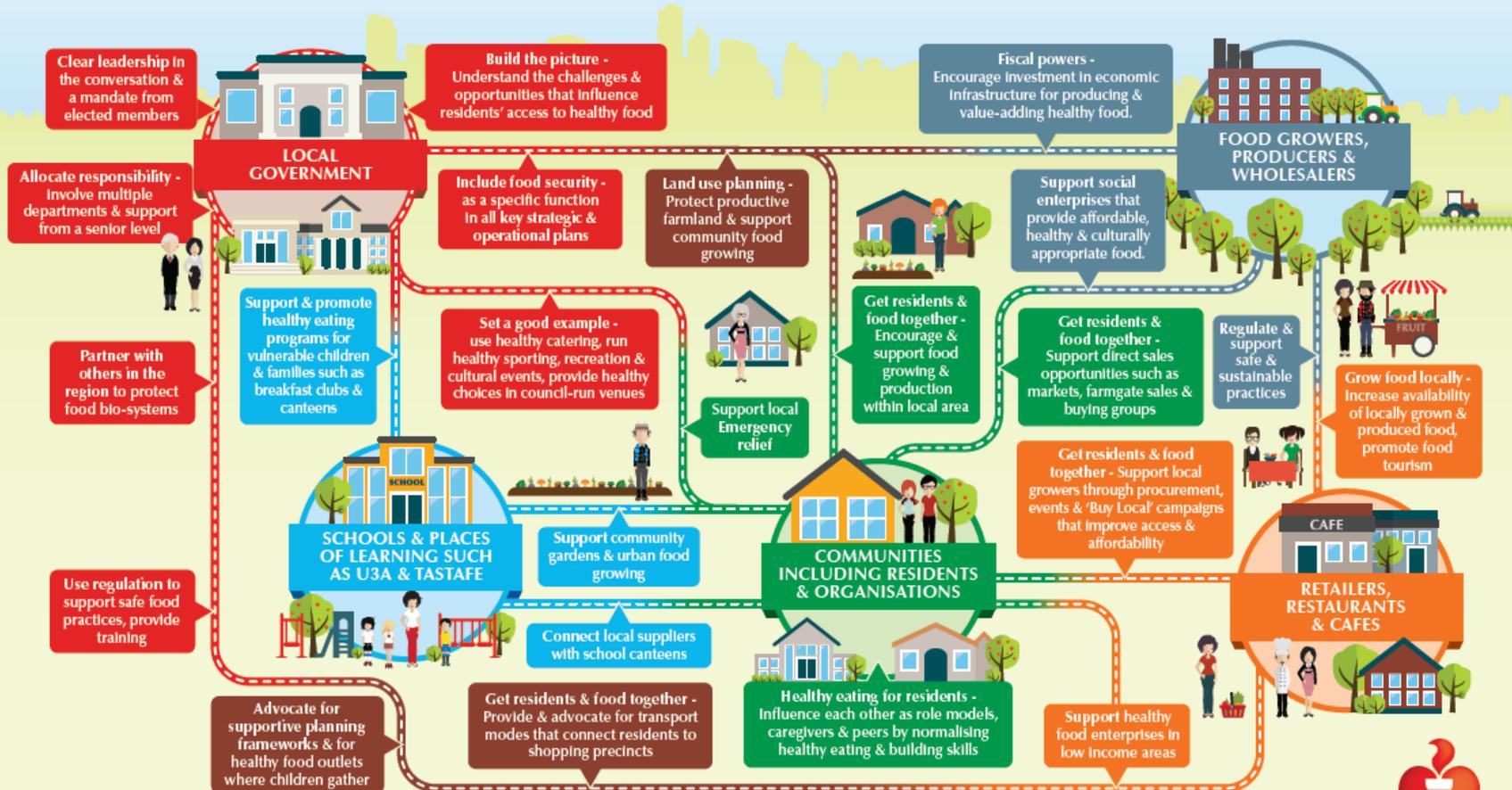
A culture of healthy eating in a variety of community settings such as schools and early childcare and community meals programs

- Move Well Eat Well Schools – Bridport Primary School, Scottsdale Primary School, Winnaleah District School
- Move Well Eat Well Early Years Education and Care Centres - Explore Learning Educational Care, Scottsdale Child Care Service
- Breakfast programs
- Healthy school canteens - Scottsdale Primary School, Winnaleah District High School, Ringarooma Primary School
- *Delicious Dorset Project* (Dorset Community House and Dorset Council)

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

- Dorset Community House
- Dorset Health
- Community and school gardens
- Family Food Patch Volunteer

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



In the Dorset Council local government area there are recent examples of how community organisations and members are planning to work together to improve access to healthy food.

Dorset Health, Dorset Community Health, Eat Well Tasmania, local media and Woolworths – a community partnership

A recent partnership project in Scottsdale between the Community House, Woolworths and the local newspaper demonstrates that exploring options to partner with local retailers can have a great impact. The main elements of the project included cooking classes in the Community House using seasonal fruit and vegetables. The recipes, provided by Eat Well Tasmania, were published in the local newspaper and the food clearly promoted in the local supermarkets alongside the recipe. While there were some challenges, the supermarket demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness to supporting the local initiative. The initiative was coordinated by Dorset Health. Outcomes included noticeable increases in sales of the vegetables ingredients reported by supermarket. Recipes with a shorter list of ingredient were more likely to be used by the community.

Delicious Dorset Project

Following on from this partnership a new project, *Delicious Dorset*, has been funded. The project aimed to map locations of where fruit and vegetables are available for sale across the council area. This information will be made available online and through hard copy to community members. Dorset Community House has also established a food cooperative with fruit and vegetables for sale for community members. This was funded through the Healthy Food Access Tasmania project run by the Heart Foundation. Find out more about Delicious Dorset here <http://www.deliciousdorset.org.au/>

Dorset Council

Dorset Councils *mission is to improve the quality of life of the people of Dorset, through services based on the principles of quality, equity, value and responsiveness.*

In 2015 Dorset Health Primary Care Service has been incorporated into the Dorset Council. This means Council is now exploring exciting new ways to support community health and wellbeing, some of which are about making healthy locally grown food easier to obtain. Recent new initiatives include establishing a Health and Wellbeing community group who meet to discuss and plan new activities and participate in activities together. With Council's support they are currently planning a Street Harvest project, a community event celebrating the harvest of local food in 2016.

Mulching Munchkins

The aim of the Mulching Munchkins program was to develop a comprehensive agricultural program designed for the needs of primary school aged children. The Mulching Munchkins program linked the history, science, literacy and numeracy Australian Curriculum requirements to food growing. Mulching Munchkins connected children and the families' of Bridport and Ringarooma Primary schools to local food production from the paddock to the plate. Practical activities relating to soil preparation, mulching, composting, planting, farm maintenance, animal husbandry, food processing, transport and preparation were included in curriculum lessons. Children's participation included building and installing garden infrastructure water tanks, hot houses, compost bins, raised garden beds and fencing, farm and supermarket visits and cooking with a focus on locally grown produce and visits to the

school by agronomists, soil experts and historians. The children were exposed to a range of career options within the food and agriculture sectors. The project was funded through the Tasmanian Government *Food for All* program and also received in-kind support from the project partners Dorset Health, the schools and the Tasmanian Farmers and Growers Association.



Healthy Food Access
Tasmania

www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au

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- ¹⁰ <http://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases#Fq9sc2vA122ewQCU.97>
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