



## **LATROBE COUNCIL AREA- COMMUNITY FOOD/HOUSEHOLD 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 consequences. 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 Latrobe doing?**

Currently 54.1% of adults living in Latrobe eat the recommended 2 pieces of fruit per day and 9.6 % eat the recommended 5 serves of vegetables, this compares with 42% and 9.8% state averages<sup>9</sup>. The Latrobe residents are unfortunately eating slightly less vegetables in 2013 when compared with 2009 but more fruit over the same period<sup>9</sup>. For adults living in Latrobe 21.6 % is obese<sup>9</sup>. Compounding this 21.3 % of local adults report that their health is poor or fair compared with 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 30% of young people become overweight or obese<sup>11</sup>.

### **Food Security - How easy is it to access healthy food across the Latrobe 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 Latrobe Residents**

Across Latrobe 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 small number of shops across the local government area. In total there are 7 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased, that is a mix minor supermarkets (3 -2 in Latrobe & Wesley Vale), general stores (2- Latrobe and Wesley Vale) and fruit and vegetables shops (2- Latrobe & Wesley Vale). As a general observation there are unfortunately no shops located in the areas where the average household income is lowest where fresh fruit and vegetables area available. 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 Axeman's Hall of Fame has a community market which runs on Sundays and has home and small scale producers selling locally grown fruit and vegetables. Latrobe market runs each Sunday and also has some locally grown produce. More details about where to access fruit and vegetables locally can be found through the interactive maps on this website [www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au](http://www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au) .

### **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

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

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

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 Latrobe may have difficulty accessing healthy food?

In the Latrobe local government area there are 3779 households and 9830<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 ( 31 % 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 154 single parent households<sup>10</sup> & 17% of children 0-14 are estimated to be living in poverty across the local government area<sup>13</sup>)
- People with a disability or chronic disease (21.3 % of adults report their health as fair or poor and 510 residents are receiving the disability support payment<sup>13</sup>) because they may have difficulty carrying shopping<sup>14</sup> and their medical expenses reduce the household food budget<sup>7</sup>.
- Households without a car (4% 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 (27 % 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>15</sup>.
- People who have inadequate access to public transport<sup>13</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. Australian research<sup>16</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 Latrobe Council 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 Latrobe 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.
  - Axeman Hall of Fame and Latrobe market include sales of seasonal fruit and vegetables .
- Fruit and vegetable shops and some supermarkets also sell locally grown fruit and vegetables
- Meals on wheels and home delivery from the supermarkets and other shops can help ensure people who cant 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

**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 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

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

Schools and community groups and gardens and other community organisations may be 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.

Council has committed in its Strategic Plan ( 2012- 2017) to prepare a Latrobe Council Health Plan each year and promote healthy eating and lifestyle activities. The information contained in this profile may be useful to consider when responding to local health challenges. 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, including agencies that distribute fruit and vegetables obtained from SecondBite
- Northdown Market
- Farmgate sales and home deliveries by growers such as *Quality Vegie Boxes*
- Supermarkets & general stores
- Community Transport may support people to get to the shops

### **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- Andrews Creek Primary School, Geneva Christian College, Latrobe Primary School, St Patrick's Catholic School, Sassafras Primary School
- Move Well Eat Well Early Years Education and Care Centres -Latrobe Primary Kindergarten, St Patricks Child Care Centre
- Breakfast programs
- Healthy school canteens - Andrews Creek Primary School, Geneve Christian College, St Patrick's School, Latrobe High School

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

- Community groups such as the CWA Latrobe and Wesley Vale/Sassafras
- Community & school gardens – including gardens that grow fruit and vegetables, For example St Patrick's School uses the school grown produce in the canteen and surplus can be taken home by school members for meals prepared at home.
- Family Food Patch Volunteers



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



In the Latrobe Council government area there are several interesting examples of how community organisations and members have worked together to improve access to healthy food. Below are some recent highlights.

### **Healthy Community Initiatives (HCI) – Eating Well in the Latrobe Municipality**

Recently Latrobe Council was involved in the HCI program which was federally funded until mid 2013. In the Latrobe area the Eating Well program was delivered and ran a series of community events and skill building opportunities which profiled locally grown food and how to prepare healthy meals with it. Local schools and community group participated in ‘cook off’ where they were challenged to make healthy meals. One of the key things council learned from delivering this program was an increased understanding that promoting fresh local produce is good for local business and growers/producers. They were keen participants in the program. Specialist growers and producers have now become part of a local tasting trail which includes a range of businesses on the North West Coast.

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

Latrobe Council, along with other regional councils and lead by Central Coast Council 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. A forum was held in Mid 2015 to bring together a variety of stakeholders. Ideally located and surrounded by other local government areas which are big food producers, the plan is to identify the potential for greater links across the area to capitalise on the local economic assets that relate to food. One of the focus areas will be to consider how the local food supply can be improved and better connections between local producers and the retail environment facilitated. This should in turn build greater resilience into the food system as it becomes increasingly self-reliant.



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

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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. The 2013 survey was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health – Confidence Intervals Fruit – 45.1%, 62.8% and Vegetables 6.2%, 14.7%)
- <sup>10</sup> <http://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases#Fq9sc2vA122ewQCU.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
- <sup>13</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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