

CITY OF LAUNCESTON – 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 Launceston doing?

Currently 41.2 % of adults living in Launceston eat the recommended 2 pieces of fruit per day and 11 % eat the recommended 5 serves of vegetables, this compares with 42% and 9.8% state averages⁹. This compares poorly with 50.5% eating enough fruit in 2009, a significant fall. Launceston residents are eating the same amount of vegetables compared with 2009⁷.

For adults living in the City of Launceston area 20.7% is obese⁹. Compounding this, 20.1 % 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 children and young people become overweight or obese¹¹.

Food Security - How easy is it to access healthy food across the City of Launceston 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 Launceston Residents

Across the Launceston area residents ability to get to the shops is 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 wide variety of shops across the local government area. In total there are 44 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased, that is a mix of major supermarkets (9 – 2 in Mowbray, 2 in Kings Meadow, Newstead, 3 in Launceston and Prospect) minor supermarkets (11- Ravenswood, Newnham, Waverley, Newstead, Summary Hill, West Launceston, Norwood, Youngtown, Lilydale, St Leonards and Prospect,) general stores (19 – 3 in Invermay, Newnham, 2 in Norwood, Lilydale, 3 in Launceston, Nunamara, 2 in Kings Meadow, Newstead, Lebrina, Trevallyn and Windermere) and fruit and vegetables shops (5 – Youngtown, 2 in Launceston, East Launceston and Kings Meadow). As a general observation there is unfortunately only 1 shop located in the areas where the average household income is very low, meaning many areas are not well served. This means for these people getting to the shops to purchase healthy food can be difficult. Often low income households do not have access to a car and may also have inadequate public transport to get them to the shops.

The Harvest Market runs weekly in the centre of Launceston and includes small and medium scale producers selling locally grown fruit and vegetables. The Eskmarket also runs weekly and is a mixed market and does include fruit and vegetable sales. Look at the interactive community maps on this site for details of where fruit and vegetables are available for sale. www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au

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. The basket reflects the cost of food for a fortnight. Data was collected in 142 of Tasmania's 353 stores where fresh food is available. On page 4 there is a summary of the regional results plus local government areas where available. It shows that the cost of healthy foods varies 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 a Centrelink

dependent 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 – NORTHERN REGION

Area	Major Supermarket				Minor Supermarket				General and Convenience shops			
	2 adults + 2 children family	1adult + 2 children family	Male Adult	Elderly Female	2 adults + 2 children family	1adult + 2 children family	Male Adult	Elderly Female	2 adults + 2 children family	1adult + 2 children 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 (where data 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.

Which residents in the Launceston may have difficulty accessing healthy food?

In the City of Launceston Council area there are 25432 households and 64161¹⁰ 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 (30% 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 budget⁷.
- Single parents and their children particularly if they rely on Centrelink payments. (there are 1305 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 (20.1 % of adults report their health as fair or poor and 3111 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 (11% 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 (34 % 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 transport¹⁵

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 Launceston 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 Launceston residents.

Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply

- Harvest and Esk markets
- Ravenwood Community House - Growing Together Project
- Northern Suburbs Community centre - Peace of the garden veggie Box Scheme
- Urban Farming Tasmania
 - 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 grwon produce such as Youngs.
 - Agencies which provide fresh fruit and vegetables as part of their food relief for residents who are food insecure

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

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.

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 agencies, including agencies who provide fresh fruit and vegetables supplied by SecondBite
- Esk Farmers Market & Harvest Market
- Peace of the garden Veggie Box Scheme
- Food Coops & farmgate sales
- Urban Farming Tasmania
- Supermarkets & general stores and fruit and vegetable shops
- Community Transport

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

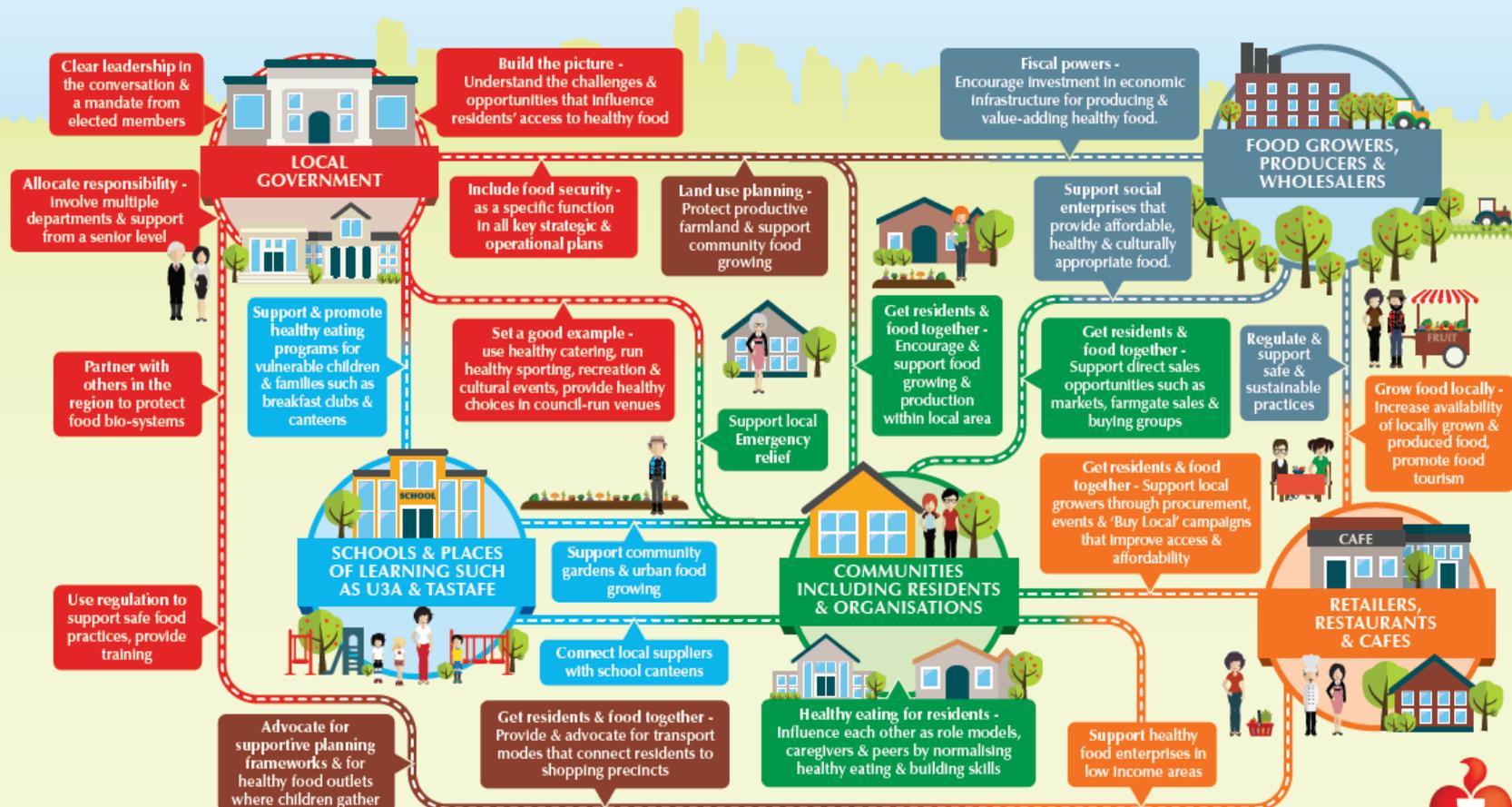
- Move Well Eat Well Schools- Community Christian Academy, East Launceston Primary School, East Tamar Primary School, Glen Dhu Primary School, Invermay Primary School, Larmenier Catholic School, Launceston Church Grammar School, Lilydale District School, Norwood Primary School, Oakwood School, Punchbowl Primary School, Ravenswood Heights Primary School, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Scotch Oakburn College Junior School, Seabrook Christian School (Newnham), St Leonard's Primary School, Summerdale Primary School, The Launceston Preparatory School, Waverley Primary School, West Launceston Primary School, Youngtown Primary School
- Move Well Eat Well Early Years Education and Care Centres - Good Start Early Learning Kingsmeadow, Abacus Child Care, Affordable Family Day Care Launceston, DMP Early Learning Centre, Glen Dhu Children's Services, Good Start Early Learning Newstead, Harmony Early Learning Centre; Lady Gowrie Alanvale, Norwood & University Newnham; Launceston Family Day Care, North Children's Network Family Day Care, Pedder Patter Child Care Services, Stewart Child Care Services, The Children's Playhouse Child Care Centre
- Eating with Friends social eating program
- Breakfast programs
- Healthy school canteens - Glen Dhu Primary School, Invermay Primary School, Lilydale District School, Norwood Primary School, Sacred Heart Primary School, Scotch Oakburn

Junior School, St Leonards Primary School, Waverly Primary School, West Launceston Primary School, Mowbray Heights Primary School, St Patricks College, Trevallyn Primary School, St Finn Barr School

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

- Neighbourhood House - Northern Suburbs Community Centre, Mowbray & Rocherlea; Ravenswood Neighbourhood House, Ravenswood
- Community & school gardens and Urban Farming Tasmania
- Family Food Patch Educator Volunteers

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



In the City of Launceston area there are several interesting example of how community members are working together to improve access to healthy food.

Northern Suburbs Community Centre – Social Enterprise (funded by the Heart Foundation)

The Centre will be using its existing social enterprise to expand and improve access to affordable fruit and vegetables (preferably locally grown) for people living and working in the Northern Suburbs of Launceston. The project officer developed a project plan and coordinated project activities, engage with external stakeholders and community partners, and foster and develop new and emerging networks. The Peace of the Garden Food Box scheme has an online ordering system

(<https://www.openfoodnetwork.org.au/apeaceofthegarden/shop>) and also capacity to be a mobile market. Importantly the project has a strong partnerships with the community that ensures the model meet their needs.

Ravenswood Community House – Growing Together.

The house and its community partners the Ravenswood Primary School and Children's and Family Hub have received funding (from Tasmania Medicare Local) for a project in the local area. The project builds on work from their Growing Together project that has increased the number of local residents growing food in their backyards, the community and school garden. The food is shared with local residents and used in community cooking classes. The new project will look to establish a social enterprise to create an income for future projects that improve access to healthy food in the neighbourhood.

Urban Farming Tasmania

Urban farming Tasmania is a group of community members largely students and their community networks who have an interest in building resilience within community and promoting urban agriculture so that more food is produced within urban areas. They provide lots of opportunities for people to learn about food growing including propagation, soil health and chemical free pest management and healthy meal preparation and cooking. They also have a commitment to reducing food waste and have developed a map of where food can be safely foraged and shared with others. <http://urbanfarmingtasmania.org/>



Healthy Food Access
Tasmania

www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au

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- ⁹ 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 36.8%,45.8% and Vegetables 8.3%,14.1%)
- ¹⁰ <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.
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