Food Security Consultation 2016:
Building on what is working and future directions

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1   Executive Summary

Food security happens "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (United Nations).

Food insecurity happens when limited food options mean people go hungry, eat a poor quality diet or have to rely on emergency relief. However, being food secure is about more than relieving hunger; it also is about being able to choose and prepare healthy foods and obtain food in socially and culturally appropriate ways including not relying on food relief programs.

Food insecurity is worsening in Tasmania and is more common in disadvantaged communities in Tasmania. When healthy food is not available and affordable, people have to compromise on food quality and nutrition. This can lead to higher rates of obesity and other chronic conditions.

In Tasmania over the past few years, there has been much progress to implement local solutions to improve food access. This has been largely due to guidance from the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy Food for All Tasmanians (2012) and significant investment, most of which has now ceased.

Purpose

Research was undertaken by Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS0 to find out what is working to improve food security and how to do things better. We talked with community organisations and groups funded to provide food security programs and projects in their region, researchers, project funders, neighbourhood house, local government staff, local market managers, and members of the former Tasmanian Food Security Council.

What was found will inform the future work of DHHS though Public Health Services, and the relevant initiatives within the Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic plan.

What works – it is more than nutrition

We found evidence of a range of collaborative and cross-sectoral strategies in place to improve community food security. Food-based programs such as community gardens, food hubs and local markets create places for community conversation around food. This helps people to reconnect with food, find out where it is grown and how to prepare it. This can lead to improved wellbeing by people making healthier food choices.

When people and communities understand the work that local growers and producers do, they often value locally grown products more, which may lead to a change in what and where they buy. This helps the local economy.

The high level of civic engagement in food security solutions in Tasmania reflects the broad community interest in food and food systems. Volunteerism adds significant value and resources to programs by providing physical labour and expert advice, meaning a relatively small investment can go a long way. This goodwill represents high value in dollar terms of time and expertise.

Food security projects and programs had real benefits for social inclusion, workforce participation and for people's physical and mental wellbeing. It can be difficult to measure the value of these outcomes but several community groups undertook qualitative evaluation to record what they have been able to do.

We know there has been a more coordinated approach to improve food security in Tasmania in recent years. New organisations and partners have become involved, bringing with them varied experience and skills.

Ongoing challenges

Some people felt that while they were reaching individuals at risk of food insecurity, they did not feel they were reaching the people 'most' at risk. It can be very difficult to reach the people most in need of support with food security. People may be managing critical personal situations. Therefore, they may be unable to take part in the programs offered. Emergency food relief programs need to continue to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable in our community.

Public Health Services can collaborate with organisations who already work with communities and individuals at risk of food security, to support the inclusion of food access and nutrition education into their service delivery.

Cultural shift

In areas where healthy foods particularly fruit and vegetables are less accessible, it can take time to change food culture (purchasing, cooking and eating behaviours). Public Health Services has a key role in increasing food literacy and building local capacity through workforce training to support healthy communities. It has a responsibility to ensure equitable access to food and nutrition resources.

Public Health Services should continue to fund and collaborate with a mix of program partners in communities across a number of settings, which use a range of strategies to facilitate cultural change towards healthy lifestyle and food choices.

Measuring change

Public Health Services has an ongoing role to ensure any change at a population and community level is measured. The inclusion of food security indicators in the Tasmanian Population Health survey will help measure change over time.

Working collaboratively with UTAS has increased the robustness and extent of the food security data collected within Tasmania. By helping communities build in evaluation and monitoring into service planning, the quantitative and qualitative data collected will tell their story.

Supporting sustainability

A number of organisations reported short term funding as a major barrier to preparing for sustainability. Actions that help the local food security initiatives transition into successful ongoing enterprises include:

- Planning for sustainability from the start, and working towards this during the project.

- Having a project leader or team members with business skills.

- Setting up from beginning as a not for profit business or a social enterprise using a grant, donations or in kind support.

Economic sustainability is just one possible goal and sustainability is measurable in other ways. If a local service provider can improve food security through reorientation and redesign of what they do this is can be a good outcome for that community.

We need to work together

Experts and communities overwhelmingly felt that the issue of food security required a whole-of-government approach, and that the issue sits outside of the boundaries of a single portfolio. Over recent years, the food security agenda had been progressed largely by the health sector. The three main funding bodies who have offered food security grants since 2010 include the Tasmanian Government, the Heart Foundation and Primary Health Tasmania. These have now concluded.

Conclusion

This evaluation has highlighted the importance of creating local community solutions to improve food security, the role networking and intersectoral collaboration plays, the need for a strong policy environment and the continuing role of research and evaluation. Public Health Services will continue its partnerships with community sector organisations and UTAS to improve food security in Tasmania. In 2017, our focus will be on providing training, resources and support for communities and to create opportunities for healthy food access to be addressed within the Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic plan.

While it was not possible to talk to everyone working to improving access to healthy food in Tasmania, we are grateful to the many participants in this evaluation, who took the time to talk to us and share their knowledge.

We can continue to build on the momentum of recent years - working with communities to ensure that there truly is food for all Tasmanians.

For more information

Email community.nutrition@dhhs.tas.gov.au

2   Introduction

This consultation will help inform the work of Public Health Services (DHHS) as part of its ongoing commitment to improve food security within Tasmania. It will help guide the relevant initiatives within the Tasmanian Government's Healthy Tasmania plan to ensure equitable healthy food access is considered in its delivery.

Food security is "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life [1]". This means not having to rely on emergency food relief.

When healthy food is not available and affordable, people have to compromise on food quality and nutrition. This results in higher rates of obesity and other chronic conditions.

Obesity contributes to a large burden of disease in Tasmania. People are more likely to be obese if they live in areas of disadvantage. The risk of overweight and obesity is 20 to 40 per cent higher for women who are food insecure [2]. If healthy food is not available or affordable, people are more likely to choose cheaper and easily accessible options. These foods are often lower in nutritional content and higher in fat, salt and sugar. For some people and families lack of cooking equipment, or coping with complex social issues make eating healthy food less of a priority.

Food insecurity is worsening in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Population Health Survey 2016 shows seven per cent of Tasmanians reported that in the past 12 months they had run out of food and could not afford to buy more. In areas of disadvantage, this is more common, rising to more than twelve per cent of the community. Dissatisfaction with the cost of food was significantly higher in 2016 (26.8 per cent) than in 2013, whilst the proportion of Tasmanians dissatisfied with a lack of culturally appropriate food or food of adequate quality was significantly lower than in 2009. Lack of quality (22.2 per cent) and variety (11.0 per cent), and the high costs of some foods (26.8 per cent) were the main dissatisfactions expressed by Tasmanians in 2016 [3].

The results of the Healthy Food Access Basket (HFAB) 2014 survey conducted by UTAS highlighted considerable variability in the availability and cost food in Tasmania. Access to healthy food may be more challenging in regional areas if people have to use a limited range of food shops.

The HFAB suggests families living in towns serviced by a limited number of food shops may also be at a disadvantage in their ability to access healthy food if they do not have transport to a supermarket. Fresh fruit and vegetables were of a similar price across the state. The differences were largely in non-fresh food items. These food prices may be affected by 'specials' and availability of generic brands reducing costs in larger regional centre supermarkets. The cost of healthy food relative to income for low-income groups continues to be of concern. Monitoring the cost of healthy food is an important strategy towards addressing food insecurity in Tasmania [7].

The policy environment

Improving food security and reducing the need for emergency food relief services requires a multi-layered approach, particularly for long-term EFR clients and those at increased risk of food insecurity.

Over the past five years, progress to improve food security in Tasmania has demonstrated the benefits of this approach. There has been progress to improve food access. This has been largely due to guidance from the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy Food for All Tasmanians (2012) and significant investment by three main funding bodies who have offered food security grants since 2010 include the Tasmanian Government, the Heart Foundation and Primary Health Tasmania, most of which has now ceased.

Food For All Tasmanians – a food security strategy

Food for All Tasmanians (2012) was the first whole of state food security strategy in Australia. The four key priority areas have provided a framework to develop action:

- Increasing food access and affordability.

- Building community food solutions.

- Supporting regional development and food based social enterprises.

- Planning for sustainable local food systems.

Since 2009, there has been continued investment in food security in Tasmania, through funding for local initiatives from the Tasmanian Government (DPAC), the Heart Foundation, and Primary Health Tasmania. DHHS has supported and given advice to each of these funding rounds.

The Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Policy

Released in 2004, the Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Policy highlighted the importance of nutrition in improving the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian individuals and communities. Being food secure is one of the major factors that influence health, and food security affects Tasmanian's ability to make healthy food choices.

The Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Policy outlines the need to increase community awareness of the challenges of accessing healthy food and reduce the social, cultural, economic and geographical barriers to healthy food.

The Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Policy increased focus on food security within the state, and has underpinned the outcomes achieved over recent years.

Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic Plan

The Healthy Tasmania Strategy released in July 2016 outlines the Tasmanian Government's five-year vision for Tasmania to have the healthiest population in Australia. The Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic plan identifies nutrition and physical activity as an area for priority action to improve health.

The Healthy Tasmania strategy has six key principles for action, to help Tasmania become the healthiest state in Australia. Appendix 6.2 outlines how the six key principles of the Healthy Tasmania strategy relate to food security.

3   Research aims

2.1 Research aims and objectives

The approach taken in this evaluation was to assess the success and challenges of food security projects and programs across Tasmania. The outcomes of this research will help guide DHHS's future work in preventative health, and inform future policy and investments.

2.2 Research questions

The evaluation sought to answer three key research questions:

1. What have been the key successes and challenges of food security projects in Tasmania?

2. What activities have become self-sustaining, and what factors influence sustainability?

3. What more needs to be done to ensure food security for all Tasmanians, and who needs to be involved?

4   Research methods

3.1 Identifying stakeholders

Stakeholders working or volunteering in food security or food systems in Tasmania were invited to participate. These included:

*   Organisations that had funded food security projects and programs in Tasmania since 2010.

*   Researchers working in the area of food security and local food systems.

*   Previous members of the Tasmanian Food Security Council.

*   Individuals working in projects that had been funded through the Food for All Tasmanians grants (DHHS), Social Determinants of Health fund (Primary Health Tasmania), and the Healthy Food Access Tasmania project (Heart Foundation)

*   Organisations and groups working in local food supply or food security that either self-funded (run as businesses or social enterprises) or accessed funding through other means.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were semi-structured and tailored based on the role of the interviewee mindful of their experience and knowledge in this area. All interviews were face to face, and took between 30 to 40 minutes. A list of questions is contained in appendix 3. The interviews were recorded (with permission from the interviewee) and transcribed using an external transcribing service for accuracy.

3.3 Demographics

Researchers interviewed a broad selection of stakeholders from across all key stakeholder groups, working across different regions of the state.

More than fifty stakeholders were identified and 25 agreed to be interviewed, just over a third of them (36%) were 'food security leaders', working at a strategic level within the state. This group included researchers, project funders, and members of the Tasmanian Food Security Council. A further third of stakeholders (32%) were working for community organisations and groups funded to undertake food security programs and projects in their region. The remaining third of stakeholders were split between those who worked in neighbourhood houses and local governments (20%) and local markets (12%).

Table 1: Stakeholder type

Stakeholders by group	Number	%
Food security leaders – including researchers, funding bodies and members of security council	9	36 %
Community organisations	8	32 %
Neighbourhood houses and local government	5	20 %
Markets	3	12 %

Over a third of stakeholders interviewed were based in the South of the state (36%), with a further third based in the North and North East (32%). The North West of the state was under-represented in our data, (8% of respondents). This response rate is not an indication of the amount of work happening in this region, as there are many programs addressing food security within the region. The North West of the state is recognised as an area of priority, with an increased need for services and supports in this region. The lower level of response from this part of the state may be more reflective of how stretched services are at present, and caution should be taken when interpreting results of this evaluation, as they may not be representative of the views and needs of those working in the North West region.

Around a quarter of the stakeholders interviewed worked in a state-wide capacity. This was most common among the 'food security leader' group these included people working in research, policy or funding and were likely to work across the whole state rather than in a specific region.

Table 2: Food Security regional stakeholder mix

Stakeholders' main region of work	Number	%
State-wide	6	24 %
South	9	36 %
North	8	32 %
North-West	2	8 %

Due to the relatively small sample size, researchers have not identified respondents by role as well as region, as this could potentially make some respondents identifiable.

3.4 Data analysis

Data was analysed using the qualitative data analysis software program N-Vivo. Analysis was performed by two team members, who cross-checked and compared coding for the purposes of triangulation, in order to ensure consistency.

Researchers then identified key themes in the data using the process of inductive thematic analysis. Data was read and re-read before initial codes were generated, before researchers searched for themes among the codes, and reviewed these themes to ensure they accurately reflected the data and answered the research questions.

3.5 Ethics and confidentiality

The Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this evaluation, HREC project number: H14167. All information was de-identified and kept in a secure and password-protected section of the shared drive.

4   Results and discussion

From the responses of the 25 interviewees who took part in the semi-structured interviews, key themes have emerged around these:

- It is more than nutrition.
- Creating sustainable solutions.
- How we can do better.
- Networking and collaboration.

The approach has been to describe these in more detail and discuss DHHS's contribution to making Tasmanians more food secure.

4.1 What we know works – it is more than nutrition

The people interviewed commented on the sense of pride in the progress made over the past five years. They felt that Tasmania is leading the way in addressing food security through a combination of good public policy (in the form of the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy) and local level action.

The cross-sectoral partnerships and proactive approach taken in Tasmania is seen as an example of best practice at a national level.

> *"Our National Operations manager has spent the last few days in Tasmania, and he said on a couple of occasions that the other states could learn a hell of a lot from what we're doing down here, so that was nice."*
>
> Community organisation

Those who worked in research or provided funding for food security projects identified a direct link between the development of the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy in 2012 and the significant progress made to improve the food security of Tasmanians.

Since the launch of the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy, there have been positive shifts in how to improve food security from how to run projects and programs to a broader understanding and awareness of the issues that surround food security in the state.

> *"I've just seen so much more awareness and local-level activity going on to address the issue of food insecurity, and the whole thing about it being addressed more from a supply side rather than just the usual cooking skills type thing, which you know 10 years ago that would have been it."*
>
> Funding body

The *Food for All Tasmanians* food security strategy (2012) allowed sectors and stakeholders to find common ground and work out who was best to do what to improve food security. It provided a framework for investment. It also created a position from which conversation and debate could

continue. The dialogue needs to continue between government and key stakeholders about healthy food access and supply to ensure the best health outcomes for Tasmania.

4.1.1 Partnerships – the great success story

Of the 25 stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation, 22 of them mentioned partnerships making it a common theme. Partnerships to improve food security were discussed both at a grassroots community level and at strategic levels.

> *"I think, as most people recognise, you can do better stuff when you work together as opposed to separately."*
>
> Social Enterprise

Partnerships were a very positive contributing factor to improving food security in Tasmania. People interviewed described their partnerships as "essential", "really enabling", "really important", "amazing", and "fantastic". Strong partnerships were a common in projects that identified themselves as being successful.

> *"Having partnerships is really good in terms of spreading the load and having more reach, and you know there's lots of things that's really useful for, but it does often take an extra level of kind of management or organisation."*
>
> Community Organisation

Partnerships allowed community contributions to projects such as skill and resources. Partnerships helped cross promotion of services and products, collaboration to apply for funding and for advocacy purposes.

DHHS played an important role in supporting the development of partnerships. DHHS has always been a strong advocate for funding going to groups rather than individual organisations. This creates shared learning opportunities and responsibility by organisations working together.

The evaluation showed DHHS provided:

- leadership and advocacy for food security in the state

- program support and in-kind support

- networking and helping them connect to partners

- collecting and sharing evidence and evaluations.

This is consistent with a recent research study by the University of Tasmania, which mapped the network of stakeholders working to improve food security in Tasmania. The research showed DHHS (particularly Public Health) formed an integral part of the web of connections in the state, facilitating cross-sectoral partnerships [4].

Over half of the participants (14 of 25) commented on the role of Public Health Services (DHHS) staff in supporting work in food security in Tasmania and much of this feedback was around the value of collaborating with DHHS.

> *"I think this funding and the work that (Public Health Services) have done has really helped normalise certain things and just made things more possible. And also probably helped trigger other funding rounds and initiatives, which is hard to measure and track but I think it's starting to create a different culture around food security issues."*
>
> Social Enterprise

There are clear benefits from working in partnership, but it was also felt that partnerships could create challenges at times. These included the difficulty of unequal contributions, where one partner ending up carrying the majority of the work and inequality in partnerships where one partner held more power than the other. This imbalance often occurred because either one partner was holding the funds for the project, or they were more highly resourced. An example of this was, a community garden based on the grounds of a school or local council-owned property that has less power to make decisions as the land was owned by their partner organisation. These issues were usually resolved by outlining expectations and roles of each group before a partnership was undertaken.

Outcomes of both the University of Tasmania social network mapping report and this current evaluation indicate DHHS plays a leadership role in improving food security in Tasmania [4]. Food security should continue be a priority within the work of DHHS.

4.1.2 Adding value through volunteerism

There was a broad recognition that the sector relies heavily on volunteers, although not in all programs. Over half of interviewees (16 of 25) mentioned the role of volunteers in food security activities. The high level of volunteer involvement reflects the level of community interest in food and food systems.

Community organisations relying on grants to run food security projects were more likely to involve volunteers than social enterprises or programs that run for profit. Volunteerism adds significant value and capacity to programs by providing free physical labour and expert advice, meaning a relatively small investment can go a long way.

A number of people managing these types of programs identified volunteer burnout as a key challenge. Management of volunteers is critical to success and processes need to be in place to do this.

"It's about people not paperwork, and participation not perfection"
Community Organisation

"Most people volunteer because they're wanting a social outcome of some sort, so making sure that people aren't just beavering away by themselves at the computer; that there's also some fun social interaction and they're feeling supported"

Social Enterprise

International food system research suggests community engagement and government investment can lead on to private investment given the right policy environment for example matched funding, tax/loan incentives and providing in-kind support. This may help provide the resources needed to support volunteers to stay involved [11].

"Local businessmen are big business people…getting together and giving back to the community. They have given us money…"

Community House

Communities who are interested and engaged in taking action to improve their health and wellbeing need support. A significant volunteer labour force is often an indication that a community is dedicated to making genuine progress to improve food security and there is value in investing in this.

4.1.3 Creating communities

Ten of the 25 interviewees gave examples of the social benefits of food security programs, and saw these outcomes as equally important or more important than outcomes relating to improved nutrition status of their clients and community.

Two services specifically identified that this was the only social contact that some people had.

"I was surprised with how sort of genuine, particularly the social side of it is. One of our aims was to improve social cohesion and that actually happened. And I think probably the links with the other community groups and businesses in the area and the way we can sort of feed off each other, that's good."

Community Organisation

"It might sound corny but… having a service like this does make a big difference in their life. And there are some clients that I reckon they would have died if it wasn't for here because you see them when they're really, really vulnerable and literally there is nothing else for them like it."

Community Organisation

Food security projects and programs had real benefits for social inclusion, workforce participation and people's physical and mental wellbeing. It can be difficult to measure the value of these outcomes but several community groups undertook qualitative evaluation to show what they had been able to do.

> *"We have learned that food is such a constant and so all-pervasive that while it does obviously lead to better health, it is also a fantastic enabler and connector for all sorts of reasons. Like, it can be the entry point for dealing with so many other problems as well in communities."*
>
> Funding body

While the social benefits of food security may be more difficult to measure in a quantitative way, it is important to evaluate these benefits in other ways for example through case studies or shared stories, or thematic analysis. The Most Significant Change method is one such tool, and DHHS has used this method in two Tasmanian communities [5].

People who worked in community organisations frequently had anecdotes or stories about the impact of the work they had done on individuals, groups or families. One community worker spoke of an after-school workshop where parents came with their children to paint pots and plant herbs to take home. She explained that many of the parents had never been to a parent-teacher interview before, and the true benefit of the activity was not about planting herbs, but rather the way it helped parents connect to the school in a safe and positive way. Food and gardening provided a backdrop to bring families and teachers together, and build better relationships within the school community. All of this contributes to breaking the cycle of disadvantage and empowering individuals and communities.

The evaluation indicates there is a strong link between food security programs and projects, and social outcomes. Community organisations may be able to use this link as a way of strengthening existing programs that relate to food security and to new community development and social inclusion funding agreements.

4.1.4 Contributing to economic development

Participants discussed economic benefits to food security programs and projects within the state. These outcomes were very varied, and were often unexpected or unintended.

"The interesting thing is that even those projects that didn't set out to be food projects… that are around building community, capability and leadership and connectedness or building education and retention and employment skills, they still use food as an entry point. Like building community gardens as a way of having applied skills for employment. It's just woven pretty well through everything."

Funding body

Some organisations and local councils anticipated and planned these economic outcomes, and used food as a way of creating education and employment opportunities. Food was used as a way of creating economic outcomes for the community.

"It brings people in to the centre of town… They'll come across the bridge, there are markets here. It creates a real lively hub in the centre of town".

Local Council

Some identified specific economic benefits to their programs at both an individual and a community level and commonly related to the development or strengthening of the local food systems. This included support to farmers markets and food co-operatives.

"One of the people who attended (market garden) training is now actually going to be a stall-holder. He has never market gardened before this season and he's already up for that".

Community Organisation

Projects that successfully improved food security in a community appeared to create economic benefits by providing income to local growers and producers, and providing employment or skill development for local community members.

More research is needed to identify how investment in food security and food system projects lead to improved regional economic development. Regions with increased wealth usually have better population health profiles. There is potentially a double benefit in improving local food access by developing income generating local food systems. There is an opportunity for the Tasmanian government to explore this further in discussion with local government.

4.2 Creating sustainable solutions

4.2.1 What projects become self-sustaining?

A number of things help the transition of local food security solutions into successful ongoing enterprises. These include:

- Planning for sustainability from the start, and working towards this during the project.

- Project leader or team members have a business background.

- Setting up from beginning as a not for profit business or a social enterprise using a grant, donations or in kind support.

"We're very modest in our ambition. We just want to be sustainable and not just to survive, we do want to thrive as well and help good stuff to happen. We don't want to have a bunch of chains across the country."

Social enterprise

"I would say this to all of the not-for-profit committees and boards I've worked for, if we don't run it like a business then you won't be there to help the people that you set out to, you won't exist anymore."

Social enterprise

Funding criteria allows for a funding body to direct investment to initiatives intended to improve food security and maximise broader outcomes. This means meeting a market demand for a product or service for example, a vegetable box service does not always drive the project development. There is a risk therefore that the project will not be sustained by market demand once funding has finished unless enough of a market for the product or service has been created. This poses a risk to sustainability of initiatives funded short term. Successful Tasmanian food security projects have had ongoing investment that has built upon previous work to create demand.

There was recognition that the importance of funding cycles needing to be long enough to allow for the projects and programs to become economically viable. The timeframes of funded projects were often only a year or two in duration, so the more successful projects were ones that had built on existing programs rather than starting a new program. As with any new business, a social enterprise or community food project requires time to become financially independent.

"I think you can't do that in two years. I think you need four or five years to do that anyway because you're trying to change intergenerational eating habits."

Social enterprise

Due to the individuality of food security projects and social enterprises, the amount of support and funding required varies. Examples of food security projects funding models in Tasmania include grants, seed funding, loans, crowd funding, donations, and reorientation of existing services.

Sustainability appears to depend on what resources are available. Programs are more likely to become economically viable if the community has established organisations, food producers and workers (or volunteers) in place. Many things influence food security within a community. A one-size-fits-all approach way to improve food security will not work a community needs to be able to design

"It's important to know what's around that infra structure sort of stuff…because it helps if you've got capacity to go with the funding then you can take it to the next stage, some communities can't."

Community House

4.2.2 Sustainability as a reasonable goal

One issue mentioned by a participant and echoed by several others was the ethics of expecting community food programs to have economic viability as a sustainability goal. Some organisations whose primary focus is charity or community work found it difficult to shift their focus and reorient programs not to be dependent on funding. There was a sense using an enterprising model at odds with their existing model of service. They felt it was inappropriate for an organisation focussed on community support to be making an income from the community they are trying to help.

"I actually think the government should be funding organisations, because the reach and the holistic results and benefits to the long-term health outcomes of the people. And then we're expected to earn income as well. I'm working on (limited funds) and what do you do? That's where it gets frustrating that we're supposed to be generating our own income but there's such a need in the community"

Community organisation

Some organisations and groups are comfortable with selling products to achieve financial viability, but others struggle with the concept given their historic role as 'givers'. These organisations were more likely to prefer to work using grants, donations and volunteers. One organisation described it as "cheeky" for the government to expect benevolent organisations to be financially independent.

This view was more common in community organisations, but social enterprises also identified this challenge.

"We've identified Neighbourhood Houses we can tap into to make sure the food gets to where it's needed while still having a viable social enterprise. It's a fine line, we can't give food away."

Social enterprise

Economic sustainability is only one possible goal and sustainability is measurable in other ways. If a local service provider can improve food security through reorientation and redesign of what they do this is can be a good outcome for that community.

This requires a managed change process, guidance, and additional support. This provides an opportunity for DHHS to engage in meaningful discussion with the organisations that it funds to provide preventative health and community services.

4.3 How can we do better?

"We could have done more if we had the time or money". This theme was most common among community organisations but expressed by social enterprises too. This shows communities recognise there is a significant need for the work that they do.

"We're here to be with the people."
Community Organisation

"Trying to spread yourself too thinly I think is a big issue."

Community Organisation

One issue commented on by community organisations was the time they spent applying for grants.

"We're here to be with the people. The time spent applying for grants is a distraction from what we should really be doing"

Community Organisation

The people interviewed could see the benefits of the work that they did. There was a desire to try to continue the work after funding ceased. Some organisations have now found ways to continue the work as part of their existing budgets and workloads, others looked to make initiatives profitable in their own right. Some have continued the work without funding, using volunteer time.

"The idea initially was that you know once we set up that it would become part of our core business. So no one would see it as a project now. When we first started it was the Feeding the Future project or whatever, now it's just normal."

Community Organisation

"It was a challenge for us though around that funding not being there to support a dedicated person or persons to continue the work on. But we weren't prepared to give up."

Community Organisation

There is a risk collective knowledge and passion may be lost when funding ceases even temporarily. Embedding food security into strategies to address inequities in health, regional economic development and community development are ways to prevent this occurring. Examples of this are the Central Coast Council food security strategy and work done by the Mersey Leven Food Hub through the Cradle Coast Authority. It may be beneficial to advise communities and organisations on how to continue improve food security when funding is time limited.

It is important to be mindful that additional assistance is often required for smaller communities with little financial resources and infrastructure. Supporting these communities to reach out to larger hubs

through networking will allow for resource sharing across regions. This is networking role could be taken on by a lead agency and be supported by web based information.

4.3.1 Increasing demand for healthy food by Tasmanians

A balance between increasing demand for healthy food (particularly fruit and vegetables) and improvement in supply of healthy food is required. In areas where healthy food has traditionally been less accessible, this can be more of a challenge. Opinion was split over whether food supply or demand for healthy food was more of a challenge when addressing food security in Tasmania.

Food-based programs such as community gardens, food hubs and local markets create places for community conversation around food. This helps people to reconnect with food systems, and improve their wellbeing by making healthier food choices. When individuals and communities are more mindful of the work that local growers and producers do, they often value locally grown products, which may lead to a change in purchasing behaviours.

> *"It's an important part of the equation and people are seeing now, 'hang on a sec, this is about connecting people to achieve affordable food', and that's a really significant cultural shift that needs to be acknowledged."*
>
> Funding body

Investment is required to create a culture of healthy eating and improved consumption of vegetables and fruit across the whole of the Tasmanian population. Affordability and access of these foods in some areas of disadvantage make purchasing more difficult. DHHS has a role through Healthy Tasmania Strategic Plan to increase demand for healthy food choices by Tasmanians.

Through the Healthy Tasmania Communities Innovation Pool, an opportunity exists for communities to build improved food access and supply into funding applications. DHHS should continue to invest in programs such as school canteen accreditation, Move Well Eat Well programs and Family Food Patch to create a culture that increases demand for healthier food.

4.3.2 Building on success

Several smaller community organisations and social enterprises observed that projects in the early phases of starting up may not always receive the support and partnerships that they need. This evaluation notes successful food security projects in Tasmania over recent years appear to more likely to attract further funding, volunteers and interest from potential partnering organisations. Success appears to create more success.

"There's this point at which when a project gets momentum that a lot of people want to be associated with it."

Social enterprise

"People are drawn to helping something that's already flourishing and well-resourced rather than jumping in to bail something out."

Community Organisation

Potential funders or volunteers may overlook start-ups and small programs initially, affecting their ability to get off the ground. Once a project reaches a tipping point into success, the support they receive is likely to help the initiative continue and become more sustainable.

Chance of success is also dependent on local opportunities. In more highly resourced regions or communities with existing effective networks in place, organisations are more likely to work together. This creates a positive cycle of networking that may bring in more funding, goodwill and volunteers over time. It is important not to overlook smaller communities and groups that are struggling to gain traction with their projects, or have limited opportunities to form partnerships with other organisations due to less local resources.

With limited funding available and so much more work to do organisations often find themselves in competition for grants. This competition is potentially between groups that collaborate around work. This creates difficult situations that may damage future working relationships. Government should avoid creating competition within communities if more can be achieved through collaboration.

4.3.3 Reaching those most at risk

Some people felt that while they were reaching individuals at risk of food insecurity, they did not feel they were reaching the people 'most' at risk. There are great complexities when trying to reach the people most in need of support with food security. People may be managing critical personal situations. Therefore, they are not in a position connect with the programs offered.

"We invest a lot into the community. It's important because it's the community that's gotten us here. But do we reach those lowest socio-economic groups? No, I don't believe we do and I'd be a fool to say we did."

Social enterprise

The emergency food relief sector in Tasmania provides an important safety net for individuals during times of crisis. Dependence on emergency food relief to solve food insecurity can create a cycle of disadvantage and reliance, which disempowers individuals from taking responsibility for their own health. It is important that emergency food relief not seen as the solution to improving food security within the state.

Due to the nature of their delivery models, EFR providers cannot guarantee a sufficient, reliable, nutritious, safe, acceptable and sustainable food intake to the food relief agencies and families they work with. EFR providers are limited in their ability to control the availability, quality and variety of the food they provide. There are also limitations in their capacity often due to funding models to address client transport needs, improve knowledge and skills, provide storage, preparation and cooking facilities, provide social support programs which help allow people to move away from a reliance on EFR towards affordable food access programs [3].

4.4 Networking and collaboration

Those interviewed all recognised that over recent years, more connections have been made across and within sectors, which has allowed a more coordinated approach to improving food security. New organisations and partners have become involved, bringing with them varied experience and skills. Groups now active in the food security space in Tasmania include:

- local government

- DHHS

- not-for-profit organisations

- Primary Health Tasmania

- The University of Tasmania

- environmental organisations

- agriculture (particularly small- to medium-sized growers who sell through local food systems like markets, veggie box schemes and independent grocers).

While an improvement in coordination since the release of the Food Security Strategy in 2012 was recognised, general agreement on the ongoing need for a consistent approach across sectors was noted. Five of the 25 stakeholders (20 per cent) expressed the need for a food security network within the state. These stakeholders were mostly community organisations and thought a food security network would be useful to:

- find partners

- brainstorm and problem-solve together using other's expertise

- share their own experience and learnings

- celebrate successes.

There was no agreement of the best model to deliver to provide this.

Tasmania has had a food security network in recent years linked to DHHS *Food for All Tasmanians* funding. In 2014-15, the network dissolved as project funding finished and the network felt it had completed its shared goals and vision and there was no longer a major driver for action within the group.

For a network to be successful in future, new-shared goals and visions are needed. Based on the feedback, the purpose of such a network is not immediately clear, as individuals had different ideas about what they wanted to get out of a network, who should manage or provide leadership to the group, and how they saw it functioning. This provides an opportunity for DHHS to have a conversation with stakeholders to explore the viability for a network going forward.

4.4.1 A whole-of-government approach

Over recent years, the food security agenda had been progressed largely by the health sector. The three main funding bodies who have offered food security grants since 2010 include the Tasmanian Government, the Heart Foundation and Primary Health Tasmania. Experts and communities overwhelmingly felt that the issue of food security required a whole-of-government approach, and that the issue sits outside of the boundaries of a single portfolio.

While the health sector has a role in this space (due to the health implications of food insecurity on disease rates), it is important to take a cross-sectoral approach to food security in Tasmania. There are significant implications for agriculture, education, and economic and community development.

Tasmania has a reputation as a 'clean green' state producing high-quality local fresh produce. Food production is important to the Tasmanian economy. The gross value of agricultural production in

Tasmania is over $1.2 billion a year (ABARES 2015). Around 23 per cent of food produced here stays in the state the rest exported to interstate and overseas markets [7].

But Tasmanian's intake of vegetables and fruit is far below recommended levels. Less than half (48 per cent) of Tasmanians meet the recommended daily intake of fruit, and less than one in ten (nine per cent) eat the recommended daily intake of vegetables [8].

This presents an opportunity to grow the local market for Tasmanian grown fruit and vegetables. Increased demand for fresh fruit and vegetables coupled with improved access to locally grown produce could lead to increased consumption of fruit and vegetables. Increased vegetable consumption could create both health and economic benefits for the state [9]. There is a clear link between fruit and vegetable consumption and reduced risk of obesity [10]. Improving fruit and vegetable consumption is an important contributing factor to a healthier Tasmanian population.

4.4.2 Creating partnerships with local government

There were comments that local governments played a key role in connecting local groups around the issue of food security. Local councils provide advice to growers and other food-related businesses in their area around regulation and infrastructure. They also have strong connections with major stakeholder groups, and a deep understanding of local enabling factors within their community. A 2015 report into the local Tasmanian food supply by the University of Tasmania recommended that local government should be considered as a broker or facilitator for the further development of local food systems [12].

It was recognised that local councils had many competing priorities and statutory requirements, and that for local government to be effective to improve food security they need to be appropriately resourced and supported.

> *"The council are great - the council are great if you don't want money off them."*
>
> Community group

In Tasmania, several councils have already recognised the key role that they can play in addressing food security within their municipality, and have developed programs and initiatives based on the needs of their local communities. For example:

- Devonport Food Connection
- Mersey Leven food hub
- Food Connections Clarence
- The Kingborough week-day market
- Meander Valley food security work
- Central Coast Council Food Security Strategy

These projects show what can be achieved when local government areas work in partnership with community organisations to create locally-driven solutions. It is important to support local government to share their experience and expertise with other councils, in order to build capacity and help others to achieve similar outcomes in their own local government areas.

DHHS through Public Health Services needs to continue working with local government, to support healthy communities. There is an opportunity for this during the implementation of the Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic plan.

5 Recommendations and future directions for DHHS

Support local community solutions

1. Include food security and healthy food solutions in *A Healthy Tasmania* initiatives. For example, link the Healthy Food Access Portal to the Healthy Tasmania Portal.

2. Increase the capacity of Tasmanians to improve food literacy* within their community by providing workforce training and resources.

3. Continue to fund and collaborate with a mix of program partners in communities across a number of settings, which use a range of strategies to facilitate cultural change towards healthy lifestyle and food choices.

4. Work with programs currently provided and/or funded by DHHS by providing advice, resources and facilitating partnerships to improve access to affordable healthy food. We will especially seek to partner with organisations already working with communities and individuals at risk of food insecurity to ensure we reach those most in need.

Networking and collaboration across sectors

5. Contribute up to date resources, tools, information and best practice food security stories and case studies to the Healthy Food Access Portal, as part of the Healthy Tasmania Portal.

6. Raise awareness through representation and facilitating information sharing the broad health and economic benefits of increasing access to healthy food. In particular access to vegetables and fruit through farmers markets, local food cooperatives and tourism initiatives.

7. Create opportunities through *A Healthy Tasmania* to advocate for whole of government action on food. This could be through updating the Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Policy and / or establishment of an inter-sectoral food coalition.

Research and evaluation

8. Work with the DHHS epidemiology team to analyse, report, and disseminate updates on food security data for the 2016 Tasmanian Population Health Survey.

9. Work with UTAS to improve monitoring and surveillance of food security in Tasmania.

10. Work with community sector organisations to increase their capacity to measure and share the outcomes and outputs of their work.

Research and evaluation

11. Share our findings with future funding initiatives. In particular, that:

    a. Providing longer term funding for community food programs allows them to become sustainable.

b. Partnerships are essential and to include performance measures which demonstrate partnerships.

Conclusion

While it was not possible to talk to everyone working to improving access to healthy food in Tasmania, we are grateful to the many participants in this evaluation, who took the time to talk to us and share their knowledge.

The people we spoke to feel that addressing food security in the state is something we need to work on together. By investing in the community, government can improve resilience and capacity to effect change. This investment (either in the form of new funding or reorientation of existing funding) is required now to address food security and reduce the inequalities in health outcomes within Tasmania.

By acting now, we can continue to build on the progress made in recent years. We have indications that by working with communities and across sectors to improve access to affordable healthy food a number of economic and social benefits are generated.

6 Appendices

6.1   Interview resources

6.1.1   Semi-structured interview questions

Public Health Services Helicopter Evaluation of the progress against the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy 2015

Below is schedule of questions for semi-structured interviews to be conducted with stakeholders working to address food security in Tasmania. The general questions (A and D) are for use with all participants, with some additional questions (B and C) for specific groups.

    A. **General Questions - all participants**

    B. **Community organisations - for example Community Houses, grassroots community organisations and individuals.**

    C. **Funding bodies, research organisations and key sector stakeholders**

    D. **Final questions – all participants**

A General questions

1. What is your interest or role in Food Security or improving local food systems?
2. Can you briefly describe your role and the project, initiative or research you were/are involved in?
3. What funding sources have you had (including re-orientation of existing funding) to progress your project, initiative or research?
4. Have you had any support from Public Health Services (PHS) in your project/s or program? If YES
    a. What type of support? (for example sat on steering committee, communication and promotion, funding or in-kind resources)
    b. What were the benefits or drawbacks of the support?
    c. Do you feel PHS has recognised the work you have done to improve food security?
5. Did you did work in partnership with any other organisations? If YES
    a. Who were they?
    b. Was the partnership successful?
    c. What made the partnership work well / not work well?
    d. Will these partnerships continue into the future?

B Questions for community funded projects or organisations

6. Are you working with any community groups or organisations to address the causes of food insecurity? For example to improve food access, education and skills, social isolation

   a. What were benefits of partnership or their involvement in your project?

   b. What were the challenges?

7. Did your initiative reach individuals, families and communities who were most at risk of food insecurity? How do you know?

   a. What made it easier / harder to address food security in the target group of your initiative?

   b. Did you reach any other community organisations or groups that you did not expect too?

8. What changed because of your work?

   a. Did your work make a difference in the local food supply? What were the changes?

   b. Did your work aim to create a social enterprise or business? If so, how successful was it?

   c. Has there been any change in skills, knowledge, or confidence of any of the following because of your initiative?

      - Individuals

      - Your staff and volunteers

      - Your organisation

   d. Did the capacity of the 'community food program' change as a result of any of the projects (e.g. cooking, gardening etc)

   e. Were there more opportunities for social connections to be made based around food e.g. greater opportunities for social inclusion

   f. Were opportunities for training and qualifications increased as a result of any your project?

   g. Was the connection between schools and community members increased as a result of your project?

   h. Did your initiative in any way increasing the capacity and strength of informal food supply sector (non-main stream food production and retail sector) to be able to provide a reliable source of fruit and vegetables to low income communities?

   i. Were there any unexpected changes because of your initiative?

9. Sustainability of Food Security activity in Tasmania

   a. Do you think that other communities or groups could learn from what you have done? What could they learn?

    b.   What ongoing impact will your initiative/work have?

    c.   Have you been able to find ways to continue the work that you are doing? For example – have you found more funding or other support?

C Questions for major institution or funding organisations

10. Do you know if your work has made a difference for future funding or directions for government, local government, and business or not for profit sectors?

11. Sustainability of Food Security funding and research activity in Tasmania

    a.   Do you think that other organisations could learn from what you have done? What could they learn?

    b.   What ongoing impact will your initiative/research have within your organisations?

    c.   Have you been able to find ways to continue the work that you are doing? For example – have you found more funding or other support? E.g. reorientation of current funding

D Final general questions

12. Have you heard of the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy – Food for All Tasmanians (2012)?

13. Do you think having a Tasmanian Food Security Strategy (2012) has been useful to you or your organisation?

14. Is there anything else that I should have asked?

15. Is there anyone else that you think we should talk to about food security projects in Tasmania?

16. Are you interested in keeping in contact with PHS and being part of a food security network in Tasmania? Would you like us to keep you in the loop about how this work progresses?

6.1.2   Participant information sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Tasmanian Food Security Strategy Evaluation 2015

We want to ask you about food security or food system activity in Tasmania since 2010, which you or your organization may have been involved in.   Catlin Saunders and Alison Ward from Public Health Services (DHHS) are conducting the evaluation.

1.   'What is the purpose of the evaluation?'

The evaluation will look at what has been the result of the food security projects and initiatives in Tasmania. It will look at projects funded through the Tasmanian Food Security Fund (TFSF), the Food for All Tasmanians (FFAT) grants, the Social Determinants of Health funding (SDOH), and the Healthy Food Access Tasmania (HFAT) project. The evaluation will also include projects which have been funded through other sources (e.g. self-funded or through crowd funding).

The evaluation will look at:

- The key successes and challenges of food security projects
- What activities become self-sustaining and what factors influenced sustainability
- How well food security projects in the state reflect the goals and objectives outlined in the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy, and what still needs to be done to progress the strategy.

The results will help guide any future funding opportunities and help find out who should be working together.

2. 'Why I am being asked?'

We are asking you because you are working or volunteering to help improve food security or food systems in Tasmania.

3. 'What does this evaluation involve?'

We are asking you to take part in a 30-40 minute recorded interview. The interviews will be semi-structured and recorded using a Sony MP3 IC Recorder and transcribed. Where possible the interviews will be held face to face at a mutually agreed time and place. If we cannot meet face to face then a telephone interview is an option.

We want you to know that your involvement is this evaluation is voluntary. We will be pleased if you talk to us, but we respect your right to say no. There will be no problems if you decide not to talk to us. If you want to stop at any time, you can do so without explaining why. All information we collect will be kept confidential, and your name will not be used in any publication about the research. All of the

research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of Public Health Services in Hobart or Launceston, DHHS, Tasmania, Launceston, Tasmania.

4. Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

The findings of the evaluation will help us find the best ways to support improving food security for all Tasmanians. What we find will help inform future policy and funding decisions.

5. Are there any possible risks expected from being part of the evaluation?

There are no specific risks expected by taking part in the evaluation. Any information you give us will be kept anonymous.

6. **What if I have questions about this research?**

If you would like to discuss anything about this evaluation, please feel free to contact any of the investigators below:

Primary Contacts

Catlin Saunders on ph (03) 6166 0716 OR email catlin.saunders@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Alison Ward on ph (03) 6777 1885 OR email Alison.ward@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Secondary Contacts

Julie Williams   Julie.williams@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Once we have analyzed the information we will be emailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the evaluation.

The Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this evaluation. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote [*HREC project number: H14167*].

Thank you for taking the time to consider this evaluation.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

6.1.3 Consent form

Tasmanian Food Security Strategy Evaluation 2015
CONSENT FORM

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for the evaluation.

2. The nature and possible effects of the evaluation have been explained to me.

3. I understand that my involvement in the evaluation may be as a:

   – Participant who will take part in a 30-40 minute recorded interview. The interviews will be semi-structured, recorded and transcribed. Where possible the interviews will be conducted face to face at a time and place convenient for the participant. If a face to face interview is not possible then a telephone interview is an option. As a participant you will be asked questions about the project you have been involved with.

4. I understand that there are no specific risks with participation in this evaluation:

   – participation in the evaluation is entirely voluntary and there is no obligation to take part in the study

5. I understand that all evaluation data will be securely stored on the Public Health Services DHHS premises for five years, and will then be destroyed.

6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

7. I agree that evaluation data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.

8. I understand that the evaluators will maintain my confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

9. I agree to participate in this evaluation, and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and if I so wish, may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.

Name of Participant:

Signature: Date:

Statement by Investigator

☐ I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of Investigator:

Signature   of
Investigator:

Date:

Caitlin Saunders caitlin.saunders@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Phone: 6166 0716

Alison Ward alison.ward@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Phone: 6777 1987

6.1.4   Ethics application

Available on request.

6.2   Food security and Healthy Tasmania

The Healthy Tasmania Strategy released in July 2016 outlines the Tasmanian Government's five-year vision for Tasmania to have the healthiest population in Australia. The Healthy Tasmania plan identifies nutrition and physical activity as an area for priority action to improve health.

The Healthy Tasmania strategy has six key principles for action, to help Tasmania become the healthiest state in Australia. How the six key principles of the Healthy Tasmania strategy relate to food security are described in sub-sections to below.

The Healthy Tasmania Strategy outlines change needs good public policy, and people and communities creating local action and taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

A Healthy Tasmania also identifies the need to focus on improving health and reducing health inequalities by working with the community. Creating local food solutions are a way communities can work together to improve their health.

Focus on people and communities

People and communities are at the core of the Healthy Tasmania strategy, because community ownership of projects and programs is essential for success.

Projects funded through DHHS (the *food for all Tasmanians* grants), the Heart Foundation (*healthy food access Tasmania* project) and Primary Health Tasmania (the *social determinants of health* funding) all focussed on supporting local strategies and actions. Individual communities were encouraged to work on the challenges that they faced in a way that was relevant to them.

Facilitate coordination, communication and collaboration between sectors to improve health outcomes

The Healthy Tasmania strategy highlights the need for collaboration to achieve better health as a state. Five years ago, the Tasmanian Food Security Council identified that there was an uncoordinated approach to address food security within the state, which was affecting the effectiveness of initiatives aimed to improve food security.

Since this time DHHS, the Heart Foundation, Primary Health Tasmania and the University of Tasmania have provided leadership collectively. The University of Tasmania recently conducted a network mapping analysis [4], which showed the strength of relationships between lead agencies and organisations working to improve food security within the state.

Take action that promotes health through responsible partnerships

DHHS has been a leader in fostering partnerships and linking organisations together.

There was recognition of the importance of working in partnership to improve food security from the start. Funding criteria for food security projects (for the *Tasmanian Food Security Fund*, *Food For All Tasmanians* grants and *Healthy Food Access Tasmania* grants) required groups to work collaboratively. Coalitions rather than individual organisations were successful with funding. How this contributed to successful outcomes is described in section 4.1.1 of this report.

The Healthy Tasmania strategy outlines that all levels of government need to work together. One of the major areas of progress in recent years has been the increasing involvement of local government in addressing food security and their role is described in in this report.

Communities have been able to develop partnerships and connect in innovative ways such as using social media and e-communication methods. Several workshops and public forums have been held across the state. This sharing of knowledge and ideas as well as network, have enabled further activity and innovation.

Reduce inequalities in health

Food security is an issue affecting disadvantaged individuals and communities. Recent food security initiatives commissioned by the state and commonwealth governments (including the Tasmanian Food Security Fund, Food for All Tasmanians and the Healthy Food Access project) have occurred mostly in areas of identified need.

Need was identified through the SEFI data and Food Security mapping conducted by the Heart Foundation's Healthy Food Access Project. These areas also have the highest rate of diet and smoking related disease.

Improving healthy food access and supply is a key component to improving population health and reducing the burden of chronic disease.

Make health information publicly accessible

The Healthy Tasmania strategy describes it is important to make health information more available, to help individuals and communities have the information they need to make choices about their health and wellbeing.

Resources have been developed (refer to appendix 1) to help communities plan how to improve food security. These include:

- A guide for community food start-ups, to help communities build profitable social enterprises (developed by Eat Well Tasmania).

- A health food basket app, to help people compare cost of healthy food across the state (developed by the University of Tasmania).

- Local Government food access profiles, to help local councils identify specific challenges and opportunities in their area (developed by the Heart Foundation).

- An interactive local food access map, showing where healthy food is grown and sold across the state (developed by the Heart Foundation).

- Case studies and success stories from local food projects, to help share learnings and practical ideas for community groups to use in their own areas (developed by DHHS).

Many of these resources have been developed using health literacy principles making the content more available.

Strengthen prevention by building the evidence-based and understanding what works

The Healthy Tasmania strategy states the importance of evaluating the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of projects and programs to ensure that initiatives are cost-effective and meeting the needs of the community.

As part of the work conducted in the area of food security since 2012, the University of Tasmania has worked alongside DHHS, the Heart Foundation and Primary Health Tasmania to conduct ongoing research and evaluation. A number of qualitative and quantitative research studies have been undertaken by the University of Tasmania (refer to appendix 2), which have contributed to the evidence-base in this area. Tasmania has now become a recognised leader in the area of food security research within Australia.

Examples of the research conducted in the state include:

- Market basket surveys, comparing the cost of healthy food in communities and identifying 'food deserts' where healthy food is not available.

- Local food systems research, identifying challenges and opportunities for growers and producers in the state.

- Stakeholder mapping which has identified the key organisations, businesses and community groups who work to address food security in Tasmania, and how these organisations work together.

Data collection is an identified as a continuing need, to build the evidence-base further.

There is now strong interest at a community level to improve food systems, and to increase affordability and access to healthy food. The government's development of good public policy and a relatively modest investment in small-scale grants have led to significant outcomes at a community level. Strategic collaboration with the not-for-profit sector combined with significant in-kind support and volunteer time at a local level has meant that despite the small initial investment, communities across the state have been able to drive local action.

DHHS has worked with community groups to grow their capacity and evaluate the effectiveness of their work using tools such as the Most Significant Change method [5]. This helps plan future investments in programs and projects that are most likely to be effective, accessible and of the highest possible quality.

6.3   Food security resources

www.foodsolution.org.au/

www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au/

1. Tasmanian Local Food Supply project - www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au/tasmanian-local-food-supply-project/

2. Social Network mapping of Tasmania Food security Networks www.healthyfoodaccesstasmania.org.au/tasmanian-healthy-eating-resilience-evaluation-social-network-analysis/

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