

Summary

Review and analysis of Tasmanian food environment

Phase 1 strategic review and literature scan

Through the 2024 Tasmanian State Election, the Tasmanian Government committed to a new whole-of-government Food Resilience Strategy. The initial phase of developing the new strategy involved the completion of a strategic review and literature scan that included:

- An evaluation of the Food Relief to Food Resilience: Tasmanian Food Security Strategy 2021-2024 (previous strategy).
- An evaluation of the Food Relief to Food Resilience Action Plan 2023-2025 (Action Plan).
- An analysis of Tasmania's food relief and food resilience environment, including community needs and gaps.
- A review and analysis of relevant food relief and food resilience research and strategic approaches.

Independent Tasmanian expert Leah Galvin Consulting was engaged in late 2024 to deliver this Review. Interviews with key stakeholders informed the development of a report used to guide the new Strategy.

Evaluation of the previous Tasmania's Food Relief to Food Resilience Strategy 2021-2024

The evaluation of the previous strategy highlighted the shift from emergency food relief to sustainable solutions. While the previous strategy was developed soon after the COVID-19 pandemic, the goal to shift from 'food relief to food resilience' was ambitious but was necessary to help commence Tasmanians pathway towards food resilience.

Benchmarking against best practice approaches was an aspect of the evaluation, which proposed adopting evidence-based frameworks from other Australian jurisdictions advocating for systemic change.

Priorities for future policies included:

- Strengthening data collection.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Collaboration across government agencies and food relief sectors.
- Addressing root causes of food insecurity through a comprehensive, sustainable food systems approach.
- Longer-term investment into food resilience support activities.

Key recommendations from the evaluation include integrating a holistic approach considering health, sustainability and equity, while supporting local communities to lead place-based initiatives.

Evaluation of the action plan

The evaluation of the action plan highlighted the progress made in fostering collaboration amongst stakeholders, and creating and delivering initiatives like community gardens, food literacy programs and innovative emergency food relief distribution models.

Challenges identified included disruption to collective planning, unclear governance structures and resourcing constraints. While the majority of the actions had been completed, some actions were still progressing. The existing action plan is current until the end of 2025, and it is proposed that a supplementary action plan is developed in 2026 to support the new strategy.

Key recommendations from the evaluation include future consideration of strengthening multi-sector governance, while integrating research and community sector expertise into policymaking, focus on nutrition standards, supporting local food systems (producers, processors, wholesalers, and food services), and empowering communities to lead food resilience initiatives.

Analysis of Tasmania's food environment

The analysis highlighted key opportunities for Tasmania that addressed fresh and nutritious food affordability, and sustainability. By embedding nutrition, dignity in accessing support, and culturally appropriate responses into food support options, Tasmanians can have more agency in their dietary preferences.

Enhanced collaboration and connection at a state, regional and local level would enhance data-sharing between government, community organisations, business and local stakeholders, and support building a resilient and sustainable food system for Tasmanians.

Food insecurity has a profound impact on physical and mental health outcomes, increasing rates of chronic illness, social isolation and state healthcare costs. The analysis identified that while Tasmania produces an abundance of food, distribution challenges and affordability issues prevent equitable access to healthy food.

Significant drivers of food insecurity in Tasmania and nationwide included rising living costs, housing costs, and inequitable and inconsistent income levels, with vulnerable groups facing even higher risk.

Key recommendations included adopting a food systems approach to food resilience by integrating policy across sectors that expands local food initiatives. This would aim to reduce the reliance on food importation and create more local economic benefits.

Review and analysis of research and strategic approaches

A review of Australian and international frameworks, evidence, tools and guidelines for models and approaches that may be suitable for adaption in Tasmania highlighted the need to continue the transition from emergency food relief to food secure communities.

Suggested strategic approaches included strengthening local food networks, introducing social supermarket models, and supporting community-driven programs that improve affordable and nutritious food access.

Governance reforms, such as cross-departmental, business and community sector collaboration were deemed crucial to capture and link all areas. Tasmania is abundant in agricultural produce, and local food processing would provide the opportunity to localise our food system, and strengthen our connection points between producers, business, organisations and institutions, and the greater community.

Key recommendations included a food systems approach that ensured climate resilience, health and social equity were prioritised, addressing the challenges of geographic isolation and economic disparity. By embracing local solutions and cross-sector collaboration.

Through a collective approach, Tasmania can lead in developing innovative models to achieve food resilience in the long term while protecting its environment and community wellbeing.