

Ten ways local government can act on food security

Overview



Access to adequate and nutritious food is essential to good health and is a basic human right. Unfortunately, large numbers of Australians don't have regular access to affordable, healthy foods. Irregular access to safe, nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable food from non-emergency sources is known as 'food insecurity'.

Food insecurity impacts on physical, mental and social wellbeing. It is much more common than we think; people can experience food insecurity during their lifetime for various reasons such as lack of income, an inability to walk, drive and carry shopping home, or inadequate food storage and cooking facilities.

The most vulnerable groups include people with little or no income, refugees, single parents, indigenous communities, people with chronic illnesses or disabilities and people living in remote or isolated areas.

Food for All

VicHealth's *Food for All* program funded local councils to improve access to nutritious food and to influence the cultural, social, economic and environmental barriers that poor and disadvantaged communities face in healthy eating.

Responses to food insecurity can be made in each of the four environments: the natural, built, economic and social. Local government is ideally placed to develop locally relevant, integrated and long-lasting strategies to address the barriers to food security.

Eight projects in nine councils were funded during 2005–2008. Six councils received extended funding for a further two years to 2010. The councils partnered with community health and welfare agencies, local businesses and settlement service providers to deliver initiatives that address specific, local issues.

Information sheets: Ten ways local government can act on food security

The information sheets, 'Ten ways local government can act on food security', are the result of valuable learnings gleaned from the individual *Food for All* projects, including the local project evaluations and the abundant practice wisdom accumulated by the participating councils.

The **ten information sheets** are designed to assist local government in advancing a food security agenda. They describe ten broad categories of action to take to assist residents, especially those vulnerable to food insecurity, with access to affordable, culturally appropriate, and healthy foods.

There are also **ten micro-movies** to give audio-visual representation of the content.

The ten information sheets and micro-movies are:

1. Allocate responsibility – *identify who carries the food security agenda*
2. Building the local picture – *establish an evidence base*
3. Policy and plans – *incorporate food security into council policy and plans*

For more information about VicHealth's work on food security go to www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/foodforall

4. Setting a good example – *model food access in council-run activities, facilities and programs*
5. Regulatory and fiscal power – *use Council's regulatory and fiscal powers to drive change*
6. Land use planning – *influence land use, business mix and the built environment*
7. Healthy eating for residents – *supporting residents to adopt healthy eating practices*
8. Growing food locally – *supporting residents to grow and harvest food*
9. Getting food and residents together
10. Advocacy – *Get your voice heard: advocate on food security*

Further reading

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