



Nourishing Our Country

## Waste Strategy Directions Paper

OzHarvest would like to thank the Government of Western Australia and Waste Authority for the opportunity to provide comment on the Directions Paper for the Review of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 (the strategy). This submission focuses on the avoid element of the strategy and its interaction with food waste,

### About OzHarvest

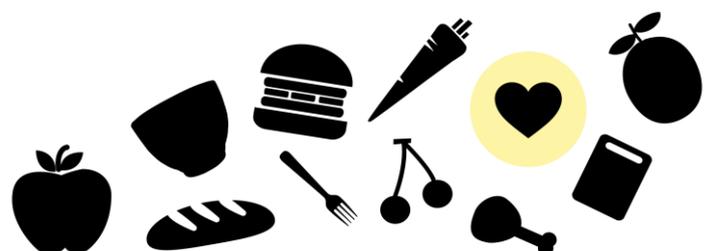
OzHarvest was founded by Ronni Kahn in 2004 and is Australia's leading food rescue organisation, collecting quality surplus food from more than 3,000 businesses, including supermarkets, restaurants, cafes, hotels, retailers, airports and retail food outlets. Every week over 250 tonnes of food is saved from going to landfill and delivered to 1,800+ charitable agencies free of charge helping to make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable people across Australia. OzHarvest uses agile just-in-time logistics to target end-of-the-day fresh and short life food, preventing it from going to landfill. The food is distributed on the same day, directly and free of charge to charities. This also saves greenhouse gas emissions caused by organic food waste.

OzHarvest also provides curriculum materials and runs education programs including:

- FEAST – a curriculum-aligned food waste behaviour change program for primary and secondary school children; and
- 'Use it Up' - A household consumer campaign that educates and provides tips and tools to households to help them reduce their food waste.

OzHarvest operates in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, Sydney, and in regional communities. Since inception OzHarvest has delivered over 220 million meals and saved over 73,000 tonnes of food from landfill.

In Western Australia OzHarvest commenced operations in late 2014 and last year we rescued 1,565 tonnes of food and provided 3.14 million meals.





### Submission

OzHarvest recognises the importance of the objectives of avoid, recover and protect in the strategy across different waste streams. However, this submission will comment on food waste predominately through the lens of the avoid objective.

We acknowledge that the state’s goal of a 20 per cent reduction in waste generation per person in WA by 2030 includes the need to reduce food waste. However, a standalone food waste target that is consistent with the federal government’s 2030 target to halve Australia’s food waste would help ensure consistency across jurisdictions. Setting a stand-alone target would also help ensure food waste reduction is considered an important part of any new strategy.

Australia produces 7.6 million tonnes of food waste every year, which costs the economy \$36.6 billion.<sup>1</sup> This is enough food to feed everyone in Australia for six months. One third of this food waste comes from our home.<sup>2</sup> Food production, manufacture and retailing takes a huge amount of water, energy, land and other resources. When food isn’t used other resources are also being wasted. Food waste occurs all along the supply chain. Below is a breakdown.

Households (32%)	Primary Production (22%)	Manufacturing (17%)	Retail (7%)
		Hospitality and Food Services (16%)	Distribution (3%)
			Institutions (3%)

<sup>1</sup> [FIAL \(2021\). National Food Waste Strategy Feasibility Study](#)

<sup>2</sup> [National Food Waste Baseline, 2019](#)



## Households:

At a household level 2.5 million (over 30% of total) tonnes of food is wasted from our homes each year and 70% of this food is perfectly edible.<sup>3</sup> This works out to more than 20kgs per household per month. According to a study titled *'Food waste, In-home research on food waste in Western Australian households'* Western Australian households produce just over 4kg of food waste a week.<sup>4</sup>

There is an opportunity to increase the amount of food waste being addressed through avoid behaviours rather than just relying on recover activities through increasing availability of FOGO bins. The ongoing roll out of FOGO bins should be partnered with initiatives to help householders and businesses reduce food waste before it needs to become part of the recovery phase.

Education delivered in school, community and households can help ensure food waste is avoided. Since 2020 OzHarvest has delivered our FEAST program to 135 schools and 8,718 students in Western Australia. The program is available to primary and high school students. Teachers are provided with curriculum aligned materials and training to help them deliver food waste and sustainability education. School based interventions play an important part in helping reducing food waste.<sup>5</sup>

Household education is also critical to ensuring food waste is avoided. This is particularly important with the ongoing roll out of FOGO bins at the household level. This rollout provides an opportunity to ensure that food and organic waste is addressed in a more holistic way so that the new bin on its own isn't seen as a solution to address food and other organic waste.

In 2020, OzHarvest commissioned BehaviourWorks Australia to undertake a world-first study to understand which household behaviours have the most impact when it comes to reducing food waste.

The published report *Halving Household Food Waste: Which Behaviours Matter?*<sup>6</sup> Identified key behaviours for food waste reduction which were:

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<sup>3</sup> [FIAL \(2021\). National Food Waste Strategy Feasibility Study](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Food waste, In home research on food waste in Western Australian households, November 2021](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Boulet et al. 2022. Influencing across multiple levels: The positive effect of a school-based intervention on food waste and household behaviours.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Halving Household Food Waste: Which Behaviours Matter?, 2021](#)



1. Make a weekly meal that combines food that needs to be used up
2. Implement a use-it-up shelf in the fridge, freezer or pantry

From these behavioural insights, OzHarvest launched the Use It Up campaign and pioneered a new product, Use It Up Tape, to make it easy to waste less at home. BehaviourWorks Australia conducted an impact study with households using the tape which showed the impact on behavioural change by acting as a visual prompt, a labelling tool which helped with meal planning and family communication. The results revealed<sup>7</sup>:

- 40% reduction in the average total amount of household food wasted
- Perishable items such as fresh vegetables, fruit and meat reduced by almost 50%

The roll out of the Use It Up Tape is complemented by the creation and dissemination of [recipes](#) that focus on commonly wasted food items.

Government endorsement and support of education and consumer education programs such as the Use it Up and FEAST initiatives can ensure reduction in food waste through encouraging avoidance behaviour. The FOGO rollout to households provides an opportunity to provide household education activities such as 'Use it Up' and help reduce the creation of food waste in the first place. In turn this will help ensure lower levels of FOGO waste and FOGO cross contamination helping to make the FOGO bin rollout more effective.

Business:

Food waste reduction goal should be established for businesses in WA to encourage changed behaviours. Business has a role to play in helping to reduce food waste and helping to achieve the goals outlined in the strategy. Stop Food Waste Australia's [Food Pact program](#) provides an opportunity for businesses to develop food waste action plans that are customised to their needs. Government promotion of this program through its networks could help accelerate voluntary business action on food waste.

Examples from other Australian jurisdictions can also help guide what is possible in the business space.

New South Wales through their [Waste and Sustainability Materials Strategy](#) have committed to requiring the separate collection of food waste from targeted businesses

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<sup>7</sup> [Use It Up Tape Impact Study, 2023](#)



and other entities that generate the highest volumes of food waste, including large supermarkets and hospitality businesses by 2025. By 2025 large supermarkets will also be required to report on their surplus food donation to food rescue organisations, This sits alongside their commitment to have full FOGO bin rollout to all NSW households by 2030.

In South Australia, the *Prices (Prohibition on Return of Unsold Bread) Amendment Act 2002* prohibits supermarkets entering sale and return arrangements where they can return bread that isn't sold to bakeries.<sup>8</sup> This makes them responsible for their own bread waste and reduces the amount of overall bread waste that is produced. Evaluation of a pre 2002 temporary piece of legislation that had the same intention as the Amendment Act of 2002 found that bread wastage in South Australia was at 6% compared to between 11 – 20% in other jurisdictions.

*Although the link between the bread regulations and the lower wastage rates cannot be demonstrated empirically, it is probable that the regulations are at least a significant contributing factor in the reduced level of wastage. The regulations force those who have the greatest power to control stock levels, the retailers, to bear the risk of unsold bread. This means that those retailers order bread in quantities that they can realistically expect to sell, reducing the level of wastage.<sup>9</sup>*

Strengthening the 'avoid' elements of the strategy particularly in relation to food waste provides an opportunity for WA to reach its objectives and to elevate the impact of the FOGO bin roll out.

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<sup>8</sup> [Bread and Bakery Sector Action Plan Summary 2022-2025](#), p.14

<sup>9</sup> [National Competition Council, National Competition Policy Review of the South Australian Prices Act 1948](#), Final Report, March 1999, p.37