



Nourishing Our Country

2024-25 Pre Budget Submission

Enhancing WA's food security and addressing cost of living

9 November 2023



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Introduction

Foodbank WA and OzHarvest welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to the Government of Western Australia's budget process. Some of the information in this submission has been presented to government before, but this submission brings together the needs of the food relief sector in Western Australia (WA) holistically. Both organisations play an important and complementary role in helping address food insecurity in WA. Each organisation undertakes food rescue, food relief and program delivery in different but complementary ways to achieve our goals. This submission asks for a total of \$6m across the two organisations for infrastructure, emergency preparedness, food literacy and nutrition education. This investment will help to improve food security across WA as it will allow for greater efficiency and expansion of Foodbank WA's and OzHarvest's complimentary operations. Elements of this submission can also be incorporated into any cost-of-living package from the government.

About Foodbank

Foodbank WA is focussed on Feed.Educate.Advocate which covers food relief, nutrition education for all ages and sharing the stories of those we serve.

Our food relief service is anchored around 6 branches in Perth, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Albany, Bunbury and Peel. Each branch has mobile service locations that are visited weekly, with over 50 stops now in our weekly calendar. Last year we distributed 5 million kgs of food to over 14,000 cardholders, with an average of 720 households supported each weekday. Our supply network is predominantly donated through supermarket partners, manufacturers and growers and the range includes food, nappies, pet food, hygiene products and household cleaning items.

Our nutrition education program covers all lifestages and is an evidence based, behaviour change series of programs that strive to support participants to make better choices for life by empowering through knowledge. In FY23, we had over 7,000 attendances at programs across the whole of WA.

All of which we could not do without our 500+ School Breakfast Program schools and 400+ agency partners, including OzHarvest.

About OzHarvest

OzHarvest WA is currently providing nearly 1.8 million kilograms of food relief each year through its food rescue operations and the Nourishing Our Schools program. Every week fresh and nutritious food is delivered to 179 charities across Perth and the Greater Metropolitan Area, of which 112 (including educational institutions) are feeding vulnerable children, youth and families. There are 23 charities on the waiting list for food and those we already support, say they can always take more to meet demand. OzHarvest collects quality surplus and nourishing food donated by 418 local supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and other food businesses in WA. We target end-of-the-day fresh food within expiry date, preventing it from ending up in landfill.



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OzHarvest WA also provides a curriculum aligned food waste behaviour change program for primary and high school children known as FEAST (Food Education and Sustainability Training).

Working Together

Foodbank WA and OzHarvest in WA provide a more comprehensive and complimentary service today, then ever before. This is a result of the growing demand and the importance both organisations place on food safety, range, complementary networks and supply. While we both rescue and redistribute food we have different operating models.

REACH: Foodbank WA has been expanding their reach into the community around their existing branch networks. OzHarvest has also been able to take steps to expand their network with a new branch in Peel, just around the corner from the local Foodbank facility.

SUPPLY: Foodbank focusses on large scale, longer life foods on pallets and trucks and has large storage facilities. OzHarvest is nimble and able to manage rescue and distribution of food on a same day basis. Both have areas of overlap and there is enough supply available to ensure both groups can implement effective distribution.

DELIVERY: OzHarvest and Foodbank both support other charity organisations with food. OzHarvest offers the food direct and free of charge to charities which empowers them to distribute food quickly. Foodbank charges a token handling fee and referred cardholders can select the foods they want.

WASTE: Both organisations are focussed on minimising waste. Both organisations rescue good quality surplus food using rigorous food safety standards and maintaining a robust cold chain.

EDUCATION: Both organisations recognise that food insecurity cannot be addressed by food relief alone. Both organisations offer education programs to help grow community food literacy.

Food Insecurity in WA.

Over 388,000 households in Western Australia including 198,000 with children, experience food insecurity annually.¹ The demand for food relief is growing in WA as it is in the rest of the country. The size of the state means that it is extremely difficult to deliver appropriate food relief to regional and remote areas. Even some metropolitan areas of Perth are being underserved because of a lack of resources. As concluded by the June 2023 report from the Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young people 'Report 6 - Hungry for Change addressing food insecurity for children and young people affected by poverty.' (Hungry for Change Report) "Food relief is largely uncoordinated across the state and is not adequately or sustainably funded to meet the ever-increasing demand."²

The nutritional profile of the food is also extremely important. Food insecurity is addressed through addressing quality and quantity of food. Improving the nutritional content of food relief provided

¹ FoodBank Hunger Report WA data 2023

² Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People, [Report 6 HUNGRY FOR CHANGE Addressing food insecurity for children and young people affected by poverty](#). Pg.xiii



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food is a focus of Foodbank and OzHarvest. The Joint Standing Committees report acknowledged that “a reliable supply of higher quality, nutritious food requires more funding.”³

Not having enough regular access to nutritious food has both short term and long term impacts on a child for both their physical and mental health, in turn this affects learning and employment outcomes across their lives.⁴ For adults and children “food insecurity is related to increased depression, stress and anxiety, poorer wellbeing and quality of life, and increased incidence of chronic health conditions.”⁵

Food literacy

Improving food literacy is an important part of addressing food insecurity. Ensuring that individuals can choose nutritious foods, plan and budget for meals, store the food correctly and prepare it are all parts of food literacy.

As outlined by Dr Roslyn Giglia, Foodbank WA’s Nutrition and Food Security Manager, “you can provide all the food relief you like, but if you do not teach children and adults how to choose, prepare, cook and share a meal, they cannot move beyond that.”⁶

Food literacy programs are delivered by both Foodbank and OzHarvest, this year OzHarvest’s, curriculum aligned Food Education and Sustainability Training (FEAST) was delivered in 85 Western Australian schools to approximately 6,000 participants, the program is targeted at upper primary and lower secondary students.⁷ Foodbank programs delivered 611 sessions to 7,092 attendees.⁸ Foodbank’s food literacy programs include a range of healthy eating and cooking programs covering a range of life stages including people living with a disability through their *Healthy Food for All Abilities* program. There is evidence that these specific programs or similar ones help increase an individual’s food literacy and food security.⁹

The Early Years partnership identified food security as a key priority for the 4 communities it is working in.¹⁰ With food security identified as a key priority, the food relief sector with expertise in both food relief and food literacy education should be brought into this trial.

³ Hungry for Change report, pg.43

⁴ [Food insecurity and hunger: A review of the effects on children’s health and behaviour](#), March 2015. [Food insecurity and child development: A State-of-the-Art Review](#), August 2021

⁵ [Food insecurity and socioeconomic disadvantage in Australia](#), January 2020

⁶ Dr Roslyn Giglia, Foodbank WA, [Joint Standing Committee Transcript of Evidence](#), 16 November 2022, p. 4

⁷ <https://www.education.ozharvest.org/>

⁸ <https://www.foodbank.org.au/WA/healthy-eating-cooking-programs> also see [Foodbank WA submission to Hungry for change inquiry](#), pgs 7 -10

⁹ [Effectiveness of Foodbank Western Australia’s Food Sensations® for Adults Food Literacy Program in Regional Australia](#)
[The Role of a Food Literacy Intervention in Promoting Food Security and Food Literacy—OzHarvest’s NEST Program](#)

¹⁰ Hungry for Change Report, p.122



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Ability of sector to meet demand

As already outlined food insecurity remains a growing problem in Western Australia. Both organisations are unable to meet the demand from the community. To meet the growing demand for food relief and to ensure that food literacy education is part of addressing food insecurity in Western Australia increased resources are required.

Budget Ask:

Infrastructure Investment:

To meet the growing demand for food relief and so food relief and food rescue can be provided across the state extra funding for both organisations is required.

1. OzHarvest new Perth Warehouse

OzHarvest require \$1m in funding for a new warehouse space which would increase the volume of rescue and redistributed food. The current space doesn't allow for enough storage of the non-perishable items that are being offered for collection. A larger space and funding would also provide for the construction of kitchen which means OzHarvest could provide cooked meals to be distributed alongside other food items.

2. Foodbank WA expansion into the North West

Since early 2021, Foodbank has been developing networks, consulting on design and proposing the creation of new hubs in Newman and Kununurra. Once we have established a north west hub, Foodbanks' learnings and networks can then take steps to ideally being able to create a total of 8 hubs across the region. The initial feasibility studies identified these towns to be Halls Creek, Port Hedland, Fitzroy Crossing, Meekathara and Broome. Detailed recommendations have been provided across many levels of government and departmental portfolios. We are seeking support of \$1m per hub to ensure we can establish self-sufficient hubs in these communities, which will pave the way for expansion into additional hubs across the region. Establishment of hubs allow for collaboration points with other relief agencies and will increase the availability of food in these regions.

Support to both organisations to expand will allow the government to achieve a comprehensive network of food relief services across the state that can then assist in implementing the proposed state guidelines for healthy food relief, as recommended by the 'Hungry for Change' report.¹¹

Preparedness for Emergency Response:

Both OzHarvest and Foodbank are participants in the State's Emergency Relief programs in situations of disaster. With support for expanding the infrastructure of both organisations, our facilities will be able to hold in date dry stock to improve our capabilities to assist in ER. Recent disasters have seen a lag in delivery of foods because of our geographic footprints. The supply of stock in these scenarios has also impacted the supply available for the day-to-day activities. To be more effective, ideally each

¹¹Hungry for Change Report, Recommendation 2



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organisation holds bulk purchased stock, already packaged. When required, each can then consider additional donated stock items to add to the relief food supply into areas of need.

Annual funding for managing the stock across different sites.

Foodbank \$400,000

OzHarvest \$100,000

Food literacy and nutrition education

To ensure further rollout of food literacy and nutrition education Foodbank WA and OzHarvest are seeking \$2m in annual investment to expand existing programs, this would allow increased delivery of programs to regional areas of WA.

Support for WACOSS Budget Submission

Foodbank and OzHarvest support the WACOSS Budget submission particularly those recommendations that relate to food security, specifically,

- Increase in emergency relief and financial counselling funding so that services can meet increasing demand, and support individuals out of hardship; and
- Creation of a universal child lunch program in all WA Schools.

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