

Food Relief Framework

Briefing

August 2019



The premise of the Food Relief Framework

Secure the basic right for every person in Western Australia to be food secure, with support from all sectors of the community

Overview

Context

Food insecurity is responsible for a growing social, health and economic burden in Australia, largely driven by financial hardship. According to Foodbank, over four million Australians experienced food insecurity at least once in the preceding 12 months in 2018, and more than 508,000 charitable meals are provided each month in this State.

Food relief across Western Australia is vast and varied – the sector is made up of multiple ‘segments’, including indirect and direct services (see Diagram 1). The sector struggles to meet the demand for food relief, with most stakeholders in the food relief system not resourced to respond adequately to the increasing demand and the complexity of issues facing people who experience food insecurity.

Current landscape

Lotterywest funded the Western Australian Council of Social Service to auspice the Food Relief Framework Project in 2017. The need for a framework came from the community sector after it was recognised that improvements to the service system can be made to better respond to need.

A WA Food Relief Framework Working Group was established and extensive stakeholder and community consultation across regional and metropolitan areas was undertaken. The high level findings paint a stark picture.

1. Food insecurity is rarely an emergency, it is much more likely to be entrenched and periodic, over a longer period, with limited pathways out.
2. There are major gaps in transport logistics and infrastructure between food retail, food rescue and food relief organisations.
3. Food relief is not adequate to meet the nutritional, cultural and social needs of those who experience food insecurity.
4. There is a wide range of food relief models, from queuing for food in parks to more dignified and socially acceptable methods, such as supermarket shopping vouchers or eating seated meals that allow individual choice.
5. Food insecurity does not exist in isolation and food relief services are not well integrated with other service areas.

6. The food relief sector is under-equipped to work in this complex environment, relying mainly on a voluntary workforce, often with limited resources.
7. There are no evaluation systems to map, monitor and measure the need for, or impact of, food relief services.
8. Critically, there is no central location in government for oversight and coordination.

The Framework

The conversations with stakeholders around the State, about what we needed to do to change this, mobilised the involvement and commitment of a diverse range of people, groups and agencies, including the state government. A new picture of food insecurity emerged. Importantly we established a baseline of food insecurity in WA through the development of the Food Stress Index.

In partnership with providers and consumers, we identified what good practice for services looks like and we designed a set of attributes that consumers can expect across service provision. We know what we need to do now to make sure we can assess the impact of service delivery going forward. And we have established some key platforms and resources to continue this work.

We now have a greater understanding of the different and integrated policy levers that can be used to alleviate the condition of poverty and food insecurity.

The WA Food Relief Framework is the roadmap to improved outcomes for people and families. It provides the basis for how we can work together to better assist those who experience food insecurity. The Framework also delivers a deeper understanding about why food insecurity exists in WA and sets out pathways that provide solutions to an issue that has far-reaching consequences.

This work was only possible because of the effective relationships built amongst us in the sector. We have role modelled what good cooperation and collaboration can look like. We have generated widespread interest. Other jurisdictions have told us that WA is leading the way. This foundational work will translate into better outcomes for people who live with food insecurity and entrenched hardship in the longer term.

Lotterywest recently granted additional funds to support the finalisation of specific activities that have arisen out of the Food Relief Framework and that go beyond the original scope of the Project.

To ensure enduring change we are now relying on others’ engagement and contributions.

The invitation

The Food Relief Framework invites all levels of civil society – government, community and the corporate and commercial sectors – to address gaps in food security in Western Australia.

With the WA Premier's leadership, the Food Relief Roundtable will be tasked with overseeing this. The invitation to key players from the different sectors to join will include all levels of government, producers, transporters, retailers, wholesalers, providers, researchers, funders, media, lawyers and emergency services, amongst others. The attention that this Framework has already garnered around Australia attests to how important this work is, and that the highest level of political, business and community representation on the Roundtable is therefore warranted.

In addition to overseeing and assisting the progression of the recommendations of the Framework, members of the Roundtable will bring new perspectives and ideas. This agenda of the Roundtable will span, but not be limited to, the following areas.

1. Initiatives and collaborations to improve appropriate and nutritious food security in Western Australia
 - a. Gaps in supply, transport and storage
 - b. Natural disaster management
 - c. Other factors that will increase food security
2. Measuring and monitoring
3. Food security governance and accountability for the next five years



Solutions

The summary of the recommendations listed here are interconnected and part of an overall food relief system, there is overlap between both the solutions and accountability for them.

MAPPING AND MONITORING

- ✓ Identify a host for the Food Stress Index and its data collection, to map, measure and monitor the potential risk of food insecurity and need for food relief across Western Australia

SUPPLY

- ✓ Prepare a submission for tax deductibility of transport and storage of rescued nutritious food to the Australian Taxation Office to increase the supply of these foods for food relief
- ✓ Convene an inaugural Food Relief Roundtable, comprising representatives from all segments of the WA system
- ✓ Expand platforms to share resources between the commercial and food rescue services
- ✓ Ensure safe, nutritious and affordable food for remote Aboriginal community stores and regional Aboriginal funerals
- ✓ Investment in infrastructure to distribute pre-packed frozen meals

PROVISION

- ✓ Support widespread use of outcomes oriented service delivery to promote flexible services tailored to needs and circumstances
- ✓ Ensure adequate funding component built into service contracts for backbone and centrally organised workforce support

- ✓ Continue developing and maintaining resources and platforms to assist providers with giving relevant information and referrals pathways, and strengthening local partnerships
- ✓ Pilot place-based funding for local solutions to food insecurity
- ✓ Continue progressing data collection and reporting systems with an outcomes focus
- ✓ Support widespread use of a volunteer Food Safety Code of Practice and other resources
- ✓ Support widespread adoption of food relief service provider Practice Principles

CONSUMPTION

- ✓ Support widespread adoption of Consumer and Provider Charter for food relief
- ✓ Design and trial a supermarket card voucher system, enabling consumers to shop in mainstream stores
- ✓ Explore, support and evaluate alternative models of providing food relief
- ✓ Ensure lived experience input into designing, implementing and evaluating food relief policies, services and responses

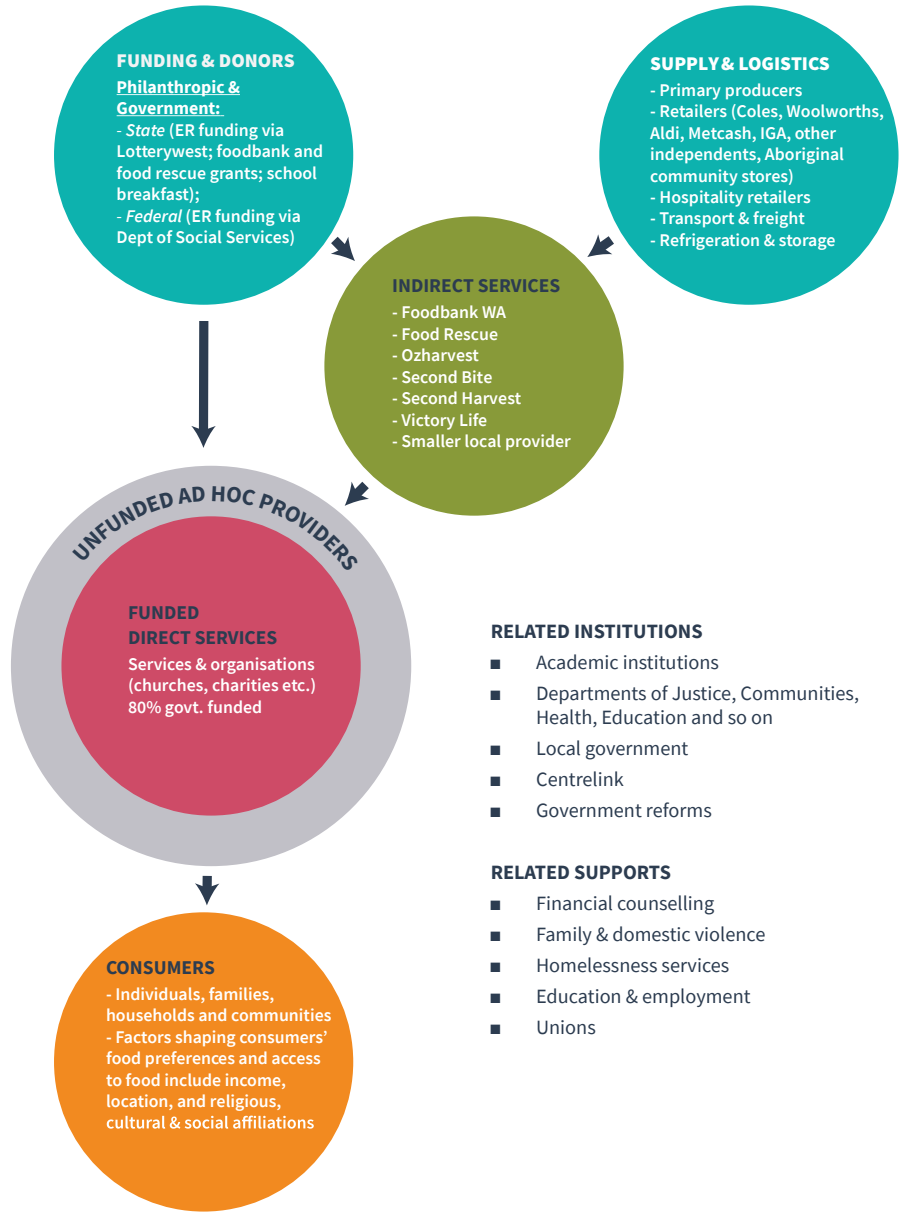
POLICY COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP

- ✓ Proactive Government leadership on an issue impacting many Western Australians
- ✓ Develop and resource a nutrition-focused food relief policy
- ✓ Ensure evidenced based and sustained funding for greater efficacy in service delivery
- ✓ Strengthen the role for and relationships with Local Government
- ✓ Align Food Relief Framework with current government reforms and priorities



Diagram 1

Map of the WA food relief system (how it works)



FUNDING & DONORS

Philanthropic & Government:
 - State (ER funding via Lotterywest; foodbank and food rescue grants; school breakfast);
 - Federal (ER funding via Dept of Social Services)

SUPPLY & LOGISTICS

- Primary producers
 - Retailers (Coles, Woolworths, Aldi, Metcash, IGA, other independents, Aboriginal community stores)
 - Hospitality retailers
 - Transport & freight
 - Refrigeration & storage

INDIRECT SERVICES

- Foodbank WA
 - Food Rescue
 - Ozharvest
 - Second Bite
 - Second Harvest
 - Victory Life
 - Smaller local provider

UNFUNDED AD HOC PROVIDERS

FUNDED DIRECT SERVICES

Services & organisations (churches, charities etc.)
 80% govt. funded

RELATED INSTITUTIONS

- Academic institutions
- Departments of Justice, Communities, Health, Education and so on
- Local government
- Centrelink
- Government reforms

RELATED SUPPORTS

- Financial counselling
- Family & domestic violence
- Homelessness services
- Education & employment
- Unions

CONSUMERS

- Individuals, families, households and communities
 - Factors shaping consumers' food preferences and access to food include income, location, and religious, cultural & social affiliations

Food Stress Index

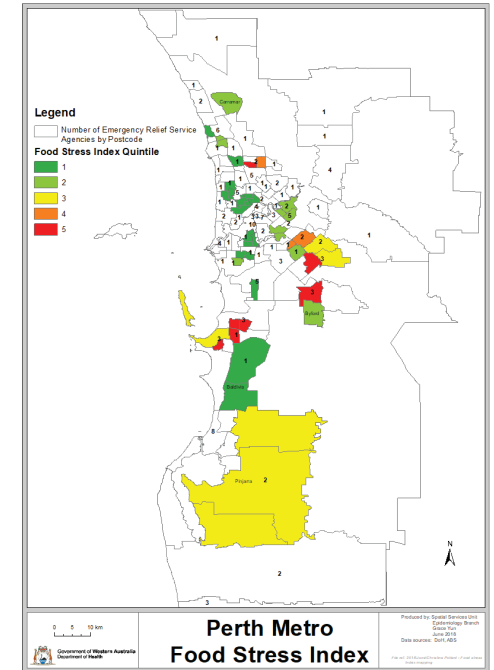
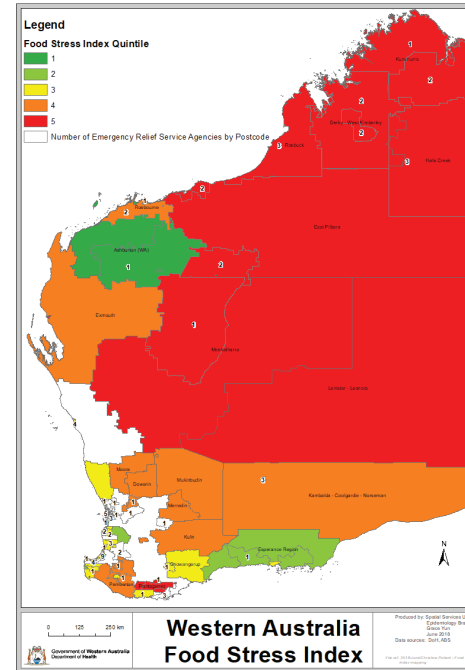
As mentioned, the Framework Working Group has overseen the development of a Food Stress Index, a tool that can geographically map food insecurity risks across the State. The tool can provide crude estimates of the types and amounts of food required for food relief.

The Food Stress Index combines multiple socio-economic data sets, which are designed as a measure of overall advantage or disadvantage, with food affordability. Food affordability is determined by applying the food prices from the WA Food Access and Cost Survey to basic nutritious meal plans to ascertain the proportion of weekly household income needed to purchase the food basket. Together these variables created the Index, able to predict the proportion of households in an area that are likely to be suffering

food stress. With this information, we are able to estimate the amount of food required for food stressed families in each geographic area.

The Food Stress Index can be used to estimate how much food relief is required for various scenarios, for example, the requirements for 100 per cent food relief at a local government area level in natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and earthquakes.

Food insecurity is increasingly in focus around Australia, and other states, industry and researchers are very interested in the Food Stress Index as a tool in the prediction of future need and targeted responses. The location-specific data generated via the Index will also be vital for a range of other sectors too.



**WACOSS
stands for
an inclusive,
just, and
equitable
society**

We advocate for social change to improve the wellbeing of Western Australians and to strengthen the community services sector that supports them.

