

MORWELL HUB FACT SHEET



ABOUT FOODBANK VICTORIA

Our vision is healthy food for all. We believe that all Victorians should have regular access to healthy and nutritious food. With 90 years' experience, Foodbank Victoria is the largest and oldest food relief charity in the state.

From our distribution centre in Yarraville, we distribute more than 9.3 million kilograms of food and grocery items each year - the equivalent of putting 16.7 million meals on tables for people in need. Through our network of 533 charity partners across the State, we're able to provide 1.2 million meals a month to Victorians in need - supporting vital food relief programs including community pantries, kitchens and dining halls, mobile soup vans whilst also providing emergency food hampers in times of crisis and disaster.

We work with the Victorian Department of Education and Training to deliver Australia's largest School Breakfast Clubs program, providing healthy breakfast, lunch and school holiday supplies to 1,000 primary, secondary, P-12 and specialist schools across the state.

Working with our charity partners, we also run a Farms to Families program, a series of pop-up style farmers markets that offer a welcoming and safe space for disadvantaged communities to access a range of free nutritious and fresh produce.

MORWELL FOOD HUB

Of the 533 charities we partner with, many have little capacity to store and handle large quantities of fresh, chilled or frozen product. As a result, food relief in regional centres predominately consists of the provision of shelf stable grocery items, rather than fresh fruit and vegetables.

While we have considerable volumes of food available at our Yarraville warehouse, there is a bottleneck in the capacity to safely

transport, store, handle and distribute fresh, chilled and frozen food across Victoria.

In partnership with the State Government, the Morwell hub will operate as a centralised regional warehouse to address the current storage bottleneck and provide the critical missing link between Foodbank's supply of healthy foods and those experiencing food insecurity in the Gippsland region.

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

People living in regional Australia are 33% more likely to experience food insecurity than their metropolitan counterparts.¹

Food security has been identified as a significant problem in Morwell and the surrounding Gippsland region.

Access to a variety of nutritious foods has also been identified as a challenge to healthy eating in the Gippsland region. Approximately one in five parents (21 per cent) who live in the Gippsland region relied on unhealthy low-cost food for their children as a means of averting food insecurity - a significantly higher proportion compared with 13 per cent of Victorians overall.²



In 2020 **25%** of food insecure residents in Victoria are accessing food relief at least once a week versus **22%** in 2019

¹ Foodbank Hunger Report 2018

² Victorian Agency for Health Information: Challenges to Healthy eating - Food Insecurity In Victoria

We know there is not enough food getting into this region and we know many charities have little capacity to store and handle large quantities of fresh, chilled or frozen product.

In addition to getting more staple foods into the region, the hub will also ensure more fresh, chilled and frozen foods can be distributed - supporting our vision of 'healthy food for all'.

THE HUB MODEL

The hub will provide the Gippsland region with:

- Substantial warehouse capacity of up to 2,000sqm to receive, handle, store, break down, package and distribute a wide range of foods and goods to local emergency relief agencies and schools.
- An operating structure comprising paid staff, volunteers and government-funded vocational training placements.
- Food sourced from delivery by Foodbank Victoria and donations from local supermarkets, wholesalers and producers.
- Commercial kitchen facilities for preparation of emergency meals in times of disaster, and for food insecure people, as well as the training of these individuals in food literacy and basic food preparation skills to help ensure their food independence.
- Community based food programs such as the Farms to Families pop-up style markets will be operated out of the hub.

DISTRIBUTION

It is expected this hub will service selected local charity partners in the Latrobe Valley, South Gippsland and Wellington local government areas.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The community outcomes resulting from this model include:

- Increased supply of food to disadvantaged communities in the Gippsland region.
- Access to timely food relief and support in times of disaster.

- Increased supply of healthier fresh, frozen and chilled foods to disadvantaged communities in the Gippsland region.
- Local operational employment and training opportunities, including pathways into employment for disadvantaged people.
- The opportunity for significant numbers of volunteers from across a range of social strata and age groups to be engaged in their community.
- Reduced 'environmental footprint' from waste and dumping of surplus food, along with reduced food mileage.
- Social connectedness, community-building and community strengthening - particularly in times of crisis.

WHO CAN ACCESS FOOD FROM THE HUB?

Local food relief charities will remain responsible for assessing clients and providing food to individual community members in need.

WHEN WILL THE HUB BE OPERATIONAL?

Fully costed plans have been provided to, and approved by, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. The next step is to acquire land or an existing building. Foodbank Victoria is working with local real estate agents in Morwell to source a suitable location. The hub is anticipated to be operational by no later than December 2022.

GIPPSLAND COMMUNITY

Foodbank Victoria has engaged with many groups in the region including the Latrobe City Council Emergency Food Relief Network. Foodbank Victoria is attending Latrobe City Council Emergency Food Relief Network meetings and providing updates on the development of the hubs as it progresses.

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