

Food Donation Feasibility Study



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
1.0 The Project	4
2.0 Project Stages and Methodology.....	6
3.0 Existing Environment.....	9
3.1 Current and potential food distributors	9
4.0 Consultation and Survey Results	14
4.1. Survey.....	15
4.1.2 Agency Surveys.....	15
4.1.2 Regional Supermarket Survey results.....	21
4.2 Focus groups	24
4.2.1 Exploring Common Themes - Issues and solutions.....	25
4.2.2 Partnerships Communication and collaboration	27
4.2.3 Food Hub Designs.....	28
4.3 Interviews.....	31
4.3.1 Food distributors:.....	31
4.3.2 Donation Agencies.....	32
4.3.3 Regional waste groups	34
4.3.4 Food Donation Forum	36
4.3.5 Relationships and Networks formed	38
4.3.6 Transportation.....	39
5.0 Recommendations	40
Appendices.....	45
Appendix 1: Table 1.....	46
Appendix 2: Desktop Research.....	47

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was undertaken by North East Waste in June 2018 to assess the feasibility of a regional food hub/s and identify the needs, opportunities and barriers to successful collaboration amongst donors and food donation agencies. A number of different food hub and donation models were examined and the main issues facing the agencies and donors were identified through a series of surveys, focus groups, interviews and a Forum.

The key challenges for participants centred around the inconsistent supply of produce, the difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers, the lack of ongoing financial support for operational activities, a lack of skills and information in donor organisations and agencies and a lack of infrastructure and food donation policy.

Stakeholders saw potential solutions in:

- Better communication between store and agency;
- Training and recognition of volunteers;
- Formal agreements;
- Raising of awareness around food donation regulations;
- Working collaboratively with other agencies around freight and food sharing;
- Raising funds or applying for grants to secure ongoing operational support.

Our feasibility study determined that the majority of food donation agencies did not consider a major physical food distribution centre to be the only solution to their core issues around access to food. The complexity of establishing and the ongoing management were considered the main barriers to a hub and the size of the region made one central hub untenable. It became very clear during the course of our analysis that many of the improvements that could be made for agencies and donors were dependent on an increase in human resources. While grant funding could provide for infrastructure it did not provide for the person hours needed to conduct administrative work, organise people and collections and foster better relationships to increase access to food.

Our recommendations (detailed in pages 40-43) focused on the need to:

- Build capacity for ongoing funding, promotion and support of existing programs;
- Identify means to improve access to fresh, refrigerated and frozen foods on a regular basis;
- Improve infrastructure to support ongoing management;
- Increase networking and collaboration amongst agencies and donors and other stakeholders.

Although the above needs are not prioritised, capacity building to provide ongoing funding needs to be addressed before several other recommendations made can be undertaken.

1.0 THE PROJECT

In June 2018 North East Waste secured funding to undertake a study to assess the feasibility of a regional food hub/s and identify the needs, opportunities and barriers to successful collaboration amongst donors and food donation agencies. The objectives of the project are to:

- 1) maximise efficiencies between stakeholders and increase food waste diversion;
- 2) establish a baseline of data and information to guide NE Waste's future involvement in the food donation and waste avoidance space;
- 3) inform stakeholders on common emerging themes and provide information for future support and funding.

People living in regional areas are 33% more likely to have experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months than those in metro areas (Foodbank 2018)

Kyogle has the second highest child poverty rate in NSW at 28.2%, and 21.61% for the Northern Rivers region

North East Waste has nearly 20 years of experience in delivering waste-based projects. In more recent years food waste avoidance has been incorporated into our work, as Councils and the state have focused on diverting organics from landfill. Our Councils have shown their commitment to this sector by providing bins to food donation agencies for free and supporting our work to date in the food donation arena. NE Waste had already undertaken some preliminary work and established contacts in the food donation space, assisting the Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres (CONC) to seek funding for their Food Recovery Program in 2017/18. Our Love Food Hate Waste and Bin Trim programs have also forged relationships with potential donors such as supermarkets and retail outlets.

Prior to the commencement of the project, NE Waste secured support for the project from FOODBANK NSW, the Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres (CONC), the Australian Red Cross, NSW Health and the Northern NSW Local Health District Health Promotion Unit, Lismore Uniting Church and Metcash IGA. The study involved the formation of a Steering Committee, with representatives from these

organisations to guide the project's direction, provide advice and support as required. The group met regularly over the project's life and information exchanges by email kept the working group informed of progress.

Other stakeholder participation and input was garnered through 3 sub-regional focus groups, 10 face to face interviews, 21 food donation agency surveys, 15 supermarket surveys and an Education Forum. These were designed to maximise stakeholder involvement and ownership of the program and to encourage the ongoing engagement of stakeholders in the project into the future.

The results of this engagement and desktop research have informed the framing of questions for each consultation component, common themes emerging to input into this Feasibility Study and its recommendations. North East Waste has as a result of this consultation developed solid relationships with many of the food donation agencies in the region, and supported the creation of networking opportunities amongst the agencies themselves, including sharing of excess food donated, sharing of transportation/freight and further avenues to access food in the region.

2.0 PROJECT STAGES AND METHODOLOGY



The project stages and approach included:

- **Establish a working group of food donation stakeholders to inform, guide and review the projects stages**

In August 2018 six potential members were invited and 5 agreed to take up a position on the project's Steering Committee. They were provided with a project brief and further communications clarifying their role. The members included Adam Guise (NSW Health), Michelle Burns (CONC/ Food Recovery Project), Gerry Anderson (Foodbank NSW), Alan Hoskins (Uniting Church - Lismore), Charlotte Richardson (Met Cash) as well as representation from North East Waste from the Coordinator and Education Coordinator. Red Cross were also invited to participate, however, due to a change in staff, they were unable to provide a staff resource.

- **Conduct desktop research**

This research was to identify stakeholders and to look at other food hub models and methods of distribution interstate, nationally and internationally. The documents that were reviewed can be found in Appendix 2.

- **Develop a food donation agency data base**

Through the committee a directory of all known agencies who provided food relief in the region was compiled (see Appendix 1). In addition, discussions were held with local Councils, food distributors and known donors to expand the data base of food relief organisations operating consistently in our region.

- **Develop and distribute a survey to stakeholders**

Survey Questions aimed to provide the project with:

- Insight into the types of issues to be explored further in the project phases, particularly frame questions for the focus group and face to face interviews;
- Information about the type of services offered;
- Transportation infrastructure available and required;
- Data around food donated;
- Access to food (locally sourced or foodbank), quantity and types of food donated and in demand;
- Support and physical infrastructure (eg. storage) required;
- Common challenges and organisational improvements to accessing food;
- Information that will assist organisations in seeking future funding.

The project steering committee made the recommendation to also survey food donors in addition to the food donation agencies. The purpose was to assess future potential food donors, and any barriers that exist to donating food.

- **Focus groups with agencies**

Focus groups were held in the south of the region at Grafton, in the middle at Lismore and in the north at Murwillumbah to allow access for agencies to attend. The focus groups looked for common themes, needs, challenges and issues that agencies face, ideas of what a hub might look like and operate, and explored the ways in which agencies communicated and what partnerships they had formed.

- **Conduct 10 face-to-face interviews**

As the project progressed more in-depth interviews were held to try and fill gaps and offer more detailed input into common emerging themes. Distributors, supermarkets and agencies were asked to discuss issues and ways forward in their roles.

- **Hold a regional forum to inform and assist those agencies who had participated in the project**

A Regional “Future of Food Donation” Forum was held in Ballina in August at the end of the project. The aim was to bring together agencies, partners, distributors and the NSW EPA to share information gained by the project, promote grant funding available, showcase the role of technology in the future of food donation and provide attendees with the opportunity to input into a way forward.

- **Produce the Feasibility study with recommendations and distribute to stakeholders**

This feasibility study has been developed using the above findings and highlight recommendations contributed from the project’s stakeholders.

3.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 CURRENT AND POTENTIAL FOOD DISTRIBUTORS

At present the two main food distributors in our region are Foodbank and Second bite, with the Food Recovery Far North Coast Project using both of these distributors and also acting as a distributor.

- **Foodbank** is Australia's largest hunger relief organisation and provides food to 2,600 charities and groups who feed those in need. In 2017-18 it provided the equivalent of 67 million meals. They partner the food and grocery industry, including retail, farmers, manufacturers and wholesalers. They operate a school breakfast program in 1,750 schools nationally. In NSW they have been operating for 27 years, assisting 607 agencies in 2017 by supplying 8.42 million KG of food. They are supported by government funding (including the NSW EPA), trusts and corporate partners, volunteers and a range of individual sponsors.

In our region, they support 15 individual agencies and distributed 502,088 kg of food over the past 12 months to those agencies. They operate from a large central distribution warehouse in Sydney's western suburbs and ordering is done online, with approximately 50% free and 50% at cost.

Foodbank freights to our region with Towers Transport, who are subsidised by government, so the delivery is at no cost to the agency. While there is no refrigerated delivery, Foodbank have trailed cold deliveries to Armidale at the cost of \$160 per palette (approx. 400 kg). These costs could be shared between agencies and this is seen as a model to get refrigerated food, supplemented by local donations.

- **SecondBite** is a non-for-profit organization dedicated to rescuing food and redistributing it to those in need. Operating nationally, Second Bite helps facilitate direct connections between the supermarkets and charities. Collection at national warehouses of surplus food donated by supermarkets such as Coles, markets, wholesalers, caterers and events, are distributed for free to charities, supporting over 1000 community food programs. SecondBite also run SecondBite Community Connect – an innovative model of food rescue that facilitates the redistribution of surplus fresh food from local food donors directly to local community groups. Any community group, emergency food relief agency, or benevolent cause with an organised community food program, can be part of SecondBite

Community Connect™, and are provided with a full guide to the food donation process. Many charities in our region currently utilize Secondbite services but the distance from head office and lack of response to inquiries has made them difficult to engage in this project.

- **Food Recovery, Far North Coast** (<http://www.foodrecovery.org.au/>) is one of the larger food donation and distribution agencies in the region. It was supported by a NSW Environmental Trust/EPA Organics Infrastructure Grant, to purchase refrigerated vans. The program is facilitated by the Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres (CONC), with its headquarters situated in the Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre and it includes seven member organisations. The other Centres are Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre, Pottsville Neighbourhood Centre, Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre, Kyogle Neighbourhood Centre, DAISI and the South Grafton School of Arts.

The project aims to ensure the successful diversion of organic food waste is implemented throughout the Far North Coast NSW, by utilising the best available methods of collection, redistribution, and maximising the capacity of each food donor and food relief agency, ultimately to improve the socio-economic disadvantage experienced across the region by young and old. Social inclusion, participation and community development are core principals of all the CONC member organisations. North East Waste (NEW) has worked with the CONC on their Food Recovery Program, to help them secure funding for 2 refrigerated vans. At present the CONC collects and distributes food from local donors, Foodbank and Second bite. They operate Monday to Friday.

Since the program began in 2017, the project reports to have recovered Food Recovery has diverted 90,696kg of food. The breakdown of this is: Vegetable 34%, Bread 31%, Fruit 23%, Eggs 4%, Meat 1%, Dairy 1%, Pantry 1% Non-nutritious 2% Misc. 3%

In terms of sharing the van amongst other organisation not part of the CONC, their insurance liability does not extend to volunteers not registered with the CONC organisations. Additionally, contributions towards ongoing operational expenses, such as fuel, insurance, registration, servicing etc would need to be negotiated with the CONC.

“... we have loaned the van to Liberation Larder for the music festival rescues/while we are closed for public holidays. This has been mutually beneficial to both parties as they share the proceeds of the food rescued with us. “



There are many individual agencies operating in the Northern Rivers, based on a variety of different approaches. 45 agencies were contacted as a part of this study and most have participated at some level. See Table 1 Appendix 1.

In an attempt to examine the different successful food distribution centres and models that operate regionally Oz harvest, REAP at Coffs Harbour and Path Finders in Armidale were contacted and interviewed.

While Oz Harvest does not currently operate across our entire region it does have a location in Murwillumbah. They have also participated in discussions about their potential to assist Food Donation agencies in the future through the development of an app.

- **Oz Harvest** is a not-for-profit organization that collect excess food from commercial outlets and directly deliver to charities. Food is donated from over 3500 outlets such as fruit and veg markets, supermarkets, hotels, airports, wholesalers, farmers, corporate events, catering companies, shopping centres, delis, cafes, restaurants, boardrooms and film and television shoots. They deliver to youth groups, indigenous centres, women’s and men’s shelters, homeless shelters, alcohol and/or drug addiction organizations and to people with mental health issues, disabilities and the elderly. There are more than 300 locations across Australia. Oz Harvest also run education programs with supermarkets and their clients. Brand recognition is an important component of Oz Harvest – from the yellow vans, to the yellow t-shirts that their staff and volunteers wear. This ensures that food donors and the public have a raised awareness of Oz Harvest.

OZ Harvest has highlighted that the new app they are developing is one that is a regional model and relevant to our area where there is no existing “Yellow van” footprint. The app model works by connecting charities directly with food donors and would remove

the need for a physical hub model and replace it with a virtual hub. They support the app management with their existing team in trying to find and make these connections between charity and donor. They also leverage our existing relationships with major donors to try and bring them on board to utilise the app. There is no cost for food donation agencies to sign up to the app. There is a cost for food donors to participate in the app. Oz Harvest also provides staff training to participating food donors.

- **OzHarvest Coffs Harbour** was the last REAP chapter – a regional distribution model. It is a passionate and lively group that rescues quality food for around 50 charity partners in the Coffs community since inception in February 2014. It rescues approximately 8000 kg per month. Petrol is donated and EPA grants have provided a cool room, van and wet area for the group. The success of this operation seems primarily rooted in the dedication of its manager and its strong organisational features. 25- 35 volunteers work on a regular basis and 9 teams go out every day and night, with multiple pick-ups, to collect and distribute food with 3 vans, 2 of which were obtained from external benefactors, the NSW EPA and Oz Harvest. The third van was purchased after fund raising \$30,000. They no surplus with any excess going to farmers and recycling 100% of their waste.

Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre's Food Pantry



- **Pathfinders in Armidale** is a food donation organisation that differs from many agencies in that it is not charity based and food donation is an additional activity undertaken outside of its core business. It operates a community support network and youth centre, with 270 employees and is funded by the Department of Community Services. Pathfinder's outreach workers support low socio-economic residents in a range of areas including tenancy

support and counselling. In delivering these programs staff saw an opportunity to also provide food relief to those in need and established relationships with local businesses in the area, the University of New England and Second bite. On its existing schedules, using normal vehicles, staff collect food and distribute directly or return to the youth centre for storage. They currently support 7 local charities and feed approximately 200 people per week. At the youth centre there are 2 freezers and a fridge dedicated to storage and every Saturday a cooking workshop is held to upskill youth and provide frozen meals for the week.

Murwillumbah Community Centre Food
Pantry



4.0 CONSULTATION AND SURVEY RESULTS

In order to establish the requirements of the food donation communities in our region and any gaps in existing services and relationships, surveys, focus groups and interviews were conducted over the period of 12 months.

The surveys were developed in collaboration with the Project Steering Committee, for food donation agencies as Phase 1 of the consultation process. The aim of the survey was to:

- Provide insight into the types of issues to be explored further in the project phases, particularly frame questions for the focus group and face to face interviews;
- Information about the type of services offered
- Transportation infrastructure
- Data around food donated
- Access to food (locally sourced or foodbank), quantity and types of food donated and in demand;
- Support and infrastructure required,
- Common challenges and organisational improvements to accessing food
- Provide information that will assist organisations in seeking future funding

The survey questions were designed and tested and then promoted via the steering committee, direct emails via NE Waste database, through Council e-databases and direct phone calls to agencies. The latter approach proved to be successful to both introducing the project and the role of NE Waste, as well as assisting the organisations in filling the survey out with them whilst on the phone.

4.1. SURVEY

Both agencies and supermarkets/donors in our region were surveyed.

4.1.2 AGENCY SURVEYS

A total of 21 organisations responded to the survey (see table in Appendix 1). This represented almost 50% of the total number of agencies on our database in the region that are providing food donation within the community.

Of food donation agencies who responded to the survey, the majority (75%) offer food parcels and/or meals for pick up; 45% have a foodbank/food pantry on-site; 40% offer dine-in meals; 30% offer food vouchers; and 25% offer food parcels and/or meals delivered.

Q2 What sort of food donation service does your agency provide?



A total of 19 agencies reported to donate to approx. 4000 clients each week. The number of clients who had access to food donation services each week from each of these agencies varied from 5 to 500. A common theme reported was that the number of clients varied from week to week in each of these agencies. Those with in-house meals only tended to have smaller numbers of clients and food pantry's

had a higher number of clients: *“We see approximately 300+ clients per week for the 'shop' part of things and welfare services varies week to week. We have almost 1000 registered customers but this is not an accurate account of clients that use our services.”*

1. Food supply and transportation

Respondents answered that their MAIN suppliers of food for donation purposes were: Foodbank NSW, local food retailers, and ‘Other’ (including Secondbite, local supermarkets, volunteers, parish donations and Foodbank QLD). There were also a few responses from organisations who relied on donations from their parish or bought food themselves for the purposes of donation. Whilst local supermarkets are able to play a valuable role in provision of food, there is still a reliance on Foodbank to supplement and provide a known quantity of food each week. When compared to the responses of the supermarket survey, there exists an opportunity to continue to foster relationships between food donation agencies and local food donors.

The survey found almost half of agencies relied on volunteers and their own means of transport (43%) to collect food from donors, whilst 38% reported via freight (Foodbank), and pick up via agency’s transport. Some agencies also reported to be using the Northern Rivers Food Recovery refrigerated van. Although not highlighted as one of the main types of infrastructure required by respondents, regular transportation would enhance opportunities to pick up regularly from food donors.

2. Data around food donated: quantity, quality, type, demand

The survey found that the amount of food donated to organisations varied in quantity and from week to week, with some reporting to receive up to 600kgs per week and another none at all. Further data collection to report on quantity of food donated would assist organisations in applying for funding in the future. It would also provide an assessment of which donors reliably donate a similar amount each week. To ensure consistent data from organisations, resourcing of this exercise is essential.

In terms of quality of food, the responses were largely positive: it was reported to be usually of good quality (74% or 14 out of the 19 respondents) and comments suggested that sometimes a component of the fruit and vegetables may not be edible, but usually it was mixed in with the other produce. Another agency reported the issue of having to discard produce that was freighted in a non-refrigerated van, due to the distance it needs to travel.

“Sometimes ... deliveries include broken eggs, too soft stone fruit or limp greens etc amongst great quality produce. At NNIC ALL food scraps, compostable containers (used at NNIC) and our recycled printing paper and any cardboard is deep composted by Kath our Community Access Worker Front of House and Vollie Supervisor. Food abundance grown at my place is then re-gifted to NNIC etc. So we operate our food services with zero landfill waste.”

The survey highlighted that the types of food being donated and in demand from clients, were fairly consistent amongst agencies. The three most commonly donated foods were bread 72%, fresh fruit 47% and pantry items 44%. The three food types that were least likely to be donated were meat 43%, dairy 41% and frozen produce 47%. Products that were least often donated, and most in demand by clients were reported as: Meat products and fresh fruit (both at 47%), followed by vegetables (42%) and dairy. The survey results demonstrate that whilst fresh fruit and vegetables were products that were donated frequently, they were also products of high demand, highlighting the need for more fresh fruit and vegetables to be sourced locally for the purposes of donation.

3. Infrastructure requirements

To highlight common themes around infrastructure constraints, challenges and opportunities, the survey question asked respondents to what infrastructure they already had in their agency, what was required and what was shared. The answers to this question were variable, highlighting the needs of some agencies were still individual, with some requiring more infrastructure needs than others. This question was further explored in the face to face interviews held.

Overall, freezers and food storage containers and bags rated the highest in terms of required infrastructure with 6 out of 19 respondents to these categories. Although storage space was important to only 3 of 19 in this survey, it has been identified as an issue in interviews done with some of the food donation agencies. Additionally, despite a reliance on volunteers and volunteer transport to collect food, transportation infrastructure was not identified as a primary requirement. (It should be noted, that in the Food Donation Forum, fuel was identified as something that could potentially be funded externally).

4. Support and future needs

This question aimed to provide focus into what types of education workshops our study could provide, and the types of activities that could assist organisations in the future for funding opportunities. The top 4 types of support agencies would like to have to secure funding for the required infrastructure as listed below.

1. Support with knowing what grants are available (57%)
2. Networking with other food donation agencies (47.62%)
3. Support with grant writing (47.62%)
4. Case studies of what other organisations are successfully doing in the region and beyond (38.10%)

“NNIC and the NR CONC are recovering tonnes of food otherwise headed for waste. Our big hope is we can one day have a purpose suitable space to be able to provide a Foodbank shop to local clients thus increase our fundraising opportunities.”

“Networking dinner/lunch to bring food donation agencies together”

The above survey results helped to shape the Food Donation Forum that NE Waste held in August. Rather than holding 3 separate workshops, it was decided that by bringing together the food donation agencies across the region it would maximise opportunities to network and to have out-of-region people attend the session to provide support, case studies, and technologic innovation in this area.

5. Challenges in the provision of food relief

According to the survey results, the 2 greatest challenges in the provision of food relief were:

a) Resource constraints – funding and staff/volunteer resources

Most food donation agencies rely heavily on volunteers for the day to day operation, as well as food collection from donors. Those that are employed are usually stretched assisting clients in need, as well as the administrative functions of the organisation. Applying for funding, management of projects externally funded, seeking food donors and regular supply, promotion of food donation to food donors and collection of food are all

b) Access to donated food and sourcing regular food donors

The majority of respondents highlighted that sourcing regular food donors required staff/volunteer resources to establish long-term relationships, and that it was difficult to ensure regular access to donated food.

Other challenges were also highlighted by the majority of respondents and these included lack of staff resources and lack of adequate storage space.



Bread is the most common product donated

6. Future opportunities

The survey provided input for qualitative feedback for highlighting what was required to facilitate better coordination between food donors and agencies and better access to food. The responses whilst varied, also reflected some similarities including:

- a) Regular funding/resources to improve local food recovery
- b) A steady supply of sustainable volunteers
- c) Partnerships and collaboration – networking amongst agencies
- d) Promotion of food donation in the region

“publicity and good honest communication with food donors. general public is still very unaware of food insecurity in our communities”

“The greatest challenge we face is funding for coordinating programs and costs associated with food transportation. With adequate funding we could triple our food recovery.”

4.1.2 REGIONAL SUPERMARKET SURVEY RESULTS

In order to determine opportunities for further and future food recovery in the region, a survey specifically for regional supermarkets was also designed and tested in conjunction with the Project Steering Committee. A total of 14 food donors responded to the survey (however 1 of these did not answer every question), representing 2 of the 4 major supermarket chains, and a smaller food retailer. Responses were largely thanks to employees within head office emailing out the survey link, as well as our direct phone calls to key supermarket contacts.

1. Number of employees and customers

From 13 respondents, the average number of staff employed by these supermarkets ranged from 17 to 175 with an average of 106 employees. The number of staff represents challenges such as communication and training around food donation policy and procedures. The estimated number of customers from 13 respondents, ranged from 2,600 to 35,000 per week.

2. Waste collection services

When asked what type of waste collection the business currently has in place, 85% (or 12 of the 14) reported they had mixed waste skip/bins, and 100% reported they had cardboard and paper recycling. Interestingly 11 of the 14 respondents reported they had a commercial food collection service in place as well, although commercial FOGO is quite limited in our region. Some also highlighted they were involved in soft plastics recycling, most likely referring to the REDCYCLE soft plastics program for householders.

3. Current food donation practices

Asked if they currently donate to a food donation agency, 80% (12 out of the 15) of supermarkets responded positively, whilst 3 of the supermarkets did not donate food. When asked who they donate to, more than half donate to a local charity, neighbourhood centre, soup kitchen, church or community centre. 25% highlighted they donate via the Secondbite program – which again would be to a local charity. Three supermarkets indicated they donate to farmers.

“Bread goes to Women up North Mondays, Food bank collect Wednesday, Farmer collects every other day”

When asked about the quantity of food donated, 10 respondents were donating an average quantity of 345kg/ week, which ranged from 70kg in 2 supermarkets to 1,500 kg in another. More than half also identified they could donate more (the range was from 20kg to 500kg more). This is an area that can be further investigated with the supermarkets, and an opportunity to maximise further food recovery in the region.

The most common frequency of donations according to the survey is daily (60%), followed by 2 or more times per week (23%) whilst 1 respondent said 5 times per week.

4. Types of food donated

The most common types of items donated were also consistent with the findings of the most common types of foods received by food donation agencies: Bread, fresh and/or packaged vegetables and fruit (fresh and/or packaged) were the most commonly donated items. Frozen produce was the least most donated item, and meats, dairy and pre-prepared meals were not often donated.

5. Barriers to food donation and future opportunities for food recovery

According to the survey results, the main barriers to food donation were:

- a) The availability of an agency to come and collect the food immediately or as required
- b) Health and safety concerns – liability

There were a number of other barriers that were highlighted by a smaller number of agencies, including staff training, storage infrastructure (fridges, freezers etc), and that food is past it's best before date. It is evident from these responses that more training is required with the supermarket sector in relation to food donation legislation, procedures and food labels, as well as having a wide network of local food donation agencies to draw on if there was excess food/stock that was in need of immediate donation. Additionally, storage infrastructure (shared in precinct hubs) or other could be further explored which would reduce the need for agencies to collect immediately if food could be frozen or stored well in the interim.

These strategies are further supported by the results of the following questions which asked about the type of support that would allow for better management of the food to be donated by that particular store.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the following would support them:

- a) a regional food hub transportation network
- b) customer education around food waste avoidance and food donation
- c) knowing where they can donate in the region and access to an app that would link them with their local food donation agencies
- d) knowing what can and can't be donated and staff training

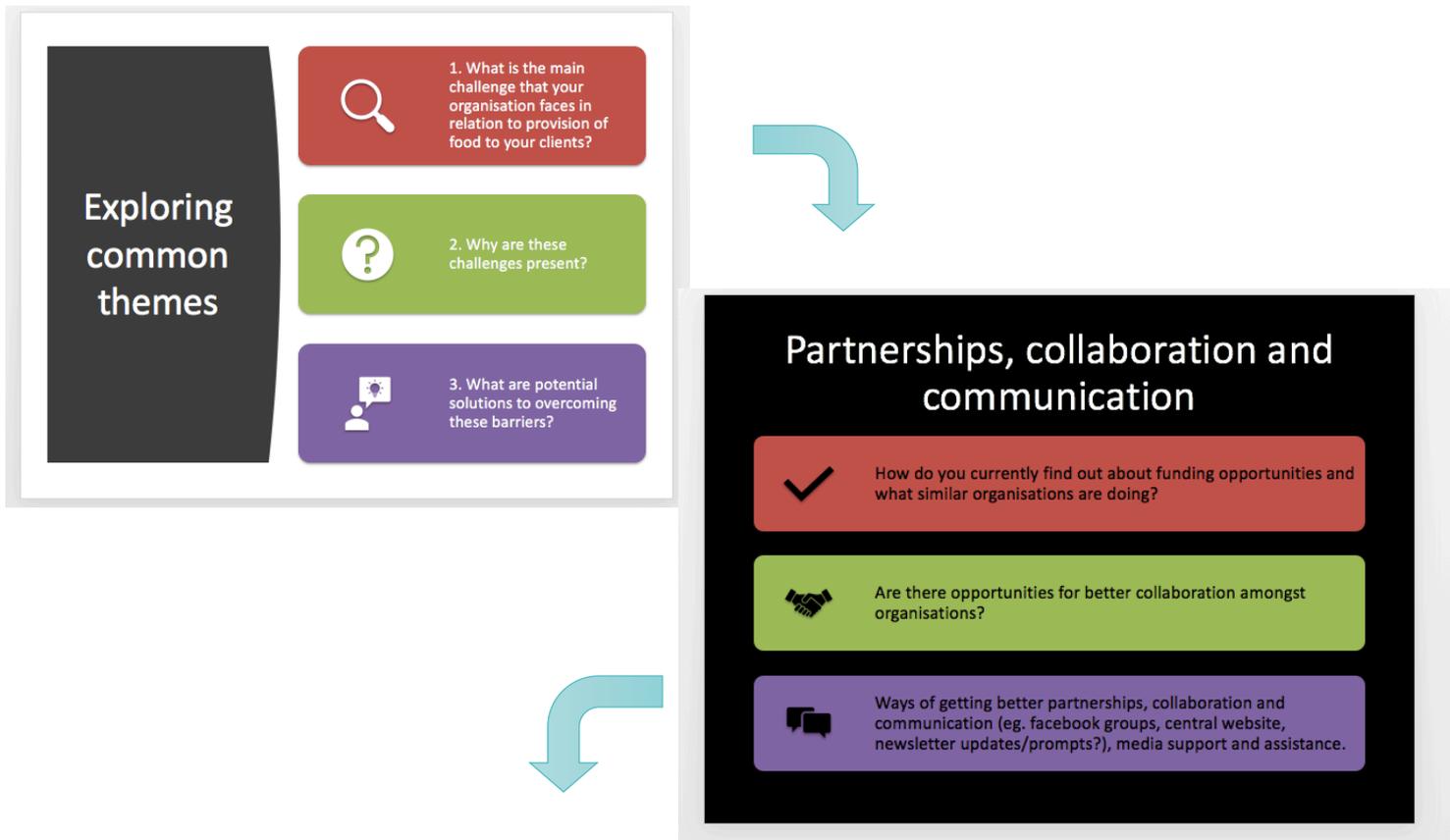
"We have the training and infrastructure, just need more pick up's"

When asked about the expectation from food donation agencies, supermarkets largely said they didn't have any expectations, however a number commented in regard to consistency of collections, and ensuring agreements are in place to comply with in-store policies.

"Have reached out to food donation programs in the past but none have returned the required paperwork. Also, from discussions with the team around previous times we have donated the people receiving the stock were very picky and only taking what they considered 'good', even though other donated items were within the guidelines of donated stock"

4.2 FOCUS GROUPS

The three Focus groups had 3 main components. We explored common themes, looked at existing partnerships and did group work to design a food hub. See the format below:



Group work

4.2.1 EXPLORING COMMON THEMES - ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

The three focus groups comprised of staff and volunteers from agencies in Grafton, Evans Head, Mullumbimby, Murwillumbah, Byron, Lismore, Casino, Ballina and Pottsville. The issues identified and prioritised by each group are in Table 2 below, followed by potential solutions in Table 3.

Table 2 Issues identified

Theme	Issues	Weighting
Produce/Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety and quality of produce • Availability of fresh and cold produce • Too much bread • Limited items from big distributors 	*** *** ** *
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency in Volunteers • Good ones leave for paid work • No commitment from work for the dole • No dedicated role for coordinator 	*** * ** ***
Consistency & Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Lease certainty • No consistency in staff/contact at donor • Increasing homelessness is putting more pressure on • No ongoing funding to support grant given infrastructure or coordination 	* * * ***
Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick ups are often poorly organised • Goods are there when you arrive at supermarket • Delivery issues from Foodbank to small places 	* * *
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pig farmers get first choice 	**
Policy and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some donors have poor attitudes to food donation • Donors fear liability laws • Some volunteers and staff abuse the system and take goods 	** ** *
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Support from Councils 	**
Infrastructure/ storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors don't store or refrigerate adequately • Lack of refrigerated vans and freight is expensive • Lack of storage space • Lack of refrigeration 	** ** * **
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little publicity around food donation • Lack skills to promote and attract donors • Difficulties getting local connections 	** * *

Table 3 Solutions proposed

Theme	Solutions
Produce/Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communication between store and agency • All stores need a Zero Waste to landfill policy • Develop a fresh Food hub or tap into the agricultural sector • Work with neighbouring agencies
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of volunteers, recognition of volunteers
Consistency & Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a designated person, for consistency and supervision • Raise funds or apply for grants for ongoing support
Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal agreements • Develop a better relationship with major distributors such as foodbank
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better networking and communication amongst agencies • Consider use of virtual apps • Format agreements in place with food donors
Policy and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and culture need to change • Raise awareness around food donation laws etc
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garner Council involvement and support • An approach on a collective basis to distributors
Infrastructure/ storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively around freight and goods • Investigate back loading opportunities with other agencies

4.2.2 PARTNERSHIPS COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

During this session we looked at how organisations currently received information and communicated or networked and if they could think of ways to improve that.

All groups felt:

- It would be beneficial to all to have a central place/person for the dissemination of information about grants and other agencies activities. While some agencies are linked to Councils for information on grants, many have no contact and being put on a mailing list from large organisations like Council would be helpful.
- More information sharing from large distributors would be helpful
- There is a skill and resources shortage when it comes to writing grant applications for small charities and large organisations are therefore more successful
- It would be good if grants were divided into streams or scaled to suit small organisations and larger organisations
- Networking more would help and a monthly email about what's happening in the different groups, what others are doing in regards to servicing the community, opening hours, what's working with clients etc would be excellent
- Communication with donors needs to improve on both sides to foster better relationship's
- A network lunch or dinner or regular meeting would help facilitate improved interagency relationships

4.2.3 FOOD HUB DESIGNS

All groups were asked to discuss and design the type of food hub that would best suit their needs. Two of the focus groups discussed bricks and mortar style hubs while the third group were happy with existing smaller storage areas and thought a virtual hub or app would be better suited to their region.

Group 1: Grafton

A large shed with cold storage for distribution to agencies only. It would be operated by an independent operator, to ensure equitable distribution. It should incorporate a kitchen, so that excess can be cooked and made into meals creating less food waste. As well as pick-ups supermarkets could deliver goods to the hub using their home delivery trucks and farmers could also deliver seconds that they can't sell. Management structure would be most likely be a committee or board with representatives from main offices. It would require an ongoing funding commitment and should be supported from 3 tiers of government to ensure permanency.

Participants from the Grafton focus group



Group 2: Lismore

This group envisaged came up with 2 potential models.

- a) They saw a warehouse in an industrial estate along an existing the transport hub/ network as the ideal model. It also needed to be independently operated, managed by a board of agencies.

It required a paid manager, paid management and volunteers and would be supplied by farmers, and growers, supermarkets, local processors, local manufacturers, individuals and factories.

They felt it needed strong legal and risk frameworks in place.

The hub could be resourced by grants and sponsors

And if it's locally owned and operated it should get more support than distant distributors.

Promotion or a campaign could be launched to attract the donors.

- b) Again, the governance model was a committee or board based with a CEO. It would operate in a similar way to Foodbank in that they would charge a fee for some goods.

It could also house a central education and communication hub to support a range of needs in the community. A way to connect suppliers and donors to the hub would be essential. Members who used the hub could donate volunteers hours in exchange for goods.

Participants from the Lismore focus group



Group 3: Murwillumbah

In Murwillumbah the group was smaller than the other focus groups, with only 3 organisations represented, the majority having a steady supply of produce from regular local food donors. This group felt that due to the proximity of their organisations to the Gold Coast where food hubs were already operating, they were not really in need of a new one, but could see the benefits for other areas. A virtual food hub was seen to have value for this group. The group focussed on the opportunities that further networking with other agencies could provide them. Liberation Larder already share food to other food agencies when they have excess. The contact that this focus group provided them, enabled an ongoing relationship between Murwillumbah Community Centre and Liberation Larder.



Participants from the Murwillumbah focus group

4.3 INTERVIEWS

The range of stakeholders who collect, donate and distribute food to those in need is broad and their mode of operations and size varies significantly; from large centralised distribution centres such as Foodbank, who operate at a state wide level to small church run soup kitchens in regional towns; from the mega supermarket chains to the local bakery. In order to learn from their experience and understand our own region's situation a number of interviews were undertaken. The intent of the interviews was to gain a more in-depth understanding of how these stakeholders operated and what they considered to be the barriers and opportunities for improved access to and distribution of food to those in need in our region, and if indeed a food hub here was feasible or necessary.

Those interviewed were Foodbank NSW, Oz Harvest, Oz Harvest's REAP Coffs Harbour, Liberation Larder, Pathfinders Armidale, Metcash IGA, and 2 regional waste groups who had undertaken regional Food Donation grants from the NSW EPA.

Common themes and key findings are outlined below by sector.

4.3.1 FOOD DISTRIBUTORS:

Interviews were conducted with a range of food distributors, Foodbank, Oz Harvest and Second bite. Each had different methods of distribution and while each organisation had differing opinions on the value and feasibility of food hubs in our region, some common themes were identified.

Key findings from food distributors (Food bank, Food Recovery and Oz Harvest)

- If a food distribution centre was established in the region then it should not be managed by one dominant food relief charity. It would be better to be hosted by an organisation that was neutral to ensure even distribution to all charities
- That there may be other models of cooperation and networking that may suit the region such as sharing refrigerated produce pallets from bigger centres such as the Foodbank Armidale trial or sharing backloading transport from SEQ
- The rise of food donation apps may change the current distribution model and allow greater access to local food from a range of large and small distributors and donor businesses – for example, there was potential for agencies to pilot the app's in development from Oz Harvest and Metcash/IGA

- That current existing transport models are adequate for the region and a local food hub wasn't necessary
- If a 'foodhub' were developed it should avoid a 'supermarket' look, so as not to threaten small local supermarkets
- Cooperation models and seeking produce directly from markets and farmers should be examined before a foodhub model is adopted.

4.3.2 DONATION AGENCIES

Even though most agencies participated in the surveys, more insight was gained by interviewing 3 in more depth. Liberation Larder, the Food Recovery Project and REAP Coffs Harbour were asked to elaborate on their successes, challenges and ideas for the future. The key findings were:

Success has come from:

- Good infrastructure and facilities
- Collaboration with other agencies
- Consistency and trust established in relationships with donors
- Offering a range of services – eg food pantry and prepared meals
- Training and retaining volunteers
- Awareness raised in the community to attract both volunteers and donors
- Formalised relationships with donors and supporters

Challenges have included:

- Inter-agency competitiveness for ongoing food donors/regular food donations
- Difficulty in retaining volunteers
- Secure and adequate storage space and equipment
- Lack of consideration by donors of the need to keep food refrigerated/frozen
- Lack of ongoing funding to assist in the delivery of programs once they have been established

Things could be improved with:

- Fridge magnets at holiday properties for holiday makers and Airbnb places – to remind people to donate excess packaged food
- More storage and cool-room space

- Higher community profile and positive community liaison – increase awareness of the role of agencies
- More access to grants and ability to apply for them with external support to maximise food donor support
- Ongoing networking amongst food donation agencies and the business community
- Ongoing operational funding for staff costs to decrease total reliance on volunteers
- Changes in perceptions of retail donors and their staff to encourage an increase in donations, changes in restrictive policies and remove stigma attached to those in need
- More volunteers that are consistent and committed
- Apps and their promotion of on TVC etc with information about how to register
- Need a balance between paid and voluntary staff because of the size of the region and to ensure consistency of people who deal with stores and donors
- Policy change – its easier for them process wise to give to pig farmers – lots of paperwork to give to people.
- Designated person - Even a person in the city who could give template documents such as MOU's and letters of agreement, start conversations about it with large corps,
- Facilitate networking events by webinar, pulling in donors and agencies to talk about the wins and the losses.

4.3.3 REGIONAL WASTE GROUPS

The two regional waste groups who had input into our study were the Netwaste group of Councils and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint organisation of Councils (ISJO).

The ISJO project was launched in 2016 and involved a range of government and community sector partners. A feasibility study highlighted the critical gaps in infrastructure (with only 3 dedicated food collection and delivery vehicles in the region) and the need for better collaboration to sustain and expand current programs. The project aimed to unite food aid providers in the region, increase efficiencies and optimise food rescue and redistribution. Additionally, smaller partner organisations were to benefit from economies of scale with access to storage and infrastructure they would not otherwise be able to afford or maintain.

The grant funding was used in 2016 and 2017 to replace aging infrastructure at food aid organisations and purchase additional infrastructure to increase the capacity for local food redistribution. In support of the project, the three Local Councils (Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama) combined resources to fund a Hub Coordinator to oversee the project.

Unfortunately, although some positive food rescue and redistribution outcomes were identified, the outcomes of the project were disappointing, and it dissolved in 2017. The main contributors to the projects demise were related to governance and accountability, not to the strength of the food hub model. The project Coordinator agreed to share the lessons learned in their venture to help other projects avoid some of the problems they encountered. These are summarised below.

- Using a social enterprise that could collect and store food, that has existing staff and drivers could be a better model and could provide training opportunities as well. A body that was not an existing food donation charity could help alleviate power imbalances and competition between agencies.
- Another option would be to boost the capacity of smaller existing agencies – their storage, transport and staffing needs
- Ensure that regular meeting and networking is established early in the project. It would help to use an existing ongoing agency to facilitate this, such as NSW Health. This could also facilitate opportunities for training for volunteers in food handling and other food and health related areas. It could also foster a positive relationship between agencies.

- Sharing infrastructure was an option that came out of the feasibility study but it didn't take into account the issues of ongoing maintenance, fuel and drivers. Small agencies don't have the capacity and if the large agencies take it on it leads to inequities.

Netwaste regional waste group provided information about their projects progress and shared their feasibility study findings and insights with us.

In 2017 they partnered with Food Rescue Central West (FRCW) to implement a targeted awareness campaign to increase the sustainability of food rescue in the Central West of NSW. Though a number of challenges were identified for each group, the underlying theme across all groups was access to suitable food, its quality and variety. The project led to a Feasibility Study with the objective to develop recommendations for a practical regional collaboration model for food rescue organisations with the aim of increasing the efficiency and durability of food rescue.

The key actions identified by their study included

- Building capacity to receive more rescued food by improving storage, particularly refrigeration.
- Grouping and sharing resources to gain economies of scale for receiving, distributing and storing rescued food.
- Building strong relationships directly with local food donors and food bank organisations.
- Applying for funding and support.

In interviews, Netwaste Project officers highlighted many similar findings and barriers that this study also identifies. They include:

- There is an inconsistency in food supply in the region
- Many agencies don't keep good records and there is a paucity of reliable data around volumes of food rescued and the number of clients.
- Communication between agencies can be difficult, particularly for small agencies with few resources
- The need for better understanding between agencies and donors and ways to facilitate this. How to make initial contact with potential food donors, setting up systems that are reliable and maintaining relationships all need to be fostered.

4.3.4 FOOD DONATION FORUM

The Food Donation Forum was held on August 1 and attracted 30 participants. Initially, NE Waste considered running 3 education workshops, 1 in each of the same venues as the 3 focus groups that were held. However, in order to ensure an excellent range of speakers and attract more participation from organisations across the region, it was decided that 1 bigger Forum be held.

The principle aim of the Forum was to increase the capacity for food donation agencies to apply for funding. The Forum did this by highlighting grants available through the NSW EPA, how to apply for them and key considerations when applying for them, as well as highlighting case studies of successful models from other regions. Potential opportunities were also provided by providing information about innovation in technology in this space, and the opportunity to pilot this in our region.

The Forum also provided an excellent opportunity for discussion and networking amongst agencies and other stakeholders, something that was highlighted as a key opportunity in the focus groups held earlier in the year. Information about what the project had learned to date was covered, and participants were able to contribute to the study further through the open forum session and a survey that was developed.

Forum speakers included:

- Sian McGhie – NSW EPA
- Ben Sensicle – Oz Harvest
- Charlotte Richardson – Metcash/IGA
- Adam Loftus – Foodbank NSW
- Michelle Burns – Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre, CONC
- Jeanie McKillop and Linda Tohver – North East Waste



Food Donation Forum for Agencies and Donors

Thursday 1 August, 10am - 3pm
Ballina Surf Lifesaving Club, Lighthouse Road East Ballina

- How to write your grant
- How to improve your access to food via technology
- An opportunity to network and learn from others

GUEST SPEAKERS
OzHarvest • Foodbank NSW
Food Recovery Far North Coast • NSW EPA

Register online at www.newwaste.org.au/dfd
or contact fooddonation@newwaste.org.au - 0427 770 198

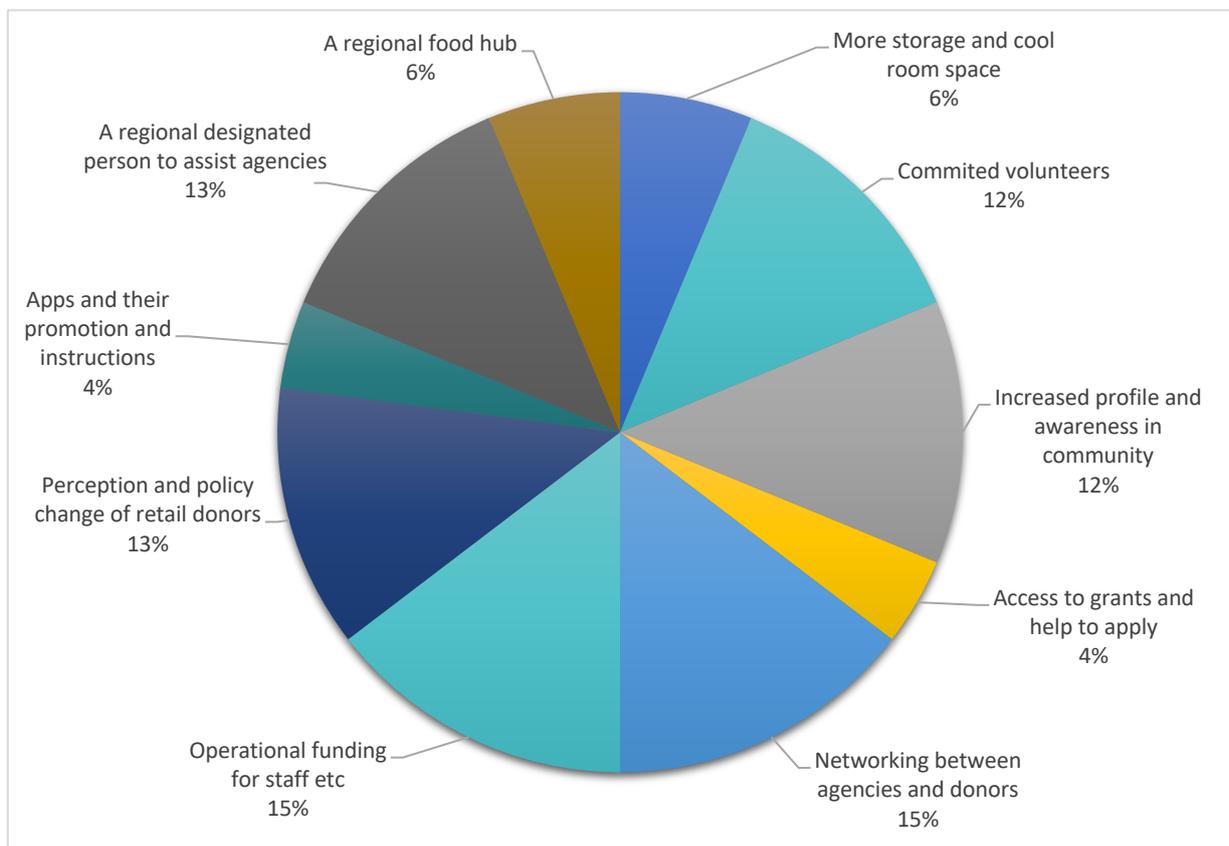
Brought to you by NSW EPA and North East Waste

NSW EPA newwaste north east waste

Feedback from the group at the end of the day indicated that

- some groups would apply for grant funding to improve their operations and infrastructure
- some groups may wish to trial the Metcash and/or Oz Harvest apps once developed
- ongoing networking was considered important by participants. This could take the form of either an email group for the distribution of information, but most participants felt face to face contact was beneficial

Participants were also asked to complete a survey prioritizing from a list of 10 things, 3 that would improve their current position. The results are seen in figure 2 below.



4.3.5 RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS FORMED

From the outset, by bringing together key food donation agencies, Council, NSW Health and Metcash in a steering committee format, the project recognized the need to foster positive networking opportunities.

Networking amongst agencies and donors has been highlighted as a key opportunity that can be facilitated into the future. The focus groups and Forum brought together main agencies for the first time, whilst others may have more opportunity for networking through interagency meetings. These types of session are imperative to foster positive relationships, promote good will, share challenges and opportunities and prevent competition amongst agencies for donors.

For example, the Murwillumbah Focus group led to an informal sharing arrangement between Liberation Larder and Murwillumbah Community Centre and the Food Recovery Project – where Liberation Larder is able to donate excess produce to these organisations.



Grafton focus group participants working together on their hub ideas



4.3.6 TRANSPORTATION

There are a number of transport companies in the region who currently deliver refrigerated goods to supermarkets and retail outlets. However, due to the cost of refrigerated transport most small agencies do not utilise these companies. Some larger agencies in Lismore have engaged transport companies returning from SEQ without a load to bring food from Foodbank and other distributors, at a discounted price. Foodbank in NSW provides free freight for unrefrigerated goods only. The Food Recovery Program has its own refrigerated vans and Secondbite provides other agencies with cold goods.

In discussions around transport it was identified that there may be solutions to the lack of refrigerated supplies by sharing costs. Foodbank conducted a trial in Armidale of shared frozen food delivery but a more regional solution would be preferred.

Sharing the services of a local transporter (some listed below) may allow agencies to negotiate a better price. Transport companies should also be made aware of the tax incentives from delivering rescued food.

This company currently delivers Foodbank into our region:

<http://www.towerstransport.com.au/index-1.html>

Truck It compares different quotes from different providers and the client can book whoever fits their needs:

<https://www.truckit.net/how-it-works>

This company is already affiliated with Oz Harvest:

<http://content.isuzu.com.au/industry-insights/waging-war-on-food-waste/>

Below are 2 companies that deliver food in the region:

<https://www.freightmatch.com.au/freight-quotes/>

<https://www.qualityfoods.com.au/>

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Our feasibility study determined that the majority of food donation agencies did not consider a major physical food distribution centre to be a viable, simple solution to their core issues around access to food. The complexity of establishing and ongoing management of a hub was discussed and evaluated by all participants in the study. In these discussions, other options presented themselves and they will be the focus of our recommendations.

Key needs identified were:

- Building capacity for ongoing funding, promotion and support of existing programs
- Improve access to fresh, refrigerated and frozen foods on a regular basis
- Improvement of infrastructure to support ongoing management of food
- Increased networking and collaboration amongst agencies and donors and other stakeholders

Although the above needs are not prioritised, capacity building to provide ongoing funding needs to be addressed before several other recommendations made can be undertaken. Therefore, its issues and recommendations will be outlined first.

1. Building capacity for ongoing funding, promotion and support of existing programs	
Issue	Recommendations
1.1 Grants have provided infrastructure, but no ongoing operational costs	<p>1.1a Consideration be given to ensuring grants have an allowance for ongoing operational costs.</p> <p>1.1b Implement fundraising activities to support operational costs (see promotion).</p> <p>1.1c Volunteer management to support existing programs – joint policies, procedures and training.</p> <p>1.1d Develop a database or get on a mailing list (some Councils have them) for community, bank and other grants to apply for non-food diversion funding.</p>
1.2 Organisation don't have the knowledge, skills or resources to apply for funding (or know where funding exists)	<p>1.2a Seek funding for a staff resource (as per 2.2a) to establish professional development opportunities/forums to increase awareness, knowledge and skills.</p> <p>1.2b Establish an E-newsletter (via staff resource in 2.2a) to promote grants available, viable case studies and collaborative opportunities.</p> <p>1.3c Form a group or expand existing inter-agencies role as per 2.2b.</p>
1.3 Lack of promotion and awareness within the food donation sphere	<p>1.3a Seek promotional opportunities through sponsorship from media to highlight the good work being done by agencies and food donors (via staff resource in 2.2a).</p> <p>1.3b Explore ways that Social media can be utilised to attract consistent volunteers and donors.</p> <p>1.3c Collect data to provide insight into food diversion rates, and meals served.</p> <p>1.3d Seek funding for the above to occur.</p>

It became very clear during the course of our analysis that many of the improvements that could be made for agencies working in our region were dependent on an increase in human resources. While grant funding could provide for infrastructure it did not provide for the person hours needed to conduct administrative work, organise people and collections and foster better relationships to increase access to food.

2. Improve access to foods on a regular basis, particularly fresh and frozen produce	
Issues identified	Recommendations
2.1 Increase the number of businesses donating food	<p>2.1a Investigate opportunities from farmers, producers, markets and localised fresh food businesses to increase suppliers of fresh/frozen produce through local food organisations (eg Northern Rivers Food).</p> <p>2.1b Develop a toolkit with templates, letters of introduction, donor lists, policy/legislation, food handling, training, etc.</p> <p>2.1c Contact Oz Harvest, Second Bite, Foodbank and Metcash IGA to pilot one of their apps in our region.</p>
2.2 Agencies can't always collect food immediately from donors, who do not have adequate storage capacity within their premises to store cold food for donation	<p>2.2a Collaborate with donor businesses to investigate opportunities or funding to purchase storage capacity (eg. Designated freezer/fridge to store food for donation purposes on supermarket docks or inhouse).</p> <p>2.2b Formalise agreements between agencies and donors to specify schedules and requirements on both sides.</p> <p>2.2c Investigate opportunities to pilot new technologies such as the Oz Harvest app, Metcash app to improved knowledge of when and what is available in real time, reducing the chance of spoilage.</p>
2.3 Transportation issues include lack of refrigerated transport and availability of volunteers/ staff drivers	<p>2.3a Share transport and freight arrangements with other agencies to maximise efficiency and reduce costs. Eg utilising any existing agencies refrigerated vans or sharing costs of backloading/freighting with a local TPT company.</p> <p>2.3b Look at simple storage solutions for collection of frozen and cold foods and apply for infrastructure funding individually or to share with other agencies in the LGA – eg. Esky, refrigerated trailer.</p>
2.4 Donor staff and agency staff/volunteers need training in how to identify, store, handle and manage food for donation and transport purposes	<p>2.4a Ensure donors understand the regulations around food donation and dispel myths of litigation by providing staff training, distributing fact sheets and information.</p> <p>2.4b Undertake training for supermarket/donor staff on food donation management. Eg. Oz Harvest app model includes staff training.</p> <p>2.4c Investigate existing training available to provide skills and information on food handling and safety for volunteers/staff eg. TAFE, community colleges and local councils may be able to assist.</p>
2.5 There is very little rigorous data collection around food donation	<p>2.5a Develop a data collection toolkit that can be used by food donation agencies that do not collect data to improve grant applications and knowledge.</p> <p>2.5b Investigate opportunities for supermarkets to share their data around food donation.</p>

3. Promote networking and collaboration amongst agencies and donors and other stakeholders to maximise efficiencies and share resources.

Issue	Recommendations
3.1 Lack of collaboration amongst agencies	3.1 Bring agencies together annually for information exchange, sharing of programs and ideas, funding opportunities, transport arrangements, resource sharing.
3.2 Lack of resources/staff and support to establish collaborative opportunities	3.2a Seek funding for a staff resource to establish collaborative, networking opportunities amongst stakeholders. 3.2b Form a group/expand existing regional interagencies, whose role it is to provide information and support to food donation agencies and food donors.
3.3 Lack of resources/staff and support to establish collaborative opportunities	3.3 Identify a contact within Councils to foster an understanding of how Council could support food donation and how agencies could inform Councils of their food waste diversion activities.
3.4 Ongoing, consistent relationship with food donors	3.4a Work closely with food donors to ensure agreements are established and are being met by all parties. 3.4b Investigate pilot of Metcash app. 3.4c Invite food donors to yearly forums/ meetings.

4. Improve infrastructure

Issue	Recommendations
4.1 Some agencies don't have adequate storage or refrigeration	4.1a Apply for NSW EPA Food Donation organics infrastructure funds for refrigerated vehicles. 4.1b For smaller storage needs (eg. Containers, bags) apply through the FD Education Grants.
4.2 Some agencies and donors don't have funds to cover non-EPA grant costs such as fuel	4.2a Look for opportunities to share travel/transportation costs with other agencies then divide donations. Eg one agency collects from Alstonville and one collects from Lismore, meet in the middle and reduce fuel/travel costs 4.2.b Engage in fundraising activity to help support the costs.

Food donation agencies have had little time or resources to develop closer networking and collaboration ties. This has to a large extent precluded the opportunity to share infrastructure and resources or build trust. NEW thinks there is an opportunity, with funding assistance, to implement a program where a facilitator could be contracted to deliver a range of initiatives to assist in establishing

networks and mailing lists, the promotion to identify new supplies and volunteers, and to develop grant writing and education workshops.



NEW Food Donation Workshop

1/08/2019

10 things you said could improve operations for your group. Please number the top 3.

- Access to more storage and cool-room space*
- More volunteers who are committed and consistent*
- A higher community profile and positive community liaison – increase awareness of the role of agencies*
- More access to grants and ability to apply for them*
- Ongoing networking amongst food donation agencies and the business community*
- Ongoing operational funding for staff costs to decrease total reliance on volunteers and improve consistency in dealing with donors*
- Changes in perceptions and policy of retail donors and their staff to encourage an increase in donations, changes in restrictive policies and remove stigma attached to those in need*
- Aps and their promotion of on TVC etc with information about how to register*
- A regional designated person to assist agencies – eg provide templates, start conversations with large donors, facilitate networking events to connect people*
- A regional food hub*

Thank You

| APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TABLE 1

Council area	Organisation	Steering Committee	Survey	Focus Group	Interview	Forum
Ballina	Veteran's Advocacy Centre		yes			
	Five Loaves Ballina					yes
	DAISI, Ballina (participated via CONC)		yes	yes		yes
Byron Shire	Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre		yes	yes		yes
	The Grace Space					
	The Liberation Larder Project -Elizabeth		yes	yes	yes	yes
	C3 Care Food Care Program - no longer operating					
	The Hub Baptist, Ocean Shores		yes			
	Uniting church Community Food Box, Mullumbimby		yes			yes
Clarence Valley	Presbyterian Church Maclean					
	Soup-A-Stars (New School of Arts Neighbourhood House)		yes	yes		yes
	Christ Church Cathedral		yes	yes		yes
	The Hub Baptist Church		yes	yes		
	Food Care, South Grafton		yes	yes		
	Wellspring Community Pantry					
Kyogle	Kyogle Community Kitchen					
	Kyogle Seventh Day Adventist Church					
	Kyogle Together Inc					
Lismore	Nimbin Neighbourhood & Information Centre		yes	yes		yes
	Life Care Food From Life, Foodbank, Lismore		yes	yes		
	Winsome Hotel - Lismore Soup Kitchen		yes			
	Anglicare North Coast		yes			yes
	Five loaves					yes
	Lismore Regional Mission					
	Crossroads Care					
	Northern Rivers Community Gateway		yes	yes		
	Uniting Church Community Food Box, Lismore	yes	yes	yes		yes
Uniting Church - Red Dove Café (see above)						
Richmond Valley	A combined Churches Project					
	Casino Soup Kitchen and FoodBank				yes	yes
	Five Loaves, Casino					
	Food Basket (previously Lend-A-Hand Food Cupboard)		yes	yes		
	Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Tweed Shire	ADRA Food & Friendship Kitchen		yes			
	Hari Krishna Community & Meditation Farm					
	Murwillumbah Community Centre - Food Hub		yes	yes		yes
	Breakfast with Friends					yes
	Beachside Communicare/ Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre		yes	yes		yes
	Vibe Care Ltd					
Other organisations	Foodbank NSW	yes			yes	yes
	Oz Harvest				yes	yes
	Northern Rivers Area Health Service	yes				yes
	Metcash IGA	yes	yes			yes

APPENDIX 2: DESKTOP RESEARCH

- Community food hubs: an economic and social justice model for regional Australia? Nicholas Rose (2017) Rural Society <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rrso20>
- County of Kane Food Hub Feasibility Study 2016
<https://www.countyofkane.org/FDER/Documents/Food%20Hub/Kane%20County%20Food%20Hub%20Feasibility%20Study%20Summary%20Report.pdf>
- Cutting Waste & Boosting Food Donation October 25, 2017 Yerina Mugica <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/yerina-mugica/case-studies-cutting-waste-boosting-food-donation&usg=AOvVaw3PnNm3VtiyuD1KsKQfRDta>
- Food Donation Tool kit, Do something! And NSW EPA 2012
- Food Rescue Central West Feasibility Study, Netwaste 2019
- Food losses and waste - inventory and management at each stage in the food chain French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) by INCOME consulting 2016
- Feasibility of Food Donation Programs in Illawarra – Analysis of options for Collaborative grant funding, APC 2015
- Foodbank Hunger Report 2018, Foodbank and McCrindle
- Flood and Food Survey, Lismore Dec. 2017 Kerry Gibson, Australian Red Cross
- Food donation: An initiative to mitigate hunger in the world Conference Paper · July 2015
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284726800>
- Illawarra Food Hub Post-project Debrief Final Report, Rooftop Social, April 2018
- Local Food Hub Impact Report Virginia, 2017
<http://www.fooddonationmodel.org/virginia-local-food-hub-annual-report-2016.webarchive>
- NSW food and beverage manufacturing industry development strategy, Dept of Industry, NSW Government 2019
- Our Farms to Families <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/5748285/the-faces-of-hunger-hundreds-of-families-queue-for-food-relief/>
- Scoping, Design and Recommendations for the Development of a food hub in the City of Casey, Eaterprises 2012



This is a NSW Government Waste Less, Recycle More initiative funded from the waste levy.

END OF DOCUMENT