



Sector Action Plan

2021-2023

Food Rescue

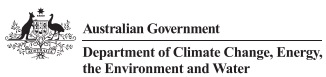


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“This work will have a positive impact on the lives of millions of Australians who are currently food insecure. It will have a similarly positive impact on helping to reduce this country’s food waste.”

Sarah Pennell, Foodbank Australia’s GM of Business on behalf of the working group.

1. Executive Summary

This Sector Action Plan outlines the current state and future potential of the food rescue¹ sector in Australia and how the sector may move forward to achieve three major goals:

- ▶ Increasing the volume of edible, nutritious food recovered.
- ▶ Decreasing the volume of food waste all along the food value chain.
- ▶ Improving the collection and distribution of rescued food to assist food insecure people in Australia.

Developing the plan followed the Review-Plan-Do methodology (FIAL, 2019) incorporating site visits, conversations with food rescue sector representatives and reviewing existing literature to formulate a system-wide understanding of the sector.

There are opportunities for the food rescue sector to address the three overarching goals through interventions in research, resources, policy, collaboration and education in the short to medium term and longer-term.

Recommendations include:

- ▶ Establishing a collaborative steering group within the sector to discuss and prioritise actions and develop a workable plan for the sector to implement.
- ▶ Improving tax incentives to encourage donations of surplus food and essential services to the food rescue sector.
- ▶ Research to improve our collective understanding of the sector and current food rescue models and systems.
- ▶ Investigate new opportunities to rescue food – e.g., rescuing surplus food in primary production.
- ▶ Investigating alternate modes of distribution and sharing of surplus food, such as through apps, commercial logistics and contracting pallet space.
- ▶ Working together as a sector to engage with policy-makers and advocate for the sector.
- ▶ Working closely with Stop Food Waste Australia (SFWA) to maximise the benefits of the Australian Food Pact and other Sector Action Plans for the sector.

There are limitations to the report, such as a lack of quality data on the sector as a whole, but this challenge may be overcome by future research into the sector and supporting methods for data sharing and collaboration.

1. Throughout this document, 'food rescue' incorporates the breadth of activities undertaken across food rescue and food relief.

2. Introduction

Australians experiencing food insecurity rose to 31% in 2020 (Foodbank, 2020).

Concurrently, Australia generated 310kg of food waste per person (across the entire food value chain) (FIAL, 2021). With a national target to halve food waste by 2030 (in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, Target 12.3), extensive change is required across the entire Australian food value chain. Increasing the impact of the food rescue sector is one way to target change across multiple levels of the food value chain, whilst also reducing food insecurity.

This Sector Action Plan has been developed to provide recommendations to enhance the food rescue sector in Australia, focusing on:

- 1 Increasing the volume of edible, nutritious food recovered
- 2 Decreasing the volume of food waste all along the food value chain
- 3 Improving the collection and distribution of rescued food to assist food insecure people in Australia.

Food rescue is a vital sector in Australia due to its co-benefits of reducing food waste and helping to address food insecurity. If critical barriers to the sector are addressed it is possible that a tenfold increase in the food rescue sector could deliver 10 percent of Australia's 50% food waste reduction target by 2030 (FIAL, 2019). This Sector Action Plan documents the current state and future potential of the food rescue sector as a part of the broader food value chain to determine how best the sector can upscale.



3. Background

Food waste is a major problem in Australia across each sector of the food value chain. The National Food Waste Strategy (NFWS) Feasibility Study found each year Australia wasted 7.6 million tonnes of food, with an economic cost of \$36.6 billion, and an environmental impact of 17.5 million tonnes of CO₂ generated from the production and disposal of food that is ultimately wasted (FIAL, 2021). At the same time, one in six adults haven't had enough to eat in the last year, while 1.2 million children have gone hungry (Foodbank, 2021).

Australia's National Food Waste Strategy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) set the ambitious target of halving food waste by 2030 to combat these economic, environmental and social issues. This goal aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 12.3: *'By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses'*.

[SDG 12, Responsible Production and Consumption](#) covers land, water and food. Other related SDGs such as [SDG 2 Zero Hunger](#), SDG 13 Climate Action, and [SDG 15 Life on the Land](#) are also relevant to food waste, and are related to the food rescue sector (FIAL, 2019).

The food rescue sector acts to prevent food from being wasted by collecting, storing and redistributing food otherwise destined for disposal. The Feasibility Study defines food used for food rescue as food 'reuse', the most preferred method of food waste minimisation after prevention and lists 37,000 tonnes as currently being rescued (FIAL, 2021). **Figure 1** overleaf shows the Australian Food and Drink Recovery Hierarchy with food rescue as 'reuse' (SFWA, 2021).





Food security is a major issue in Australia. Food rescue offers a unique approach to reducing food waste because of the fundamental co-benefit of reducing food insecurity. National and international publications strongly recommend food rescue as an opportunity to reduce food waste. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) Food Wastage Footprint report found that redistributing safe, surplus food to those in need is the “best option” for managing food waste (FAO, 2013).

The National Food Waste Strategy Feasibility Study (FIAL, 2021) highlights the importance of food donation as one of the key prevention methods (Figure 1). There is an opportunity to expand food rescue, attempt to balance the food and drink recovery hierarchy and achieve the target of halving food waste in Australia by 2030.

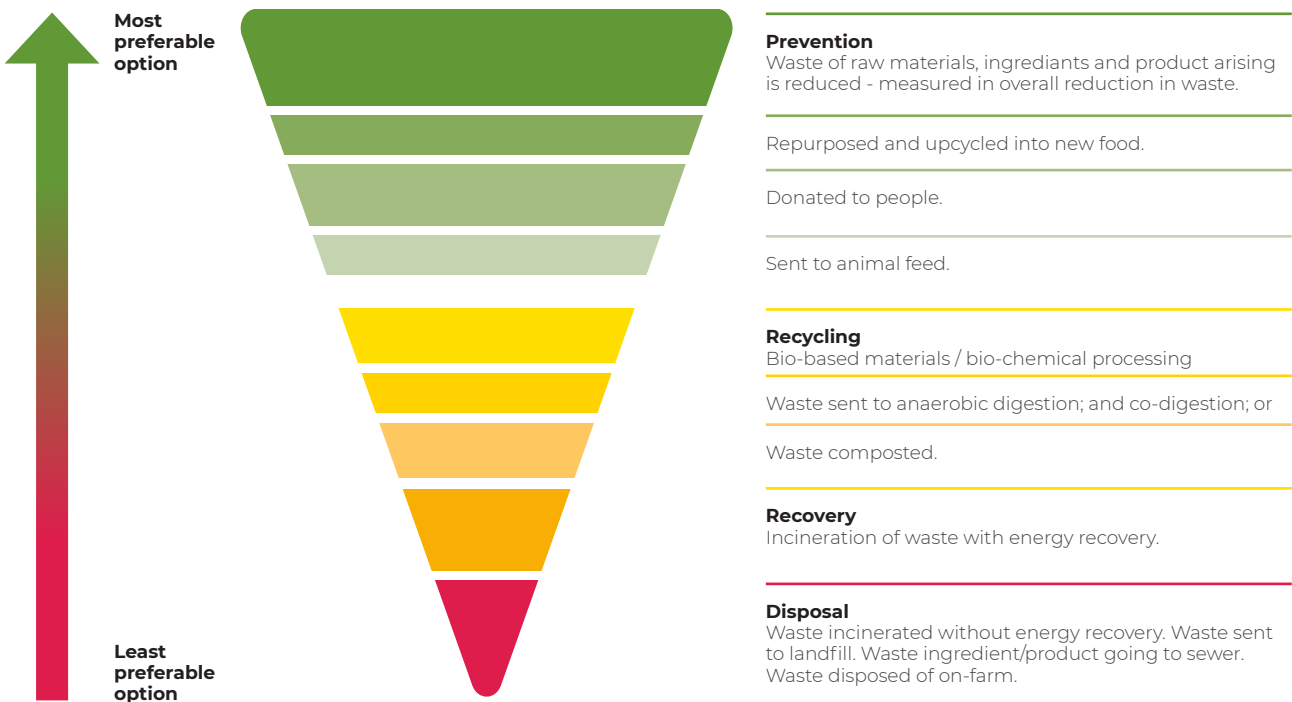


Figure 1: Australian Food and Drink Recovery Hierarchy (SFWA, 2021)

4. Stop Food Waste Australia and Sector Action Plans

Stop Food Waste Australia (SFWA) has been established as an independent, long-term entity to play a key role in delivering the [National Food Waste Strategy](#) target to halve food waste by 2030. SFWA has initial funding from the Australian Government and a shared resources arrangement with Fight Food Waste Limited (FFWL). With the support of its core partner, the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), it will deliver a program of food waste reduction and transformation activities.

As a priority, SFWA will deliver Target 2.1 of the 2019 [National Waste Policy Action Plan](#) to establish a “voluntary commitment program for businesses across the supply and consumption chain to engage in food waste reduction activities and to encourage industry-led action.” SFWA is also responsible for a range of other food waste reduction and transformation activities, including developing Sector Action Plans, stimulating active stakeholder engagement and establishing new partnerships, acting as a home for food waste-related communication, and monitoring,

evaluating and reporting the impact of its activities and those of its partners. Australian food rescue organisations Foodbank, Secondbite and OzHarvest are founding partners of Stop Food Waste Australia, with FareShare becoming a partner in 2021.

Sector Action Plans provide an opportunity to deploy targeted interventions to reduce significant food waste hotspots, while realising multiple economic, environmental and societal benefits for supply chain partners, collaborators and wider civil society.

The principles of co-design are fundamental to creating an effective Sector Action Plan. By working collaboratively with those key stakeholders most able to directly control or influence the root cause(s) of food waste hotspots and to take action to reduce or eliminate food waste in the value chain, Sector Action Plans create a ‘bottom-up’ framework for taking action on reducing food waste.

Sector Action Plan initiatives for reducing the impacts of food loss and waste will generally fall under five pillars of activity as shown in **Figure 2** below.

The shape of each Sector Action Plan and the balance of interventions between these pillars, will depend entirely on the focus of the plan, the

willingness of stakeholders to undertake specific initiatives and the priorities emerging from the co-design process. A pivotal element of each Sector Action Plan will be a program theory and logic map, illustrating causality and targeting areas for Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI).

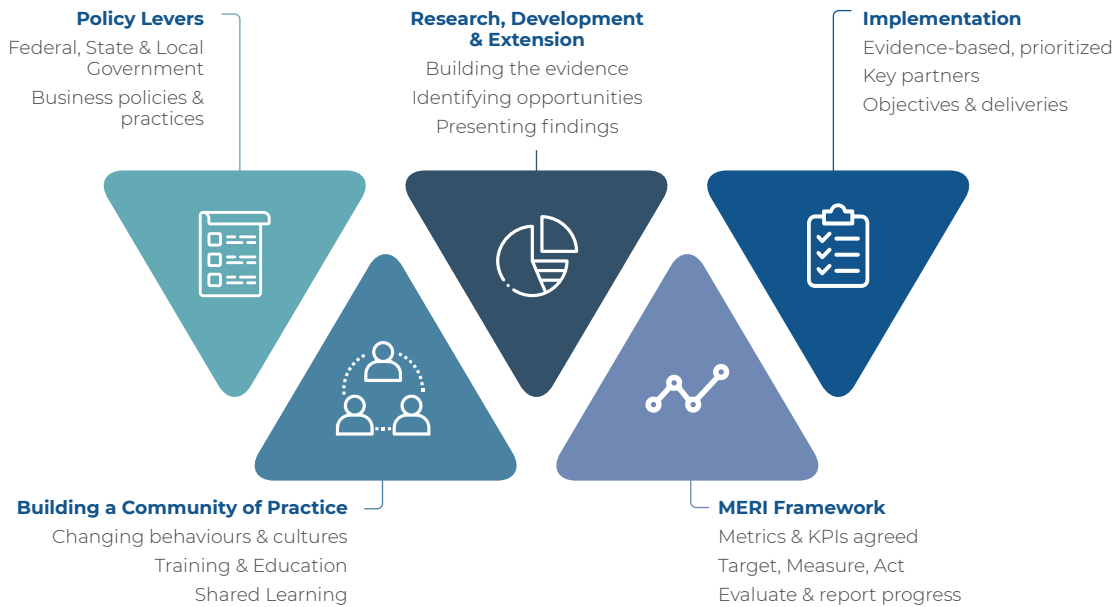


Figure 2: The five pillars of a Sector Action Plan

5. Changes in the context of the Food Rescue Sector 2020-2021

In 2020, the food rescue sector in Australia was heavily impacted, initially by bushfires and emergency response, and later by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These disasters have altered the way the sector works together, creating opportunities for ongoing collaboration and dialogue. This refresh of the Food Rescue Sector Action Plan highlights changes since the initial plan in 2020, setting the stage for reprioritisation and identification of new initiatives.

Increased need

Every year Foodbank compiles the Foodbank Hunger Report. The results of the Foodbank Hunger Report 2020, published during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighted the impact of the pandemic on everyday food insecurity, including new cohorts becoming vulnerable to hunger during times of emergency.

In 2019, 15% of Australians experiencing food insecurity were seeking food relief at least once a week. In 2020 at the beginning of COVID-19, this more than doubled to 31%. Although charities saw demand for food relief decline amongst those receiving Government Covid-19 support, new cohorts became vulnerable, including casual workers, temporary visa holders and international students. (Foodbank, 2020). Since the rollback of JobSeeker and JobKeeper, 49.8% of food relief agencies are reporting a renewed increase in demand (OzHarvest Agency Survey, 2021)

COVID-19, from both a health and economic perspective, has made life even more difficult for vulnerable Australians and there is concern that they will never make up lost ground. In addition, charities have seen other food insecure groups arise in the crisis, including casual workers and international students. The demographics of these groups has resulted in alternative forms of food relief being adopted such as pop-up food pantries in CBDs and inner suburban locations.

Increased coordination and collaboration

Over the past year (2020-2021), the food relief demands of natural emergencies and the pandemic have resulted in a greater need for coordination and collaboration across the sector. This is particularly evident in terms of government advocacy, where sector organisations have coordinated their intelligence and funding requests. Also operationally at the state level organisations have shared information, resources and helped to back each other up in service delivery, food storage and logistics. This Sector Action Plan identifies specific areas where increased coordination and collaboration amongst sector agencies will strengthen overall outcomes.

Heightened focus on nutrition

Charities have seen a significant increase in the frequency of demand for food relief. In addition to supporting this increased need, there is a strong commitment for the sector that the food relief provided meets all dietary and nutritional needs.

The growing dependence on food relief for many, and changes in the profile of those in need, highlights the increasing importance of diversity in food provision. The sector is increasingly ensuring reliable availability of key staple foods that provide variety, convenience, nutritional value and cultural appropriateness. In particular, priorities are to secure food for different ages (e.g., babies, toddlers, children, pregnant women, the elderly), people with special health and dietary needs and school children.

Progress on specific activities

Tax Reform

The Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (FFW CRC) has worked with Foodbank and KPMG to develop a policy paper and recommendations for Federal Government on the potential application, impact and cost-benefit analysis for proposed tax incentives for the donation of food, transport and storage (KPMG, 2020). Foodbank led the development of the policy and advocacy across national government departments, MPs and Ministers. The FFW CRC has also assisted by creating a range of communication products, such as this [short explanatory video](#).

A working group has been established to scope and deliver pilots in two Australian LGA areas, following feedback from the Treasurer, while also pursuing a national tax reform agenda.

The Hunger Map

Foodbank is developing a Hunger Map, with the first stage available in late-2021. The initial stage combines a range of geospatial statistical data illustrating the location of current food insecurity, food supply and, therefore, gaps in supply. Future additions to the Map will also show greater detail relating to the accessibility of food relief particularly for specific cohorts of food insecure people; and the logistics networks of food rescue organisations.

Service delivery within State and Territories

While this Sector Action Plan is focussed on opportunities for national coordination and alignment of food rescue programs, on-the-ground service delivery within jurisdictions is the foundation of the sector. Consequently, relationships within states between food rescue organisations, their suppliers and front-line food relief charities are vital to understand and coordinate operational services.

In 2019, the Western Australian Premier convened a sector-wide, whole-of-government Food Relief Roundtable. The resultant WA Food Relief Framework provides a wide range of approaches to coordinate and improve service delivery across the sector (WACOSS, 2019). It is data-driven, involves local governments and regional collectives and highlights the imperative for cross-sectoral and cross-government commitment to deliver identified actions.

Sustainability Victoria has nominated the scaling of food rescue as a key priority for its Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre's work to reduce food waste and food insecurity. A workshop with food rescue organisations, major retailers and peak industry bodies in food and agribusiness was held in June 2021 to identify opportunities for collaboration and improvement projects to increase Victoria's rescued food to 62,687 tonnes per year, realising estimated savings of \$165 million and providing 188 million meals to hungry Victorians. Changing perceptions from 'food waste' to 'surplus food'; from 'food waste' to 'good' and 'bad' stock losses provides a basis for reframing the opportunity. Working more closely with primary producers to reduce food loss on farm and increase nutritious foods available for food rescue was highlighted as a clear priority to progress.

6. Developing a Sector Action Plan

This Sector Action Plan utilises the Review-Plan-Do method, as developed as part of the NFWS Resources Document (FIAL, 2019)². This method aims to understand the current system, identify opportunities and co-design actions for sectors of the food value chain. It is a method to reduce the complexity of sectors that operate at multiple points in the food value chain. The co-design approach of this method facilitates the integration of multiple Participants' perspectives to create inclusive and relevant recommendations.



Figure 3: Primary steps to the Review-Plan-Do methodology

Figure 3 outlines the primary steps to the Review-Plan-Do approach that are applied. This plan first engages selected 'champions', undertakes research to understand current systems, develops an implementation plan, highlighting the primary objectives for the sector, reviews existing programs, co-designs future initiatives and provides advice for implementation. Stakeholder involvement and co-design are core components of the Review-Plan-Do planning process.

In addition to the Review-Plan-Do method, the NFWS Resources Document outlines desired principles to drive good outcomes and promote best practice in food waste reduction initiatives (see **Table 1**, below) (FIAL, 2019). These principles provide direction on methods and outcomes to inform program design, decision-making and reporting. A full listing of the principles are contained in **Appendix 1**.

Principles to drive good outcomes:	
▶ Prevent food waste	▶ Facilitate food rescue and relief
▶ Move food up the food recovery hierarchy	▶ Make wasting food a socially unacceptable thing to do
▶ Apply a circular economy approach	
Principles to promote best practice in food waste reduction initiatives:	
▶ Co-design with Industry	▶ Seek a Return on Investment (ROI)
▶ Create initiatives to realise multiple benefits for supply chain partners and collaborators	▶ Take a food system's perspective

Table 1: Principles to drive good outcomes and promote best practice in food waste reduction initiatives (FIAL, 2019).

2. For an explanation of the *Review Plan Do* process see Section 3.5.3 of [Resources for implementing the National Food Waste Strategy](#) (FIAL, 2019).

6.1. Engage Champions

Four champions have been identified for the food rescue sector. Foodbank, OzHarvest, SecondBite and FareShare (the latter joining in 2021) collectively account for 98% of the food volume rescued (Arcadis, 2019).

OzHarvest focuses on collecting food primarily from the retail and hospitality sectors and distributing it directly to partner charities for dissemination to people in need. OzHarvest's primary objective is to reduce food waste and all of their actions align with this objective. In addition to food rescue, OzHarvest runs several education programs to support food waste prevention, sustainability and nutritional security.

SecondBite focuses on retail, hospitality and other sectors across the food value chain, including primary producers. SecondBite utilises cold chain logistics and contracts pallet space in commercial vehicles as a method of keeping costs down and impacts high.

Foodbank focuses on a broader range along the food value chain, from primary producers, manufacturing, retail and hospitality. This food is received into one or more of its warehouses, sorted and then distributed to charities for food relief services.

FareShare operates a fleet of refrigerated vans in Victoria which collect surplus and donated food from supermarkets, wholesalers, manufacturers and farmers. This includes meat, eggs, dairy and vegetables which they cook into free, nutritious meals. In Brisbane, Foodbank supplies their kitchen with surplus food including significant quantities of meat and vegetables. FareShare add value to this food by cooking it into balanced, nutritious, ready to eat meals.

While the four champion organisations differ in their operations, they achieve a common outcome: feeding people while reducing food waste.

For the purposes of this report, the Champions in the sector have been identified according to scale of food rescue operations. Foodbank, OzHarvest, SecondBite and FareShare account for 98% of



the food volume in the sector. The remaining 2% is spread across small to medium organisations; Yume, an online marketplace for the hospitality sector to purchase surplus food; the Y-Waste App, which connects food merchants with buyers for end-of-day surplus foods at a discounted price; Spare Harvest, an app that connects food donors with recipients free of charge, and other groups include Food for Change, Bring Me Home, Uniting Care West, Produce to the People, Student Bites, The Big Umbrella and Communities@Work (Arcadis, 2019; Student Bites, n.d.).

In addition to small to medium sized food rescue organisations, there are further community initiatives and small-scale food rescue projects and programs occurring in Australia, such as street and charity pantries. This report acknowledges the unique value of each food rescue program across Australia in both regional and urban settings. While this report focuses primarily on Australia's four major food rescue organisations, there are opportunities for collaboration and coordination with and between small and medium sized organisations. Further, the findings and recommendations of this report may have broader applications across the whole food rescue sector.



6.2. Understand Current Systems

This section outlines the existing system of food rescue in Australia. It explores how food rescue intersects with the food value chain and reviews the food rescue sector champions.

Currently, food is being wasted across the food value chain, including throughout the transport and storage network as seen in **Figure 5**. The Baseline (Arcadis, 2019) provides a snapshot of food rescue data for the year 2016-17. However, national data across the sector has not been captured on a regular basis but will be in future as part of the MERI framework for this Sector Action Plan.

The food rescue sector operates across the food value chain at the primary production, manufacturing, wholesale, retail and hospitality levels, as seen in **Figure 4** below. Household waste is out of the scope of most food rescue organisations, due to logistical and health issues, and thus household waste volumes are not factored into this report.

Primary production and manufacturing have the highest levels of food waste (aside from households, which are not serviced by food rescue), and concurrently, higher volumes of food rescue. The retail sector has higher levels of rescue and lower levels of waste which may be attributed to a focus on the retail sector by both OzHarvest and SecondBite.

The marked difference in volumes between waste generated and food rescued suggests there is a significant opportunity for the food rescue sector to considerably expand operations.

The geographic distribution of rescued food in Australia is uneven. Food rescue volumes tend to be high in urban areas and low in regional and remote areas (Arcadis, 2019). However, according to the Foodbank Hunger report (2019), regional and remote areas have the highest level of food insecurity. Rescue organisations tend to have staff, infrastructure, and the capacity to collect surplus food in urban areas, but are more limited in their capacity to collect food from regional areas.

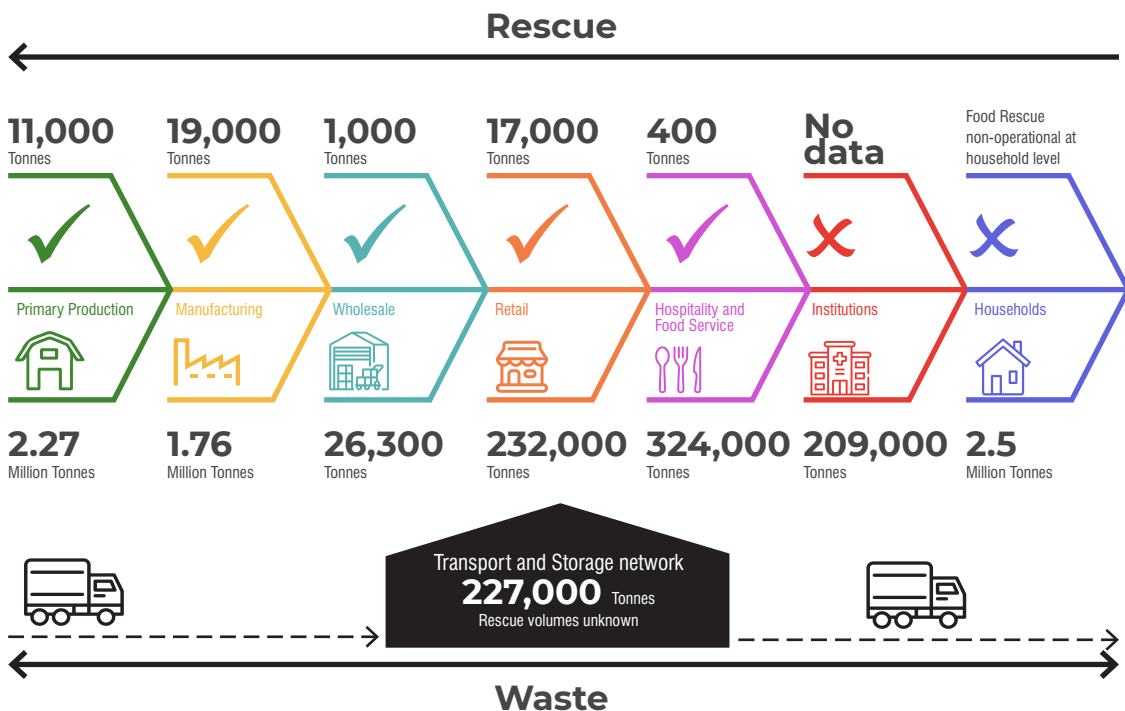


Figure 4: Food rescue and waste intersections along the food value chain. The data illustrated is from 2019 statistics.

Food rescue efforts tend to operate similarly across the sector but at different levels of the food supply chain. As shown in **Figure 5**, below, surplus food is collected from donors, transported, either to food relief organisations or to storage facilities where it is distributed to final recipients at a later date.

While the model of food rescue is similar across the sector, each of the sector champions operate differently. Thus, it is important to understand the food rescue sector from the different perspectives of these organisations in order to align with the NFWS Resource Document principles, such as ‘co-design with industry, taking a food systems perspective, and creating initiatives to achieve multiple benefits for partners and collaborators’ (FIAL, 2019). Further, gaining a systems perspective of the sector will allow for greater understanding of the sector as a whole.



Figure 5: Generalised food rescue and redistribution process for major food rescue organisations.





Foodbank

Overview

Foodbank is the largest food rescue organisation in Australia. It is responsible for rescuing 72% of the surplus food in the sector and runs under a federated model. Foodbank operates across Australia in NSW/ACT, VIC, QLD, NT, WA, TAS and SA. A depiction of how Foodbank runs its day-to-day operations can be seen in Figure 6 below. While Foodbank's primary aim is to address food insecurity in Australia, food waste reduction is an integral part of their operations.

fighting hunger in Australia. Their Foodbank Hunger Report, released annually, provides valuable data on the prevalence of food insecurity in Australia. Their School Breakfast Program provides children with access to breakfast at school. In the Key Staples Program, Foodbank collaborates with farmers and manufacturers to create and distribute key staple items such as pasta and rice, which are rarely donated to food rescue in adequate supply.

www.foodbank.org.au

Foodbank primarily runs programs focusing on



Fighting Hunger

- ▶ Food rescue and relief
- ▶ Key staples program
- ▶ School Breakfast Program
- ▶ Foodbank Hunger Report and other research
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Nutrition programs

Figure 6: Model of Foodbank's primary objective and related activities (Foodbank).



Nourishing Our Country



OzHarvest

Overview

Founded by Ronni Kahn AO in 2004, OzHarvest is a for impact organisation with a driving purpose to 'Nourish our Country' by stopping good food going to waste and delivering it to people in need. Its food rescue operations collect 250 tonnes of fresh and nutritious food from more than 3,000 businesses every week, which is redistributed to over 1,600 charities across Australia. In response to the drastic rise in need, OzHarvest scaled up their emergency food relief response to include packing and distributing food hampers via pop-up hubs, delivering fresh produce to regional communities with mobile markets, creating cooked meals, putting new vans on the road and supporting more charities.

OzHarvest education programs are focused on creating positive change, by increasing life skills around healthy eating, raising awareness about food waste and strengthening community connections. FEAST is a curriculum-aligned program from schools, NEST teaches adults to cook and eat healthily on a budget and Nourish offers hospitality training and employment pathways for vulnerable youth.

Empowering others to fight food waste and promote food security is the goal of OzHarvest's advocacy work, with a firm commitment to reach the national target of halving food waste by 2030. By working closely with Government and stakeholder groups, OzHarvest provides a voice for food insecure Australians and insights on reducing national food waste.

Protecting the planet is central to their mission and the organisation proactively promotes climate action. Its work is strongly aligned to achieving five of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Continuous innovation guides their work to tackle food waste and feed hungry people, working closely with their social impact business, ForPurposeCo.

OzHarvest operates nationally in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Cairns, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth and in regional communities.

www.ozharvest.org



Figure 7: Details OzHarvest's programs, services and projects under the four strategic pillars.



SecondBite

Overview

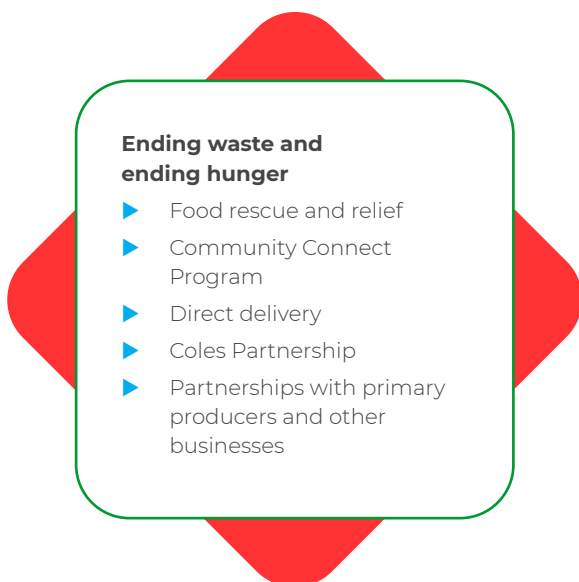
SecondBite's primary goal is to feed food insecure people with surplus food. The organisation's primary goal centres around both food waste and hunger in Australia.

SecondBite operates similarly to both Foodbank and OzHarvest. They collect food from predominately commercial outlets. They have a national partnership with Coles, but also work with other retailers and other donors along the Coles supply chain. SecondBite has warehouse locations in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, where they sort and distribute surplus food, which is then delivered to food relief organisations.

They also have connections in Tasmania and the Northern Territory where they facilitate the peer-to-peer sharing of surplus foods from suppliers directly to charities and food relief organisations.

Figure 8 outlines key operations of SecondBite, including their corporate partnerships with Coles and their Community Connect Program which connects surplus food directly to charities (SecondBite, 2019).

www.secondbite.org



SecondBite
Ending Waste. Ending Hunger.

Figure 8: Model of SecondBite's operations (SecondBite, 2018).



FareShare

Overview

For 20 years, FareShare has been rescuing quality food and cooking it into nutritious meals for people doing it tough.

From humble origins baking a few hundred pies each week, FareShare now operates Australia's largest charity kitchens in Melbourne and Brisbane, where their chefs and volunteers work hand in hand to cook the best possible meal for every person.

The healthy, delicious meals are given away free to front line charities, such as soup vans, homeless shelters, women's refuges and community food banks. **Figure 9** summarises FareShare's programs.

Rescue

FareShare save surplus, quality food from landfill, cutting food waste and fighting pollution.

FareShare operates a fleet of refrigerated vans in Victoria which collect surplus and donated food from supermarkets, wholesalers, manufacturers and farmers. This includes meat, eggs, dairy and vegetables which they cook into free, nutritious meals. In Brisbane, Foodbank supplies their kitchen with surplus food including significant quantities of meat and vegetables. FareShare add value to this food by cooking it into balanced, nutritious, ready to eat meals.



Cook

FareShare transform rescued and donated food into nutritious meals.

FareShare cooks rescued food at scale. Over two decades they have developed efficient processes to cook 12,000 meals a day with a volunteer workforce. They ensure the meals are packed with protein and fresh vegetables to provide vulnerable people with as much nutrition as possible. Their ready to eat meals include curries, pastas, casseroles, soups, tagines and braises. FareShare’s Melbourne kitchen also prepares a popular line of savoury pastries such as sausage rolls, vegetable rolls, quiches, and egg and bacon pies. Cooking is supervised by experienced chefs in modern, production kitchens.

Grow

FareShare grow vegetables in kitchen gardens to add nutrition to our cooked meals.

FareShare operates three kitchen gardens in Melbourne to help them secure sufficient vegetables for the meals. The gardens are tended by volunteers under the direction of a kitchen

garden manager and produce about 100 tonnes of vegetables a year. Crops grown include zucchinis, carrots, eggplant, pumpkins and sweet potatoes. All vegetables harvested in the kitchen gardens are brought back to the kitchen to be added to our meals, supplementing what they are able to rescue.

Feed

FareShare share their cooked meals with vulnerable people struggling to access nutritious food.

FareShare’s meals are distributed free to people experiencing food poverty and unable to afford nutritious food. In Victoria, the meals are handed out by more than 400 charities including soup vans, homeless shelters, women’s refuges, schools serving disadvantaged communities, and RSLs. Meals cooked in their Brisbane kitchen are distributed by Foodbank to its existing network of frontline charities supporting people doing it tough. For many people, a FareShare meal will be the only meal of the day and therefore they do everything possible to make it count nutritionally.

www.fareshare.net.au

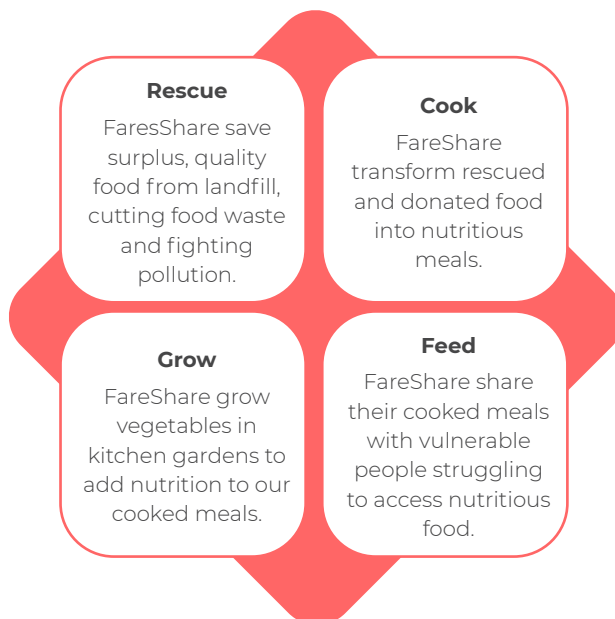


Figure 9: Description of FareShare’s programs

6.3. Develop a fit-for-purpose implementation plan for the targeted sector

A program logic has been created to guide the implementation plan for the food rescue sector. Program Logics are used as a thinking, planning and implementation tool which links activities with outputs, and short medium and long term outcomes (Braveman & Engle, 2009).

Program Logics provide an integrated and systematic approach to program planning, implementation and evaluation (WK Kellogg Foundation, 2004). The program logic (Figure 10, below) captures a picture of the food rescue sector in Australia currently, the core intended outcomes for short, medium and long term, as well as the available inputs and the activities and participants needed to achieve these outcomes. However, it is important to note the key assumptions and external factors, as seen in **Figure 10**, which may impact the program logic.

There are three long term goals for the food rescue sector:

1. Increasing the volume of edible, nutritious food recovered
2. Decreasing the volume of food waste all along the food value chain
3. Improving the collection and distribution of rescued food to assist food insecure people in Australia.

The desired outcomes of the program logic are used to inform recommendations in the following co-design section.

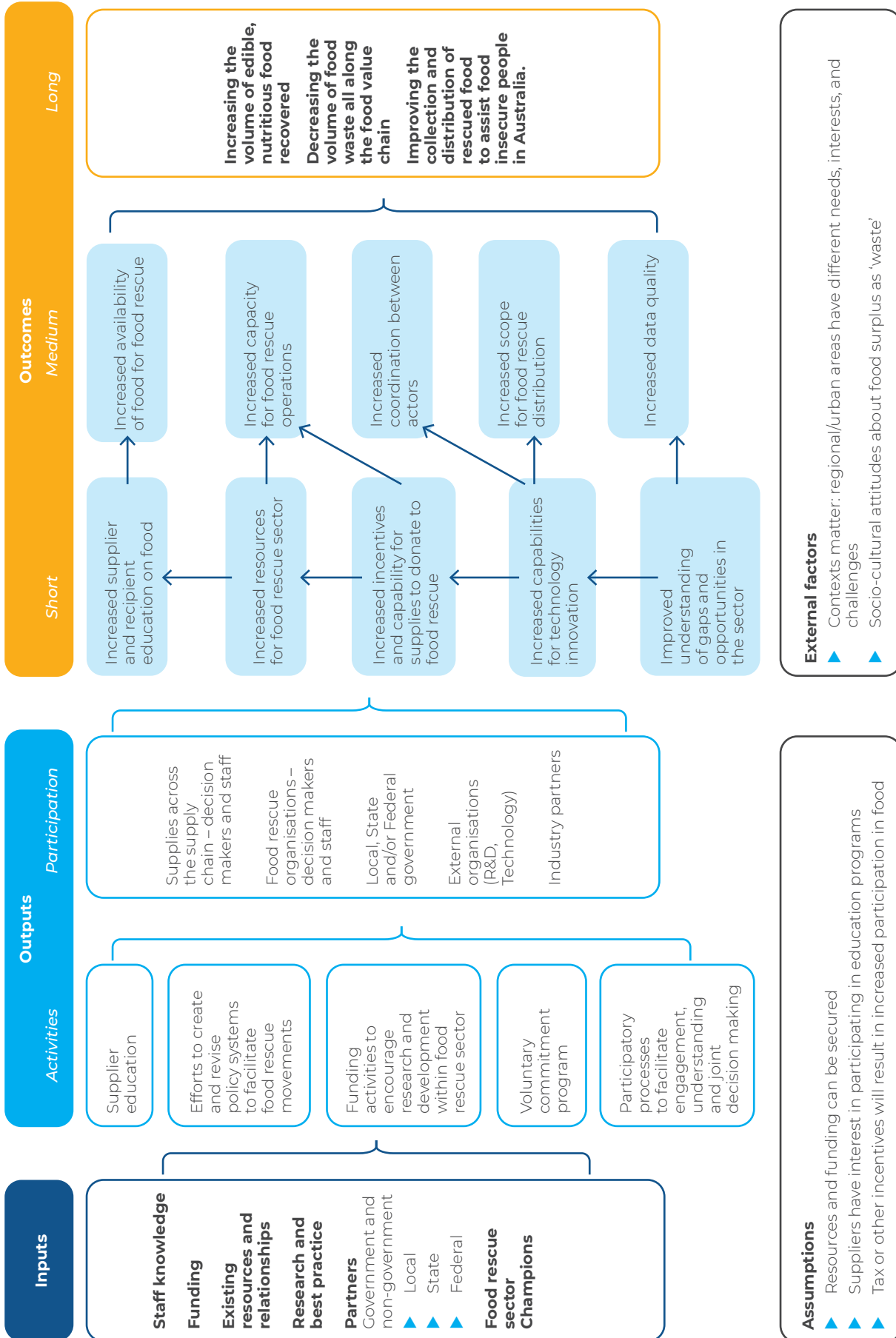


Figure 10: Program Logic for the Food Rescue Sector in Australia.

6.4. Co-design future initiatives

There is a distinct need to build food rescue into the current food value chain. Feedback Global has created a transformative model of a circular food system that builds food rescue into each point of the food value chain as pictured in **Figure 11** below.

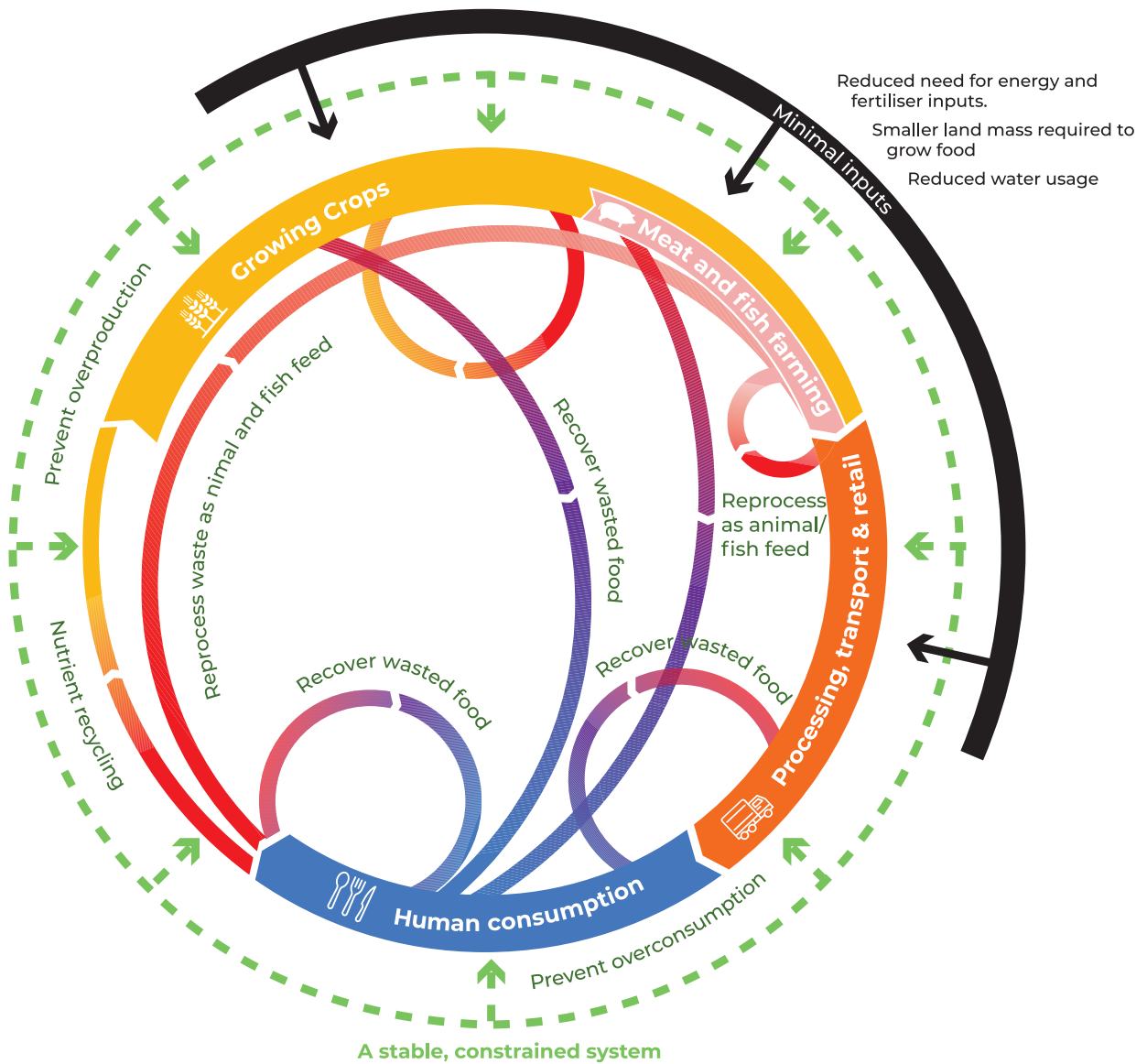


Figure 11: Building a better food system model (Feedback Global, n.d.)

This circular food system model ensures that wasted or surplus food is recovered and used for human consumption from food production to post-consumer losses. It is important to acknowledge that while food rescue does operate at all of these levels in Australia currently, it is not built into the current system. In order for food rescue to grow tenfold, system level changes are required.

This review of the food rescue sector in Australia indicates there are a number of achievable and measurable short to medium and longer-term actions to address the three identified outcomes of:

- ▶ Increasing the volume of edible, nutritious food recovered
- ▶ Decreasing the volume of food waste all along the food value chain
- ▶ Improving the collection and distribution of rescued food to assist food insecure people in Australia.

Table 2 (Research initiatives), **Table 3** (Policy initiatives), **Table 4** (Education and communication initiatives), **Table 5** (Collaboration), and **Table 6** (The Australian Food Pact) include specific, workable actions, as well as broader, systemic changes needed to fully recognise the capacity of the sector.

The food rescue sector exists only due to the nature of the current food system, which produces an abundance of food. Future directions should acknowledge that there are significant structural issues within the current socio-political economic system of broader Australian society. Interventions to improve outcomes for the food rescue sector are just one part of a multi-pronged approach that targets the reduction of overall waste volumes.

Australia has the opportunity to learn from what other countries have already implemented in this sector. Examples of initiatives from the US (refer to **Appendix 3**) and other countries (refer to **Appendix 4**) and the effects they have had on the food rescue sectors provide evidence of what policy intervention can achieve.

Proposed Pillars for addressing the goals of the food rescue sector

The initial 2020 review of activities indicated five focus areas or 'pillars' for improvement across the food rescue sector:

1. Research
2. Policy systems and taxation reform
3. Resources
4. Education
5. Collaboration

While the overall emphasis and targeted areas for improvement remain, these focus areas have been refined and expanded below. An additional pillar, highlighting linkages to the Voluntary Agreement Program of the Australian Food Pact, creates a clear line of sight for signatory companies to the objectives of the food rescue sector.

6.4.1 Research initiatives

Understanding the strengths and limitations of current approaches and future opportunities for food rescue and distribution is key to preventing food waste and food insecurity across Australia. This section outlines two ‘mega-projects’ – one for food rescue, and the other for food distribution, each applying a focussed application of the ‘Review–Plan–Do’ methodology.

As supporting partners in Stop Food Waste Australia, the food rescue sector agencies are ideally placed to design meaningful investigative and trial projects with the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (FFW CRC). The FFW CRC brings together industry, research, and the community to reduce food waste, increase industry profitability, and improve food rescue to deliver economic, social, and environmental benefits for Australia.

#	Research Initiatives	Objectives	Component parts	Commence within	Responsibility	Measures of success
R 1	Investigate, support and assess alternate models for providing food rescue services	Improve outcomes for the sector; Look for opportunities to streamline information; Think outside the box to utilise services and spaces that already exist to alleviate time, stress and money on the sector.	<p>Understand the current food rescue system, including using and expanding the Hunger Map;</p> <p>Review the effectiveness and coverage of existing programs including current collaborative approaches* to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understand barriers to donation, especially for farmers ▶ Work with primary industry to optimise food rescue ▶ Co-design fit-for-purpose initiatives including potential FFW CRC projects ▶ Understand resourcing needs and advocate for programmatic funding ▶ Implement and review 	6 months	Food rescue organisations (with SFWA)	Identified improvement in performance against food rescue objectives (including tonnes rescued)

#	Research Initiatives	Objectives	Component parts	Commence within	Responsibility	Measures of success
R 2	Investigate, support and assess alternate models for providing efficient distribution of rescued food	Improve outcomes for the sector; Look for opportunities to streamline information; including thinking outside the box to utilise services and spaces that already exist to alleviate time, stress and money on the sector	<p>Understand the current distribution system for rescued food including using and expanding the Hunger Map;</p> <p>Review the effectiveness and coverage of existing programs including current collaborative approaches * to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understand and seek opportunities to streamline movement of rescued food ▶ Support the broader sector in fit-for-purpose distribution channels; including reinforcing the capacities of food relief charities to store and distribute additional rescued food ▶ Understand resourcing needs and advocate for programmatic funding ▶ Implement and review 	6 months	Food rescue organisations (with SFWA)	Identified improvement in food distribution (including tonnes distributed) assessment of nutrition and KPIs for logistics
R 3	Leverage existing FFW CRC projects	Ensuring any existing and upcoming FFW CRC projects take into consideration the Food Rescue sector.	Include consideration of the needs and opportunities of the food rescue sector in the FFW CRC project application form	Immediate with revision to proposal forms	FFW CRC	Number of projects that actively incorporate food rescue considerations

* Consider the applicability of IT and 'apps' to assist with food rescue and service delivery.

6.4.2 Policy Reform and Advocacy

The National Food Waste Strategy (NFWS) targets policy support as a priority area of the strategy’s ‘Framework for Action.’ One specific focus of policy support in the Strategy is ‘Enabling legislation to better support food waste reduction and repurposing’, in which it is stated that this legislative change “could include amending or developing new legislation to provide more flexibility or incentives to redirect food waste to charities” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017, p.20).

#	Policy Initiatives	Objectives	Commence within	Responsibility	Measures of success
P 1	Collaborative advocacy for the sector	Speaking as one voice e.g., Advocacy, identifying and advancing next area for national policy reform	Ongoing	Food Rescue (FR) partners	Regular dialogue with all FR partners repriorities and progress
P 2	Whole of Australian government Memorandum of Understanding on Food Waste	Incorporate food rescue objectives into whole of government MOU on food waste to Stop Food Waste Australia	Underway	Stop Food Waste Australia	Reports on progress from regular meetings of Interdepartmental Committee

Table 3: Policy initiatives

6.4.3 Education and Communication

The Education pillar has been expanded to include Communication. One of the four major program areas of Stop Food Waste Australia is communication, engagement and partnering for impact. Working in with SFWA on messaging regarding food rescue is one way to leverage the partnership and extend the reach of messages to a broader range of stakeholders.

#	Education Initiatives	Objectives	Commence within	Responsibility	Measures of success
E 1	Case studies	Use outcomes from FFW CRC , Voluntary Agreement and other collective projects to document case studies to share what can be achieved FFW CRC project owners	Ongoing	FFW CRC project owners SFWA communication manager	4 case studies per year on SFWA website Pick up and amplification in social media

Table 4: Education and Communication initiatives

6.4.4 Collaboration

Increased collaboration could achieve better outcomes for the sector by allowing for the sharing of resources, food and data. Collaboration could be either between food rescue organisations, their regional bodies or between food rescue and external parties, such as food relief organisations, logistics companies, peak industry bodies or governments.

#	Collaboration Initiatives	Objectives	Commence within	Responsibility	Measures of success
C1	Leverage membership in SFWA	Proactively use SFWA as a vehicle for advancing collective food rescue objectives	Underway	SFWA with Food Rescue partners	Food Rescue partners' Satisfaction with SFWA # of collaborative projects. Tonnes of food rescued through collaboration.
C2	Establish governance	Provide a transparent mechanism to oversee Food Rescue Sector Action Plan delivery including collective approaches to seeking funding	By September 2021	Food Rescue partners with SFWA	Will be embedded in Terms of Reference

Table 5: Collaboration



6.4.5 The Australian Food Pact

The Australian Food Pact is an ambitious voluntary agreement program bringing together a broad range of organisations in a new pre-competitive collaboration to make our food system more sustainable, resilient, and circular. At its heart is a multi-year commitment to identify priorities, develop solutions and implement change at scale – in signatories, across their value chains, via new partnerships and collaborations, and by spreading good practice across Australia. It is crucial for food rescue to be embedded into the Pact and for the food rescue sector to play a key role in assisting Pact signatories to succeed in their commitment.

#	Voluntary Agreement Initiatives	Objectives	Component parts	Commence within	Responsibility	Measures of success
VA 1	Engaging businesses	Food rescue sector to use contacts to leverage potential Australian Food Pact signatories		Current	Food rescue organisations	Number of Pact signatories with Food Rescue contacts
V 2	Embed Food Rescue into the Australian Food Pact	Work with Pact signatories to optimise outcomes for Food Rescue 'Hard wire' food rescue into the business practices of Pact signatories	<p>Reinforce and embed food recovery hierarchy throughout the Pact:</p> <p>Understand the system....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Linkages to Food Rescue ▶ Barriers to food donation <p>Look for opportunities for food rescue when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Undertaking whole chain resource efficiency (WCRE) projects ▶ Applying Target, Measure, Act process ▶ Providing tools and best practice guidance for application by Pact signatories <p>Seize opportunities for new business models for signatories that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide essential services for Food Rescue ▶ Investigate alternative models of Food Rescue service delivery <p>Use insights to formulate new research projects with FFW CRC</p>	Commence immediately to influence the Australian Food Pact; Ongoing in delivery	SFWA to create opportunities Food Rescue partners to provide input and dialogue	<p>Increased donations of fresh and nutritious foods</p> <p>Evidence of embeddedness within the Pact collateral and procedures</p>

Table 6: The Australian Food Pact

Risks

In order for food rescue to meet 10% of the 50% food waste reduction target, the sector will need to upscale tenfold. There is a lack of certainty with this figure and both demand and need for the service needs further investigation. It is important that further research of need and demand be undertaken to identify whether food rescue could feasibly grow tenfold.

While there will not be a maintained risk register for this Sector Action Plan, any risks associated with individual projects and initiatives that form part of the Sector Action Plan will be recorded.

Implement

For this food rescue Sector Action Plan to be effective the feasibility and sequencing of recommended actions need to be agreed upon by key actors in the sector. Planning for on the ground implementation across the sector will require cooperation and prioritisation, initially with the primary champions before working along their supply and distribution channels.



6.4.6 Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI)

One of the primary roles of SFWA is to provide a MERI framework for its activities. Several parameters will be tracked across all programs of SFWA:

- ▶ Food waste reduced (where possible by supply chain stage)
- ▶ Kilograms of food rescued
- ▶ Number of meals provided though food rescue and redistribution to food relief agencies
- ▶ Additional program indicators will include: greenhouse gas emission savings, economic savings, return on investment and jobs created.

In addition, there is an opportunity to gather more granular information to provide feedback on specific programs, initiatives and in this case, Sector Action Plans. Using the program logic of the original Sector Action Plan provides an initial context for the collection and analysis of targeted data through development of a fit-for-purpose MERI framework for this Plan.

Each of the proposed initiatives above has nominated measures of success, which when amalgamated will provide insights to the three overall outcomes of the original Sector Action Plan:

- ▶ Increasing the volume of edible, nutritious food recovered
- ▶ Decreasing the volume of food waste all along the food value chain
- ▶ Improving the collection and distribution of rescued food to assist food insecure people in Australia.

Developing a robust, fit-for-purpose MERI plan for the refreshed Sector Action Plan is an additional action scheduled to occur within one year as per Table 8 below.

#	MERI Initiatives	Objectives	Commence within	Responsibility	Measures of success
MERI1	Develop a MERI plan for the refreshed Sector Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To create a fit -for-purpose MERI plan. ▶ To ensure collection and analysis of targeted data 	1 year	SFWA with FR	Ability to track progress against program logic
MERI2	Collaborative reporting to government	Build approaches to measure collective need and impact [look for opportunities to link to impact reporting from the Australian Food Pact]	As part of developing Target Measure Act approach for Pact signatories	SFWA with FR	Coordinated reporting to government on need and effectiveness (with agreed measures of success) of food rescue and redistribution (Adapt existing Victorian template)

Table 7: Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework for Food Rescue Sector Action Plan

7. Conclusion

The food rescue sector is a key element in achieving Australia's food waste reduction goal of halving food waste by 2030. Currently, the sector is comprised of a range of organisations, which all operate differently. The recommendations detailed in this report propose a 'call to action' to achieve the goals:

- ▶ Increasing the volume of edible, nutritious food recovered
- ▶ Decreasing the volume of food waste all along the food value chain
- ▶ Improving the collection and distribution of rescued food to assist food insecure people in Australia.

This Sector Action Plan highlights opportunities for a range of initiatives to be undertaken by the food rescue system as a whole, not only within the sector, but also with primary producers, manufacturers, retailers, transport and logistics organisations and other associated parties.

From adaption of legislation, increased data quality and increased coordination to linking in across the Australian food system, there are many cross-cutting challenges facing the food rescue sector. It is complex because it operates along many different points in the food value chain, donations can be ad hoc, and distributing food to non-urban areas is a challenge.

Through increased collaboration on these challenges, the food rescue sector has a real opportunity to scale up and impact significantly on the food waste reduction target and continue their substantial contributions toward addressing food insecurity in Australia.

Future initiatives in the food rescue space ought to be seen as just one component of the challenge requiring action in all sectors of Australia's food system if the NFWS target of halving food waste by 2030 is to be realised.



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10. Appendices

Appendix 1 : Principles to inform program design and decision making

Principles to drive good outcomes	
Prevent food waste	Preventing the generation of food waste is the fundamental objective.
Move up the food recovery hierarchy	Looking for opportunities to avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle and recover/valorise food will reduce overall food waste. Create co-benefits and the potential to develop new and valuable co-products from different food waste streams.
Apply a circular economy approach	Use the principles of the circular economy – design out waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use, and regenerate natural systems - when designing initiatives.
Facilitate food rescue and relief	Work with the whole food value chain and food rescue and relief organisations to maximise redistribution of safe surplus food to those in need, to help achieve future food security, public health and nutritional goals, and reduce hunger.
Make wasting food a socially unacceptable thing to do	Change social norms. Move wasting / throwing away food from an unconscious behaviour to a conscious behaviour as a major driver of increased awareness and behaviour change (for consumers and industry).
Principles to promote best practice in food waste reduction initiatives:	
Co-design with Industry	Developing food waste reduction initiatives with industry will increase relevance, buy-in and accountability. Applying co-design facilitates flexibility in the adaptive management cycle.
Principles to promote best practice in food waste reduction initiatives:	
Seek a Return on Investment (ROI)	Assessing the ROI for proposed initiatives will help to prove the business case for action and ensure efficient and effective translation of actions into bottom line and societal benefits.
Take a food system's perspective	Delivering better practice requires a food system's view of opportunities available for food recovery - both within the production and consumption system and across the food value chain.
Create initiatives to realise multiple benefits for supply chain partners and collaborators	Actively seek out win-win solutions to maximise triple bottom line benefits across the food value chain - at the same time as balancing value chain and investment risk. Co-investors in a solution realise a proportionate co-benefit from food waste reduction initiatives.

Appendix 2 : Current key legislation on food rescue in Australia

New South Wales	Civil Liability Amendment (Food Donations) Act 2005 No 16
Victoria	Refer to "Wrongs & Other Acts (Public Liability Insurance Reform) Act 2002" and Donating food to charities in Victoria ACT Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2002
Queensland	Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2008
South Australia	Civil Liability (Food Donors and Distributors) Amendment Act 2008
Western Australia	Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Amendment Bill 2006
Northern Territory	PERSONAL INJURIES (LIABILITIES AND DAMAGES)
Australian Capital Territory	SECT 7 PERSONAL INJURIES (LIABILITIES AND DAMAGES) ACT - SECT 7ACT and SECT 8 PERSONAL INJURIES (LIABILITIES AND DAMAGES) ACT
Tasmania	CIVIL LIABILITY ACT 2002 - SECT 35F

Appendix 3: Impact of initiatives relevant to food rescue by Aim (ReFED, 2019)

Activity	Aim	Impact
Donation Tax Incentives	Meals Recovered	638 million meals per year
Standardised Donation Regulation		22 million meals per year
Donation Matching Software		250 million meals per year
Donation Transportation		183 million meals per year
Donation Storage and Handling		172 million meals per year
Value Added Processing		171 million meals per year
Donation Liability Education		95 million meals per year
Activity	Aim	Impact
Donation Tax Incentives	Waste Diverted	383k tonnes per year
Standardised Donation Regulation		193k tonnes per year
Secondary Resellers		167k tonnes per year
Donation Matching Software		150k tonnes per year
Donation Transportation		110k tonnes per year
Value Added Processing		102k tonnes per year
Donation Liability Education		57k tonnes per year

Appendix 4: International examples of policy interventions for food rescue

<p>Country: Scotland</p> <p>Strategy Name: Making Things Last – A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland (2016)</p>	<p>Relevance to Food Rescue:</p> <p>Increased incentive for businesses to consider donating food to food rescue organisations such as Food Sharing Edinburgh</p>
<p>Country: Netherlands</p> <p>Strategy Name: No specific food waste policy but many interventions</p>	<p>Relevance to Food Rescue:</p> <p>Many interventions such as: INSTOCK Taste Before You Waste</p>
<p>Country: US</p> <p>Strategy Name: No specific food waste policy but many interventions</p>	<p>Relevance to Food Rescue:</p> <p>Legislation: Internal revenue code 170(e)(3) This legislation allows for increased tax deductions for businesses to encourage the donations of appropriate food to eligible non-profit organisations that serve food insecure people. “Qualified business taxpayers can deduct the cost to produce the food and half the difference between the cost and full fair market value of the donated food”</p> <p>https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-110s2420enr/pdf/BILLS-110s2420enr.pdf</p> <p>Bill Emerson Act – an Act that absolves food rescue organisations of civil or criminal liability for their activities (with exception to gross negligence or intentional misconduct).</p> <p>In 2017, CalRecycle provided \$9 million in funding to expand food rescue efforts by local governments and hunger relief organizations, in alignment with SB 1383, which requires at least 20 percent of edible food currently disposed to be recovered for human consumption by 2025.</p> <p>In Washington State, Thurston (county) Food Rescue was funded by the Department of Ecology through a comprehensive program grant that builds upon household food waste prevention campaigns previously implemented in the county. The program improved infrastructure to rescue and process more food within the county’s food rescue network.</p> <p>In Oregon, the Department of Environmental Quality partnered with the regional government supporting the Portland metro area to provide over \$100,000 to expand capacity for food donation infrastructure, including expanding the fresh produce donation program developed by the OregonFood Bank.</p> <p>Source: https://pacificcoastcollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/PCC-West-Coast-Food-Waste-Reduction-Commitment-FINAL-FINAL-formatted-1.pdf</p> <p>And May,S. 2017.</p>
<p>Country: NZ</p> <p>Strategy Name:</p>	<p>Relevance to Food Rescue:</p> <p>Council funds food rescue orgs such as KiwiHarvest.</p>
<p>Country: France</p> <p>Strategy Name: Food Waste Bill</p>	<p>Relevance to Food Rescue: French supermarkets are required by law to donate excess food to charities for redistribution or to be used as animal feed.</p>

This Food Rescue Sector Action Plan 2021 combines an initial version compiled by Food Innovation Australia Ltd (FIAL, 2020) with revisions made in 2021. The initial action plan was commissioned by FIAL, working with an ANU internship student, Molly Folkard, to explore opportunities to scale the food rescue and relief sectors. Recent revisions by food rescue sector agencies were facilitated by Stop Food Waste Australia, which now has responsibility from the Australian Government for the development of Sector Action Plans for food waste prevention and reduction.

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