



Food Rescue



Overview

Food insecurity remains a pressing issue in Australia. The latest Foodbank Hunger Report (2021) shows that one in six Australian adults haven't had enough to eat in the last year, and 1.2 million Australian children have gone hungry, sometimes going whole days without eating.

At the same time, Australians generated 310kg of food waste per person (across the entire food value chain) totalling 7.6 million tonnes of food wasted each year (FIAL, 2021).

Food waste is a major problem, and Australia has set the goal to halve food waste by 2030 in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, Target 12.3. To reach this ambitious target, extensive changes across the entire food value chain are required – with food rescue playing a vital role.

The food rescue sector acts to prevent food from being wasted by collecting, storing and redistributing food otherwise destined for disposal. The National Food Waste Strategy Feasibility Study (FIAL, 2021) highlights the importance of food donation as one of the key food waste prevention methods (Figure 1).

Food rescue is a unique approach to reducing food waste because it also has the fundamental co-benefit of reducing food insecurity.

There are many cross-cutting challenges facing the food rescue sector. It is complex too 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. Addressing critical barriers and supporting a tenfold increase in the food rescue sector could help deliver 10 per cent of Australia's 50% food waste reduction target by 2030 (FIAL, 2019).



Collaboration

The Food Rescue Sector Action Plan has been co-designed by Stop Food Waste Australia (SFWA) and Australia’s four biggest food rescue charities: Foodbank, OzHarvest, SecondBite and FareShare, who collectively account for 98% of the food volume rescued (Aracadis, 2019).

The Food Rescue Sector Action Plan outlines the current state and future potential of the food rescue sector in Australia, providing guidance on how the sector can 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.

There are opportunities for the food rescue sector to address the three overarching goals through interventions in the short to medium term and longer-term.

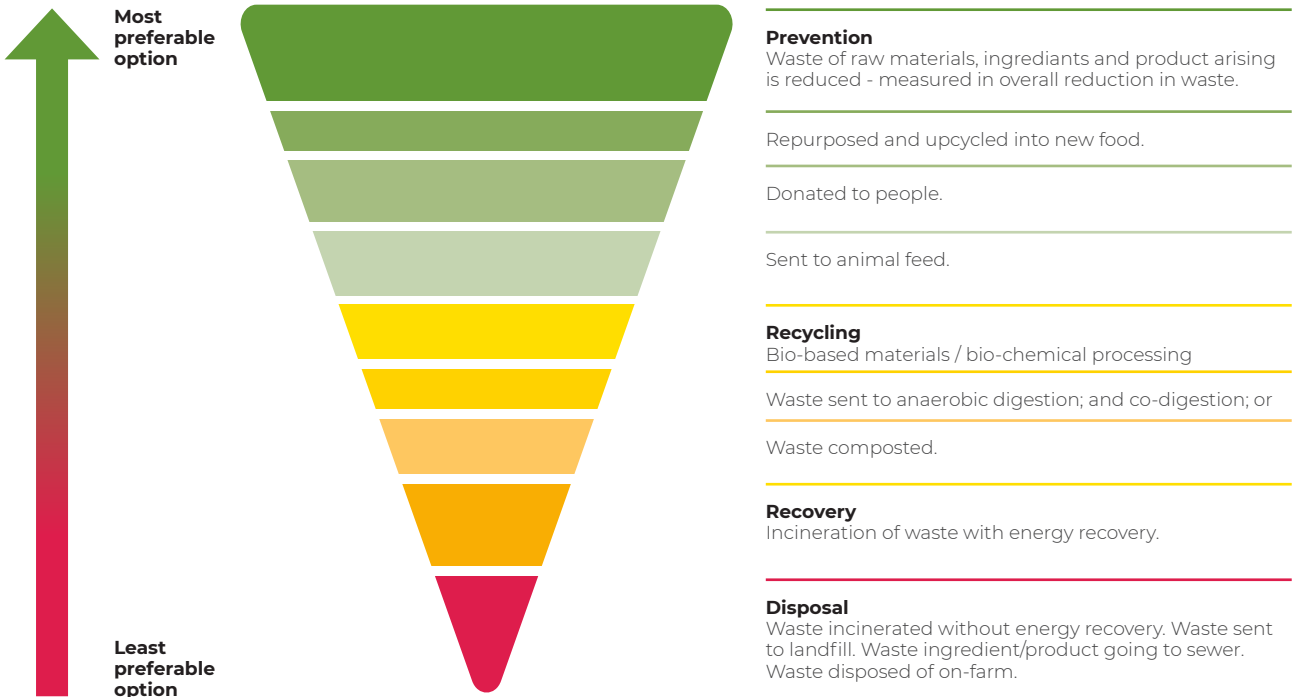


Figure 1: Australian Food and Drink Recovery Hierarchy (SFWA, 2021)

Key initiatives

Interventions in research, policy, collaboration, education and the Australian Food Pact are required for the food rescue sector to achieve the three goals. The Sector Action Plan highlights opportunities for a range of initiatives to be undertaken by the food rescue system both within the sector and with primary producers, manufacturers, retailers, transport and logistics organisations, and other associated parties.

Policy systems and advocacy

- ▶ Improve tax incentives to encourage donations of surplus food and essential services to the food rescue sector.
- ▶ Work together as a sector to engage with policy-makers and advocate for the sector.

Collaboration

- ▶ Establish a collaborative steering group within the sector to discuss and prioritise actions and develop a workable plan for the sector to implement.
- ▶ Leverage SFWA membership and proactively use SFWA as a vehicle for advancing collective food rescue objectives.

Research initiatives

- ▶ Improve collective understanding of the sector and current food rescue models and systems.
- ▶ Investigate alternate models of food rescue, distribution and sharing of surplus food, such as rescuing surplus food in primary production and using commercial logistics networks.

Education and communication

- ▶ Work with SFWA on messaging regarding food rescue to leverage partnership opportunities and promote best practice.
- ▶ Share the impact and outcomes of the research and partnerships with Australian Food Pact Signatories.

Australian Food Pact

- ▶ Maximise the benefits of the Australian Food Pact by embedding food donation into the Pact and business practices of Pact signatories.

The [Food Rescue Sector Action Plan report](#) includes the full list of co-designed future initiatives and specific, workable actions as well as the broader, systemic changes needed to fully support and optimise outcomes for the sector.



Implementation

Stop Food Waste Australia, along with the food rescue partners, Foodbank, OzHarvest, SecondBite and FareShare, are leading this work and are looking forward to working with federal and state government and industry across the food supply chain to reduce food waste and food insecurity.

“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. For the sector itself, having Stop Food Waste Australia bring us together to work on this has been game changing.

We’ve been able to increase our understanding of each other and our shared challenges, which makes addressing them easier and more effective. The openness has been so welcome – it’s helped us to realise we’re not alone in facing the barriers to delivering real impact”

**Foodbank Australia’s GM of Business,
Sarah Pennell**



Australian Government
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