

# Victorian Government response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Food Security in Victoria

July 2025



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In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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# Introduction

The Victorian Government thanks the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (the Committee) for its *Inquiry into food security in Victoria* and acknowledges the valuable work undertaken by the Committee, including engagement with stakeholders across the food security and community services sector.

The Victorian Government's response to each of the Committee's recommendations is outlined below. Three recommendations are supported in full, 14 recommendations are supported in principle, and eight recommendations are under review.

'Support in full' is where all elements of the recommendation are supported by Government; 'support in principle' indicates that the intent or merit of the policy underlining the recommendation is supported, but that the specific method to achieve the recommendation is not necessarily supported; and 'under review' indicates that Government needs to undertake further analysis to determine its position.

The Government has already advanced a range of programs and initiatives since the report's release in November 2024, including:

- As part of the \$4.5 million Community Food Relief Program, 116 organisations received grants to support food relief services; strengthen local, regional and state-wide food security models; and enhance collaboration and partnerships across the food security sector.
- Continuing funding for six regional foodshares and shared services delivered through the Regional Food Security Alliance, and for Foodbank Victoria's operations.
- Establishing connections across Government and strengthened partnerships with key sector stakeholders to support a more coordinated and integrated approach to achieving food security in Victoria.

New investments of \$18 million in the 2025-26 State Budget will strengthen and expand this work, including:

- Doubling support for regional foodshares, with \$6 million committed over two years to support the critical warehousing and operations of six regional foodshares and the work of the Regional Food Security Alliance.
- Delivering a second, significantly larger round of the Community Food Relief Program in 2025-26, which will invest \$9 million to support statewide, regional and local organisations to provide more food relief to those who need it most, create sustainable partnerships and strengthen food security in Victoria, including \$0.5 million over two years to boost Foodbank Victoria's regional charity freight services.
- Supporting Foodbank Victoria's GROW program with an investment of \$3 million over three years, to help rescue produce from farmers and growers, and reduce reliance on donations and food purchasing, while increasing the supply of fresh, healthy food to charity partners supporting Victorians in need.

In total, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$74 million since 2020 in the state's food security sector and maintains a strong commitment to addressing immediate food relief needs in local communities across the state and working to bolster long-term food security.

In addition, \$10 million has been provided by the Victorian Government to Foodbank Victoria to establish new community food centres in Ballarat and Morwell to distribute food to charity partners, as well as \$3.3 million in annual operational funding.

# Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Victorian Government response
<b>Recommendation 1</b> <p>That the Victorian Government provide support to schools who wish to expand their food education programs, including encouraging them to take a place-based approach by working collaboratively with local communities to meet the specific needs and challenges of each region.</p>	<b>Response: Support in full</b> <p>The Department of Education supports schools to utilise existing evidence-based food programs and curriculum-aligned teaching and learning resources delivered through the School Breakfast Club program and promotes optional resources available through health partners such as Vic Kids Eat Well, the Healthy Schools Achievement Program, Victorian Schools Garden Program and Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. These resources aim to support and improve whole-of-school environments and approaches to healthy eating, food literacy and placed-based approaches to food access, and prevention partnerships. Schools can also elect to use their own funds to purchase food education programs that meet their local needs.</p>
<b>Recommendation 2</b> <p>That the Victorian Government support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver place-based food literacy programs.</p>	<b>Response: Support in principle</b> <p>The Victorian Government acknowledges the critical role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in leading place-based food literacy programs grounded in knowledge, practices and connection to Country.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has funded Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver self-determined placed-based prevention initiatives aligned to the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, including deadly choices education (healthy lifestyle), cook and yarn, breastfeeding and cultural events.</p> <p>Further, Victorian Government grant programs have supported a range of food literacy programs such as community gardens, cooking classes and cultural food knowledge programs, that not only provide practical skills, but also foster social cohesion, support local First Peoples' economies and enhance access to fresh, culturally appropriate food.</p>
<b>Recommendation 3</b> <p>That the Victorian Government support First Nations communities with policies and resources to advance their goals and aspirations for food sovereignty. This should begin with implementing the recommendations outlined in the Victorian Aboriginal Community</p>	<b>Response: Under review</b> <p>The FoodPATH research project, funded by VicHealth, aimed to empower First Peoples in Victoria to determine the actions needed to improve healthier food environments. The FoodPATH report includes 10 policy recommendations providing a clear pathway for food systems reform and to enhance nutrition policies that support vibrant and self-determining Aboriginal communities in Victoria.</p> <p>In 2024 the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) funded the Victorian Aboriginal Community</p>

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Controlled Health Organisation's FoodPATH report.	<p>Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) a further \$100,000 to deliver grants among member organisations (Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations) to support aligned community-based food and nutrition initiatives.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has also provided VACCHO funding to deliver self-determined approaches to prevention aligned with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. Funding supported policy development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and delivered a grant program called Our Food Connection.</p> <p>Investment through the 2025-26 Community Food Relief Program will also support self-determined approaches to food relief in First Peoples communities.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will undertake further consultation and continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders including VACCHO.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government work with culturally and linguistically diverse community groups to deliver place-based food literacy programs.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government understands the value of place-based culturally appropriate food literacy programs that leverage cultural knowledge and local food sources.</p> <p>Ensuring that people have reliable access to food that meets their dietary needs and aligns with their cultural and/or religious practices is crucial in supporting diverse communities.</p> <p>The efforts of community health organisations, local governments and local public health units, alongside project grants (such as the Community Food Relief Program funded by the Victorian Government), have supported a range of food literacy programs working with culturally and linguistically diverse community groups. These include community gardens, cooking classes and cultural food knowledge programs.</p> <p>Regional foodshares in Victoria also deliver culturally responsive food relief initiatives. For example, the Mildura Foodshare (delivered by Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council) launched a food literacy project aimed at producing cooking videos and a cookbook featuring the diverse culinary traditions of the community. Similarly, Bendigo Foodshare's 'Grow Cook Share' Food Hub has delivered cooking and baking classes, and food relief workshops for multicultural communities.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government establish a comprehensive</p>	<p><b>Response: Under review</b></p> <p>Gathering quality data and evidence through continuous performance monitoring and evaluation is an essential</p>

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<p>monitoring and evaluation framework for food literacy and security programs it implements, funds or otherwise supports. Evaluation should ensure that programs are effective, with strategies refined where needed, and appropriately supported.</p>	<p>activity of Government, and all funded food literacy and security programs are monitored and evaluated.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will continue to review food literacy and security programs to ensure they are appropriate, effective, efficient, and are demonstrating impact, paying particular attention to client voices and lived experience to guarantee positive community outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government expand the Victorian School Breakfast Clubs program so that it is available to all Victorian schools who wish to opt in.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government supports the intent of the recommendation. All Victorian schools can establish local food support arrangements to meet the needs of their school communities.</p> <p>The 2024-25 Budget invested \$21.1 million to make the School Breakfast Clubs program available to all government schools. This builds on the \$141.2 million invested in the program since 2016.</p> <p>The School Breakfast Clubs program provides healthy and nutritious breakfasts, lunches, snacks, take-home meal packs and cooking classes to students and families in need at over 1100 participating government schools. The Victorian Government recently invested additional funding into the program to expand the program to all government schools that choose to opt-in.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government trial and evaluate a school meal program that provides breakfast through to lunch, using partnerships with local food providers and community organisations. The trial should target schools with high rates of food insecurity and other forms of disadvantage.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government supports the intent of the recommendation.</p> <p>Through existing investment in the School Breakfast Clubs program, all government schools who opt in can access lunches and snacks for their students who need it.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is partnered with Foodbank Victoria to deliver the program, which prioritises green rated and fresh foods. Where possible, locally produced and manufactured suppliers are utilised.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <p>Following a review of the outcome of the trial, that the Victorian Government investigate the delivery of a school meal program to all schools in need.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government supports the intent of the recommendation.</p> <p>As per recommendation 7, through existing investment in the School Breakfast Clubs program, all government schools who opt in can access lunches and snacks for their students who need it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9</b></p>	<p><b>Response: Under review</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government is committed to protecting and promoting human rights and understands the importance of</p>

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<p>That the Victorian Government amend the <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i> to enshrine the right to adequate food.</p>	<p>ensuring all Victorians have access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food.</p> <p>The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Charter) contains 20 rights that promote and protect the values of freedom, respect, equality and dignity. While the Charter does not contain a right to adequate food, it contains other rights that could indirectly provide protection, including the right to equality and non-discrimination (section 8), the right to life (section 9), protection of families and children (section 17), and cultural rights (section 19).</p> <p>Enshrining the right to adequate food in the Charter will be considered as part of any future work on Charter reform.</p> <p>Any future reform to rights in the Charter will require detailed consultation and thorough consideration of the resourcing and economic impacts on Victorians.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government explore options to expand the provision of food vouchers to Victorians facing food insecurity. The Government should consider the appropriateness of a government program or providing grant support to relief services.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in full</b></p> <p>Food vouchers help ensure that individuals and families have a dignified choice to healthy, culturally and religiously appropriate food. While they play an important role in addressing immediate food needs, the Victorian Government is also focused on building local capacity and enhancing the effectiveness of the broader food system to achieve long-term food security and reduce demand.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has funded a range of projects through the 2024-25 Community Food Relief Program – Local Grants that are providing food vouchers to Victorians facing food insecurity. Additional grants for local, regional and statewide organisations for community food relief initiatives will be provided through the 2025-26 Community Food Relief Program.</p> <p>With further funding allocated in the 2025-26 State Budget, regional foodshares will be able to offer more food relief in a variety of ways to support choice and dignity, including through food vouchers and mini-marts.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will continue basing policy and programming on evidence-based models. For example, a Deakin University National Health and Medical Research Council Partnership Grant is comprehensively examining the impacts of food voucher trials on food security, nutrition, wellbeing, and related social and economic outcomes among priority populations in Victoria.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will also continue to engage with the Commonwealth Government and local governments to respond to cost of living pressures, and to ensure initiatives</p>



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	that support Victorians experiencing food insecurity are delivered in a dignified way.
<p><b>Recommendation 11</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government continue to support social enterprises tackling food insecurity, such as the Community Grocer. The Community Grocer operates weekly pop-up markets that are, on average, 35% cheaper than other outlets and aims to address the physical, economic, and social barriers to accessing healthy food while fostering community connections and inclusivity.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government recognises the unique role social enterprises play in delivering benefit to the community and will continue to explore opportunities to engage social enterprises in relation to food security initiatives.</p> <p>The Victorian Government launched Australia's first Social Enterprise Strategy in 2017. Building on the strong foundation of the first strategy, the Social Enterprise Strategy 2021-2025 aims to grow the social enterprise sector, strengthen its connectivity, and unlock the potential to enhance economic and social value to the Victorian community.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has supported a range of social enterprises tackling food insecurity, including a \$250,000 grant in 2024-25 to the Community Grocer to provide food relief to people living in social housing.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is further supporting food security social enterprises through promotion of the Victorian Healthy Food Relief Guidelines to the sector and through the Government's healthy and more sustainable food procurement policy.</p> <p>VicHealth has also invested \$4.4 million over three years in seven Future Healthy Food Hubs, which are similar to community food enterprises, to support community-led organisations in regional Victoria and outer metropolitan growth corridors. These hubs aim to increase access to affordable, locally sourced, healthy, and culturally appropriate food, particularly for those facing barriers such as First Nations and multicultural communities.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government advocate to the Commonwealth Government to support the implementation of a national food donation tax incentive.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government to identify areas of national reform to support and incentivise donations of food to relief services.</p> <p>The Victorian Government acknowledges the need to overcome practical and financial barriers that contribute to the wastage of food, particularly nutritious food, that could otherwise be consumed.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 13</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government explore potential penalties for food waste occurring along the supply</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p>

Recommendation	Victorian Government response
<p>chain to prevent the wastage of food that could otherwise be consumed.</p>	<p>The Victorian Government supports action across the supply chain to limit the wastage of food that could otherwise be consumed.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will continue to conduct research and consider opportunities to reduce food waste and work towards our target of halving the amount of food and organic waste sent to landfill by 2030.</p> <p>The 2025-26 State Budget invests \$3 million over three years for Foodbank Victoria's GROW program, which will rescue produce from farmers and growers and increase the supply of fresh, healthy food to charity partners supporting Victorians in need.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with other state and territory governments to support the Commonwealth Government's commitment to halve Australia's food waste by 2030 outlined in the National Food Waste Strategy, and</li> <li>• Continue reforms outlined in the Victorian Government's circular economy policy Recycling Victoria: a new economy to reduce, reuse and recycle food waste, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– statewide behaviour change campaigns to support households to reduce food waste, such as the 'Small Acts, Big Impact' campaign</li> <li>– support and share materials for councils to deliver local food waste avoidance campaigns</li> <li>– community circular economy guides, including the 'Guide to running a food rescue and distribution program'</li> <li>– driving business innovation to reduce food and organic waste in Victoria.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Victorian Government is not currently considering penalties for food waste along the supply chain.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 14</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government expand the Victorian Population Health Survey to more precisely monitor food insecurity across the food security continuum, using validated tools such as the Household Food Security Survey Module.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government agrees that information on food security should be regularly collected.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will review and consider opportunities to collect such data, including through the Victorian Population Health Survey and other data collections.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government develop a Victorian Food Security Strategy focused on: transitioning</p>	<p><b>Response: Under review</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government continues work in partnership with major food distributors and retailers to support food</p>

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<p>the food security response from relief to resilience; supporting a place based, community-led response to food security; and establishing a food relief sector which can be scaled to deal with sudden shocks and crises.</p>	<p>supply during emergencies in accordance with Victoria's <i>Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy</i>.</p> <p>As part of the Victorian Government's strategic, long-term approach to food security and relief, the Victorian Government has invested in food relief infrastructure across the state, including providing \$10 million for two Foodbank Community Food Centres in Morwell and Ballarat, and supporting warehouse upgrades for Shepparton and Bendigo Foodshares.</p> <p>Continued and increased funding provided in the 2025-26 State Budget to the Regional Food Security Alliance will further enhance the capacity, efficiency, and viability of the six regional foodshares as a collective, and as place-based food relief providers responding to local need.</p> <p>A second round of the Community Food Relief Program in 2025-26 will build further capacity in local, regional and statewide food systems to strengthen the ability to meet demand and response to need when and where it arises.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will also work closely with the Commonwealth Government on their new national food security strategy: Feeding Australia, noting responsibility for food security and relief is a shared responsibility across local, state and federal government.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 16</b></p> <p>To support the development of a Victorian Food Security Strategy, that the Victorian Government appoint a Minister for Food and establish a Victorian Food Security Committee. The first action of the Minister and Committee would be to define resilience.</p>	<p><b>Response: Under review</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring ministerial accountability and oversight for food security. Food security is well-covered under existing ministerial portfolios, including Carers and Volunteers (food relief), Planning, Education, Health, Environment and Agriculture, which work together to address food insecurity in Victoria. Introducing a new Minister for Food could potentially overlap responsibilities and create duplication and resourcing inefficiencies.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will also work with the Commonwealth Government on the establishment of a new National Food Council, comprising industry and community experts, to advise on the development and implementation of a new National Food Security Strategy.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will continue to regularly meet with the food relief sector and key stakeholders to gather insights and perspectives to inform decision making.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 17</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government advocate to the Commonwealth</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in full</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government will engage with the Commonwealth Government on the development and</p>

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<p>Government for the development and implementation of a National Food Plan to ensure coordinated and sustainable food security efforts across all levels of government.</p>	<p>implementation of a new National Food Security Strategy: Feeding Australia, overseen by a new National Food Council. The strategy will boost the security and supply chain resilience of agriculture and food production systems in Australia.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Government has committed \$3.5 million to develop the Feeding Australia strategy with a collaborative approach to give farmers and other stakeholders in the food supply chain the opportunity to address underlying challenges facing the food system.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 18</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government advocate to the Commonwealth Government to increase income support payments to alleviate poverty and food insecurity.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government recognises that food insecurity is driven by a range of factors, including poverty and financial insecurity. The Victorian Government will continue to work with and advocate to the Commonwealth Government on income support payments, with a view to achieving the best outcomes for Victorians.</p> <p>Commonwealth Government income support programs play a critical role in providing financial support to individuals and families, which impact their ability to access and afford sufficient nutritious food.</p> <p>The Victorian Government acknowledges the importance of setting income support payments at an adequate level to ensure people can afford food and other essential items such as housing, which are strongly linked to providing better health and wellbeing outcomes for Victorians.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 19</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government advocate to the Commonwealth Government for a national definition of multidimensional poverty, so that clear and tangible benchmarks may be set towards its elimination</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government will engage with the Commonwealth Government to discuss development of a national definition of multidimensional poverty.</p> <p>The Victorian Government notes that a national definition of multidimensional poverty could provide a comprehensive picture of poverty that may allow better targeting and alignment of supports that alleviate poverty at all levels of government.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 20</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government conduct a comprehensive audit of food relief services across Victoria to identify service gaps. Following the initial audit, a Food Relief Services map should be made publicly available which provides real time information to the public on available food relief resources.</p>	<p><b>Response: Under review</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government works closely with the food relief sector to understand gaps and overlaps in service delivery, as well as opportunities for improvement and reform across Victoria.</p> <p>A list of Victorian Government Community Food Relief Program grant recipients is published online, with grant assessments informed by data on food insecurity across Victoria and identified service gaps.</p>

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<p>This map should be regularly updated to ensure it remains a reliable tool for both service providers and people in need.</p>	<p>The Ask Izzy platform helps people locate food relief services in their local area, while some local governments also publish available local support services to improve community access and awareness.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will consider opportunities to enhance public access for up-to-date, reliable centralised food relief information at a community level, noting food relief initiatives are supported and resourced through local, federal, philanthropic and other sources, not just through state government.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 21</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government provide the food relief sector with recurrent funding to ensure it can address both current demand and future challenges.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>In response to ongoing cost of living challenges, the Victorian Government is delivering a further \$18 million over three years through the 2025-26 State Budget to continue strengthening food security across Victoria.</p> <p>This includes doubling annual funding for six regional foodshares, delivering a second larger round of the Community Food Relief grants program, providing a boost to Foodbank Victoria's regional charity freight services and funding Foodbank Victoria's GROW program.</p> <p>Including these recent investments, the government has allocated more than \$74 million since 2020 to strengthen the food security system in Victoria and deliver more food to Victorians in need.</p> <p>Government funding is targeted based on evidence and sector advice on current and emerging food relief needs. Further funding is subject to an evaluation of the impacts of existing funding, and future government budget decisions.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 22</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government re-establish and resource the Victorian Food Relief Taskforce with an expanded membership to include First Nations people, persons with lived experience of food insecurity and frontline agencies.</p>	<p><b>Response: Under review</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government meets regularly with the sector and key stakeholders to gather insights and perspectives to inform better decision making.</p> <p>Between April 2021 to June 2023, the Victorian Government convened a Food Relief Taskforce to inform the work of Government during the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery.</p> <p>The Taskforce provided advice to ensure the food relief system could respond effectively to increased demand during the pandemic and provided a collaborative forum to address barriers and develop solutions to improve the efficiency, quality, and accessibility of food relief.</p> <p>The Taskforce's efforts played a crucial role in establishing a key understanding of the food relief sector and informed the Government's ongoing policies and programs aimed at</p>

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	<p>addressing food insecurity. The work of the Taskforce continues to inform Government's ongoing work.</p> <p>For example, the Taskforce led development of the Victorian healthy food relief guidelines, in collaboration with VicHealth. The final guidelines were published in late 2024.</p> <p>Victoria will also work with the Commonwealth Government on the establishment of a new National Food Council, comprising industry and community experts, to advise on the development and implementation of a new national food security strategy.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 23</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government accept Sustain's proposal that local governments be empowered to lead the participatory development of community food systems and food security strategies via the provision of financial and supporting resources. As such, food security should be reinstated as a priority area within the next Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan, embedding food security within strategic health planning for all local governments in Victoria.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>The <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> (Vic) (the Act) sets requirements for developing a State public health and wellbeing plan every four years and in addition, requires local councils to prepare municipal public health and wellbeing plans every four years.</p> <p>The development of the next Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2027-2031 plan will commence in late 2025. As per Section 49(2)(a) &amp; (b) of the Act, the Department of Health will undertake a needs analysis based on data to identify the health status of Victorians and the determinants and risk factors shaping that status. The findings and recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry report will be considered in this analysis, along with consultation with stakeholders to determine public health and wellbeing priorities as part of developing the next plan. The outcome of the analyses and consultations will be reflected in the 2027-2031 plan.</p> <p>Food security has not been a standalone priority of previous Victorian public health and wellbeing plans. However, in the current Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2023-2027, food security is identified as an issue that has been worsened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Two of the five actions under the "Healthy eating" priority have potential to improve food security outcomes and address multiple dimensions of food insecurity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access, availability and consumption of a wide variety of nutritious foods; and</li> <li>• Promote healthy and more equitable, sustainable food systems across Victoria, with a focus on priority populations.</li> </ul> <p>The Victorian Department of Health does not fund local government for municipal public health planning; however, it provides guidance and resources that support the ten priorities of the state plan. There are also a range of</p>



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	<p>resources to support local government in building healthy food systems that are available through VicHealth. VicHealth provides funding to local government to support community food systems and local food partnerships.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 24</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government revise the Victorian planning provisions (Planning and Environment Act 1987) to include health and food security as an objective when local governments and other planning authorities are making planning decisions.</p>	<p><b>Response: Under review</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government will review options for revising the Victoria Planning Provisions to include health and food security objectives and improve health outcomes.</p> <p>This could include consideration of changes to the planning system to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to providers of affordable and nutritious food, and reduce the density of some large chain food premises to protect health outcomes in Victoria.</li> <li>• Support councils to implement the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and associated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans to meet their obligations under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.</li> </ul> <p>The Government is implementing food security objectives through the Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Action Plan 2024 (Action Plan). The Action Plan includes several actions to ensure stronger protections for Victoria's productive agricultural land and to limit urban expansion and fragmentation into productive agricultural land.</p> <p>Further work is required to determine the most effective way to implement these objectives into the Victoria Planning Provisions and to fully consider impacts on local economic growth and jobs. The Government will continue to engage with First Peoples and other stakeholders, including those with lived experience of food insecurity.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 25</b></p> <p>That the Victorian Government expand regional food hubs, including providing recurrent funding, as part of the shift to food resilience.</p>	<p><b>Response: Support in principle</b></p> <p>Since 2020, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$17.5 million to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of six regional foodshares and the Regional Food Security Alliance, in acknowledgement of the unique challenges faced in regional and rural areas of the state.</p> <p>This includes continued and expanded support for regional foodshares with \$6 million over two years committed in the 2025-26 State Budget to meet heightened demand. Further funding is subject to an evaluation of the impacts of existing funding, and future government budget decisions.</p> <p>These foodshares are located across key regions of the state, in Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo, Geelong, Mildura, Shepparton and Warrnambool. The regional foodshares take a networked approach and partner with local food</p>

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	<p>producers and distributors, businesses, state-wide food security agencies, local government, volunteers, and social services and community organisation to get food to those Victorians who need it most.</p> <p>The Government has also supported infrastructure upgrades for the foodshares, with \$3.9 million provided to expand warehouse capacity for Bendigo Foodshare and Shepparton Foodshares.</p> <p>In addition, \$10 million has been provided by the Victorian Government to Foodbank Victoria to establish new community food centres in Ballarat and Morwell to distribute food to charity partners, and the 2025-26 State Budget also includes additional funding for Foodbank Victoria to increase regional charity freight.</p> <p>Government will continue to assess data and evidence regarding demand for food relief, and work with key stakeholders to determine the best approach to strengthening Victoria’s food security system over the longer term so that it is responsive and flexible across the state, including in regional areas.</p>