



CITY OF BALLARAT

# Social Policy Position Statement



August 2022

## Access to Safe, Affordable and Nutritious Food

### Context

The City of Ballarat's vision is that all community members have access to a vibrant, nutritious, and sustainable food system. Unfortunately, large numbers of Australians- and a growing number of Ballarat residents- don't have regular access to affordable, healthy foods. Irregular access to safe, nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable food from non-emergency sources is known as 'food insecurity'.<sup>1</sup> Access to nutritious food is determined by what is available in neighbourhoods and communities, what sort of foods we may be accustomed to or prefer to eat, our ability to afford it, and accessibility to where it is sold or grown.

The *Victorian Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to provide the best outcomes for the community, while having regard to the long-term cumulative effects of decisions. The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires all local governments to prepare a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) which sets the health priorities for the municipality and outlines the strategies to support the community to achieve optimum health and wellbeing.


'Food' is identified as a liveability domain within the Ballarat MPHWP 2021-31, with the desired outcome of "increased access to and consumption of safe, healthy, affordable foods through a sustainable local food system".<sup>2</sup> The plan acknowledges that food insecurity can not only reduce physical and mental health and wellbeing, but can limit participation in education, employment, and broader society. Many different Ballarat communities experience food insecurity, particularly groups such as the unemployed, homeless, students, elderly, people with limited transport options, people with mental ill health and those fleeing domestic violence.<sup>2</sup>

The City of Ballarat acknowledges that access to sufficient safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food is a fundamental human right, as recognised under international law, and that the food system is significant and complex, impacting on the environment, industry, transport, and the economy.

The City of Ballarat recognises that local government is ideally placed to contribute to locally relevant, integrated, and long-lasting strategies to address the barriers to accessing safe, affordable, and nutritious food. As outlined below, there are many roles in which the City of Ballarat plays which have significant impact on strengthening our local food system and increasing access to healthy food in our community.

## The City of Ballarat's current role in improving access to safe, affordable and nutritious food

City of Ballarat has a **shared** role in improving access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.

	<p><b>Shared:</b> The City of Ballarat is one of many responsible stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountable for some aspects</li> <li>• Some capacity to act</li> <li>• Moderate City of Ballarat role required to improve community wellbeing outcomes.</li> </ul>
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In line with the *City of Ballarat Social Policy Framework 2018*, the principles of Equity, Inclusion, Proactive, Leadership, Collaboration and Compassion are to be considered in all new social policy development. These principles also provide a foundation for action and can be seen in the current City of Ballarat role in relation to access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food, as identified below. Fully integrating these principles into different aspects of social policy work will take time and will require the dedicated efforts of everyone involved.

### Planner/ regulator

- Undertakes compliance inspections under the Food Act 1984 to ensure the sale of safe and suitable food and minimise risks to the community.
- The City of Ballarat has a statutory responsibility in land use and physical infrastructure planning and development, building controls, public health, traffic management and open space planning, which impact on food production and accessibility.
- Encourages outdoor dining through implementation of the Outdoor Dining and Trading Policy, which considers the design of footpaths, activation of laneways, improvements to lighting, seating etc.
- Installation of water drinking taps in recreation and other public areas in conjunction with Central Highlands Water.

### Coordinator

- Coordinates actions across City of Ballarat departments in relation to Healthy Eating through the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

### Advocacy

- Is a signatory to the Urban and Regional Food Declaration.<sup>3</sup>
- Participates in the Ballarat Food Access Network.
- Promotes national healthy eating campaigns.

### Educator

- Provides information and education to businesses on food safety.
- Supports families with timely advice on breast-feeding, food choices, weight management and oral health for infants through the MCH service, Parent Place and Supported Playgroup program, including links to BHS services.

### Capacity Builder

- Supervises university student placements to undertake research related to food security and access that can then be used to inform local initiatives.
- Supports food outlets and key settings, including early childhood services, schools, community groups and sports clubs, to provide and promote healthy food and drinks.
- Supports gardening and environment groups to deliver local activities which encourage skills development for growing food.
- Supports community groups and organisations to increase community capacity and individual skills to grow and prepare foods.

### Service Delivery

- Assess clients and provide appropriate referrals for assistance with shopping, meal planning and food preparation under the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home and Community Care Program.
- Implements healthy food policies at early learning centres.
- Provides weekly support to local welfare agencies with main meals which are excess to the delivered meal service.
- Provides breastfeeding and children's healthy eating support through maternal and child health services including lactation consultancy services.
- Supports families through provision of facilities which are breast-feeding friendly.
- Completes My Aged Care assessments to identify people who may need assistance in accessing food.
- Provides opportunities for young people to learn about healthy food choices, encourages youth volunteering at local community gardens and provides opportunities to learn to cook with fresh locally sourced produce.
- Increasing proportion of healthy foods and drinks available at Council run facilities and events.

### Related City of Ballarat policy documents

- City of Ballarat *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021- 31*  
[ballarat.vic.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing-plan](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing-plan)
- City of Ballarat *Outdoor Dining and Trading Policy 2019*  
[ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/201904/Outdoor%20Dining%20and%20Trading%20Policy.pdf](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/201904/Outdoor%20Dining%20and%20Trading%20Policy.pdf)
- City of Ballarat *Nature Strip Policy 2016*  
[ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-04/Nature%20Strip%20Policy.pdf](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-04/Nature%20Strip%20Policy.pdf)
- Food Act 1984 (includes the City of Ballarat's mandatory reporting requirements)  
[legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/food-act-1984/113](http://legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/food-act-1984/113)
- Urban and regional food declaration (City of Ballarat is a signatory)  
[circlesoffood.org/urban-and-regional-food-declaration](http://circlesoffood.org/urban-and-regional-food-declaration)
- *Social Policy Framework 2018*  
[ballarat.vic.gov.au/city/about-us/social-policy](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/city/about-us/social-policy)

## Key messages – Access to affordable and nutritious food

- Access to nutritious food is determined by what is available in neighbourhoods and communities, what sort of foods we may be accustomed to or prefer to eat, our ability to afford it and accessibility to where it is sold or grown.
- A healthy diet helps prevent and manage health risk factors, such as overweight and obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and associated chronic conditions, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some forms of cancer.<sup>4</sup>
- It is estimated that currently around 12 percent of people in Ballarat experienced food insecurity and accessed emergency food relief at least once within a 12-month period in 2018.<sup>5</sup>
- Access to sufficient safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food is a fundamental human right, as recognised under international law.<sup>15</sup>
- The food system is significant and complex, impacting the environment, industry, transport and the economy.
- The City of Ballarat undertakes many roles and responsibilities which can significantly impact strengthening our local food system and increasing access to healthy food in our community.
- Local government is ideally placed to contribute to locally relevant, integrated and long-lasting strategies to address the barriers to accessing safe, affordable and nutritious food.
- The City of Ballarat believes that ensuring access to affordable and nutritious food for the Ballarat community requires working collaboratively and systemically at multiple levels and delivering a range of interventions. We are committed to continuing to work in this way with partner organisations.

## Key data and trends

### The food system

Food, including how it is produced, secured, transported, processed, marketed, accessed, regulated, consumed, wasted, its contribution to the economy and jobs, and what it does to our bodies and the planet is a major issue for households, communities, cities and regions.<sup>6</sup> Production of food is dependent on scarce water supplies, and on resources such as fossil fuels and productive agricultural land. The production, distribution and consumption of food all make a significant contribution to our environmental impact. When reflecting on access to food, it is important that the different aspects of food, such as the impacts on health, environmental sustainability and economic growth are considered.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to concerns about the impact of climate change on yields from agricultural supplies, there are several known barriers to eating well within the community. These include the neighbourhoods in which people live, what quality and variety of food is readily available to them, their ability to get to where healthy food is available, their income and level of health or disability.<sup>8</sup>

### Health and risk factors

The food and beverages we consume play an important role in our overall health and wellbeing. Food provides energy, nutrients and other components that, if consumed in insufficient or excess amounts, can result in ill health. A healthy diet helps to prevent and manage health risk factors, such as overweight and obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, as well as associated chronic conditions, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and some forms of cancer.<sup>4</sup>

In 2017, Ballarat respondents to the Victorian Population Health Survey<sup>10</sup> had at least one chronic disease; this was significantly higher than the Victorian average of 32.3 percent. The survey also reported that Ballarat residents ate an average of 2.3 serves of vegetables per day, less than half the recommended 5 serves of vegetables per day. Additionally, Ballarat residents have a higher consumption of sugary drinks than the state average (11.2 percent compared to 10.1 percent)<sup>10</sup>. These indicators have not been evaluated at an LGA level in more recent iterations of this study.

### Food Insecurity

There are several organisations in Ballarat that provide emergency food relief. From these organisations, around 68,945 meals were provided by community meals programs in 2018/19, an increase of 13,513 since 2015/16. 34 schools in Ballarat provide meal programs for students, with an estimated 1,827 meals served weekly.<sup>12</sup> In 2020, at least 4.5 percent of the Ballarat population are believed to have run out of money to buy food in the 12 months prior.<sup>13</sup>

The Food Access Network was formed in Ballarat in 2015, evolving out of the collaborative relationships formed between food security stakeholders and Ballarat Community Health SecondBite stakeholders. The Food Access Network works to reduce food insecurity in the Ballarat region by sharing information and resources, advocating for greater food access and food security, developing sustainable initiatives, and investigating the feasibility of a food hub in Ballarat.

Further background information about the impact of food insecurity in Ballarat, research and resources can be found through the following links and through the related City of Ballarat policy documents listed above.

### Further Information

- Food Safety information  
[ballarat.vic.gov.au/pc/public-health/food-safety.aspx](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/pc/public-health/food-safety.aspx)
- Impacts of Food Security in Ballarat Report 2018  
[bchc.org.au/assets/publications/files/impacts\\_of\\_food\\_insecurity\\_in\\_ballarat\\_report\\_final\\_may\\_2018.pdf](http://bchc.org.au/assets/publications/files/impacts_of_food_insecurity_in_ballarat_report_final_may_2018.pdf)
- Victorian Population Health Survey 2020  
[vahi.vic.gov.au/report/population-health/victorian-population-health-survey-2020-dashboards](http://vahi.vic.gov.au/report/population-health/victorian-population-health-survey-2020-dashboards)
- Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership Community Profile 2020  
[chpcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CHPCP\\_Cmnty-Profile\\_with-Liveability-data\\_May2021.pdf](http://chpcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CHPCP_Cmnty-Profile_with-Liveability-data_May2021.pdf)
- City of Ballarat- Guide to Community Gardens  
[ballarat.vic.gov.au/media/2268880/comm-gardens-comguides-a5-060314-final\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/media/2268880/comm-gardens-comguides-a5-060314-final_low_res.pdf)
- Heart Foundation– Food-sensitive planning and urban design  
[healthyplaces.org.au/userfiles/file/Design%20elements/foodsensitive\\_planning.pdf](http://healthyplaces.org.au/userfiles/file/Design%20elements/foodsensitive_planning.pdf)

## Services and support

### Community Food Programs (as at June 2022)

Details may change without notice. Please contact organisations to confirm they are open and have food available.

#### Salvation Army - food and vouchers

##### Emergency Relief- No face-to-face appointments

- 102 Eureka Street, Ballarat
- Phone 5337 0600 to arrange a phone interview and assessment Mon – Fri 9:15am – 2:15pm.
- Bread and fruit able to be collected at the front of Reception Mon – Fri 9:15am -2:15pm

##### Café 102

- 102 Eureka Street, Ballarat Tuesdays & Thursdays 12pm
- Hot takeaway main meal to be collected outside at the front of reception area.

#### Uniting Ballarat

- Food and vouchers.
- 105 Dana Street, Ballarat
- Emergency Relief for those on low income or immediate financial crisis.
- Phone 5332 1286 at 9am to book an appointment (appointments fill fast)
- Available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

#### BreezeWay Meals Program

- Takeaway hot meals and sandwich/cold packs
- 105 Dana Street, Ballarat
- 7 days a week 11.30 to 1pm. One of each available per person.

##### Meals for Change

- Supporting young people (aged 15-25) to access affordable meals in local cafes
- Contact Uniting on 5332 1286 for more information

#### St Vinnies

- Food and vouchers, funding for medical scripts and MYKI top-ups
- 6 Dawson Street South, Ballarat. 10am – Midday, open Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- 15 Violet Grove, Wendouree 9.30am- 11.30am, open Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- To organise a home visit for assistance, call and leave a message on 5334 2844.

#### Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre

- 11 Tuppen Drive, Sebastopol, 5329 3273
- Fridays – Community lunch 12-2pm
- Tuesdays & Thursday - Bread

#### Anglicare Victoria

- Community breakfast (take away)
- 49 Lydiard Street South, Ballarat Monday – Friday 8.30am - 10am

##### Emergency Relief - food and vouchers:

- 14 Victoria Street, Bakery Hill. Monday – Thursday 10.30am – Midday
- 227 Albert Street, Sebastopol Closed till further notice
- 103 Napier Street, Creswick Second Tuesday of the month 10.30am - Midday

Please phone for assistance. 5333 0600

#### **Hilltop Church**– food bank

- 503 Mair Street, Ballarat 3350
- Phone 5331 5957
- Food Bank – fresh produce Friday 1.30pm – 2pm
- Free bread alternate Fridays
- Frozen meals available, please call to arrange (leave a message if unattended)

#### **The Seventh Day Adventist Good Samaritan Centre**- food pantry

- Cnr Learmouth & Grevillea Road, Wendouree
- Thursdays 12pm -1pm
- \$5 donation for a bag of groceries (pantry staples and fresh food)
- Available to everyone, no registration required.

#### **Soup Bus- Ballarat on Track Foundation**

- Free hot dinner. Registration is not required.
- 124 Armstrong St South, Ballarat. (In front of Cameron's Welding and Industrial Supplies)
- Monday – Thursday 7.30pm-9pm
- Sunday 5.30 pm – 7.30pm

#### **Shower Bus- One Humanity** (Closed until further notice)

- Shower and clothes washing facilities (Closed until further notice)
- 126 Armstrong st, Ballarat open Thursday 6-8pm and Sunday 5-7pm

#### **Delacombe Community Garden**

- 16 Nandiriog Drive Delacombe
- For people to obtain fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs, the garden is open all year round

#### **Food is Free Laneway**

- Corner Ripon St South & Warrior Place, Ballarat
- Food is Free Laneway is a space for people to drop off or collect veggies, fruit and herbs and connect with the neighbourhood.
- Visit [foodisfree.com.au](http://foodisfree.com.au)

#### **Victorian Government**- emergency relief packages

- The program is to support people in mandatory self-isolation, who have little or no food, and no network of family and friends to support them.
- Each eligible household will receive a one week supply of essential goods.
- Packages can be accessed by calling Victoria's Coronavirus hot-line on 1800 675 398 (press 5).

#### **Healthy Eating and Dietetics services**

- Ballarat Community Health [bchc.org.au/services/healthy-eating-dietetics](http://bchc.org.au/services/healthy-eating-dietetics)
- Ballarat Health Services [bhs.org.au/services-and-clinics/allied-health/dietetics-nutrition](http://bhs.org.au/services-and-clinics/allied-health/dietetics-nutrition)

## How Community Members Can Get Involved

### Volunteer

- Food is Free, [foodisfree.com.au](http://foodisfree.com.au) or email [volunteer@foodisfree.com.au](mailto:volunteer@foodisfree.com.au)
- Ballarat Community Health, [bchc.org.au/about-us/volunteers](http://bchc.org.au/about-us/volunteers)
- Ballarat Foundation, [ballaratfoundation.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer](http://ballaratfoundation.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer)
- City of Ballarat, [ballarat.vic.gov.au/ac/careers/volunteer-opportunities.aspx](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/ac/careers/volunteer-opportunities.aspx)
- Community Gardens, <https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/city/parks-and-outdoors/community-gardens>
- The Soup Bus  
[ontrackfoundation.org.au/the-soup-bus](http://ontrackfoundation.org.au/the-soup-bus)

### Contact

City of Ballarat  
Health and Social Planning Team  
Email: [hsplanning@ballarat.vic.gov.au](mailto:hsplanning@ballarat.vic.gov.au)  
Phone: (03) 5320 5500

**Position Statement Review: By August 2024**



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