

Country	Australia					
Population	169,860					
Title of policy or practice	Community Food Relief 2021 - 2025					
Subtitle (optional)	Melbourne's Food Plan Relief Plan aim to facilitate increased food security for everyone, especially the most vulnerable.					
URL video	https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/community-food-relief-plan.pdf					
Category	03 – S&EE		SDGs		2 – 10 – 17	
Year of start	2020		Year of end		2025	
Actors involvement	Municipal departments	Public institutions	NGOs CSOs	Research centers	Private sectors	International bodies
	2	N/A	8	2	N/A	N/A
	Other					
	200					
Budget	€35,000					
Brief description	<p>In 2021, City of Melbourne (CoM) Social Indicators Survey (CoMSiS) indicated that one in three (33%) residents experienced food insecurity. This was a significant increase since 2019 (25.8%). In March 2021 CoM engaged food relief services who highlighted significant increases in the demand for food relief as well as changes in the demographics of community members accessing their services. Food relief providers also signaled that the issue of food insecurity is not “new” and has been steadily increasing due to the high cost of living in Melbourne. However, since the beginning of the Pandemic we have witnessed and better understood the vulnerabilities our food system faces and how this impacts food security across our city.</p> <p>The crisis of the Pandemic and recent impacts and severity of weather events from climate change on food supply chains have challenged our reliance on just in time food access and availability. These impacts showcased a set of interconnecting environmental, economic, social and structural challenges exacerbating inequities of food access across our municipality. We have a heightened understanding of the links between poverty and food insecurity, including food relief organizations reliant on surplus food donations and the significant issues accessing sufficient food during these times. For this reason, Council identified food security as a key health and wellbeing focus area within our Council Plan 2021- 2025.</p> <p>In December 2021, councilors endorsed Melbourne's food relief plan titled: Food Relief 2021 - 2025: Planning for a food secure city. This plan outlines Council's role and commitment to improving access to food relief services and support community to grow their own food. Partnerships are a key focus including advocacy to all tiers of Government for the development of a policy framework to address poverty with a call to action to raise income support above the poverty line and increase ongoing investment in social housing.</p>					
Innovation	<p>During the Pandemic City of Melbourne worked with State and Federal Governments to establish a suite of food relief initiatives for all vulnerable groups in our municipality. CoM enabled flexibility for different models of food relief such as food vouchers for international students; use of community halls for meal distribution; long life and frozen meal products; living food boxes so community could grow their own food; working in partnership with food relief providers to transform council owned buildings and car parks into hamper packing and delivery operations; activation of fresh food markets and access to grants for the purchase of PPE to support safe distribution of food. This diversity has demonstrated new ways of working with our food relief providers and our community; providing enduring methods to ensure dignified access to food relief for community members who have longer</p>					

	<p>term need. This work has led to CoM being the first local government in Australia to develop a food relief plan post the pandemic in response to the escalation of food insecurity. The plan also advocates to all tiers government to address the increasing experience of poverty for all Australians. During the pandemic, a higher level of income provided by the Australian government served as an example of how elevated income increased community capability to pay their bills, remain socially connected to their community, enable food choices, and sustain confidence and resilience.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	<p>City of Melbourne is in the early stages of its food relief plan delivery. However, we are utilizing the following MUFPP indicators to understand the impact of our activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator 22 - Council has a target of reducing food insecurity to 2019 levels by 2025. Indicator 19 - Council will measure the number of people in the community accessing food relief services (through food relief providers). Indicator 22 - mapping community-based food assets in the city, including council facilities and community gardens in 2022. Indicator 24 - Implementing food growing, food literacy and food waste management classes/workshops from late 2022. ● Governance indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator 3 - Council Plan 2021 - 2025 is our strategic framework which outlines indicators to be monitored. <p>We will also work with our food relief network to support implementation of the food relief plan and gather data to understand impact.</p> ● Environment indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator 44 - Redistribution of surplus food from produce markets quantifying the amount of food recovered and redistributed to community through internal and external partnerships. ● Financial sustainability - We will collaborate and play a coordination role in delivering initiatives to strengthen partnership efforts and increase access to food in our community, without necessarily adding in large amounts of funding.
<p>Inclusion</p>	<p>The design and implementation of the food relief plan is broad and has several dimensions including: Multiple MUFPP categories including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social and economic equity is the dominant focus of our plan which aims to support community members and groups that experience the most disadvantage and inequity of food access. ● Governance through fostering coordination and collaboration of the local food relief sector and through a food relief provider network. ● Food circular economy and waste management by working with our major food markets to redistribute edible surplus food to our community. <p>We will be working with a variety of stakeholders to implement the plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City of Melbourne departments to deliver work associated with redistribution of surplus food from major food produce markets and food relief services. ● Food relief organisations to better understand community need and coordinate the distribution of food relief in the municipality. ● Researchers and subject matter experts to strengthen our knowledge and delivery of key actions and programs including the development of a refreshed food policy in 2022-2023. <p>Our focus encompasses delivering initiatives, for example pop up produce markets, in neighborhoods identified as the most food insecure.</p> <p>The plan outlines a whole of municipality approach aiming to increase confidence, promote health and wellbeing, including social inclusion and improved mental health.</p>
<p>Challenges and learning needs</p>	<p>Chronic food need is a progressive first world problem with limitations to reduce the cost of food for community as food inflation is the result of State, Federal and global factors. This includes our capability to reduce levels of poverty and wage inequality which is again controlled by State and Federal governments in Australia. Advocacy is a key role for CoM.</p>

COVID-19 recovery: State and Federal governments have removed pandemic supports, despite COVID-19 still impacting. It's harder for community to manage their needs; and our food relief organizations to meet ongoing and increasing demand for food relief.

As a growing city CoM has limited space for urban agriculture to support communities to grow their own food. A learning need for our council is to consider how other cities are supporting communities to grow their own food in urban environments; hence City of Melbourne will undertake research to investigate this further in 2022 - 2023.