CLARENCE CITY COUNCIL – COMMUNITY FOOD ACCESS PROFILE

Introduction & disclaimer – This profile have been developed by the Heart Foundation Tasmania as part of the Healthy Food Access Tasmania Project. The information highlighted in this profile was gathered in 2014. At the time we put it together it was up to date. Sometimes things change and when they do we are happy to update it for you. Also if there is other information you think should also be included please contact us.

Why does access to healthy food matter?
Limited or poor access to healthy food has both health and social outcomes for people who are struggling with this issue. There are many health conditions and diseases associated with or caused by a poor diet resulting from poor economic or physical access to healthy food. The diseases include heart disease\(^1\), diabetes\(^2\), some cancers\(^3\), and other health conditions such as overweight\(^4\) and obesity\(^5\). Poor access to healthy food can cause poor physical development in children and impact their learning and attendance at school\(^6\). For adults who have poor access to healthy food it is often very stressful and causes them to be anxious and ashamed\(^7\). This often also means they avoid social occasions in their communities and with family so can become socially isolated\(^8\).

How are the residents of Clarence City Council doing?
Currently only 49% of adults living in Clarence eat the recommended 2 piece of fruit per day and 8.3 % eat the recommended 5 serves of vegetables. This compares with 42% and 9.8% state averages. Clarence Residents are unfortunately eating slightly less fruit and vegetables in 2013 when compared with 2009\(^9\).

For adults living in Clarence 18.5 % are obese (state average 23%)\(^9\) and 16 % report that their health is poor or fair versus (19% state average)\(^10\).

While we don’t have results for children at the local government level we do know that rates of overweight and obesity are increasing across Tasmania. The teenage years are when significant changes are observed and up to 30% of young people become overweight or obese\(^11\).

How easy is it to access healthy food across Clarence City Council?
Often we hear about people being food insecure across Tasmania. People who are food insecure do not have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life. Across Tasmania about 5-10% of the adult population are affected by food insecurity, and it is estimated at between 25-40% in low income households.

The Healthy Food Access Tasmania project is focused on improving physical and economic access to fruit and vegetables in communities across Tasmania. When we
think about access to healthy food we think about what is available and where, and how affordable is it. Can all residents easily get to the shops? And can they afford to buy a healthy range of foods?

Across Clarence, residents ability to get to the shops is of course impacted by where shops are located and what transport they may have available to them. Recent research conducted by the University of Tasmania showed that there is a good variety of shops across the area. In total there are 24 shops where fresh food such as fruit and vegetables can be purchased, that is a mix of major supermarkets (4 – 2 in Warrane/Rosny Park, Howrah & Lindisfarne), minor supermarkets (5 – Risdon Vale, Rokeby, Bellerive, Lauderdale, Lindisfarne and Richmond), general stores (12 – Clarendon Vale, Rokeby, 3 in Howrah, Richmond, Opossum Bay, South Arm, Lauderdale, Cambridge & Seven Mile Beach) and fruit and vegetable shops (3). As a general observation, there are less shops located in areas where the average household income is very low when compared with other areas. For these people this means getting to the shops to purchase healthy food can be difficult. Often low income households do not have access to a car and rely on public transport.

Clarence has a farmers market which runs seasonally in summer at Coal River Valley which is another source of locally grown fruit and vegetables.

Healthy Food Access Basket Survey - Tasmanian results 2014\textsuperscript{12}.

In March and April of 2014 the University of Tasmania, as part of the Healthy Food Access Tasmania project, conducted a price and availability survey for healthy food across Tasmania. The Healthy Food Access Basket survey collected data on 44 foods which are consistent with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE). The AGHE was developed by the Commonwealth Department of Health and provides recommendations for how Australian's should eat for good health across the lifespan. This survey has been used widely in Australia as measure of the cost of eating well. Data was collected in 142 of Tasmania’s 353 stores where fresh food is available. On page 3 there is a summary of the state wide results contained in Table 1. These results show the range in the price by the different kinds of stores and also the percentage of income required for 4 common household types using Centrelink payments as the income. It shows that the cost of healthy foods vary across store types and the varying impost on the household budget depending on household type. The range of cost of food was determined by the survey results and the calculation for the percentage of income has been made by the Healthy Food Access Tasmania Project. Results from the fruit and vegetables shops are not included here. These results are preliminary findings only and will be reviewed and updated in September 2014.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STORE TYPE</th>
<th>FAMILY TYPE</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>% Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 parents (female and male age 44) &amp; 2 children</td>
<td>23-31%</td>
<td>$311- $413.38</td>
<td>20-27%</td>
<td>$98.67- $129.43</td>
<td>20-26%</td>
<td>$76.18- $100.73</td>
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<td>(ages 18 &amp; 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single parent (female age 44) and 2 children (ages 18 &amp; 8)</td>
<td>20-27%</td>
<td>$211.50- $284.33</td>
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<td>Single Male (&gt;31 years)</td>
<td>25-36%</td>
<td>$258.48- $377.89</td>
<td>24-35%</td>
<td>$119- $173.24</td>
<td>12-18%</td>
<td>$90.70- $132.43</td>
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<td>Age Pensioner (age 70)</td>
<td>13-18%</td>
<td>$280.30- $391.50</td>
<td>25-35%</td>
<td>$125.93- $173.52</td>
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<td>$99.23- $136.05</td>
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<td>Minor Supermarkets (For example IGA Everyday, local supermarket)</td>
<td>28-41%</td>
<td>$378.16- $550.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>General &amp; Convenience Stores (For example local, general, convenience and corner shop)</td>
<td>30-41%</td>
<td>$404.48- $560.67</td>
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Which residents in the Clarence City Council may have difficulty accessing healthy food?

In the Clarence City Council local government area there are 19842 households and 51878 residents\(^\text{13}\). The people and households who are likely to find it hard to access healthy food are likely to be:

- Households with a low incomes including residents on Centrelink payments (27% of the local population are Concession Card Holders; 5 % unemployed)\(^\text{13}\) often have a reduced ability to buy sufficient healthy food as there are many other costs such as housing, transport and utilities which drain the household budget.

- Single parents and their children, particularly if they rely on Centrelink payments. (888 single parent households\(^\text{13}\) & 14% of children are estimated to be living in poverty across the local government area\(^\text{14}\).)

- People with a disability or chronic disease (16 % of adults report their health as fair or poor and 2528 residents are receiving the disability support payment)\(^\text{13}\) because they may have difficulty carrying shopping\(^\text{15}\) and their medical expenses reduce the household food budget\(^\text{7}\).

- Households without a car (7% of households.)\(^\text{13}\)

- People experiencing housing stress. This is people who have a low income and who pay more than 30% of their household income on rent or mortgage (28% of local households)\(^\text{13}\)

- People living in areas which rely on general stores or do not have any shops at all within walking distance limiting their physical access to healthy food\(^\text{16}\).

- People who have inadequate access to public transport\(^\text{13}\)
What can we do about improving access to healthy food for local residents?

While the data about health and resident’s diets may paint a daunting picture there are existing programs and initiatives that are working towards improving outcomes. Australian research\(^1\) has shown that when several factors occur together for residents they are able to eat well, even if they have a low income. We call these *resilience factors*, which means people can still eat well despite other challenges. To have this resilience it is important to have several factors working together to support people to make healthy food choices easy choices. These success factors include:

1. Residents having good personal skills around food preparation, cooking and shopping. Being able to grow some of your own food is also very helpful.

2. Growing up or living in a family or community that values healthy eating and sees it as a ‘normal’ thing to do, including eating fruit and vegetables.

3. Importantly, residents must have access to affordable healthy food, this means it must be available in their community or it must be easy to get to where it is available.

Using these success factors we have compiled some of the characteristics of the Clarence City Council area to show how strengthening the coordination between these factors and/or program activities that are underway can help contribute towards building a community in which healthy eating is achievable for all.
Linking and coordinating these factors present in the community will contribute towards making healthy food choices easy choices for Clarence City Council residents.

Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply

- Food Connections Clarence project is an alliance of 12 community organisations working to improve access to healthy food targeting older people and people living in areas where there are limited shops selling healthy food. Hubs increase access to healthy rescued food for emergency relief.
  - Farmgate sales provide an opportunity for residents to purchase affordable locally grown food direct from growers. Some fruit and vegetable shops and supermarkets also sell locally grown food.
  - Meals on wheels and home delivery from the supermarkets and other shops helps ensure people who can't get to the shops can still get nutritious food.

Individual skills, knowledge to shop, cook, grow and prepare healthy food

Neighbourhood Houses, schools and community gardens and other community organisations are running programs that teach people to cook, grow food, shopping/budgeting and how to eat well and affordably.

A culture of healthy eating in a variety of community settings

- Schools and early childcare centres which are part of the Move Well Eat Well program are working with children, young people and their families to regard healthy eating as normal and important to achieve.
- Some workplaces have health and wellbeing programs which promote healthy eating to their workers.
- Healthy catering or food at community events assists people to make healthy food choices more often.
- Promoting locally grown food.
How can it make a difference when we connect it all together?

Seeing the resilience factors as a ‘system’ and ensuring they are linked to each other can have a positive impact on making healthy food choices easy choices for local residents. For example if cooking programs use local seasonal produce available in local shops it is easier for people to purchase affordable healthy food and prepare and eat it. If schools teach children that eating tasty fruit and vegetables are important and ‘normalise’ it, this makes the family meal more enjoyable for the ‘cook’ and the whole family. If shops and markets in neighbourhoods and towns have a ready supply of affordable fruit and vegetables this makes it easier even for people on a tight budget to buy it and eat well. If it is locally grown it is also a great boost to the local economy. Making sure that people who need support in times of crisis also receive healthy food such as fruit and vegetables helps them to continue to eat well and maintain their health during challenging times.

Below is a list of the businesses, organisations and groups who have an interest in improving access to healthy food that we are currently aware of:

Supportive environments influencing healthy food access and supply

- Food Relief agencies including programs that provide fresh fruit and vegetables supplied by SecondBite
- Coal River Valley Farmers markets & farmgate sales
- F & V Shops & Supermarkets
- Food Connections Clarence
- Foodbank Tasmania
- Mission Australia Housing
- Clarence City Council – Social Planning

A culture of healthy eating in a variety of community settings such as schools and early childcare and community meals programs

- Move Well Eat Well Schools- Bellerive PS, Cambridge PS, Clarendon Vale PS, Corpus Christi School, John Paul 11 Catholic School, Lauderdale PS, Lindisfarne North PS, Lindisfarne PS, Montagu Bay PS, Risdon Vale PS, Rokeby PS, Seabrook Christian School, South Arm
- Early childcare- Discovery Early Learning Lauderdale, Gumnut Long Day Centre, Howrah Beach Child Care Centre: Lady Gowrie Acton, Lindisfarne & Richmond, Lauderdale Primary Kindergarten, Little Bee Early Learning Cambridge & Howrah, Oakdowns Early Learning, Rokeby Primary School Kindergarten, Rosny Child Care Centre, Emmanuel Christian School Kindergarten, South Arm Primary Education, Cambridge Rd Play and Learn Centre, Care Bears Cottage
Individual skills, knowledge to shop, cook, grow and prepare healthy food

- Community and Neighbourhood houses- Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood Centre, Clarendon Vale; Risdon Vale Community Centre; Rokeby Neighbourhood Centre; Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre, Warrane
- Community & school gardens- including at South Arm, Lauderdale, Warrane, Southern support School, Rokeby High (currently being revitalised) Emmanuel, The Cottage School, Richmond, Montagu Bay, Risdon Vale, Clarendon Vale
- Child and Family Centre Clarendon Vale
- Social Eating Programs such as Chat and Chew – Monthly lunches are held in Lindisfarne, Risdon Vale, South Arm, Clarendon Vale, Warrane/Mornington and Rokeby. Information about dates and time is available through Community Development at Clarence City Council

What can partnership between local government and other important community organisations, businesses and members achieve?

There is no doubt that when the efforts of groups of people are combined and linked together many of the reasons why people have poor access to healthy food can be resolved. As a guide there are 10 keys ways to act

18. They are listed below along with examples to explain their importance:

1. Allocate Responsibility – it is key that there is strong leadership and also that the responsibility is shared. Forming a coalition of people to drive change is important.

2. Build the local picture – it is important to understand the local reasons why people have poor access to healthy food by collecting information and speaking with the people who are impacted. This helps to identify gaps which community partners may like to pursue together and can inform future decisions and approaches.

3. Develop policy and plans – when you understand the issues develop a response to bring about change and create a connection between organisations and people who can bring about change together. Make sure you discuss your ideas with the people who you hope will benefit.

4. Set a good example – where you work or live demonstrate what healthy affordable eating looks like, considering your catering, events or canteen policy to model good behaviour.

5. Use regulatory and fiscal power – regulation can be used to promote healthy affordable food choices across a variety of locations. It could impact the food sold in community spaces, vending machines or ensure there are now local laws to prohibit food growing in public spaces.

6. Land use planning – protect land for farming and make sure land use within townships is mixed use to support growing food within open spaces and neighbourhoods.

7. Healthy eating programs for residents – support training and skill building opportunities.
8. Growing food locally – make the connection between what is grown locally and what is available for purchase. This strengthens the local economy and can also apply to home growers who swap and share food.

9. Getting food and residents together – consider that not everybody can jump in the car and get to the shops easily, work on solutions that get people to food and food to people.

10. Advocacy – get your voice heard. When the issues are well understood it is important to speak out and make submissions to bring about change.

In the City of Clarence there are some very good examples of how community members have been working together or plan to in the future.

Food Connections Clarence Project
This project currently funds a partnership with 12 organisations that have created a community network and hubs across the local government area. The project has established a series of opportunities for community members to participate in a ‘social eating’ program that promotes healthy eating and brings people together to share a meal and each other’s company. Food relief including fresh fruit and vegetables is distributed via the hubs for people who are food insecure. The project works with the local secondary school to prepare low cost healthy meals for older community members who do not or are unable to prepare meals for themselves. This builds food preparation and cooking skills in the young people and ensures access to affordable meals for older residents.

Clarence City Council Community Health and Wellbeing Plan
Clarence Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2018 cites several activities and objectives relevant to improving access to healthy food for local residents. These are outlined below:

• Identify and assess patches of land for local food production in high-medium density housing areas
• Identify and enhance community hubs and villages
• Increase the use of tracks and trails for recreation and transport purposes
• Support locally driven development of community gardens and food patches
• Promote expansion of Move Well Eat Well
• Promote school based initiatives for growing, nutrition education and social marketing
• Support initiates to promote food access, affordability, availability and awareness of healthy food as recommended by Tasmanian Food Access Research Coalition
• Encourage and support social enterprises
• Provide support and advice for community markets (including farmers markets)
Currently the Healthy Food Access Tasmania project has a project partnership with CCC to build a detailed picture using spatial mapping of the Clarence City Council’s:

- Community areas and the built environment
- Attributes which contribute towards improving access to healthy food

This project will deliver against and inform future action for the Clarence City Council Health and Wellbeing Plan objectives and actions. The partnership project is due for completion in June 2015.

**Healthy Food Access Tasmania**

The Healthy Food Access Tasmania project runs till mid 2016 and we are hoping to work with communities and stakeholders from the paddock to plate to increase access to fruit and vegetables, preferably locally grown, in communities across Tasmania. The Healthy Food Access Tasmania project seeks to make healthy food choices easy choices by ensuring that fresh foods (preferably locally grown) are readily available across Tasmania. The project will contribute towards addressing this important health, economic and social objective over the next three years. Healthy Food Access Tasmania is a Tasmania Medicare Local funded project (and will seek to link with the future Social Determinants of Health project). The project will be led by the Heart Foundation with the University of Tasmania as a key project partner. We believe the project will have positive health, social and economic objectives for communities across Tasmania.

We encourage communities to consider the important issues raised in this profile and welcome inquires about how the HFAT project might support your effort to better understand and address local determinants of access to healthy food.

We are committed to Tasmanians in all communities being able to make healthy food choices which are easy choices.

For more information please contact the project manager Leah Galvin 03 6220 2210 or leah.galvin@heartfoundation.org.au

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5 Burns C, 2004, A review of literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
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10 http://www.adelaide.edu.au/phidu/maps-data/data/. The Social Health Atlas of Australia includes data on a range of population characteristics, including demography, socioeconomic status, health status and risk factors, and use of health and welfare services.
12 University of Tasmania, 2014. Preliminary results; Availability and cost of health food basket Tasmania
13 http://www.adelaide.edu.au/phidu/maps-data/data/. The Social Health Atlas of Australia includes data on a range of population characteristics, including demography, socioeconomic status, health status and risk factors, and use of health and welfare services.
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