



# **Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare**

## **Strategic Directions 2025-2028**

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## Our Vision

No-one goes hungry in our communities.

## Our Purpose

To improve food security in our local communities by ensuring access to sustainable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food.

## Our Mission

To improve food security for our communities by ensuring:

- Stability, efficiency and sustainability of food supply
- Building food resilience
- Accessibility and connectivity of food relief services
- Strong advocacy

## Our Values

- **Access to food is a human right:** Everyone deserves access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food as part of our mission to deliver food security.
- **Waste nothing:** We are focused on optimising all resources and reducing waste to deliver the best outcomes for our community.
- **Teamwork wins:** Collaboration is key as we build mutually beneficial partnerships to achieve common goals and to raise food security awareness.
- **Be our best selves:** To be the best we can, we act with honesty and responsibility in all our dealings, foster trust, embrace diversity, and ensure well being first.
- **Benefit for all:** We strive for social justice by giving to the community, being part of the community, and receiving back from the community.

## Context

Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare (FoodShare) is a well-established and essential community service. With cost-of-living pressures taking a toll on our communities, the demand for food relief is putting increased pressure on the organisation both in the scope of its work and in its sustainability. Uniquely located on the border between NSW and Victoria, FoodShare works across two state governments in all aspects of its operations.

FoodShare has shown strong resilience in the face of emergencies (such as bushfires and floods) and as an essential service provider during the pandemic. In the midst of responding to these emergencies, FoodShare performed strongly against the last Strategic Plan (2022-2024).

These achievements include:

### **Operational Sustainability and Impact**

- Developed local partnerships with suppliers to mitigate declining food availability
- Decrease in reliance on Foodbank Victoria for food supplies
- Community Pantry services ingrained in our community
  - agency collaboration increased by 106% (33 to 68 agencies)
  - food out increased by 23% (93,000 kg to 115,000 kg)
  - voucher redemption daily average increased by 47% (17 to 25)

### **Financial Sustainability**

- Expenses tracked against budget and \$500,000 in term deposit
- Shop \$70k net contribution (excludes salary and targeted grants/ donations)
- Secured operational funding (\$250k) from Victorian State Government

### **Our People and Capability**

- Well-resourced, skilled workforce supported by engaged volunteers
- Very low number of minor workplace incidents

### **Advocacy, Engagement and Education**

- Food relief network collaboration through RFSA and external relationships developing with national food partners

### **Governance and Risk**

- Financial practices enhanced and overseen by Finance Committee
- Constitution updated

## **Environmental Analysis**

The cost-of-living pressures being experienced nationally and in our regional communities are increasing demand for food relief services. The flow on economic impact on our organisation is both financial (19% decrease in income) and operational (18% decrease in donated food). Food is also more expensive to purchase and difficult to source. It is thus becoming more difficult to meet the need for food relief.

Unfortunately cost of living rises are also impacting our operations, with expenses increasing, particularly in insurance, energy costs, rent, transportation and cost of food supplies. We are also experiencing a need for additional staff to support operational capacity. Importantly, the Federal and State Governments have recognised the increasing food insecurity in our communities and are seeking to support services that show strong results and are responsive to their communities. There are thus opportunities to increase FoodShare's income base with funding from both NSW and Vic Governments (including recurrent funding from the Victorian State Government) as well as the potential for funding from the Federal Government.

In this context, we assess our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as follows.

## **SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- We prevent people from going hungry - but recognise that it is difficult to measure this impact
- Increased operational capacity and efficiency to maximise food supplies
- Our volunteer workforce has increased, and we are getting more volunteers with professional backgrounds
- Our local donor relationships are strong, though not always formalised - sometimes at request of donor
- We have good governance
- Our resources (equipment, premises and capability to support our region)
- Financial reserves (enabling investment in organisational development)
- Staff and volunteer continuity, retention and skill sets are strong
- Board members have strong skills and portfolios are now possible
- RFSA membership is benefiting FoodShare in food, funding, advocacy and other shared services and resources

### **Weaknesses**

- Increasing cost base (insurance, energy costs, rent, transportation, cost of food and wages)
- Lack measures of effectiveness of our service
- Limited visibility and recognition in our communities
- Local Government relationships need improvement (possible patron role)
- Reduced availability of food supplies
  - Supply contracts or lack thereof (need of succession planning for individual relationships with donors)
  - Local manufacturers are more financially vulnerable in current economic climate
  - Foodbank Victoria donations reducing further
- Decreased financial donations due to economic environment
- Lack diversity and recurrence in income streams (social enterprise opportunities)
- Gaps in food relief especially in NSW

### **Opportunities**

- Consider partnerships with organisations to deliver our mission that streamline services for the community and maximise efficiencies for funders
- With new funding we will be able to seek more food donors and increase our food distribution, particularly in underserved areas in NSW
- Local recognition and local connections with agencies create opportunities for RFSA to advocate on our behalf as well as share food and resources across members

### **Threats**

- Increased competition for food and funding
- Reduced availability of food from national food relief partners (especially FBV)
- Reduced donations from food rescue partners (supermarkets)
- Food donations are being diverted from charities to discount chains
- The price of food has risen significantly

- Tenuous food supply chains
- Foodbank Victoria is still seen as a key agency for delivering Victorian State Government priorities
- Local recognition (still confusion with Foodbank) and thus the need to strengthen community awareness and brand recognition

## Our Functions

- Source, store and distribute food
- Local resilience building
  - Operate a social supermarket
  - Market and fundraise
  - Educate and empower people to be food secure
  - Link people to wrap around support services
- Being the recognised, legitimate voice and leader of local and regional food security
- First responder and rapid mobiliser

## Our Goals

In five years, we will be:

- Financially secure, including proportional investment from all three levels of Government
- Food secure
- In a fit for purpose facility
- Seated at the table with all levels of Government for NSW and Vic
- Operating a network of social supermarkets in priority areas
- With a thriving volunteer and paid workforce
- Recognised by our communities as an essential community asset
- A key member of established regional food security networks in NSW and Vic

## Our Strategic Plan

<b>Priority Area: Community Food Security and Resilience</b>	
<b>Objective: To strengthen community food security</b>	
<b>Strategies 2025-2028</b>	<b>Actions 2025</b>
<p>Deliver a food rescue and supply service that is responsive to need by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a network of food suppliers in NSW that rescues 5,000 kg per week that is shared with at least 10 food relief providers in NSW</li> <li>• Strengthening and expanding relationships with food suppliers in Victoria</li> <li>• Extending our geographic reach to address food supply gaps in our region and in accordance with our grant commitments (especially in our NSW communities)</li> <li>• Providing effective crisis response to emergencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate EPA project in NSW to improve understanding of opportunities to increase capacity to accept more rescued food from NSW</li> <li>• Map food suppliers and identify sustainable food sources</li> <li>• Map food relief providers in the region to identify gaps</li> <li>• On track to divert an additional 3,500 kilograms per week by March 2027 from NSW donors</li> <li>• Integrated into LGA Emergency Management Plans</li> <li>• Also see Our People and Capability</li> </ul>
<p>Partner to develop strategies to improve food security through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access to food education; and</li> <li>• wrap around support services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a foundation for food education (cooking and growing skills) through partnerships (e.g. Wodonga TAFE and Neighborhood Centers)</li> <li>• Key partner in local service provider networks to extend accessibility and connectivity to wrap-around support services to drive warm referrals</li> </ul>
<p>Provide sustainable direct services that are culturally appropriate and provide dignity and choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with agencies, schools and local service providers (including cultural groups) to understand the needs of the community and provide support through the Community Pantry and Warehouse</li> <li>• Seek feedback from programs (surveys and site visits) and provide a report in June 2026 and October 2027 to guide reviews of the Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Also see Operational Sustainability</li> </ul>

**Priority Area: Operational Sustainability**

<b>Objective:</b> To ensure operational sustainability	
<b>Strategies 2025-2028</b>	<b>Actions 2025</b>
Secure reliable and affordable food supplies locally  Strengthen partnerships with food suppliers outside our region through the RFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with national food relief providers to secure regular deliveries</li> <li>• Build relationships with partners and suppliers to increase supplies (rescued, donated and purchased food)</li> </ul>
Acquire facilities to enable effective and efficient operations (social supermarkets, warehouse, transportation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a capital funding strategy, which includes a business case, concept designs, budgeting (with flexibility for a staged approach) and project timeframes in preparation for funding opportunities (the cost to develop this strategy is \$90,000)</li> </ul>
Actively support regional networks (Vic and NSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate and further develop the impact of the RFSA in Victoria</li> <li>• Initiate discussions regarding the development of a regional network in NSW</li> </ul>
Evaluate the effectiveness, and reach of our existing operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with agencies and local councils to gather valuable information to make informed business decisions</li> <li>• Review and implement improvements</li> </ul>

<b>Priority Area:</b> Financial Sustainability	
<b>Objective:</b> To ensure financial sustainability	
<b>Strategies 2025-2028</b>	<b>Actions 2025</b>
Secure recurrent proportional investment from all three levels of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue recurrent funding in Vic in collaboration with the RFSA</li> <li>• Continue to develop relationships with NSW State Government</li> <li>• Continue advocating for federal funding with the support of Indi and Farrer MPs</li> <li>• Pursue financial contributions from LGAs for operational support to supplement agency membership payments</li> </ul>
Develop a diversified sustainable income from social enterprises, grants and philanthropic, fundraising initiatives and donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow our foundation of regular donors by implementing the marketing and fundraising strategy</li> <li>• Evaluate other social enterprise opportunities by exploring the VicHealth Local Food Partnerships Grant</li> <li>• Attract grants which support core business operations</li> </ul>
Continue to grow the Community Pantry program  Develop a three-year capital plan to for expansion of the Community Pantry program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow the social supermarket service to support 35 families per day through the implementation of the marketing and fundraising strategy</li> <li>• Execute the rebranding project as per the marketing and fundraising strategy</li> </ul>

Leverage income and reduce expenses through opportunities with the RFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement shared fundraising and expense reduction strategies with RFSA</li> </ul>
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**Priority Area: Our People and Capability**

**Objective:** To ensure we have the right people and the resources they need, to deliver on this plan and our grant commitments

Strategies 2025-2028	Actions 2025
Ensure FoodShare's operations are supported by a thriving volunteer and paid workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate a vibrant and positive culture to support an engaging workplace</li> <li>• Provide training opportunities to enhance skills</li> <li>• Maintain a strong safety focus with a target of zero incidents</li> </ul>
Ensure we have effective online management systems (volunteer management, stock/logistics and integrated CRM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a volunteer management system (Better Impact)</li> <li>• Continually review and improve our stock/logistics for effectiveness in light of the other actions in this plan</li> <li>• Investigate a CRM that is fit for purpose that will integrate with our systems</li> </ul>
Acquire an appropriate warehouse facility and vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review appropriateness of vehicles and expand the fleet to include a small truck to support the NSW EPA project targets</li> <li>• Develop and implement a capital fundraising strategy for a fit for purpose warehouse and/or social supermarkets</li> <li>• Monitor the market for an appropriate warehouse facility</li> </ul>

**Priority Area: Advocacy and Engagement**

**Objective:** For the work of FoodShare to be understood, valued and supported by our communities, funders and supporters

Strategies 2025-2028	Actions 2025
Evidence of success through shared projects with RFSA (income, expenses and resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore shared project opportunities with the RFSA</li> </ul>
NSW government recognises the need for recurrent funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify any current funding models and explore opportunities</li> </ul>
Evidence that we are recognised as an essential community asset in our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Marketing Strategy</li> <li>• Engage LGAs for recognition in local government Public Health and Well Being Plans as well as Emergency Management plans and other relevant plans</li> <li>• Engage with collaborative networks and serve as a representative voice for our community</li> </ul>

**Priority Area: Governance and Risk**

**Objective:** To enhance governance and risk management processes and capability to reflect the increasing complexity of the organisation

<b>Strategies 2025-2028</b>	<b>Actions 2025</b>
Board recruitment and development to ensure an appropriate skill mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate skill mix and recruit to fill gaps</li> <li>• Complete annual Board Health Check survey</li> </ul>
Risk register and governance processes working effectively and aligned to planned priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate governance integrated into board reporting schedule</li> <li>• Policies and procedures updated and integrated into operations</li> <li>• Review risk management matrix</li> <li>• Report all extreme risks to the Board and managed with Board support</li> </ul>