

Emergency Food Relief

A Food Security Project

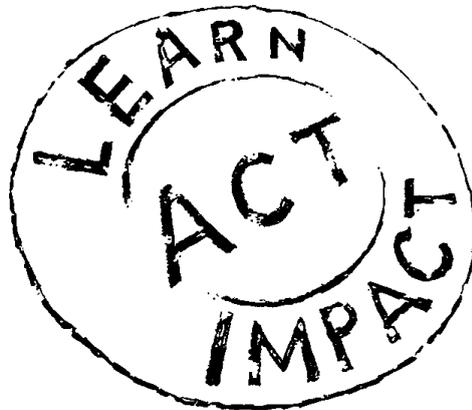


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Team Members

The Food Security project team comprised four participants from the 2010 - 2012 Leaders for Geelong Program.

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Executive summary

The Leaders for Geelong (LfG) program is “designed to expose emerging leaders to the challenges and opportunities that will shape the region, and prepare them to take the helm”.

The expectation is that the participants – who already have strong community connections – will become further involved, therefore helping to shape the region’s future. One important part of this is the potential for participation on boards and committees of management, particularly in the not-for-profit sector.

With this in mind, the project team were united in the view that the project would be one with relevance and significance in the community sector, and one that can produce a practical outcome for those in need.

Some Headlines in our local Community:

Homeless Men and Children Rising in City

Australian of the Year Applauds Giving Spirit

Food Centre a Lifeline for Battling Parent

Dad's Hunger Fight is 'gut-wrenching'

Struggle for Food on Aged Pension

Finding Food for Geelong Children

Why We Chose 'Emergency Food Relief'

The Food Security Project Team shared the vision of making a positive impact on those most vulnerable in our community, and strengthening access to emergency food relief for those in need. The Team set out to create an audit map of all emergency food relief providers in the Geelong region, identify the current situation and determine what forward thinking needs to occur in the future for sustainable service delivery.

Project Brief

Intended Audience:

- Geelong communities benefiting from emergency food relief
- Geelong emergency food relief providers/funding providers
- City of Greater Geelong and other relevant government agencies

Scope:

In Scope	Out scope
Geelong emergency food relief providers/funding providers	Melbourne emergency food relief providers
New players in the market	Acquisition Geelong Food relief and Uniting Care (recommendation will follow)
Current users of the service	Volunteer review (recommendation will follow)
Medium/short term intervention and its role	
Sustainability of providers to be considered	
Collaboration of providers to be considered	

Original scope

1. Audit of EFR to determine gaps
2. Identify an existing cause/funding provider and determine how we would strengthen its foundations based on our findings
3. Create more awareness among communities of the need for a collaborative approach
4. Share findings and successes of our work with the identified cause/funding provider
5. Create recommendations for other causes/funding providers to adopt and implement

New Scope:

1. After meeting with a number of EFR providers it became apparent early on that it would be difficult to find a cause/funding provider willing to let us in on their patch (Uniting Care, Salvos, Geelong Food Relief Centre). We attended some workshops aimed at tackling a collaborative approach and it proved unsuccessful.
2. All providers are quite protective in the sense that their way of doing things is the right way. Through our discussions with providers it did become clear from all of them that there was a need for a map of all EFR providers as it didn't currently exist
3. Our focus therefore shifted to determining where people can access EFR and creating a map for those individuals
4. Food Relief also proved quite large so our focus has been on EFR as opposed to Food Security

Objectives:

1. Create an audit map of all emergency food relief providers in the Geelong Region
2. Analyse evidence and consider the following:
 - a. good practice
 - b. changing demographic
 - c. who requires the service
 - d. new players into the market
 - e. funders of emergency food relief
 - f. medium and short term intervention and its role
3. Identify an existing cause/funding provider and determine how we would strengthen its foundation based on our findings
4. Consider medium/short term intervention and its role in relief
5. Create more awareness among communities (including providers of goods, public and council) of need for collaborative approach
6. Share findings and successes of our work with the identified cause/funding provider
7. Create recommendations for other causes/funding providers to adopt and implement

Approach:

1. Meet and discuss ideas of project with field specialists.
2. Contact key providers within Geelong to create the audit map
3. Research Phase
 - a. Meet with funding providers to discuss gaps and approach of each provider
 - b. Review Literature regarding this sectors history
 - c. Review Literature regarding other sectors
4. Analyse findings
5. We changed the scope at this point where we shifted to creating an online audit map as there was a need identified
6. Create recommendations for funding provider to consider
7. Implement recommendations with funding provider
8. Consult with our funding providers via an information session

Assumptions and constraints:

1. Information will be readily available for us to create our audit map and undertake our analysis
2. Assume that providers and funding providers will be open to sharing their ideas, thoughts and constraints within emergency food relief

Key Risk:

Risk	Mitigating Strategies
Providers and funding providers will not participate in the process	Our initial contact is key to making this work and we will seek input from field specialists throughout the process
Knowledge and experience gaps within the project group	Allocate key strengths to relevant parts of the project so that we are successful
Time and cost constraints of field specialists	Consideration will be given to this at all times

Project Stakeholders:

1. Regular monthly meetings to be held with participants
2. Notes to be clearly documented after each session and sent to participants in a timely way
3. Email will be the primary source of communication with personal meetings to be held as often as practically possible



The Geelong Food Relief Centre

Early Indications

- Broad diversity in service providers, locations, operating practices and future planning strategies
- Mapping of service providers has not been completed in the Geelong Region
- Need to address balance between addressing the cause and treating the symptoms
- Emergency Food Relief organisations largely staffed by volunteers
- Evidence of training gaps for service delivery providers
- Stigma of deserving and undeserving poor
- Absence of networking amongst providers

Our Journey

The shared goal of the Food Security Project Team was to make an impact in the Geelong Region. Whilst the goal remained constant, the project aim changed tack several times over its lifespan.

Following a meeting with Lesley Lightfoot of Give Where You Live, the overriding message was that the Geelong region had various EFR providers, many with diverse histories, values and denominations.

These agencies generally operate independently of one another and networking is minimal, restricting opportunities to share information, resources and capability. Many agencies operate with short-term strategies and aging volunteer based workforce. This led the Team to wonder, "What will happen in 5-10 years time".

"Collective Greater than the Individual"

The Project Team discussed the concept of a conference to convene key agencies together, open the communication lines and evoke conversation. It was anticipated that if we could bring the providers together and highlight the benefits in networking, the security of service delivery might be strengthened into the future.

Tony Blackwell, former CEO of Uniting Care provided insight into his perspective of emergency food relief in our region. Whilst Tony agreed that there was a clear absence of 'community of practice' type approach, he advised that many providers may be reluctant to share information, for fear of losing funding and individual operational security. Given the shoestring budgets in place and annualized funding applications by each agency, the competition for survival is prevalent. Tony suggested that the 'funders' would need to be involved in order to gain support of individual agencies.

City of Greater Geelong

Leigh Johnston and Belinda McPherson met with Amanda Stirrat of City of Greater Geelong. Amanda provided insight as to the current needs in the Food Security sector. Whilst Amanda applauded the concept of enhanced networking, she stressed the immediate need as 'mapping of providers'.

City of Greater Geelong had commenced mapping, but had not progressed to validation and publication. Amanda provided the team with data collated by CoGG, which was used to progress the mapping aspect of the project.



Hunger and malnutrition in Geelong

This year it is estimated 370,000 Victorians will, at some stage, not know when or where their next meal is coming from.

Traditionally, it has been older people living alone, young homeless people and single parents that have been the most common groups going without enough food.

Now it is increasingly the working poor. They have a job and a roof over their heads, but once they have paid the rent or mortgage, petrol, electricity and other necessary household expenses they are unable to afford to feed their families three meals a day. The rising cost of living, including petrol, rent, water and power, are making it difficult for many families to afford food; especially as food prices increase. In fact, a recent study found that 19% of families in Portarlington are food insecure.

Good food going to waste

Each year in Victoria we throw out 700,000 tonnes of food - that is the equivalent of 28,000 fully stocked supermarkets. Too much of this is fresh and perfectly fit for us to eat; especially considering a recent study of homeless young people in Geelong found that only 20% ate any fruit and only 4% were consuming the current recommended daily intake for major nutrients.

Good food is thrown out for several reasons, including being labeled incorrectly, being close but not past its best before date, and damaged packaging.

The cost to businesses of sending food that is surplus to their needs to landfill has increased markedly in the past few years. This has caused many businesses, including supermarkets, to rethink what they do with their surplus fresh fruit, vegetables, meats and other items. Many of them are offering this surplus to charities.

Charities unable to handle food donations

While it is commendable that many businesses are now offering charities food that is surplus to their needs, a problem often lies at the receiver end; many of the charities simply do not have the capacity to accept this food.

Charities are lacking the fridges, freezers, cool rooms, food transport vehicles, staff to co-ordinate volunteers and other resources to handle these food donations. This limits the amount of fresh food that can be collected and healthy meals that can be prepared.

There are over 25 community food programs operating across Greater Geelong. Throughout the Feed Geelong campaign, The Geelong Advertiser profiled these organisations and helped to raise awareness and understanding of food insecurity in our city and how you can help.

A couple of success stories

What's for Breakfast?

The Christ Church Community Meals Program

Christ Church provides free breakfast seven days a week throughout the year and an evening meal every Wednesday. The Community Meals Program is well known and is a respected contribution to welfare in Geelong. Guests come from a range of backgrounds - street kids, homeless people, schoolchildren, people who need company as much as food, the unemployed, stranded travelers' and families. Those who come for a meal are welcomed regardless of their circumstances. For many, the meal at Christ Church may be their main meal of the day; for others it is their only meal.

The Meals Program is run entirely by volunteers, sometimes with the assistance of students from different local schools.

Lunch and Dinner?

The Outpost – A Shining Example

The Geelong Community is surprised to find that a short walk from the waterfront leads to The Outpost, a compact premises that provides much needed services to disadvantaged local people.

Opening daily for lunch and dinner, the daytime program also provides referrals and warm drinks. The evening session offers all of that plus emergency accommodation, blankets, clothing and someone to talk to.



Linking the Gaps

If you could not feed your family today, would you know where to go for help?

After meeting with representatives from a range of organisations, the clear identified gap was the ease of access to find clear information. The Team now decided to make the biggest and immediate impact; they needed to produce an e-map.

Time to Get Tech Savvy

Continuing with the mapping theme, Leigh & Juliet met with graphic designers Paul and Morgan from Paul Kelly Design 2 Print to discuss the requirements of the EFR e-map and various options for its development.

The Project Team sought an e-solution, which would be user friendly and simple in design. Potential users will be mainly disadvantaged clients seeking easy access to services in their areas, as well as case managers and staff in community service organisations assisting clients.

The Google Maps tool was the best fit for ease of access and familiarity with the community. It was appealing that this resource could be accessed wherever there was an internet connection. Today, that can occur in the home, many public access services (libraries, community centres), and of course via mobile phones and other portable devices.

Who is On-line?

Further research was therefore required in order to determine the level of access to the internet, particularly amongst those living in lower socio economic areas.

In 2008-09, three-quarters (74%) of people aged 15 years and over had used the internet in the previous 12 months. Whether people used the internet, and where they used it, both varied with age. Much lower rates of internet use were reported among older age groups (31% for people 65 years and over).

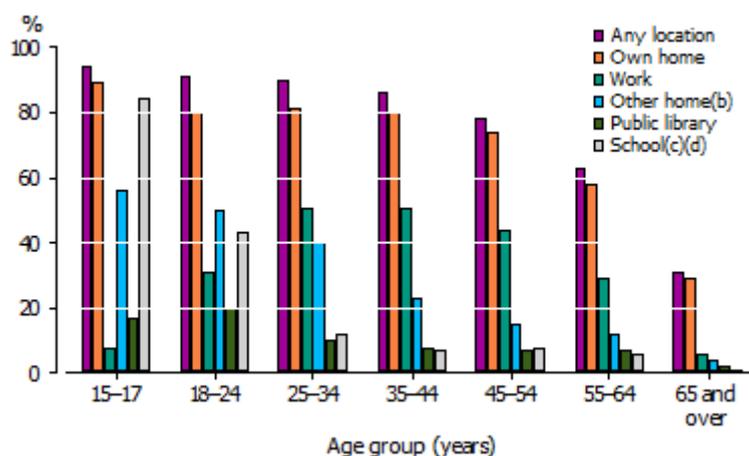
Home was the most common location of access, with two-thirds (68%) of people accessing from this location. This was the case across most age groups, and particularly for older groups, with relatively few people 65 years and over accessing the internet from locations outside the home.

Work was the second most popular location for accessing the internet (35%), particularly amongst the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups (both with 51%). People aged 15-17 years, and those aged 65 years and over, demonstrated significantly lower rates of access from the workplace (8% and 6% respectively).

A neighbour's, friend's or relative's house was the third most common location (25%). Younger people were more likely to access the internet from other people's homes than older people, with 56% of 15-17 year olds, 50% of 18-24 year olds and 40% of 25-34 year olds doing so.

More than eight in ten (84%) people aged 15-17 accessed the internet from an educational institution, followed by less than half (43%) of 18-24 year olds. These age groups also had the highest rates of internet use from a public library (17% and 20% respectively).

INTERNET USE BY LOCATION OF ACCESS(a) - 2008-09



(a) More than one site may be nominated.

(b) Refers to the homes of friends, relatives and/or neighbours.

(c) Refers to internet access from an educational institution.

(d) The estimate for the 65 and over age group has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: ABS Household Use of Information Technology, Australia, 2008-09 (cat. no. 8146.0)

HOUSEHOLD INTERNET ACCESS

Source: [ALIA INTERNET ACCESS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES SURVEY 2011](#)

The popularity of homes as a venue for people to use the internet was reflected in the rates of households with internet access. In 2008-09, nearly six million Australian households (72%) had internet access, a sizeable increase from around one million (16%) in 1998.

While rates of home internet access have increased across all states and territories over the past decade, access rates do vary according to where people live. In 2008-09, households in the Australian Capital Territory were most likely to have internet access (82%) and those in Tasmania were least likely (63%). Households in Major Cities (75%) had higher rates of access than those in Regional (64%) and Remote Areas (62%).

Households with the highest rates of home internet access included those with children and those with higher levels of equivalised gross household income. In 2008-09, more than four in five (86%) households with children under 15 years of age had an internet connection compared with two-thirds (66%) of those without children. Nine in ten (90%) households with income in the highest equivalised income quintile had internet access, closely followed by 84% of households in the fourth quintile. In comparison, two-fifths (40%) of households in the lowest income quintile had home internet access.

Public library internet access

Source: [ALIA INTERNET ACCESS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES SURVEY 2011](#)

Number and use of public access terminals

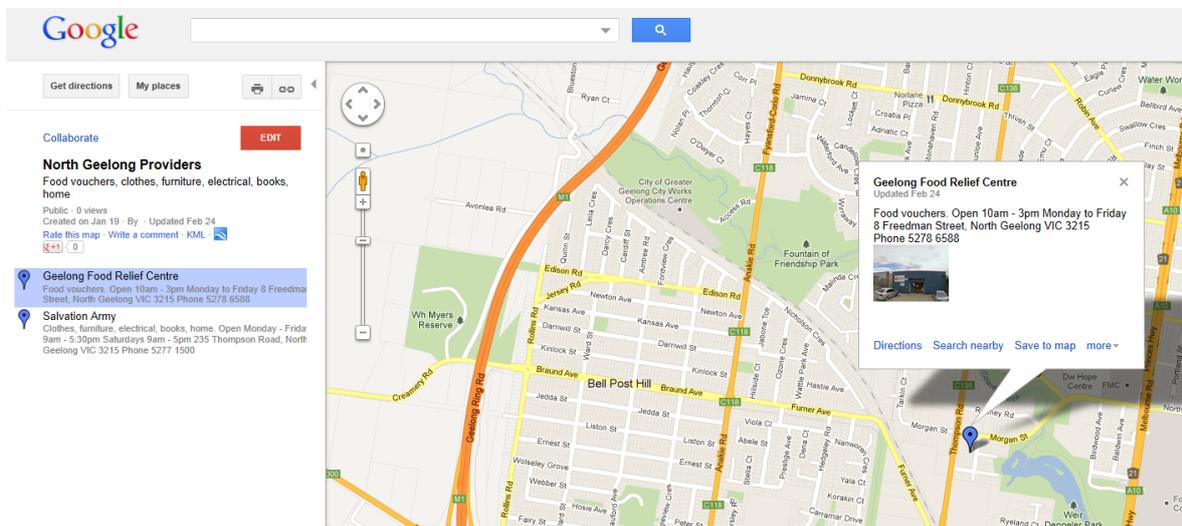
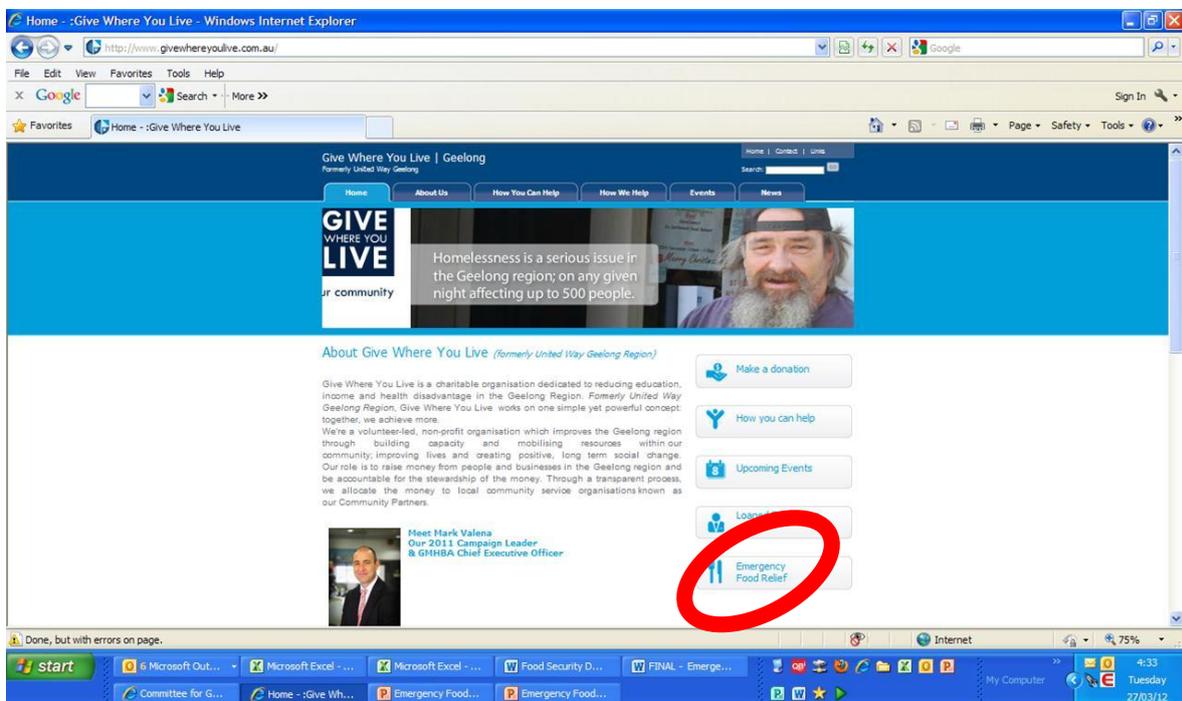
The 2011 survey responses represent public libraries serving a total of 5,939,319 registered users; approximately 60% of registered users nationwide.2

Online Resource



The e-resource is a web based series of maps, hosted on the Give Where You Live website. EFR providers are categorised by geographical location in the Geelong region. Basic details of each provider are given, including opening times, services offered and contact details.

The screenshot below is an example of one provider in North Geelong. Google maps also has a 'get directions' function, a handy tool for those new to the area, or unfamiliar with it.



Communication

From the outset, the project team agreed that we wanted to achieve a tangible, practical outcome for people needing to access EFR; something that would make a difference to their lives. Once this had been achieved, the next challenge was to ensure that the resource was actually used and not sitting gathering virtual dust. In order to do this, a communication plan was put in place to ensure that the right people were aware of the resource and knew where and how to access it. This will involve a number of simple, yet effective strategies including:

- Letters to all service providers and stakeholders in the region, explaining the resource, its purpose and how to access it
- Follow up meetings with key stakeholders (eg Centrelink , Community Centres)
- Design and distribution of business cards to promote the online resource



Exit Strategy

Ownership

The following factors were considered and together provide a solid basis for the continued success of the resource:

- Give Where You Live is a key stakeholder in local Health and Human Services sector. Its fundraising umbrella supports 70 Community Partners – many operating to address economic disadvantage – a major cause of Emergency Food Relief dependence.
- The Give Where You Live (GWYL) website will host the maps.
- As GWYL is already involved in food relief there is a clear synergy for this to be adopted and maintained by the organisation – an undertaking to this end has been given.
- Because of its involvement, GWYL has networks to ensure maps and data remain accurate and relevant.

Development opportunities

- There is an opportunity to include locations for other Food Security services in the future.
- There is also an opportunity for other Leaders for Geelong project teams to investigate the gaps that we identified within our region.

Review

- There will be regular checks for data accuracy
- GWYL will review the success of the maps in 12 months' time via the web analytics we obtain to determine access and usefulness.

Conclusion

The Project team sincerely hopes this resource will be well utilised and provide some assistance to the individuals, families and children who 'Need Food Now' in the Geelong region.

We invite you to visit the 'Need Food Now' page at:



Then, please invite someone else too. Spread the word; share the food.



Pictured from left: Leigh, Belinda, Jade and Juliet