

**2021**  
CENTRAL  
HAWKE'S BAY

**FOOD**  
**SECURITY**  
**ACTION**  
**PLAN**



CENTRAL  
HAWKE'S BAY  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

> third bearing



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## Appointment and Terms of Reference

### Background

Central Hawke's Bay District Council has successfully obtained funding from the Ministry of Social Development to develop this Food Security Action Plan. The purpose of the funding is to bring communities together to create a shared vision, to work together to develop and implement a food security plan. The overall aim is to create long term, sustainable food security in the Central Hawke's Bay community.

This is the first Food Security Action Plan for Central Hawke's Bay. While the document represents a 'formal' starting point, providing food and support in times of need is familiar activity. What is different and articulated through this document is the identification of a collective vision, goals, and the establishment of a Food Security Network. New ways of working together may take some time to refine and may change over time depending on the causes of food insecurity. This Food Security Action Plan will be further developed, reviewed, and updated in response to change.

### Work Programme and Reporting

The assignment was commissioned in September 2020 with a draft report delivered on July 2021. Our work was carried out by Tracey Hunt and Sonia Griffin of Third Bearing Limited. Supporting work has been provided by Christine Renata from Central Hawke's Bay District Council.

### Methodology

Initial discussion about the project and food security in the community was held with the Central Hawke's Bay District Council Social Services Lead, Christine Renata and Community Programmes and Partnerships Lead, Bridget Cover. This meeting was followed by desk top research including regional and international food security plans. Individual meetings were then held with

social service organisations involved in the delivery of food parcels and/or support services.

A workshop was held in November 2020 with a wider group of stakeholders. The purpose of the workshop was to gain shared understanding of the current situation, develop a vision statement, and a set of actions for this Food Security Action Plan. Valuable insight was also gained from surveys completed by 44 food parcel recipients.

Draft versions of the Food Security Action Plan were reviewed by workshop attendees and later Cr Kelly Annand.

### Probity

Central Hawke's Bay District Council commissioned Third Bearing Ltd to develop this Food Security Action Plan. Central Hawke's Bay District Council officers provided initial background information and were interviewed for this project.

They have also accompanied Third Bearing staff with interviews with various food security organisations within the district and were present for the workshop delivered.

We have considered the advice and requests from all parties involved but are satisfied that none have inappropriately influenced our report or its conclusions.

### Acknowledgements

The co-operation and assistance of the people we interviewed or attended the workshop for this project is gratefully acknowledged, as is the assistance and hospitality provided by Christine Renata and Bridget Cover from Central Hawke's Bay District Council, Mel King and Stephen Bradley of Food Basket, Jackie Aitchison and Donna Te Amo from Central Connect and the Food Bank, Carmel Thompson of Central Hawke's Bay Budget Advisory Service, Neen Kennedy of Sustainable Ewe, Andy Clark and Cheryl Nicholls from Ministry of Social Development, Trish Peters of Hawke's Bay District Health Board and Leon Jeths and Titihuia Grant from the Mackie Street Community Garden.

# 02

## CONTEXT

1. Food insecurity is a significant social issue across New Zealand<sup>1</sup>. Food insecurity issues have wider impacts on social, economic and health wellbeing indicators, particularly for children. Like many other communities, Central Hawke's Bay community organisations have a long history of providing food parcels for those in need. Price and availability of food are the main limiting factors for food security<sup>2</sup>, and can come about due to unemployment, inability to work due to illness, competing demands for limited resources, urgent calls on limited funds. These situations often result in reduced household income and require difficult tradeoff decisions resulting in food insecurity.
2. In summer of 2019-20 Central Hawke's Bay experienced reduced rainfall and extremely dry weather conditions during that resulted in a severe meteorological drought. Considered equal to New Zealand's worst ever drought, recharging of aquifers and farm recovery is expected to take years. Destocking has resulted in loss of production and income, a toll on mental health and unemployment in some situations. The impacts of the drought were further exasperated by the onslaught of the pandemic. Council prepared a Drought and COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan.
3. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local Central Hawke's Bay economy have increased the demand for food security support. The response from Council and social service providers to address immediate food requirements has been commendable issuing 3,687 food parcels over 8 weeks during the peak COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions from late March to mid-May. Although the recovery from COVID-19 continues to be positive there are a range of ongoing concerns amongst social service providers.
4. Providers face multiple challenges including sustaining the current level of service provided, addressing perceptions and barriers preventing access to food, and ensuring food is reaching the most vulnerable in the community. This Food Action Plan seeks to address these concerns and provide long term solutions for food security in Central Hawke's Bay.



# 03

## CURRENT STATISTICS

5. The Central Hawke's Bay district has experienced positive population growth, rising from 12,717 (2013 census) to 14,142 in 2018 with a projected rise to 16,442 people in 2031<sup>3</sup>. The economy is largely based on primary production with largest occupation group being labourers (as opposed to professionals nationally). A significantly higher proportion of Central Hawke's Bay District's residents identify as Māori (24%) compared to New Zealand (17%).
6. The Ministry of Social Development's social housing register recorded 68 applicants on the waiting list for social housing in Central Hawke's Bay in December 2020, an increase of 26 applicants over the same time in 2019<sup>4</sup>.
7. There were 330 people recorded as unemployed in Central Hawke's Bay at the time of the 2018 census, a reduction from 345 in 2013. Māori accounted for 37% of unemployed (compared to 27% nationally).
8. The median personal income in Central Hawke's Bay was \$29,000 in 2018 compared to \$31,800 nationally. Median personal income for Māori was higher in Central Hawke's Bay (\$26,100) than nationally (\$24,300). The percentage of New Zealanders earning \$70,000+ is significantly lower in Central Hawke's Bay (10 percent) than the New Zealand average (17.2 percent).



# 04

## CURRENT SITUATION

### DEMAND

9. There is an increasing demand for food security support in Central Hawke's Bay. The number of food parcels<sup>5</sup> issued has increased from approximately 248 during March 2020 (pre COVID-19) to approximately 777 issued in September 2020<sup>6</sup>.
10. The March/April 2020 peak of COVID-19 saw increased need within the community to access food. Social service organisations were highly effective at collaborating to secure and deliver food to those in need and became a vital social service during lockdown. The social interaction involved with food parcel deliveries enabled the Central Hawke's Bay District Council to engage with vulnerable people and an opportunity to identify other needs. Pandemic priority groups included the elderly or those living in isolation who often could not access (or were afraid to access) the supermarket, seasonal workers struggling to achieve year-round financial stability, Māori and Pacifica peoples and families.
11. The rise in demand was documented by the food parcel providers as an increase of over 200 percent across all providers from March 2020 (pre COVID-19) to May 2020 (post lockdown but still in restricted levels). A single community-based organisation reported that the demand from September 2019 to September 2020 increased over 470 percent. Ministry of Social Development statistics show increased payment of Special Needs Grants for food totalling \$320,000 for the 12 months to March 2021.
12. Whilst record high numbers for food parcels are now dropping and stabilizing at a lower level, community organisations continue to note to be a steady demand for assistance that is higher than

pre-COVID-19 levels. The exception being the Ministry of Social Development that report demand for grants has now returned to pre-COVID levels.

### RELIANCE

13. Reliance on food parcels, either perceived or real, is one of the challenges involved with the provision of food parcels. Social service organisations are aware of the challenge and suspect there are only a small number of people that access food parcels who are not genuinely experiencing food insecurity. The challenge is considered minor, definitions without evidence can be subjective, and overall is less important than the opportunity to provide food to those in need. Of those food parcel users that returned surveys 68.2 percent envisaged needing some food parcel support in the coming three to six months<sup>7</sup>.

### BARRIERS

14. For those accessing food parcels, transport can be a considerable barrier. The delivery service stationed at key collection points e.g. Mobile Service Station goes some way to assisting with accessibility but can still be limiting to those with no transport.
15. Other barriers included the stigma of accessing food parcels with one respondent noting "Stigma. I look well off but really struggling as we are cash poor". Requirements to make appointments and formal applications for food parcels or compulsory requirements to attend other services can also be off-putting for some.
16. How food parcel organisations communicate to the public can also be confusing, with three food parcel providers it can be hard to know who to access and what their differences are. Our survey noted that 34.9 percent of recipients only found out about food parcel assistance by a friend informing them and another 25.6 percent through social media.

## PROVISION/SOURCES

17. Social service providers offer a range of different food parcel options. Options include weekly parcels of food considered “top-ups” to other grocery shopping. These options include mostly rescued food of grocery staples i.e. pasta, bread, baked goods. Fresh fruit and vegetables and some meat is provided when available. Contents of the “top-up” options are dependent on what food is rescued and available.
18. Other more substantial food parcels that provide enough food for a week are also available. These parcels include items of food that are purchased from the local supermarket that are tailored to the recipients need e.g. meat, essential items, and toiletries. These food parcel options are available but on a more limited basis and upon application. There is often overlap in the foods purchased (or rescued) between the organisations and in clients accessing multiple organisations for food parcels.
19. School lunches are provided by Ka Ora, Ko Ako. This programme provides healthy lunches to participating schools<sup>8</sup> every day. During the period Term 4 2020 and Term 1 in 2021 nearly 34,000 lunches have been supplied.
20. The Ministry of Social Development provide Special Needs Grants upon application that can be used to purchase food.
21. Central Hawke’s Bay community has good support from the local marae, supermarkets and service clubs, evident during lockdown with coordinating and distributing food safely and effectively to those in need. Tamatea Taiwhenua also provided food to iwi after the first COVID-19 response.
22. Lockdowns due to COVID-19 removed traditional sources of food for many, including hunting and fishing within the rural district and limitations on travel to source cheaper fresh produce also placed further constraints. Community gardens are a valuable source of fresh produce for many – these resources are a viable option for those that do not have the ability to grow their own food.

## SUSTAINABILITY

23. Creating long-term sustainability will be the challenge food security providers will need to address. While food parcel support provides a trusted service for communities, the sustainability of access and availability of food needs to be considered.
24. Coordination and continued funding support of food parcel organisations will need to be addressed. Local Government assistance with navigating Council processes and identifying additional funding opportunities will help to create a coordinated response to achieving the goals of this Food Security Action Plan.





## **THE VISION**

**"EVERY PERSON IN OUR COMMUNITY HAS ACCESS**

**TO AFFORDABLE, NUTRITIOUS AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD**

**TO MEET THEIR CULTURAL AND DIETARY NEEDS"**



# 05

## THE VISION

25. Central Hawke's Bay District Council along with their partner organisations has developed the following vision for this Food Security Action Plan:  
***"Every person in our community has access to affordable, nutritious and sustainable food to meet their cultural and dietary needs"***.
26. The following principles underpin the development of this plan:  
**Accessibility** – food can be readily obtained  
**Affordable** – the cost of food is within income means  
**Sufficient** – the quantity of food is enough  
**Nutritious** – food is of good quality and provides sustenance  
**Appropriate** – food meets both dietary and cultural needs.



## OBJECTIVE ONE

**DRAWING ON LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT FOR SUPPORT**

27. One of the key actions in the Food Security Action Plan is creating a Food Security Network. The Network will drive the implementation of the food security plan, responding with solutions that reflect community aspirations and meet local needs. This will allow a forum for collaboration, identification and pooling of resources and abilities needed to drive the development and implementation of the plan. The network should include stakeholders from across the food systems and representation from a wide range of sectors including local government, health, economic and environmental sustainability.

**Priority actions:**

- > Development of a Food Security Network which sits within the framework of the greater Network of Networks coordinated by Central Hawke's Bay District Council. This will include those who will work collaboratively to build a healthy local food system.
- > Build relationships between key food security providers to achieve a collaborative approach to food security in the district
- > Improved support for funding applications to obtain grants to assist funding of the actions taken to increase food security

**Actions:**

- > Increase awareness of food insecurity in the region to key district and regional stakeholders such as Council and other community organisations
- > Support the creation of health and well-being plans or other strategies within the district that focus on promoting healthy communities

## USING INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE TO BUILD RESILIENCE

28. Understanding the economic, physical, social, and cultural barriers that affect individual's ability to access, cook and eat healthy, sustainable food is key to the continuing development of the food security plan. Building this knowledge will help the Food Security Network to target education resources that support and encourage the community to grow, cook and eat nutritious food, which will produce many individual and community benefits.
29. Development of Te Ao Māori approach to food will enable organisations to better connect to vulnerable groups within the community.

# 07

## OBJECTIVE TWO

### Priority actions:

- > Identify the barriers (economic, social, and cultural) and build education resources that support and encourage the community to grow, cook and eat nutritious food
- > Develop and disseminate clear information and messages that will help people identify and connect to the food security organisation that will best meet their needs
- > Consultation and development of a Te Ao Māori approach to food, looking at cultural and traditional kai practices

### Actions:

- > Create resources that connect to people through various streams (printed, social media, radio etc) to disseminate basic food nutrition knowledge
- > Support training and education of volunteers, community workers and community group leaders in healthy eating practices and basic cooking skills which will help transfer the information more widely into the community
- > Encourage and work with schools (particularly primary schools) to develop school gardens and develop garden-to-plate healthy eating programmes
- > Develop and disseminate information resources through the food security organisations that provide information on healthy meals, as well as resources that demonstrate how to purchase and prepare cheap, nutritious meals with fresh ingredients.

## OBJECTIVE THREE

### CREATING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY RESPONSE

30. Creating strong partnerships between the Food Security Network and the wider community will be crucial to the success of the food security plan to enable those who are in need to access food. This will include encouraging local businesses, schools, churches, education providers, medical centre, cafes, markets, and gardens to all collaborate to ensure the source of locally produced food is available and shared.

#### Priority actions:

- > Build stakeholder relationships across the food security network to ensure collaboration of resources to best target food insecurity in the district
- > Identify greater opportunities for collaborative partnerships with the community and external agencies that will assist in creating effective strategies to achieve food security (an example of this is the food drive)
- > Identify opportunities to improve accessibility to food parcel organisations, such as transport difficulties and reducing stigma

#### Actions:

- > Raising awareness of the importance of locally sourced food to the food rescue philosophy and wider community needs
- > Develop a directory of local producers, highlighting how the public can access local food from local businesses
- > Increased promotion and support of school and community gardens and orchards
- > Support and facilitate the development of a farmers market, allowing the community to access locally produced food
- > Support for school-based programmes that provide a breakfast or lunch club to help support families who are experiencing food insecurity

## USING ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCE TO MAKE CHANGE

31. There are several areas where the Food Security Network can help to influence policy at a local, regional, and national level. Developing and building key relationships, identifying common issues and a unified position will enable the Food Security Network to advocate, take community action and influence policy approaches.

# 09

## OBJECTIVE FOUR

### Priority actions:

- Build and maintain networks with other food security agencies both regional and nationally (such as Kore Hiakai, Kai Collective Te Awaroa, New Zealand Food Network, and Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance) to identify common issues (such as food pricing, advertising of unhealthy food, food product labelling etc). Generate public awareness and media around these issues
- Build and maintain networks with central government agencies with portfolios related to food security (such as Ministry of Social Development, Hawke's Bay District Health Board, Hawke's Bay Regional Council)

### Actions:

- Advocate for low cost, public transport options, particularly in low socio-economic areas and areas with high number of elderly people
- Advocate for quality affordable housing to be located close to shops and transport
- Promote health factors as important considerations when planning for urban land use and encourage community gardens and orchards in lower socio-economic areas

# 10

## WHAT WE NEED TO DO

### VISION

"Every person in our community has access to affordable, nutritious and sustainable food to meet their cultural and dietary needs".

#### Objective 1: Drawing on leadership and engagement for support

Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
We are a good example to the rest of New Zealand, leading the way to a community-led response to food security in our district	Development of a Food Security Network which sits within the framework of the greater Network of Networks coordinated by Central Hawke's Bay District Council. This will include those who will work collaboratively to build a healthy local food system.	Central Hawke's Bay District Council
Our response to Food Security in our District is a collaborative one where we pool resources, skills, and abilities to achieve our goals	Build relationships between key food security providers to achieve a collaborative approach to food security in the district	Food Security Network
Our Food Security organisations are well supported to achieve their goals	Improved support for funding applications to obtain grants to assist funding of the actions taken to increase food security	Central Hawke's Bay District Council

## Objective 2: Using information and knowledge to build resilience

Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
Food insecurity barriers are identified and mitigated	Identify the barriers (economic, social, and cultural) to food insecurity and develop resources that support and encourage the community to overcome barriers	Food Security Network
Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
Our community is well informed on the assistance that is available in our community	Develop and disseminate a clear information message that will help people identify and connect to the food security organisation that will best meet their needs	Food Security Network and Central Hawke's Bay District Council
Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
Central Hawke's Bay has the tools and resources to assist our iwi, hapū and whanau to collaborate and work towards food security for the district	Consultation and development of a Te Ao Māori approach to food, looking at cultural and traditional kai practices	Food Security Network

## Objective 3: Creating strong partnerships to strengthen our community response

Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
We have a collaborative approach to food security with our district stakeholders	Build stakeholder relationships across the food security network to ensure collaboration of resources to best target food insecurity in the district	Food Security Network
Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
Our Food Security Network is well supported within the Central Hawke's Bay community	Identify greater opportunities for collaborative partnerships with the community and external agencies that will assist in creating effective strategies to achieve food security (an example of this is the food drive)	Food Security Network
Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
Our community can access the help they need when they need it	Identify opportunities to improve accessibility to food parcel organisations, such as transport difficulties and reducing stigma	Food Security Network

## Objective 4: Using advocacy and influence to make change

Outcome	Actions 2021/22	Responsible
Central Hawke's Bay Food Security Network is part of a wider national group and is able to contribute to and help shape the national voice on Food Security in New Zealand	Build networks with other food security agencies both regional and nationally (such as Kore Hiakai, Kai Collective Te Awaroa) to identify common issues (such as food pricing, advertising of unhealthy food, food product labelling etc). Generate public awareness and media around these issues	Food Security Network

# 11

## MONITORING

We will measure our results to ensure we are undertaking actions and achieving the outcomes and vision we seek.

We have identified the following monitoring requirements to help assess our progress against the four objectives and our vision. Our assessment and reports will also help to tell us if we need to stop doing an action and change course, as well as when we should celebrate success. These reporting measures reflect that we are at the beginning of our work to become a more food secure community. As we become more experienced and gather more information our reporting measures will change and become more specific.

We want the actions in the Action Plan to bring about real change, as well as understand what works and what does not. It is important to recognise that some measures are influenced by things out of our control but are still important to monitor.

Monitor	Measure
The Food Security Network provides an effective forum for Food Security Organisations to work collaboratively	Annual report on the collaborative activity of the Food Security Network for example: membership, number of meetings
	Report on the Priority Actions initiated in the Food Security Action Plan
The Food Security Network monitors the demand for food parcels	Six monthly report on the number of food parcels distributed
The Food Security Network monitors the supply of food for distribution	Six monthly report on the supply of food for food parcels including any issues and or opportunities for collaboration
The Food Security Network are aware of the causes of food insecurity and work together to develop solutions where possible	Annual monitoring survey of food parcel recipients regarding causes of food insecurity
The Food Security Network are aware of the causes of food insecurity and work together to develop solutions where possible	Annual report on causes and trends relating to food insecurity



## Endnotes

- 1 Food insecurity is defined as a lack of access to healthy and nutritious food (Child Poverty Action Group Report; 2019). In 2008/09, 7.3 percent of New Zealanders were experiencing severe food insecurity, and 33 percent moderate food insecurity. In 2019 a New Zealand Health Survey found that 19 percent of children live in households with severe to moderate food insecurity.
- 2 Determining factors identified by Child Poverty Action Group 2019
- 3 Squillions Ltd Report (2019) Central Hawke's Bay District Council Demographic and Economic Growth Projections 2020-2051 Report - <https://www.chbdc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Squillions-Demographic-Growth-Projections-CHBDC-2020-2048.pdf>
- 4 MSD Housing Register December 2020 results: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/#LatestresultsndashnbspDecember20201>
- 5 Total number of food parcels including weekly and monthly provision. Excludes number of food parcels provided by iwi and MSD
- 6 Estimations are based on information provided to Third Bearing from Food Security organisations
- 7 Third Bearing conducted a survey of food parcel respondents to which we had a response from 44 people
- 8 Participating schools involved with this programme include Terrace, Otane, TKKM o Takapau, Central Hawke's Bay College and Te Aute College is yet to begin.