

Australia might be a food secure nation, but not everyone has a place at the table

Access to fresh nutritious food is a basic human right and in Australia we are often seen as “food secure” because we are the “lucky country” and produce enough food to feed 60 million people annually. Unfortunately, over 5% of Australians experience personal food insecurity (i). This means that approximately 1.2 million people cannot regularly provide themselves with a culturally appropriate, safe and nutritious food supply from a non-emergency source. There are many factors that contribute to this situation including financial stress, homelessness, unemployment, illness, geographic isolation, minimal access to transport and lack of education around food and nutrition. SecondBite’s food redistribution activities, research department and innovative education programs aim to address many of these issues.



| *Every year, 1.2 million Australian struggle to put food on the table.*

Food access

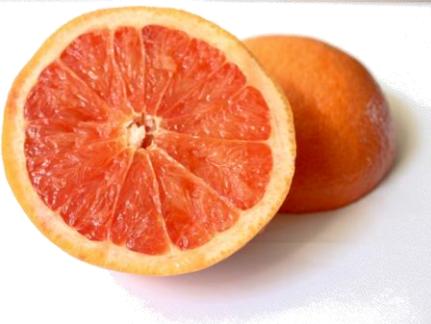
Community Food Programs are the primary source of food for many people experiencing food insecurity and in the current economic and social climate, 90% of the community food programs that SecondBite supports have experienced a recent increase in the demand for their food-related services (iii). Community food programs are operated by community and not-for-profit organisations and can include cooking classes, community meals, fresh food parcels, emergency relief services, social programs and outreach services for vulnerable Australians.

| *Only 10% of Australians consume enough vegetables – living on a tight budget makes this even harder (iv)*

Health

The economic cost of managing and treating diet-related disease in Australia is estimated to be \$6 billion annually (v). Increasing the fruit and vegetables available to socio-economically disadvantaged Australians can have an impact on reducing chronic disease. More than 8% of low-income individuals are suffering from diabetes; in some disadvantaged regions the prevalence is 1 in 7 adults (the population average is 1 in 30) (vi). Low-income women are twice as likely to develop obesity (vii) despite many spending a greater portion of their income on healthy foods. Everyday SecondBite delivers thousands of free serves of rescued fruit and vegetables direct to the community – improving health and preventing disease over the long term.

| *Your risk of obesity is 20% to 40% higher if you have an insecure food supply (viii).*





Social Inclusion

The feeling of eating juicy oranges or crunchy carrots is an intrinsic pleasure that can improve health, social and mental wellbeing. The social inclusion community members feel from sharing hearty meals or sending children to school with full lunch boxes, is a powerful, positive outcome of the fresh food we redistribute and the programs we support throughout Australia (ix).

| *“Social inclusion begins with the basics in life – access to food, shelter and security” (x)*

Research and Education

The SecondBite Research and Development Department is ever evolving to help strengthen community food programs and improve their nutrition, food safety and sustainable food practices. Appropriate and empowering education is one way to help address food insecurity in the community, and we work closely with dietitians, community sector experts and community members to develop innovative resources and education initiatives. We also seek to spread the word to a broader audience about food waste and disadvantage in Australia through our research series, website and peer-reviewed publications.

| *Disadvantaged communities have up to 2.5 times the exposure to fast food outlets (xi).*

What can YOU do about household food insecurity in Australia?

Food security in Australia means good conditions for farmers, sustainable food systems, fair food retailing and access to healthy food for all. Individuals can help with this everyday - here are 5 actions you can take:

- Support SecondBite’s Research and Development team with much needed funding – we seek to address the root causes of food waste and poor food access for vulnerable Australians. [Donate here.](#)
- Volunteer or support SecondBite or your local community food programs.
- Advocate for fresh food redistribution in your local, state or federal government.
- Spread the word. Check out our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages and share them with your friends.
- Ensure you support sustainable food systems, eat well and exercise for your own health and wellbeing.

(i) National Nutrition Survey, (1995) (ii) Australian Bureau of Statistics ‘Counting the homeless’, (2006); (iii) Contact SecondBite for their 2009/2010 Annual Recipient Surveys (iv) Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – The Health Survey (2010) (v) National Health and Medical Research Council, “Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults” (2003) (vi) Australian Community Centre for Diabetes (2010) (vii) “Fair Health Statistics”, VicHealth, (2009); (viii) “ A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia”, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, (2004); (ix) SecondBite, ‘Food Rescue. A Fresh Approach. Report 1’ (2011) (x) Adams, D. “A social inclusion strategy for Tasmania”, p.26 (2009); (xi) Reidpath DD, ‘An ecological study of the relationship between social and environmental determinants of obesity’ (2002).