

Grants and Sponsorship - Food Support Grants

File No: S117676

Summary

This report proposes the guidelines for the new Food Support grants and related budget be approved by Council.

During the Covid-19 pandemic food shortages were experienced across Australia, with those most impacted including people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, social housing tenants, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, older people, international students and temporary visa holders.

The City responded by investing \$3.1 million in food relief between 2020 to 2022 and worked with over 60 businesses and community organisations to make sure our diverse communities had access to the essentials of daily life.

Local food relief organisations have reported the current cost-of-living crisis has led to demand for food relief being higher than during the Covid-19 pandemic. Households struggling to pay their bills are forgoing food to pay for housing, health and heating.

However, as demand on their services increases, government funding and personal donations for food relief organisations are down, resulting in significant funding shortfalls and an inability to meet demand. Food relief organisations within our local area urgently need funding and support so they can meet the increasing demand for food relief as the cost-of-living crisis continues to impact our communities.

On 26 June 2023, a Lord Mayoral Minute was put to Council which resolved that the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate options for financial support for food relief organisations and, where relevant, other community-based initiatives that provide access to low-cost food including cooperatives and mutual aid groups, which are operating in the City of Sydney and report back to Council.

The resulting new Food Support grants will support projects and programs that improve access to affordable, healthy, safe and culturally-appropriate food for our diverse communities.

The Food Support grants will provide support under two tiers, with projects to be delivered between 1 November 2023 to 30 June 2026:

- Tier 1 for small scale projects - cash funding up to \$250,000 per year for a one-year program or multi-year funding (up to \$250,000 per year for up to 3 years);
- Tier 2 for large scale projects - cash funding up to \$750,000 per year for a one-year program or multi-year funding (up to \$750,000 per year for up to 3 years);

The grants will be open to not-for-profits. Tier 1 will also be open to individuals or unincorporated community groups auspiced by a not-for-profit that is eligible to apply in its own right.

The total annual budget for the grants will be \$1.7 million per year for three years until end of June 2026. From this, \$1.5 million will be available for grants, with \$200,000 per annum used to cover costs associated with staffing and administering the new grants.

As a new initiative to the resolved budget, funding for these grants has been made available in 2023/24 through the General Contingency Fund, with supplementary funding from the CEO Contingency. The Food Support grants for the second and third years will then be incorporated into the City's Grants and Sponsorship Program and budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Since the grants will only be open to not-for-profit organisations and individuals or unincorporated community groups auspiced by a not-for-profit eligible to apply in its own right, and will be reported back to Council for approval, there is no requirement under the Local Government Act 1993 to place the grant guidelines on public exhibition. The grants will be incorporated in the City's overall Grants and Sponsorship Program for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

All recommendations for the Food Support grants will be brought back to Council for approval.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the 26 June 2023 Resolution of Council put forward via a Lord Mayoral Minute, requesting the Chief Executive Officer investigate options for financial support for food relief organisations and, where relevant, other community-based initiatives that provide access to low-cost food including cooperatives and mutual aid groups, which are operating in the City of Sydney and report back to Council;
- (B) Council approve the Food Support Grant Guidelines as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (C) Council approve up to \$1.7 million for the provision of the 2023/24 Food Support grants, with \$1.0 million to be sourced from the General Contingency Fund and up to a further \$0.7 million from the CEO Contingency;
- (D) Council approve the Food Support grants to be incorporated into the City's Grants and Sponsorship Program for 2024/25 and 2025/26, along with the associated budget for the grants and the costs associated with staffing and administration;
- (E) Council note that following completion of the grant application and assessment process, all grant recommendations for the Food Support grants will be brought back to Council for approval; and
- (F) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor changes to the Guidelines or to correct minor errors to the matters set out in this report and a CEO Update will be provided to Council advising of any changes made in accordance with this resolution.

Attachments

Attachment A. Draft Food Support Grant Guidelines

Attachment B. 26 February 2023 Lord Mayoral Minute – Food Insecurity

Background

1. The City of Sydney's Grants and Sponsorship Program supports initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city. To achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision, genuine partnership between government, business and the community is required.
2. The provision of grants and sponsorships is a mechanism to further the aims identified in the City's social, cultural, economic and environmental policies. In this way, the City and the community act collaboratively to achieve the goals of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.
3. On 22 August 2022, Council adopted a Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Grants and Sponsorship Guidelines, the priorities set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and various other relevant City strategies and action plans.
4. Each year across Australia, millions of tonnes of food is wasted while record numbers of people are unable to access healthy and affordable food.
5. In the City of Sydney, food waste makes up 14 per cent of commercial waste and 35 per cent of domestic waste. This represents more than 95,000 tonnes of food waste each year going to landfill, generating the equivalent of 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.
6. The City encourages households to reduce food waste and is researching new ways to process food scraps using more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable technology. Redirecting surplus food to those in need is another important step we can take to reduce emissions while ensuring every person in the City has access to healthy and affordable food.
7. According to FoodBank's 2022 Hunger Report, over two million Australian households had experienced severe food insecurity in the preceding 12 months. Local food relief organisations have reported the current cost-of-living crisis has led to demand for food relief being higher than during the Covid-19 pandemic. Households struggling to pay their bills are forgoing food to pay for housing, health and heating.
8. In 2022 the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Food Production and Supply inquiry heard that we need a more cohesive approach to our food system, through an overarching government food system plan and a food system council to oversee this plan and coordinate responses to problems in the food system. The inquiry urged the NSW Government to introduce ongoing funding for food relief organisations.
9. Food relief organisations rely on a mix of surplus and discounted food to ensure they meet the nutritional requirements of the people they serve. They also need transport, storage and equipment to collect and deliver the food at a low temperature in accordance with food safety requirements.
10. However, as demand on their services increases government funding and personal donations for food relief organisations are down, resulting in significant funding shortfalls and an inability to meet demand.
11. The Federal Government has not committed funding to support food relief organisations in this year's budget. Nor is it clear if the NSW Government will provide funding when it hands down this year's budget in September.

12. The City is currently developing a Sustainable Food Systems Policy and Action Plan that will enable us to work collaboratively with stakeholders and prioritise actions to address food insecurity in a wholistic way across the City of Sydney. This will consider areas including resilience, economic participation, growing food in cities, Indigenous food systems governance, and community programs and education.
13. Food relief organisations within our local area urgently need funding and support so they can meet the increasing demand for food relief as the cost-of-living crisis continues to impact our communities.
14. On 26 June 2023, a Lord Mayoral Minute was put to Council resolving that the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate options for financial support for food relief organisations and, where relevant, other community-based initiatives that provide access to low-cost food including cooperatives and mutual aid groups, which are operating in the City of Sydney and report back to Council. Council noted that those going hungry could not wait until the Sustainable Food Systems Policy and Action Plan is adopted.
15. The new Food Support grants will provide an additional \$1.7 million each year for the next three years to 30 June 2026 to support food relief organisations and other community-based initiatives in the provision to food relief to our diverse communities. This \$1.7 million includes \$1.5 million cash each year for three years for the grants and \$200,000 operating expenditure each year for three years for staffing and administration..
16. The new Food Support grants will focus on supporting projects and programs that improve access to affordable and healthy food for our diverse communities.
17. The Food Support grants will prioritise projects that:
 - increase access to affordable, healthy, safe and culturally-appropriate food;
 - increase community skills in sourcing and preparing healthy food;
 - improve supply, storage and delivery of healthy food for our diverse communities;
 - increase resourcing of essential food services for our diverse communities; and
 - increase access to affordable internet and data to support community access to food support services.
18. The Food Support grants will provide support for food services projects under two tiers:
 - (a) Tier 1 – Small scale projects
 - (i) Cash funding up to \$250,000 per year is available, for a one-year program or multi-year funding (up to \$250,0000 per year for up to 3 years); and
 - (ii) Applicants can apply for up to \$100,000 worth of capital expenditure, equipment purchase or other resources.

- (b) Tier 2 – Large scale projects
- (i) Cash funding up to \$750,000 per year is available, for a one-year program or multi-year funding (up to \$750,000 per year for up to 3 years); and
 - (ii) Applicants can apply for up to \$150,000 worth of capital expenditure, equipment purchase or other resources.
- (c) Value-in-kind in the form of venue hire fee waiver is also available to both tiers.
19. The Tier 1 and Tier 2 grants will be open to not-for-profits. Tier 1 will also be open to individuals or unincorporated community groups auspiced by a not-for-profit that is eligible to apply in its own right. For profit organisations, including small businesses, will not be eligible for this program.
20. The assessment criteria for the Food Support grants are:
- evidence of the need for the project or program and proposed outcomes;
 - capacity and experience of the applicant to deliver the project or program;
 - demonstrated connection and benefit to the local area and community;
 - how the project delivers against the funding priorities; and
 - evidence of the project or program having direct engagement with our diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, young people, older people, people with disability, international students, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women, LGBTIQ+ communities and low-income earners.
21. Applicants to the Food Support grants – Tier 2 will also be assessed against the following additional assessment criteria:
- evidence of partnerships with local community organisations and networks.
22. Following completion of the grant application and assessment process, all grant recommendations for the Food Support grants will be brought back to Council for approval.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment – Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

23. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This grant is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 6 – An equitable and inclusive city – this grant program will contribute to community development by empowering the community to address issues that matter to them and drive projects to create a more inclusive and resilient city.

- (b) Direction 7 – Resilient and diverse communities – this grant program will strengthen the capacity of local residents and communities to respond to emerging needs, contributing to improved wellbeing and improved access to the essentials of daily life for our diverse communities which improve social connections and embrace a safe city.

Organisational Impact

24. Funding recommendations for the grants includes funding for the staffing and administration to deliver the grants for 2023/24. Future year funding for staffing and administration will be included in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budget.

Risks

25. Operational risks associated with implementing the proposed new grants are considered low and have been explored by City staff. There has been internal consultation with staff across areas of the City and further consultation and consideration will be given to the operational impact of implementing the grants during the application period.

Social / Cultural / Community

26. The grants have been developed in response to identified community need and will be assessed and allocated in accordance with the Food Support Grant Guidelines if approved by Council.

Financial Implications

27. On 26 June 2023, a Lord Mayoral Minute was put to Council. As a result Council resolved that the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate options for financial support for food relief organisations and, where relevant, other community-based initiatives that provide access to low-cost food including cooperatives and mutual aid groups, which are operating in the City of Sydney and report back to Council.
28. The new Food Support grants have been developed after the 2023/24 budget and long-term financial plan were resolved by Council. New Council initiatives would normally be funded from the General Contingency, however there are insufficient contingency funds for the scale of these grants.
29. Funding for the 2023/24 grants, including \$1.5 million for the grants and \$0.2 million for the costs associated with staffing and administration, will therefore be funded with \$1.0 million from General Contingency and \$0.7 million from CEO Contingency, leaving a balance of \$0.3 million in each contingency for unanticipated needs that may arise during the balance of the year.
30. The Food Support grants will form part of the Grants and Sponsorship Program and budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26, be referenced within the Operational Plan for each of these years, and allocated within the next iteration of the Long Term Financial Plan.

Relevant Legislation

31. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides that a council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
32. Since the grants will only be open to not-for-profit organisations and individuals or unincorporated community groups auspiced by a not-for-profit that is eligible to apply in its own right, and the grants will be reported back to Council for approval, there is no requirement under the Local Government Act 1993 to place the grant guidelines on public exhibition. The 2024/25 and 2025/26 Food Support grants will be exhibited along with the annual exhibition of all grant programs.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

33. The time frame for the Food Support grants is as follows:

21 August 2023	Council Meeting (approval of guidelines)
23 August 2023 - 20 September 2023	Grant applications open
23 October 2023	Recommended grants for Council approval

Public Consultation

34. Once the new Food Support Grant Guidelines are adopted by Council relevant stakeholders and community groups will be notified about the grants and how to apply through our communication channels, newsletters and online briefing sessions.

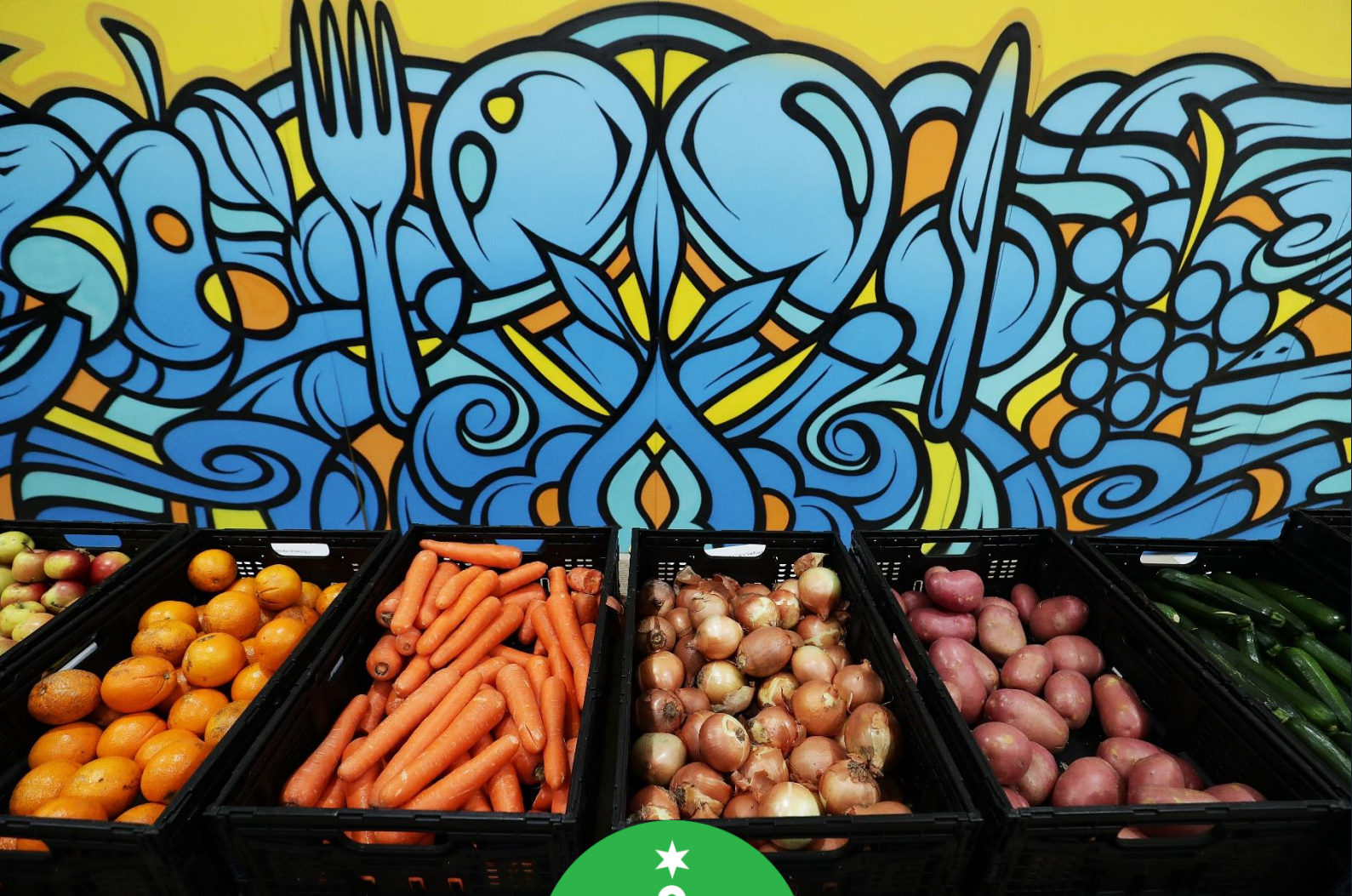
EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

Alana Goodwin, Grants Program Coordinator

Attachment A

Draft Food Support Grant Guidelines



Draft Food support grant guidelines

July 2023

Food support grant

Overview

This funding supports projects and programs that improve access to affordable and healthy food for our diverse communities.

We provide support for food support projects under 2 tiers:

- Tier 1 – Small scale projects
- Tier 2 – Large scale projects

Before applying for tier 2, contact our grants team to discuss your proposal on 02 9265 9333 or email communitygrants@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Key dates

Applications open: 23 August 2023

Applications close: 20 September 2023

Funding priorities

Our funding will prioritise projects that:

- increase access to affordable, healthy, safe and culturally-appropriate food
- increase community skills in sourcing and preparing healthy food
- improve supply, storage and delivery of healthy food for our diverse communities
- increase resourcing of essential food support services for our diverse communities
- increase access to affordable internet and data to support community access to food support services.

We encourage applications from organisations, groups and individuals that support Aboriginal and Torres and Strait Islander communities and culture, including Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and networks.

Tier 1 – Small scale projects

Funding available

Cash funding up to \$250,000 per year is available, for a one-year program or multi-year funding (up to 3 years). Value-in-kind in the form of venue hire is also available.

Applicants can apply for up to \$100,000 worth of capital expenditure, equipment purchase or other resources.

Assessment criteria

Proposals are assessed against:

- evidence of the need for the project or program and proposed outcomes
- capacity and experience of the applicant to deliver the project or program

Food support grant guidelines

- demonstrated connection and benefit to the local area and community
- how the project delivers against the funding priorities
- evidence of the project or program having direct engagement with our diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, young people, older people, people with disability, international students, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women, LGBTIQ+ communities and low-income earners.

Tier 2 – Large scale projects

Funding available

Cash funding up to \$750,000 per year is available, for a one-year program or multi-year funding (up to 3 years).

Value-in-kind in the form of venue hire fee waiver is also available.

Applicants can apply for up to \$150,000 worth of capital expenditure, equipment purchase or other resources.

Assessment criteria

Proposals are assessed against:

- evidence of the need for the project or program and proposed outcomes
- capacity and experience of the applicant to deliver the project or program
- demonstrated connection and benefit to the local area and community
- evidence of partnerships with local community organisations and networks
- how the project delivers against the funding priorities
- evidence of the project or program having direct engagement with our diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, young people, older people, people with disability, international students, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women, LGBTIQ+ communities and low-income earners.

Eligibility

To be eligible an applicant must operate within the [City of Sydney local area](#) or be able to demonstrate significant benefits for the area's residents, workers and/or visitors:

These organisations can apply for both tier 1 and 2:

- not-for-profit organisations.

These individuals and groups can apply for tier 1 only:

- individuals or unincorporated community groups auspiced by a not-for-profit that is eligible to apply in its own right.

If you work with an auspicing organisation, we encourage you to choose one that is relevant to the sector and can support the development of the proposal.

Not eligible for funding

Funding is not available for:

- for-profit organisations, including small businesses
 - projects that directly contravene the eligibility and ethics framework or existing City of Sydney policies.
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How to apply

Applications for grants and sponsorship must be completed online.

For more information on our grants and sponsorships see cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/grants-sponsorships.

If you are interested in applying for tier 2, contact our grants team to discuss your proposal on 02 9265 9333 or email communitygrants@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.



Attachment B

**Minute by the Lord Mayor – Food Insecurity
– 26 June 2023**

Resolution of Council

26 June 2023

Item 3.3

Food Insecurity

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Across Australia, we are wasting millions of tonnes of food each year, while record numbers of people go hungry.

In the City of Sydney, food waste makes up 14 per cent of commercial waste and 35 per cent of domestic waste. This represents more than 95,000 tonnes of food waste each year going to landfill, generating the equivalent of 200,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

The City encourages households to reduce food waste and is researching new ways to process food scraps using more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable technology. Redirecting surplus food to those in need is another important step we can take to reduce emissions while also ensuring every person in the City has enough food to eat.

We are all aware of the food shortages experienced across Australia during Covid. Homeless people, social housing tenants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, older people, people with disability, international students and temporary visa holders were particularly hard hit. This is why the City spent \$3.1 million, and worked with over 60 businesses and community organisations, on food relief between 2020 and 2022.

Shockingly, food relief organisations tell me that demand for free food is now far higher than in Covid, with employed people on low incomes joining the queues of people who can't afford to eat. As people struggle to pay their bills amid the cost-of-living crisis, they forgo food in order to pay for housing, health and heating.

According to FoodBank's 2022 Hunger Report, over two million Australian households had experienced severe food insecurity in the preceding 12 months. And the situation is only getting worse.

OzHarvest says that demand for free food has never been so high. The majority of charities they service have seen a 73 per cent increase in people needing help, with over a third of clients seeking food relief for the first time. These charities report they could take between 25 per cent and 50 per cent more food in order to cope with demand. In 2020, OzHarvest distributed 27,000 kilos of food a month, whereas they're now distributing 46,000 kilos of food a month. At Waterloo Market, demand has risen from 1,500 people a week during Covid to 2,000 people a week now, and they are on track to deliver 880,000 free meals this financial year.

The Girls and Boys Brigade in Surry Hills provides free food to children after school and free dinners for families. Eighty per cent of their families live in social housing and the rest are at risk of homelessness because of rising living costs. Over the past year, demand for their food program has increased by almost 150 per cent. Many families who used to access their pantry service to stock up on free food once or twice a week are now accessing it daily.

First Nations Response is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation providing culturally appropriate food support. Requests for help have doubled since late 2022, and they are now supporting over 250 elders and families each week.

At Addison Road's Camperdown Food Pantry, demand for food has increased 32 per cent in the past year. Though social housing tenants from Camperdown, Waterloo and Redfern make up most of their customers, they are increasingly seeing low-income workers whose capacity to buy food has decreased as their rents have increased, including nurses.

Up until a few months ago, St Canice's Kitchen in Kings Cross regularly fed up to 130 people a day. That number has now increased to between 160 and 220 a day, and they are anticipating 300 a day by the end of the year. They want to expand their services to provide take away meals for people when they are closed on Sundays and Public Holidays, but they are already struggling to keep up with demand.

Food relief organisations rely on a mix of surplus and discounted food to ensure they meet the nutritional requirements of the people they serve. They also need transport, storage and equipment to collect and deliver the food at a low temperature in accordance with food safety requirements. This all costs money, and yet government funding and personal donations for food relief organisations are down, resulting in significant funding shortfalls and an inability to meet demand.

I share the disappointment of food relief organisations that the Federal Government ignored their pleas for help in this year's budget. I also share their hope that the NSW Government will step up when they deliver their budget in September, noting last year's Parliamentary Inquiry into Food Production and Supply in NSW urged the Government to introduce ongoing funding programs for food relief organisations.

The City is currently developing a Sustainable Food Systems Policy and Action Plan that will enable us to work collaboratively with stakeholders and prioritise actions to address food insecurity in a wholistic way across the City of Sydney. This will consider areas including resilience, economic participation, growing food in cities, indigenous food systems governance, and community programs and education. The Policy and Action Plan will be ready for Council and community consideration early in 2024.

However, our neighbours who are currently going hungry cannot wait. They need help now. This is why I am asking the Chief Executive Officer to consider what emergency financial support can we provide to food relief organisations as they seek to feed people across the City of Sydney. I also intend to write to the Prime Minister, Treasurer, NSW Premier and NSW Treasurer asking them to join us in providing financial support to alleviate hunger across our respective jurisdictions.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor), seconded by Councillor Ellsmore –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) in the City of Sydney, food waste makes up 14 per cent of commercial waste and 35 per cent of domestic waste. This represents more than 95,000 tonnes of food waste each year going to landfill, generating the equivalent of 200,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions;
- (ii) redirecting surplus food to those in need is an important step we can take to reduce emissions while also ensuring every person in the City has enough food to eat;
- (iii) during Covid, the City spent \$3.1 million, and worked with over 60 businesses and community organisations, on food relief;
- (iv) food relief organisations are reporting a significant increase in demand for free food, with a number of employed people on low incomes seeking food relief for the first time; and
- (v) to the best of our knowledge, the Federal and NSW Governments are yet to commit to new funding for food relief organisations amid the current cost-of-living crisis;

(B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate options for financial support for food relief organisations and, where relevant, other community-based initiatives that provide access to low-cost food including cooperatives and mutual aid groups, which are operating in the City of Sydney and report back to Council; and

(C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Prime Minister, Treasurer, NSW Premier and NSW Treasurer asking them to provide urgent and ongoing financial support for food relief organisations amid the cost-of-living crisis.

The Minute, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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