

# We need to ensure all residents have food security

## We are seeking:

1. State Government recurrent funding of \$100,000 per annum to support food agencies across Banyule to meet the growing demand of families needing emergency relief.
  2. State Government investment of \$50,000 per annum for each of the four key food and material aid organisations to support storage requirements in a dedicated warehouse space.
- OR** Fund \$1.1M for Banyule Council to purchase a warehouse that can support a number of food and material aid organisations with storage needs.

## Overview

**Emergency relief is a response for those in acute need but is also used to meet the needs of families facing chronic food insecurity, cost of living pressures and the inability to meet key financial responsibilities including payment of utility bills, medical expenses and housing costs.**

When the cost of essential goods and services, including housing, healthcare and transportation, rises faster than income levels, it can strain household budgets and lead to food insecurity.

Emergency relief requests can vary from food parcels (culturally specific and comprising fresh, non-perishable and pre-cooked meals), supermarket vouchers, assistance with PBS medication costs, financial counselling (crisis assistance and practical support to break the poverty cycle), tax help, referral pathways (to specialist organisations that assist with family violence, community health, homelessness and mental health, and utility advocacy and payment assistance.

## Emergency Relief in Banyule

There are a number of key emergency and food relief organisations and community groups across Banyule that are responding to the increase in demand including the key organisations BANSIC, Diamond Valley Community Support (DVCS) and Diamond Valley Food Share along with a number of the local Neighbourhood Houses (Greenhills, Livingstone, Watsonia), local food pantries and local religious and community groups.

Emergency and food relief demands have increased by over 200% between 2019 and 2022 (BANSIC January 2023). Organisational funding during this time has remained stagnant.

**Food and emergency relief organisations across Banyule report that for every \$10 they expend on food provides \$95 worth of value to the community.**

(BANSIC 2023)

## Banyule needs...

Recurrent funding of \$100,000 per annum to support food agencies across Banyule to meet the growing demand of families needing emergency relief.

**\$100,000 per annum recurrently for both BANSIC and Diamond Valley Community Support (as the two leading emergency relief agencies in across Banyule) to ensure the needs of the community can continue to be supported and addressed.**

Whilst there seems to be good access to food by the support services, there is very limited space to store the non perishable items.

All Banyule relief providers (formal and informal) have voiced their need for storage space so that they can keep on hand the items that community members need. Ideally the storage space will be big enough for a number of the providers to have a dedicated space and accessibility to that space with vehicles such as forklifts and vans.

**\$200,000 per annum recurrently for rental of appropriate storage spaces to support the food and material aid services across Banyule or funding of \$1.1M to purchase a warehouse site to support service providers.**

**'Same bills, same groceries, same income. The only thing that has changed is prices have gone up.'**

Foodbank Hunger Report 2022

# Banyule facts and stats

**According to the Foodbank Food Hunger Report 2022, over 2 million households in Australia (21%) have experienced severe food insecurity in preceding 12 months.**

Across Banyule, 1 in 5 respondents to the recent Urban Food Strategy survey reported some level of food insecurity in the last year. According to BANSIC (who supports individuals who primarily live in the southern part of Banyule), this last 12 months has seen a 125% increase in individual clients and an increase on 133% in client visits, 90% of all recipients are on some form of government assistance and 43% of recipients identify as having a disability.

Over 2023/24 there will be an increase of 236 number of community housing units across Bellfield, Heidelberg and Heidelberg West that is expected to significantly increase demand on emergency and food relief services.

According to DVCS who supports individuals who primarily live in the northern part of Banyule, this last 12 months has seen a 52% increase in client visits and an increase of \$18,000 in food vouchers being allocated. Overall there has been an increase from 2021/22 to 2022/23 of 71% for educational, food and transport support.

## Key issues

Food security and the increase in cost of living have become significant issues for individuals and families across Victoria and specifically across the municipality of Banyule. Many local community organisations, churches and community groups across Banyule have started to run food programs, food pantries and food banks.

Food insecurity is complex and multi-faceted, affecting a wide range of households across various demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Food insecurity can affect households from various backgrounds. While some groups, like households with children, may be more vulnerable to food insecurity, this issue is increasingly impacting households that are traditionally considered less vulnerable.

Having a job also does not guarantee food security as over half of food insecure households have someone in paid employment. Factors such as low wages, under-employment and high costs of living can still lead to food insecurity for working individuals and families. Data indicates that nearly a third of households with mortgages experienced food insecurity highlighting the relationship between housing costs and food security.

**High housing costs can leave families with limited resources for other necessities, including food.**

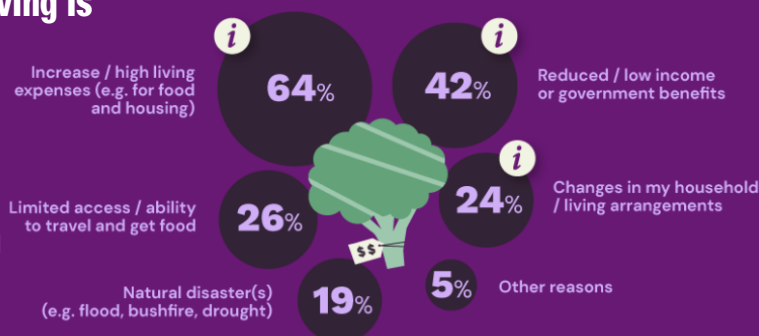
Other factors influencing families include the rising cost of living, the ongoing challenges associated with COVID and the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters which can exacerbate food insecurity.

These factors can lead to increased financial stress and make it more difficult for families to access affordable and nutritious food.

Addressing food insecurity requires a multi-faceted approach that considers both immediate relief measures and long-term solutions to improve economic stability and access to affordable, nutritious food. Social safety nets, employment opportunities, affordable housing and policies aimed at reducing income inequality can all play a role in addressing this critical issue and ensuring that households can access adequate and reliable food supply.

## The rising cost of living is the primary culprit

The most common reason for households experiencing food insecurity in the last 12 months was increased or high cost of living, followed by reduced or low incomes or benefits.



Note: respondents were able to cite multiple reasons



**Banyule**

City Council

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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