



Nourishing Our Country

MEDIA RELEASE

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HUNGER IN THE LUCKY COUNTRY: OZHARVEST REVEALS SHOCKING NEW FOOD INSECURITY DATA *Staggering 54% surge in Australians turned away from food charities as cost-of-living crisis deepens*

Australia is in the grip of a hunger emergency that many refuse to see. OzHarvest's 2025 Community Needs Survey has unveiled a devastating reality: a 54% increase in people being turned away from charity doors as frontline organisations struggle to cope with ongoing high demand.

The comprehensive survey of frontline charities reveals 77% have witnessed a surge in people seeking food in the past year, with an estimated 50,000 people unable to be supported every month by responding charities as services simply cannot keep up.

"This is a national emergency hiding in plain sight," says OzHarvest Founder Ronni Kahn AO. "Every day we're out in communities across Australia supporting 1,550 charities, that are stretched beyond their limits, as the gap between demand and resources keeps widening. In addition, we have 1,200 charities on the waitlist to receive food."

"We are in the midst of a national food security crisis. Driven by the rising cost of living, stagnant wages, and spiralling housing costs and energy bills, Australians are sacrificing food just to get by," said Ronni.

Key findings from the survey:

- 77% of charities have seen an increase in the number of people seeking food support in the last year
- Nearly one-third (31%) of people seeking food relief are doing so for the first time
- 72% of charities need more food to meet demand
- Charities reported a 54% increase in the number of people they are unable to support
- Families (48%) and single parents (31%) represent the largest groups seeking support
- 55% say providing food increased a sense of dignity and self-worth in the people they support

Food relief services are essential lifelines for many people, with charities offering additional services such as financial assistance, housing support, medical aid, and employment services. They also highlight the emotional toll on families, with parents skipping meals, experiencing shame and guilt, and making nutritional sacrifices, often unable to afford fresh fruit, vegetables, or meat.

"Food insecurity isn't just about hunger - it's about dignity, choices, health, and the impossible decisions people face every day just to survive," said Ronni.



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A Call for Immediate Action

OzHarvest is urging the government to take immediate steps and a holistic approach to address Australia's food crisis:

- Appointing a dedicated Minister for Food to coordinate food security, food waste and food system solutions
- Ongoing, sustainable funding for essential food rescue and relief
- Meaningful cost-of-living interventions including increased welfare payments and housing affordability measures

"The math is heartbreaking. Our sector provides 160 million meals annually, but it's nowhere near enough. Government failure to support those doing it toughest is deeply disappointing," Kahn explains. " This crisis demands immediate action – we need funding to feed people today, but we need leadership and policy change to ensure no one goes hungry tomorrow. This is above politics – this is people's lives."

Help feed Australians in need: Support OzHarvest's Giving Day Appeal running until June 18, where every donation is matched – meaning your \$1 provides four meals to Australians in need.

For more information or to donate, visit ozharvest.org.

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Notes to Editors:

Regional breakdown

State	% charities saw an increase in demand	%charities need more food to meet demand	% clients requesting food support for the first time
ACT	59%	64%	37%
NSW	78%	75%	32%
QLD	79%	70%	32%
SA	82%	80%	34%
VIC	81%	77%	29%
WA	72%	66%	35%



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ABOUT OZHARVEST:

Founded by Ronni Kahn AO in 2004, OzHarvest is Australia's leading food rescue organisation, collecting quality surplus food from more than 2,600 businesses, including supermarkets, restaurants, cafes, hotels, retailers, airports and retail food outlets. Every week over 300 tonnes of food is saved from going to landfill and delivered to 1,500+ charitable agencies, helping to make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable people across Australia. OzHarvest's education programs include: NEST - tailor made workshops that support people in need with nutrition education and life skills, Nourish - a hospitality training program for 'at risk' youth, FEAST – a curriculum aligned program for primary and high school student. To inspire behavioural change and make it easy to waste less at home, OzHarvest launched their Use It Up tape and campaign. OzHarvest operates nationally in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, NT, Tasmania and in regional communities and to date has delivered over 290 million meals and saved over 90,000 tonnes of food from landfill. Every \$1 donated allows OzHarvest to deliver two meals to people in need www.ozharvest.org