

Parliament of Tasmania
House of Assembly
Select Committee on the Costs of Living
Submission by: SecondBite Tasmania
16th March 2012

SecondBite appreciates being given the opportunity to contribute to this discussion.

The intent of this submission is not to review the literature on cost of living and food security. It is intended to present a brief overview of the history and growth of SecondBite in Tasmania, and hopes to highlight how fresh food rescue and redistribution can have a positive impact on cost of living pressures for Tasmanian's struggling to make ends meet.

Introduction: SecondBite is a not for profit organisation, committed to making a positive difference to people by identifying sources of nutritious surplus fresh food and produce that might otherwise go to waste and facilitating its safe and timely distribution to agencies and people in need.

Established in Tasmania in late 2008 as part of the expansion of SecondBite Victoria, the decision to commence operations in the state followed the successful passage of the Good Samaritan Act through the Tasmanian Parliament in that year.

Funding: To date, funding has been provided by The Tasmanian State Government, The Tasmanian Community Fund, trusts, foundations and philanthropy. Further, in kind support by business, service clubs and volunteers enable operations to continue 5 days per week as well as enabling out of hour's collections e.g. Rotary volunteers collecting surplus fruit from Salamanca Markets on Saturdays. Rotary's assistance has been invaluable as founding members of SecondBite in Tasmania.

Staff: Current staff includes; State Manager, Food Program Manager, Operations Coordinator and Administration Manager (part time).

Volunteers: we have a pool of volunteers numbering around 50. These comprise a core group of regular volunteers, five Rotary Clubs and a regular supply of volunteers through Choose Employment.

Structure and Governance: SecondBite is a Not for Profit, Special Purpose Public Company Limited by guarantee registered with ASIC. We have a Public Benevolent Institution status and Income Tax Exempt Charity and Deductable Gift Recipient endorsements from the ATO. SecondBite is governed by a board of up to ten directors based in Melbourne. In Tasmania, we have an Advisory Committee of five members.

Fresh Food: SecondBite's focus is on fresh food and operates nationally through a partnership with Coles Supermarkets called 'Coles Community Food with SecondBite' where fresh fruit, vegetables and bakery items which do not meet their in store quality standards but which are still safe and nutritious to eat - are donated by Coles stores. Prior to the formalisation of the partnership, the initial trial with Coles began in Tasmania in 2010.

Woolworths also support SecondBite with regular donations. We commenced regular pick up's from their stores in late August 2009.

Supermarkets are only one of many sources of fresh food. As part of SecondBite's food procurement strategy, fresh food donations are targeted from farms, markets, processors, distributors, community gardens and even restaurants and catered functions. Recently, we have placed bulk food bins with major growers in the north of Tasmania, resulting in a substantial increase in the volumes of fresh vegetables, which have been well received by our recipients.

While it is not necessary to list all of our fresh food donors, we feel that it is important to list a few to give a sense of the types of food being donated. They include:

- Harvest Moon and Premium Fresh – vegetables
- Lion – dairy and fruit juice
- Coles and Woolworths - bakery, fruit and veg
- Pure Foods – eggs
- Tamar Valley Dairy – yoghurt
- Robert Parkes –apples and pears
- Costa Logistics – fruit and veg
- Ingham Enterprises –poultry
- Creative Chicken n Meat – chicken and meat.
- Houston's Farm – salad vegetables.

The Recipients: SecondBite does not provide food directly to members of the community but supports those agencies that do. Recipients and some examples include:

- Residential services offering crisis, medium and long term accommodation support to the people experiencing homelessness – Bethlehem House and Mara House.
- Residential services offering support to people escaping domestic violence – McCombe House
- Residential services offering alcohol and other drug programs – Salvation Army Bridge Program
- Outreach food vans - Loui's Van
- Agencies providing Emergency Food Relief (EFR) – Salvation Army and Community Houses
- Drop in centres – No Bucks and Richmond Fellowship
- Community Meal Programs - Dining With Friends
- Youth Programs - PCYC, PULSE and YouthARC, TOOL and the LINK.
- Migrant resettlement programs and the Migrant Resource Centre
- Tenancy support programs –Centacare and Anglicare
- Tasmanian Association of Community Houses
- Benevolent societies
- School breakfast programs
- Agencies delivering education programs -Red Cross FOODcents and Food Angels.

Our many recipients are referred to as; community service organisations, welfare agencies, not for profits or charities. For the purpose of this discussion, we will refer to them as community food programs or CFP's.

Distribution: SecondBite now has a well established distribution network in the south of the state servicing over 70 CFP's weekly. We are able to service outlying areas such as the Huon Valley, Outer Eastern Shore and Kingborough with the help of a number of Rotary Clubs. In Kingston, Lions work in with Rotary which is a wonderful example of service clubs sharing the load.

In November 2010, we expanded our operations, using our Community Connect model, to Launceston. Community Connect effectively provides a framework for local agencies to 'connect' with donors. In this case, it involved scheduling regular pick up's from Coles Stores by two agencies - The Launceston Benevolent Society and Launceston City Mission. Both agencies have been redistributing fresh food to their own CFP's as well as others in the city. SecondBite will soon have a physical presence in Launceston and the north of the state following the purchase of a refrigerated van –provided by the Tasmanian Community Fund - and through the employment of an Operations Coordinator. This will boost our capacity to provide to the many CFP's currently not receiving fresh food.

In April, we will be extending our reach with the Community Connect model being introduced to Burnie and Devonport and Ulverstone in May.

During 2011, SecondBite Tasmania redistributed 175,000kg of food (or the equivalent of 350,000 nutritious meals) to over 70 CFP's. The SecondBite operation is predominantly a 'delivery' model with food being picked up or delivered in, then sorted, stored and redistributed. Achieving these sorts of figures would not be possible without the support of volunteers and the in-kind support of logistics companies such as SRT, Fresh Freight and Hazell Bros. We are confident of reaching our target of 360,000kg in 2012.

Food Rescue - background: A coordinated approach to the rescue and redistribution of surplus food is a relatively new phenomenon in Tasmania. For years surplus food has found its way to charities via:

- Regular 'bread runs' - donations of surplus bread and other bakery items – usually facilitated with volunteer support.
- Donations of surplus packaged or long life foods by producers, distributors and retailers.
- Occasional deliveries of surplus produce from community gardens, residential gardens and orchards and commercial producers.
- Occasional deliveries of surplus food from dairy processors, meat processors, catering businesses.
- Can drives – usually facilitated by schools and service clubs.
- Traditional Christmas donations of all types of foods to charities.

Since an amendment to the Civil Liabilities Act in 2008 (commonly referred to as the Good Samaritan Legislation) two other agencies in Tasmania have emerged whose core business is food rescue and redistribution in Tasmania. They are; Produce to the People and Foodbank Tasmania. Along with SecondBite, the objective of all three organisations is to support the objectives of all Community Service Organisations in Tasmania who provide emergency food relief and operate CFP's.

SecondBite's Impact: While the terms of reference of the Select Committee on the Cost of Living do not relate directly to the rescue and redistribution of surplus food, it is the intention of this submission to inform the committee of ways in which food rescue and redistribution can have a positive impact on those experiencing food insecurity and in turn take some pressure of existing initiatives, such as concessions, to alleviate cost of living pressures in the community:

SecondBite Tasmania is currently redistributing in excess of 20 tonnes of fresh food per month to over 70 CFP's. This equates to 40,000 meals per month or 480,000 meals per annum. The operation is very cost effective as all of the food is donated and staffing is kept to an absolute minimum, with volunteers being engaged in nearly all aspects of the operation. There is no cost recovery as all donated food is redistributed to CFP's free of charge.

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis was conducted by Social Ventures Australia in 2010 and concluded that under the SecondBite model, for every dollar invested \$4.42 was created in social value.

In addition to the redistribution of fresh food to CFP's, SecondBite has been proactive in partnering with government and non government agencies to develop programs and initiatives to reduce the incidence of food insecurity¹ which in turn reduces cost of living pressures. Some of these include:

Feeding the Future: This project was funded by; The Tasmanian Food Security Council. It is a collaboration with SecondBite, The Salvation Army, the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Community Gardens and Able Australia to support the development of gardens and improve skills through delivering horticultural, cooking and food safety programs. Ultimately this project will increase the availability of local affordable produce thus reducing cost of living pressures. Any surplus produce is redistributed by SecondBite to other areas of need.

Food Angels: A project piloted by SecondBite in Victoria and further developed in Tasmania through a partnership with Anglicare and the Department of Health and Human Service's Youth Health South (YHS) in Glenorchy. The focus is on clients of Anglicare and YHS who have been identified as needing support around budgeting, shopping, food safety, food storage cooking. During the 10 week course, SecondBite provide weekly fresh food hampers to participants while Anglicare and YHS facilitate the program. One of the outcomes is enhanced financial management skills and therefore less reliance on emergency relief.

Emergency Food Relief Outreach Service (EFROS): EFROS is a program which began in October 2010 following a request from an agency which provided community tenancy support. The use of resources to support people in the community is far more cost effective than the inevitable outcomes such as; institutionalisation or homelessness.

The EFROS process is simple - During a regular home /outreach visit, a case worker will assess the client's food and nutrition needs. Next, during the agency team meeting it is recommended that food assistance be provided. The case worker then phones SecondBite, normally a day or two prior to the next home visit, and books a food hamper. Information on the number and ages of those in the house are provided. The food hamper is then collected by the case worker on route to the next home visit.

We have received regular feedback from the agency staff along with testimonials stating that the hampers are often crucial in assisting the client over the 'hump' and helping to maintain the tenancy. Occasions of support are nearly always associated with cutting back on food to cover rent, power or transport costs.

SecondBite Nutrition Action Plan (SNAP): A partnership with Dept Health and Human Service's Community Nutrition Unit and SecondBite's Research and Development arm has developed training to be delivered to CFP staff to build food

¹ Food insecurity can refer to not having sufficient food; experiencing hunger as a result of running out of food and being unable to afford more; eating a poor quality diet as a result of limited food options; anxiety about acquiring food; or having to rely on food relief (Rychetnik, Story and Katz (2003),

skills and capacity and to assist in areas such as food safety, nutrition and food security. This program is nearing pilot stage at the present time.

In conclusion: Australians throw out \$5.2 billion² worth of food every year. Now that there is a coordinated effort to rescue and redistribute some of this food, there is a strong argument to factor in (in dollar terms, given a price per kilo of food) an amount that can be recovered and redirected into areas which have been proven to have had a positive impact on cost of living pressures.

SecondBite's long term strategy is to be among those agencies whose goal it is to eliminate food insecurity in our communities. In other words we hope one day to be out of business. In the meantime we intend to target resources to areas where they will have the most impact in the community.

During the past three years, in terms of outcomes, SecondBite has:

- Built on the capacity of established Emergency Relief Agencies such as Anglicare, the Salvation Army, Colony 47, St Vincent de Paul, Mission Australia, Benevolent Societies and others. The ability of these agencies to offer fresh food as Emergency Relief along with food vouchers effectively makes food vouchers go further.
- Reduced the expenditure on food for residential services. Savings made are then able to be redirected toward other programs, utility costs etc...
- Improved the nutritional intake of many people in low socioeconomic areas.
- Formed partnerships with both Government and NGO's, to enhance service provision focused on alleviating food insecurity.
- Engaged in the Research and Development of initiatives to address food insecurity.
- Conducted annual recipient surveys to better inform our practice, and assist with our strategic planning.

SecondBite thanks the committee for the opportunity to contribute and looks forward to the round table discussion.

² Baker et al. 2009 *What a waste: An Analysis of household expenditure on food*. The Australia Institute <https://www.tai.org.au/index.php?q=node%2F19&act=display&pubid=696>