

# How food secure are Tasmanians?

Department of Health and Human Services  
Community Nutrition Unit, Population Health

What is food security?

Who is affected?

What causes it?

Why should we be worried?

How much do we know about food  
insecurity in Tasmania?

What are some strategies to increase food security in Tasmania?

What's already happening in Tasmania?

What will Population Health be working on this year to help address food insecurity?

# What do we mean by the term food security?

- Regular access to safe, nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable food from non-emergency sources is known as food security (Vic Health)
- Ability of individuals, households and communities to acquire food that is sufficient, reliable, nutritious, safe, acceptable and sustainable (TFNP)

# What is food insecurity?

- 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
- Having to rely on food relief

# Who can be affected by food insecurity?

People who:

- Are unemployed
- Have a disability
- Are from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Are elderly and frail

Vic Health, 2008

# Who can be affected by food insecurity?

People who:

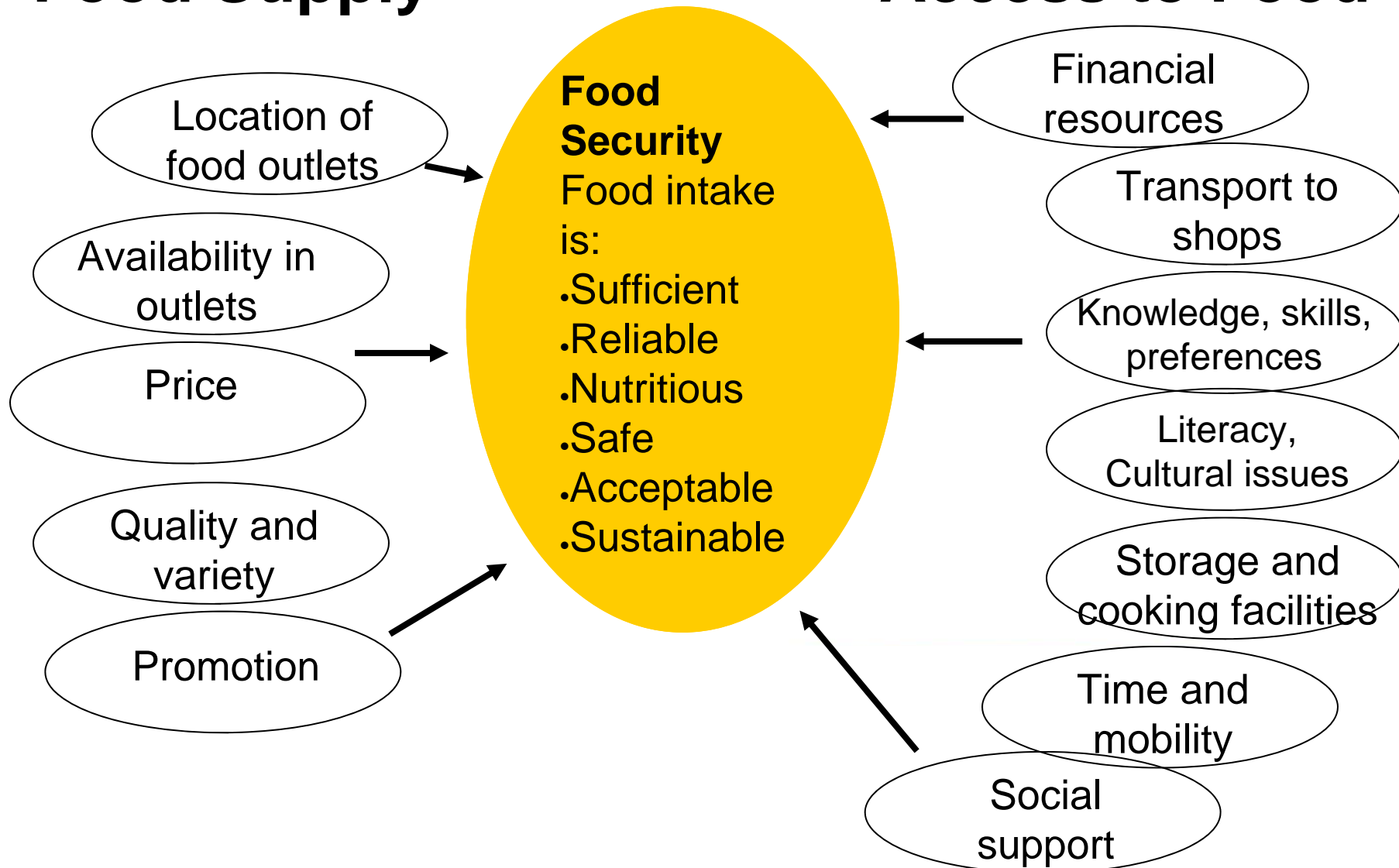
- Are affected by alcohol or substance abuse
- Are homeless
- Are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds

Vic Health, 2008

# Determinants of Food Security

## Food Supply

## Access to Food



# Myths about food insecurity

**“People would have enough food if they budgeted properly”**

**“If people are so hard up, why do they buy takeaways and eat out”**

**“It’s sheer ignorance—they don’t know what a healthy diet is”**

**“What these people need is cooking lessons”**

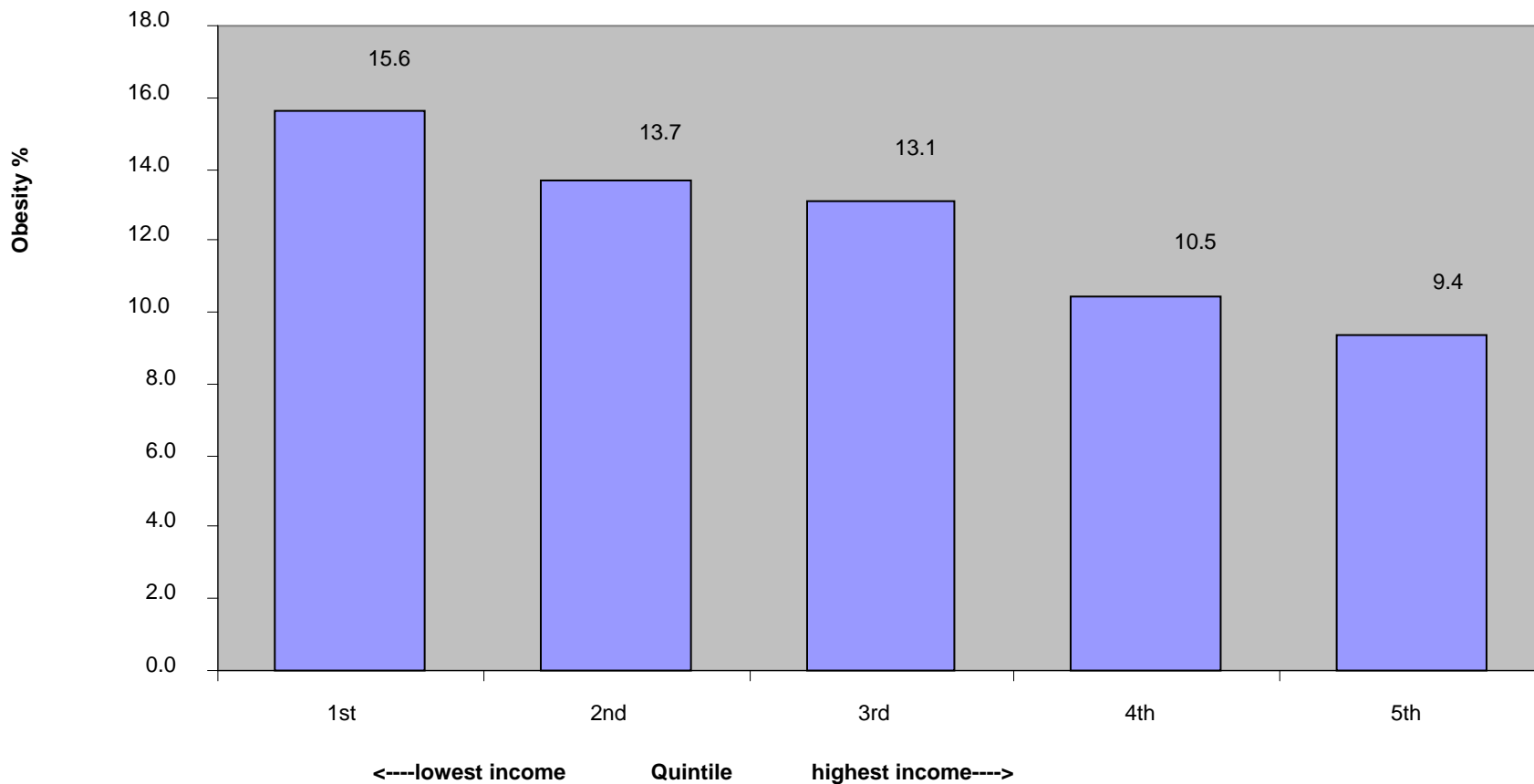
**“If they cared about their children, they’d make sure they got healthy food”**

**Wood and Streker 2005**

# Why should we be worried?

- Malnutrition, especially in older people
- Poorer quality of food
- Obesity
- Chronic conditions (diet related)
- Mental Health distress

**Obesity prevalence by Household equivalized income quintiles,  
15 years and over, Tasmania, 2004**



**2004 National Health  
Survey**

Department of Health and Human Services  
Community Nutrition Unit



# What do we know about the extent and barriers to food security in Tasmania?

- Not a lot!

# 1995 National Nutrition Survey\*

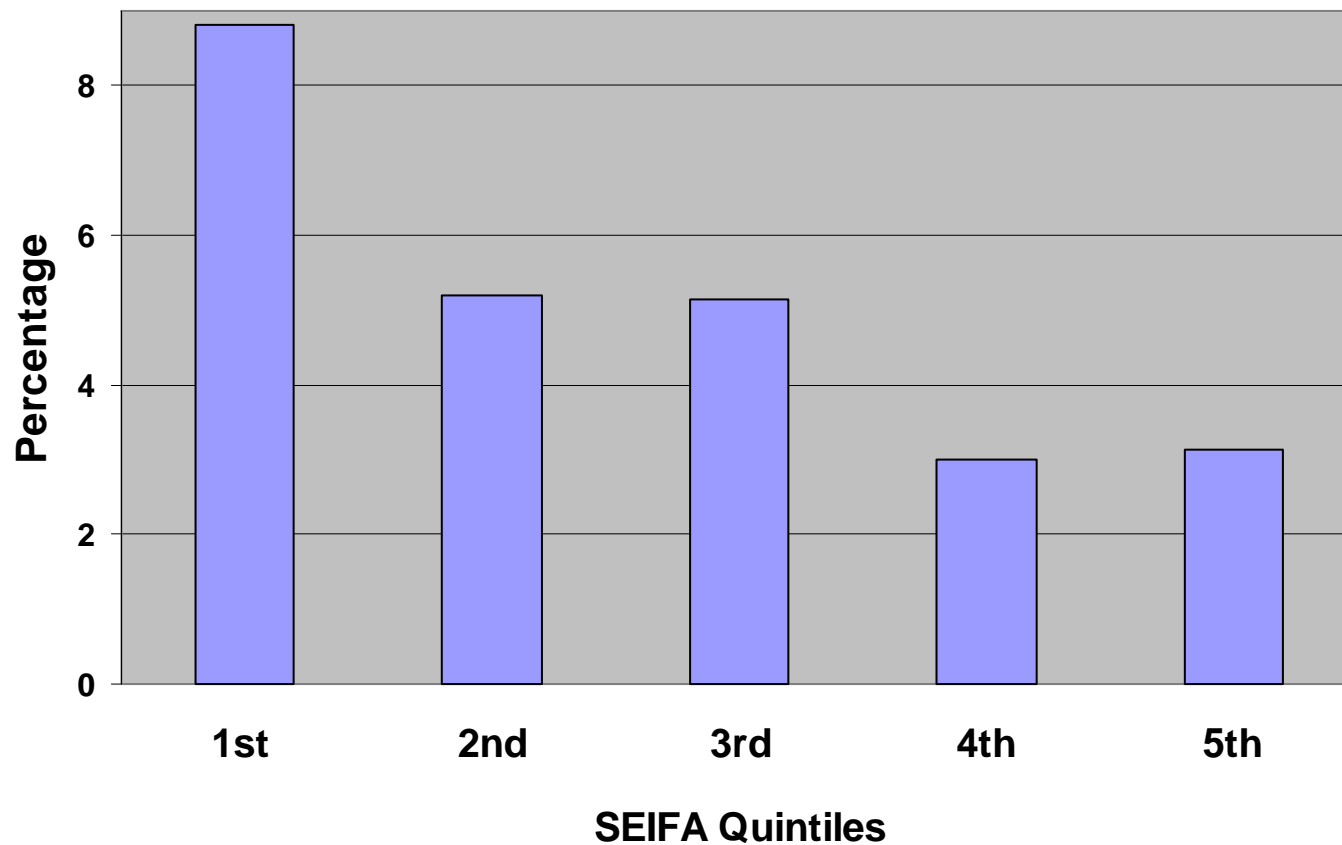
**Adults 16+ years of age only**

**'In the last 12 months, were there any times that you ran out of food and you couldn't afford to buy more?'**

**1 million (5%)**

\* Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998c

## Food insecurity in Australians aged 16 years and over, by SEIFA (relative disadvantage)



Wood et al 1995

# Healthy Communities Survey 1998

**Reported they frequently worry about whether the food that they can afford to buy for their households will be enough**

**10% Adult respondents**

DHHS, 1999

# Household expenditure

## Proportion of total goods & services expenditure spent on food & non alcoholic beverages.

State/territory	%
NSW	17.3
Vic	17.5
Qld	16.8
SA	16.7
WA	16.5
<b>Tas</b>	<b>17.4</b>
NT	15.9
ACT	16.7
<b>Aust</b>	<b>17.1</b>

Source: ABS Household Expenditure Survey, 2003-04. Cat No 6530.0

# Food Pricing surveys

- Grocery Choice
- Price Watch
- Market basket surveys

# How are people affected by food insecurity in Tasmania?

- TASCROSS research identified barriers
  - Insufficient money
  - Less availability esp rural areas
- Taking out loans to buy food
- Food vouchers (humiliating)

**TASCROSS, 2008. Enhancing Quality of Life: Addressing Poverty and Disadvantage through the HACC Program.**

Department of Health and Human Services

Community Nutrition Unit

# How are people affected by food insecurity in Tasmania?

- Compromise on food quality
- Worry about long term impact
- Missing meals
- Physical disability difficulties with food preparation
- Winter – time to cut back on food

**TASCOSS, 2008. Enhancing Quality of Life: Addressing Poverty and Disadvantage through the HACC Program.**

Department of Health and Human Services

Community Nutrition Unit

# Strategies to increase food security

National

Food Pricing

Regulation of advertising

Advocating for better incomes

State

Monitoring / surveillance

policies (land use, transport, housing, social inclusion)

Programs and workforce

Local

Local mapping

Local programs (eg Community gardens)

# What is happening in Tasmania to address food insecurity?

- Community Houses – local programs
- Community Gardening network (Sustainable Living)
- Food supply programs with vulnerable groups (HACC Nutrition program, Disability Services project)
- Capacity building for workers (eg Grow and Learn)
- Community action – Family Food Patch
- Emergency Relief programs (Louis' Van, Second-Bite,
- Food supply strategies (school canteens, workplaces)

# Where are we starting (CNU)?

- Food Security network
- Communicating with health and community workers about food insecurity
- Improve the way we measure our reach into disadvantaged areas

# Food Security project

- Participatory action research model - LGA
- Is the local supply inadequate and why?
  - Mapping locations of food, price, quality
- Who has problems acquiring food & why?
  - Special needs groups, distance to shops, time, mobility, financial resources, knowledge, skills, storage, cooking facilities, social support

# Summary

- Food insecurity can have significant negative effects on health
- We believe food insecurity is a significant issue in Tasmania
- We need better measuring of the problem of food insecurity

# Summary

- Much is already happening to address food insecurity in Tasmania but mainly targeting food access
- More needs to be done to address food supply issues in Tasmania