

Illawarra Regional Food Hub 2026

**A coordinated solution to food insecurity, waste, and rising community demand;
A scalable, long-term solution reducing cost pressures across government and
service providers.**

The Challenge

- 1 in 3 households in the Illawarra experienced food insecurity in the past year
- 70% of charities report increased demand, with 1 in 5 people turned away
- Over 800,000 tonnes of edible food is wasted annually in NSW

Current system issues:

- Fragmented services
- Duplicated effort
- Limited capacity to meet growing need

The Solution

The Food Hub will establish a centralised food system that:

- Coordinates food rescue, storage, and distribution across the region
- Provides shared logistics, transport, and infrastructure
- Connects charities, councils, and food suppliers into one system
- Enables efficient, equitable access to fresh and affordable food

Why this matters now

- Demand is outpacing supply
- Services are at capacity
- Food waste remains high
- Without intervention, gaps in access and system inefficiencies will continue to grow.

The Investment

\$5.03 million *** over 5 years will enable

- Hub infrastructure and facility setup
- Storage (pantry, chilled, frozen)
- Ongoing operations, staffing, and logistics

The Impacts

Social

- Reliable, dignified access to nutritious food
- Reduced stigma through universal access models
- Stronger community connection and volunteer engagement

Economic

- Lower food and operational costs
- Job creation in logistics, operations, and administration
- Increased regional economic participation

Environmental

- Significant reduction in food waste
- Lower emissions through coordinated logistics
- Improved resource recovery and sustainability outcomes

Call to Action

- Seeking funding, strategic partnerships, to establish the Food Hub
- Contact: Melinda Lawton - Project Manager
- Email: melinda@healthycities.org.au
- Website: www.foodfairnessillawarra.org.au

*** Investment stated is an approximate and is subject to cost escalation, contingency and GST.

