

Reducing hunger and food waste in our community Melbourne Health, Australia

GGHH Agenda Goals

- Waste
- Food
- Leadership

Hospital Goal

- Environmental
- Social
- Economic

Progress Achieved

Environmental:

- On average, 4,200 meals per month are being diverted from waste and redistributed to the community since February 2018.
- Approximately 25 kilograms of food removed from landfill per day or 9.125 tonnes per year.
- A reduction of over 17 tonnes CO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions from food in landfill per year

Social:

- Melbourne Health staff are proud of being able to contribute to the local community, help people in need, and reduce waste
- Free food relief parcels and dinners are provided to the community through Northpoint Centre
- Young people acquire life and work skills through Second Chance

Financial benefits

- Approximately \$3,000 per annum savings in landfill costs

The Issue

The Melbourne Health Central Production Kitchen in Footscray prepares 2,800 meals every day for patients at the Royal Melbourne Hospital City Campus site as well as other metropolitan health services. Over 100 surplus meals have to be prepared each day in case of unplanned events within the hospitals or as a contingency for refrigeration breakdowns or food spillages. These surplus meals remain largely unused and have to be disposed of into landfill.



Fig 1: OzHarvest collection

Sustainability Strategy Implemented

After watching a TV show called *Struggle Street*, Melbourne Health's Food Services Production Manager was determined to donate excess and unused meals from the hospital to community members in need and to reduce food waste going to landfill. He sought approval from the organisation to donate the meals to charity and then teamed up with OzHarvest and the Northpoint Centre in Tullamarine, which provides emergency and on-going food relief to the community.

Implementation process

The Food Services Production Manager at Melbourne Health met with OzHarvest and Northpoint Centre Tullamarine to establish a process to safely donate excess prepared meals.

Excess hospital meals produced by the Melbourne Health Central Production Kitchen in Footscray are set aside by the kitchen staff and then collected by an OzHarvest driver each weekday and delivered to Northpoint Centre in Tullamarine.

Northpoint Centre provides over 1,200 food parcels per week to people in need as well as offering a free multi-course dinner cooked and served on-site by young people from the Second Chance program trying to gain work experience.

Tracking Progress

Since the initiative commenced in February 2018, Melbourne Health provides 100 cooked-chill main meals, 80 modified texture main meals (which can be processed into homemade style soup in the Northpoint Centre charity kitchen), as well as 60 desserts to OzHarvest each day. The meals range from roast veal, chicken and vegetable casserole to vegetable ravioli. Desserts include mandarin cheesecake, Dutch apple cake and chocolate mousse.

On average, 4,200 meals per month are being redistributed to the community since February 2018. Melbourne Health is removing approximately 25 kilograms of food from landfill per day or 9.125 tonnes per year. This has resulted in a reduction of over 17 tonnes CO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions from food in landfill per year.

Staff in the production kitchen are proud of being able to help community members in need and are relieved that the nutritious meals they diligently prepare are now being put to good use instead of going to landfill.



Fig 2: Excess meals set aside



Fig 3.: OzHarvest Pick Up

Challenges and lessons learned

Donations to food charities of unused, nutritious meals could be implemented at any Health Services' Production Kitchen and other large-scale Production Kitchens across the food service sector. This would support food charity agencies in their efforts to help members of our communities in need and reduce both unnecessary food waste going landfill and related greenhouse gas emissions.

Next Steps

The initiative has been very successful and is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Melbourne Health is in the process of extending this initiative to other Melbourne Health campuses and investigating how portion control food items, for example individual portions of cereals, honey and jam, can be donated.

Melbourne Health also runs an organic food dehydrator at its Royal Melbourne Hospital City Campus to process food waste from patient trays and from food preparation. The food waste is dehydrated and turned into organic fertiliser. On average, 14.5 tonnes of food waste are processed per month, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 27 tonnes CO₂e and disposal cost by \$2,500 each month.

Demographic information

Melbourne Health is Victoria's second largest public health service, employing over 8,900 staff and managing over 1,400 beds. We provide comprehensive acute, sub-acute, general, specialist medical and mental health services. Melbourne Health comprises over 30 inpatient and community-based facilities including The Royal Melbourne Hospital – City Campus, The Royal Melbourne Hospital – Royal Park Campus, North Western Mental Health, and The Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity. Our main site, the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) City Campus, founded in 1848, provides general and specialist medical and surgical acute services to over 550,000 patients per year and provides one of the two adult major trauma services to the state of Victoria.

Links

[Struggle Street \(SBS\) - https://www.sbs.com.au/programs/struggle-street](https://www.sbs.com.au/programs/struggle-street)
<https://www.ozharvest.org/>
<https://northpointcentre.org.au/>

Quotes:

Keywords / topics:

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