



SCHOOL FOOD *matters*

*Supporting school
communities to thrive*

Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025

Table of Contents

From the Board and Executive Officer3

Our background.....4

How our strategic plan was developed4

Our vision: Children eating well and as a result, thriving in all that they do5

Our role: Supporting school communities to thrive5

Guiding principles:.....5

Our name: School Food Matters5

Future directions and strategic outcomes5

Bringing it all together – strategic overview.....6

From the Board and Executive Officer

For twenty-five years and together with our school and communities we have achieved some great outcomes. Today, 66% of all Tasmanian schools operate breakfast programs. 77% of all schools with canteens now work with us and the number of accredited schools in our SmartFood Accreditation Program has doubled since we launched it in 2014. However, there is still much to do and we can learn from others.

As part of a Churchill Fellowship undertaken in 2019, our Executive Officer travelled to the United Kingdom, United States of America, Finland, Italy, France and Japan to investigate international trends in schools feeding all children well. Recognising that school canteens providing healthy, nutritious food play a critical role in ensuring better education outcomes, these countries have all implemented whole-of-school approaches to food and meals.

This insight, along with the following key learnings from the study trip, will inform our work over the next five years.

- *Children ate a school lunch, prepared by a skilled and food literate workforce who enjoyed cooking from scratch, using fresh, local and seasonal produce. Menus were planned by school members and dietitians. The schools had infrastructure to cook food and to enable children to sit to eat with other students for at least 20 minutes.*
- *Diverse foods were offered reflecting both cultural and dietary needs. The five food groups were always represented – fruit, vegetables, meat and meat equivalent, grains and dairy products. The only drink options were milk or tap water and confectionary was not an option.*

As part of our State's economic recovery from the impact of COVID-19, the Tasmanian Government wants, amongst many things, to see increased procurement of fresh local produce from Tasmanian growers and to support a shift from food emergency relief to food security for all Tasmanians. The Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council's Interim Report, July 2020 recommendation # 62 states the "State Government should plan and transition from increased emergency food relief provision towards community-based and school-based food security models". This recommendation has been accepted by the Government. The Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council's Final Report, March 2021, recommendation #31 states the "State Government should ensure that the Food Security Strategy currently being prepared, expands on recent trials of school lunch provision, is linked to local agricultural and hospitality businesses, and is 'scalable' and place-based in design, so that any potential increases in demand for emergency food relief can be managed" This recommendation has been approved by the Premier in his State of the State address on 16 March, 2021. We will collaborate, advocate and educate to address these two State objectives.

We know in Tasmania there is government and community recognition that '*School Food Matters*'. We also know there is an enormous amount of untapped pride to make sure our children have fresh, local, seasonal, nutritious food. In discussions over what we have achieved, international trends, government directions, knowing what is important to our school communities and supporting them to thrive, we concluded that our name must emphasise a compelling message to unleash this pride, motivate and provide a call to action.

School Food Matters is that message and to provide a daily reminder, we are taking it as our new organisational name.

We are motivated by knowing we have a role to play in:

- educating and activating schools and communities around the why and how of healthy eating,
- building the knowledge and skill base around food literacy for children and adults
- advocating for supportive policies to make sure all children within our State have access to a nutritious meal when they are at school.
- Sourcing easy access to fresh, local produce from Tassie farmers and producers.

This strategic plan represents a new chapter in our Association’s efforts and impact and how we will support Tasmania being the healthiest state in Australia by 2025. We know that School Food Matters and that supporting school communities to thrive can play a huge role in ensuring our young people have the best chance of reaching their full potential.

Olivia Salmon

Olivia Salmon
President, on behalf of the Board



Julie Dunbabin
Executive Officer

Our background

The Tasmanian School Canteen Association Inc. (TSCA) was formed in 1994 to promote and facilitate the provision of a nutritious and healthy food service in Tasmanian school canteens. It is a not for profit, non-government, health promotion organisation and is jointly funded by the Tasmanian Department of Education and the Tasmanian Department of Health as well as sourcing appropriate funding from many other sources. The Association supports the broader school community by ensuring a variety of nutritious and safely prepared foods and drinks are served at the school food service, at the moment for the majority – the canteen, and at school. The work of the Association is supported by a small staff team and a volunteer board. In October, 2021, the Tasmanian School Canteen Association Inc officially changed its name to ‘School Food Matters’

How our strategic plan was developed

Step	What was done
1. Scoping and grounding with Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on the findings of the Executive Officers 2019 Churchill Fellowship undertakings • Analysis of present situation with feeding children in schools particularly around outcomes of TSCA programs and activities • Mapping stakeholders • Agreeing communications
2. Further engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 x interviews representative of key interest groups – Board, Staff, Canteen Managers and Partners
3. Interpretation of input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the interests of key stakeholders • Identification of key learnings and recommendations from the Churchill Fellowship
4. Strategic workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and Staff workshop to report on learnings and findings and then gain their input • Staff workshop to use all inputs to shape future directions, strategic outcomes and indicators.
5. Draft the Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using all inputs and insights shape the draft Strategic Plan
6. Feedback on Draft Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Executive Officer • From Staff • From Board
7. Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the Strategic Plan • Shape action from Strategic Plan

Our vision: Children eating well and as a result, thriving in all that they do

Every Tasmanian young person should have access to fresh local Tasmanian produce that is nutritious and tasty and part of a regular routine of eating and socialisation within the school community. Nutritious food is the pathway to happy young people and being the 'Healthiest State in Australia'. We believe in food equity for all children, meals cooked from scratch, at least 20 minutes sit down eating time, eating fresh, local and seasonal produce, focusing on the five food groups, and the connection between nutritious food, positive learning and social skill development.

Our role: Supporting school communities to thrive

Each school can play a role in creating a positive culture around food. To do this people need knowledge and skills in food literacy, sourcing, cooking, presenting and promoting food. Building connections and engagement with all schools, local producers and suppliers, partners and government, will help achieve reinforcing policies to support a strong food culture of enjoyable eating.

Guiding principles:

Principles shape our culture and guide future choices. In all that we do, School Food Matters will be:

- Collaborative and supportive

By collaborating with like-minded organisations, we can have a bigger impact on 'everyday' food choices in the wider community. This will have flow-on effects for school children and their families. We will support and help build capacity in the groups we work with.

- Creative and enthusiastic

We will build on our current practice and find new ways to work and achieve results. Our enthusiasm will be catching.

- Flexible and family friendly

Not every school is the same. We need to be flexible and have tailored approaches that respond to needs. This flexible and responsive approach with schools also includes how our team, and Board work together.

- Evidence-based and equitable

There is a large amount of research that underpins the need for nutritious eating. We will demonstrate how children and families are better off because of our work. All Tasmanian school children deserve to have equitable food choices.

Our name: School Food Matters

School Food Matters relates to eating nutritious food at school as well as the many matters of maximising the positive benefits of school food. School Food Matters will help build knowledge and skills; educate and activate school communities on nutritious eating; advocate and bring about change; promote the sourcing of fresh, local produce and the growing of food; and being sustainable in all matters of school food. Our commitment is to continue **supporting school communities to thrive**.

Future directions and strategic outcomes

Future directions organise and group work that is similar. Within each future direction are strategic outcomes we want to see happen. There are four future directions and sixteen strategic outcomes.

1. **Educated and activated communities:** four strategic outcomes
2. **Building capacity through our work:** five strategic outcomes
3. **Tasmanian children eating Tasmanian food:** five strategic outcomes
4. **Resourced to succeed:** four strategic outcomes

Bringing it all together – strategic overview

<i>We are:</i>	School Food Matters	
<i>What we want to see:</i>	School Children – Eating well and as a result, thriving in all that they do	
<i>Our role:</i>	Supporting school communities to thrive	
<i>We believe in:</i>	Food equity for all children, meals cooked from scratch, at least 20 minutes sit down eating time, eating fresh local and seasonal produce, focusing on the five food groups, and the connection between nutritious food and positive learning and social skill development.	
<i>In all that we do we will be:</i>	Collaborative and Supportive, Creative and Enthusiastic, Flexible and Family Friendly, Evidence Based and Equitable	
<i>Our Future Directions and Desired Strategic Outcomes</i>	Educated and activated communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State government has a mandated school food program and food literacy is taught in schools. Parents and school staff become healthy food champions. School principals support healthy school eating programs, canteens and the workforce. Strong relationships exist between staff, schools, communities and business. 	Building capacity through our work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are the “go to organisation” for nutritional advice, assistance and information around feeding children well. The SmartFood Program (food service accreditation) creates a positive food culture. School Food Service staff and volunteers are appropriately trained, motivated and engaged. Digital and print communication resources are useful and well utilised. School Food Services are well managed and economically self-supporting.
	Tasmanian children eating Tasmanian food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled kitchen workforce cooking school food from scratch, in well-equipped school kitchens. Tasty and nutritious school food choices. School connections with local, fresh produce growers and suppliers. Meal time is as important as play time. 	Resourced to succeed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A supportive skills-based board with appropriately trained and motivated staff. A range of alternative and consistent funding sources. Needed technology and equipment is available. Active supportive partnerships. Well recognised brand. Strong membership base.
<i>Measures of progress: How well are we doing and is anyone better off</i>	Child health data e.g. obesity/dental health Consumption of fruit and vegetables data Satisfaction survey results Funding support Volunteer numbers Staff retention ratios Report on learnings of school lunch trial	Number (%) of schools, corporate and individual members. Number (%) of in-house food services Number (%) of other ways of delivering a school food service Number (%) of schools achieving gold/platinum standard
<i>Our friends and partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasmanian Government through the Dept of Education, Dept of Health and Communities Tasmania Local Government Environmental Health Officers Move Well Eat Well Program School Health Nurses Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Oral Health Unit Loaves & Fishes Tasmania/Foodbank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families Tasmania - Family Food Patch Eat Well Tasmania Various producers Menzies Institute of Medical Research & University of Tasmania

Actions we can take to advance our strategy

Actions are either programs that continue from year to year or projects that have a beginning and an end. The next step after developing the strategy is to prepare a five-year delivery plan that identifies when actions will be taken, who will be responsible and how much funding will be allocated. The following table contains a range of actions that can be allocated to the delivery plan.

Educated and activated communities	Building capacity through our work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition our brand around our new name. • Communicate directly with politicians so they are aware of our work and energised to act. • Schedule regular face to face meetings with school principals and key staff, to advance school food security. • Lobby the School Principals Association and the Tasmanian Association of State Schools • Build a social media platform to communicate with schools, families and provide useful information • Advocate for a State Government school food plan and the teaching of food literacy in schools to support our work • Provide input to the Education Department Curriculum processes • Conduct information sessions with School Association/School Council • Provide input into the Premiers post COVID Economic and Social Recovery Plan • Use 'Well Fed Tasmania' Food Van to educate schools and communities and promote our local food and eating well • Explore becoming a member of Brand Tasmania • Develop a MOU with Oral Health Services – health promotion unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice on food selection and menu planning in partnership with the DoH Community Dietitians and Oral Health Services • Refine SmartFood (Canteen Accreditation Program) to increase participation • Assist with achieving good canteen management and operations • Build on-line options for workshops and training • Assist with the development of policies around nutrition • Provide food safety information • Deliver seminars, newsletters, food related workshops for canteen managers, teachers and the school community • Review the design and content of handbooks and procedures to ensure they are current, literate specific and useful for school food delivery staff/teachers • Develop resources that are useful and informative for volunteers • Build a social media platform to provide food advice to schools and volunteers • Train school-based food delivery staff in cooking from scratch • Recognise skills through the annual SmartFood awards program
Tasmanian children eating Tasmanian food	Resourced to succeed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link schools to local food producers and in particular, fruit and vegetable producers • Lobby to get appropriately equipped kitchens at all schools • Design, deliver and report on the sit-down lunch pilot - 2020 • Develop food plans with schools • Develop menus with DoH Dietitians and school-based food delivery staff • Encourage and work with school kitchen gardens • Establish a no confectionary policy in schools as well as a milk and water only drink policy • Successful school lunch pilot and program introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a rolling three-year financial plan in conjunction with government funding partners • Increase the number of schools, corporate and individual memberships • Identify additional sources of revenue • Identify and implement individual staff development programs • Develop a board skills matrix and ensure all skills are represented • Utilise board networks to promote the work of the organisation and gain support • Continue to build a team of partner organisations • Development and implement a new brand for the organisation • Utilise appropriate Reference Groups that support our vision