



THE GROWTH BUDGET

Cost of Living

BUDGET
2025

Hon Louise Upston Minister for Social Development and Employment

22 May 2025

Backing for food banks extended

The Government will back community-based food banks for a further year as New Zealand recovers from a cost-of-living crisis, Minister for Social Development and Employment Louise Upston says.

“The \$15 million in support announced today will be managed by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the New Zealand Food Network and partner agencies – meaning help for people who continue to need it.

“This will support the work of the Food Network, regional food hubs and community food providers, as they jointly distribute more than 4.5 million meals a month.

“Existing funding for the Food Secure Communities Programme was a Covid response measure and never intended to be permanent. It would have expired at the end of June 2024, but we know demand remains high, mainly driven by the cost of living.

“That’s why continuing support for food security remains important, with the Treasury expecting the pace of economic recovery to be slower than previously forecast.

“Our \$15 million investment in the community food sector for 2025/26 will support and maintain:

- national and regional food distribution infrastructure to distribute purchased and rescued bulk food to community providers at low or no cost and during emergencies and disruptive events (\$7.9 million)
- food security initiatives which increase community food resilience and self-sufficiency (\$1 million)
- food providers and hubs to purchase and/or distribute food through foodbanks and community centres to meet the increased demand for food support (\$6 million)

“This investment in food security also complements other Government initiatives supporting families and children, such as FamilyBoost. It also aligns with Government targets to increase student attendance and achievement. Addressing food insecurity also contributes to wider priorities on health, employment, and tackling violence and crime.

“Because it’s also important for the Government to know whether social investment and community initiatives are working, this funding includes \$100,000 for MSD to better understand the programme’s impact while wider decisions are made about the future of food security programmes,” Louise Upston says.

ENDS

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Notes for Editors

- This initiative has been enabled by reprioritising \$15 million within Vote Social Development to fund Food Secure Communities for another year. No new money was required.
- Funding will be managed through MSD.
- The New Zealand Food Network (NZFN) plays a key part in the food distribution infrastructure, helping build capability in food providers and rescue organisations.
- NZFN supports more than 500,000 people per month on average by distributing over 4.5 million meals per month through 63 food hubs, as well as hubs and providers that experience increased demand for food.