

## Media release: Urgent action needed to tackle food security in the ACT

### Key points

- a. The number of Canberrans facing food insecurity is rapidly increasing, including double income families.
- b. Community food services are struggling to meet demands – urgent action from the ACT Government is required.
- c. We urge the ACT Government to continue to provide sustainable funding to enable food relief network actors to source sufficient quality food to meet demand.

**Canberra, 3 February 2025.** The demand for food relief services has increased between 25% and 75% in the last 12 months, according to a report released by VolunteeringACT.

The Report 'Food Insecurity in the Canberra Region: A Strategic Picture' highlights the challenges Canberrans face in accessing quality, affordable food and the struggle of services to support them.

'Street pantries run by local communities such as Pam's Pantry in Gungahlin and larger community sector organisations such OzHarvest and Communities at Work all told us of the rise in the number of people using their services.

'Many of the 50 organisations in the food relief sector do not receive any government funding. Staff and volunteers are using their own money to support those in need. The ACT Government must step in to support those Canberrans facing a tough time by expanding the funding for organisations providing food relief' said Jean Giese, CEO of VolunteeringACT.

The Report builds on the work undertaken in 2023-24 with the Canberra Food Relief Network which is coordinated by Volunteering ACT. It highlights additional logistical challenges in the storage and distribution of food and makes timely recommendations for the newly elected ACT Government.

"As a small community pantry, we do not receive any government support. We aren't classified as a charity or recognised as an asset, which makes things more challenging for us. Nonetheless, we strive to support many Canberrans in need of food and other essentials. We work diligently to gather supplies and donations; however, the reality is that we are struggling to meet the increased demand," shared Pam Zielke, Pam's Pantry Founder.



“Over the past 12-18 months we have had a 20% increase in demand for food services and even our Op Shop is assisting more people seeking affordable clothing, toys and household items due to the cost of living crisis. We desperately need more donations of good quality food and volunteers to help with the running of Canberra City Care. We rely on approximately 50 volunteers each week, many older retired people with great hearts and we have a number of people helping who have some form of disability. This enables us to reach approximately 1,200 families and households across Canberra each week,” added Randolph Albrecht, Operations Manager at Canberra City Care.

The need for increased investment from all levels of government in food relief has never been greater, given food relief is currently the most common type of emergency relief in Australia. The report has provided a range of recommendations for the ACT Government to review.

The complete report is available on our [website](#).

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**Media contact:**

For interviews or queries, please email our Marketing and Communications team on [comms@volunteeringact.org.au](mailto:comms@volunteeringact.org.au) or call 0432132869.

**About VolunteeringACT:**

VolunteeringACT is the peak body for volunteering and provides community information services in the Canberra region.

We also deliver programs for people experiencing disadvantage and isolation, people with disabilities, and people needing support for mental wellness.

VolunteeringACT wishes to acknowledge and pay respect to the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region and recognises any other peoples or families with connection to this Country. VolunteeringACT is committed to reconciliation and will continue to walk alongside First Nations Peoples and embrace the traditions, stories, and wisdoms of the oldest continuing cultures in the world.