

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK REPORT

Pathways to food security: Scoping a Social
Supermarket model in Onkaparinga

August 2025

Introduction

Food security work to date in South Australia has focused on the food relief sector, not addressing the systematic causes of food insecurity, and providing a short-term 'band-aid' to deeper social issues. Accessing emergency food relief can lead to feelings of embarrassment and shame for recipients.

Social Supermarkets, however, are a social enterprise food assistance model. This model is newer to South Australia, yet common in Europe and the UK. They are considered to bridge the gap between charitable food donation and food retail, providing a stepping-stone between reliance on food relief and self-sufficiency. They aim to tackle food poverty, providing a dignified way to access low-cost food and groceries.

They specifically address food insecurity through:

- offering choice of food and access to low cost, nutritious food in a retail-like environment
- providing access to wrap around supports, services and referral pathways
- providing opportunities for learning and skill direction
- strengthening social connections and networks
- providing opportunity to connect with food, such as through a café, cooking and gardening.

This project will:

- further scope the feasibility of a place-based Social Supermarket hub in the Seaford region which has been identified as high need
- explore how coordination between existing food relief pantries and services could be strengthened using Social Supermarket principles.

It utilises previous work and research and use tools such as the Best Practice Rubric to ensure the approach is evidence based.

Community engagement purpose and techniques

The purpose of the engagement was to inform our Social Supermarket scoping report which will provide recommendations on the feasibility and next steps for implementation to the Department of Human Services (DHS), Council and community organisations and groups.

The engagement was aimed to create a vision for a hub and codesign what it could include. It was undertaken with four stakeholder groups as outlined below. Throughout the engagement the social supermarket was referred to as a "community food hub".

Community / residents:

Engagement of residents was targeted to Central South District (Seaford, Port Noarlunga South, Seaford Meadows, Seaford Heights, Seaford Rise, Maslins Beach, Moana and Old Noarlunga) and the Southern region (Aldinga, Port Willunga, Aldinga Beach and Sellicks Beach).

The objectives of the engagement with community were to:

- Design meaningful solutions that address the needs of the community.
- Inform and raise awareness with the community of this approach.
- Gather local intel and ideas and identify any barriers that might need consideration.
- Help shape the vision and model.

- Develop local ownership and opportunities for ongoing involvement.

The engagement aimed to find out:

- What they believe the outcome and operations could look like.
- What essential foods and household items they would like to see stocked.
- What programs or services would they find helpful to have on site.
- What it should feel like when they walk in (about the atmosphere and values).
- Anything we should consider, i.e. accessibility.
- Any other ideas and dreams for the space.

Community engagement was open between 29 July and 18 August 2025.

The following channels were used to drive engagement and participation:

Technique	Reach
Place based community drop-in sessions at Seaford Community Centre and Hastings Street Hall	10 attendees
Community vision boards at Seaford Library and Seaford Community Centre (static displays)	Unknown
Staffed stall in Seaford Shopping Centre x 2	Unknown
Your Say page with online participation tools	1,040 page visits 885 unique visitors 354 contributions
Email to Your Say members in the Central South and Southern districts	781 recipients 452 opens 92 link clicks
Email to food network promoting the participation opportunities	120 email addresses
Flyers with QR code directing to Your Say page for dissemination, for example at Community Centre, Library and Seaford Shopping Centre stall	Unknown
Library Screen graphic at Seaford Library	Unknown
General Facebook post	Reached 17,699 people Generated 223 link clicks
Targeted Facebook post	Reached 11,395 people Appeared in feeds 26,414 times Generated 374 link clicks
Letter to MPs	3 letters

Community service sector:

The objectives of the engagement with community services sector stakeholders are:

- To build a shared understanding and purpose around the approach
- To define roles and identify opportunities to collaborate

This engagement aimed to find out:

- What the stakeholder values about the approach.
- If they are willing to partner and what this could look like ie service delivery on site, hosting workshops or groups, referrals to the hub.
- If there are opportunities for co-contribution to the funding on a hub If a part of an existing community pantry, would they be interested in exploring a 'networked' approach and what this would look like for them.

The following channels were used to drive engagement and participation:

- Workshops with the Emergency Relief Network, Seaford Network, Onkaparinga Food Security Collaborative, Central South District Reference Group and Board of Management operated Community Centres.
- Community services sector stakeholder online survey, administered through Survey Monkey.
- Email to 150 stakeholders with link to stakeholder online survey.

Local business:

The objectives of the engagement with local businesses were:

- To consider and understand what in-kind or financial support they could offer.
- How it could benefit their business.

The following channels were used to drive engagement and participation:

- Local businesses stakeholder online survey, administered through Survey Monkey.
- Emails to 2038 relevant local businesses through Economic Development team, Business and Tourism Associations and registered food businesses contact list.

Local supply chain stakeholders:

Engagement with supply chain stakeholders (local producers and farmers) has been outsourced to the Hills and Fleurieu Local Food Futures Local Food Activator who is currently:

- Working with local farmers and producers to understand the long-term feasibility/sustainability of social supermarket hub(s) and existing food pantries/services as a distribution point for their sales (local supply chain logistics).
- Identifying types of food that could be sourced locally and sold, such as fresh produce, cheeses, meats, and the price points.
- Considering what will be needed for this to be successful, including infrastructure and logistic needs.

Engagement is still to be determined with the Hills and Fleurieu Local Food Futures Local Food Activator.

Local supply engagement will continue until the end of January 2026.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Three hundred and thirty-three people responded to the question regarding household composition.

Of those respondents:

- 37% would be shopping as a family with children living at home.
- 29% would be shopping as a couple with no children living at home.
- 17 % would be shopping as a single person living on their own.
- 10 % would be shopping as a family with adult dependents living at home.
- 7% indicated an 'other' household composition.

For those with children we asked which age group they were in.

Of the 164 respondents:

- 47% had children aged between 12-16.
- 35% had children aged between 5-11.
- 32% had children aged between 3-5.
- 29% had children aged 17+.
- 24% had children aged between 0-2.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Three hundred and twenty-six people responded to the question regarding employment status of adults in the household.

Of those respondents:

- 48% reported having at least one adult in full time employment
- 34% reported being retired
- 32% reported having at least one adult in part-time employment
- 14% reported at least one adult in the household having caring duties

24% of respondents who identified as a family (either couple or single parent) with children living at home did not report any adult in the household working full time.

35% of respondents who reported having an adult in the household with caring responsibilities reported that person also worked full or part time.

TRANSPORT

Of the 461 people who responded to this question regarding how they usually travel around their community:

- 68% reported car or motorbike.
- 19% reported walking.
- 10% reported public transport.
- 2% reported cycling.
- 1% reported a transport service such as taxi or Uber.

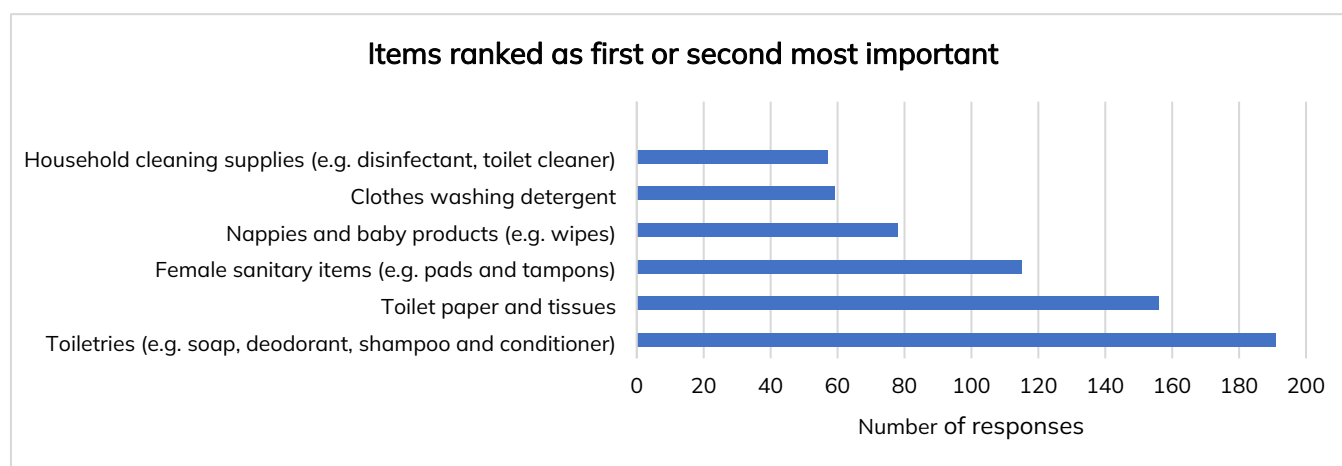
Community food hub feedback

FOOD AND PRODUCTS

Survey respondents were asked besides the standard food staples like fruit and vegetables, meat and dairy, if there are any other food items they would like a community food hub to stock. The top six most frequently listed items are listed below. A full list of items suggested can be found in the appendix.

Response	Count
Pasta / rice / noodles	42
Bread	36
Tin/can goods	35
Feminine hygiene	29
Cereal / oats	26
Snack / lunchbox foods	26

Residents were asked to rank a list of grouped household items in order of importance to them. The below table shows how often each group was ranked as first or second most important. Toiletries, toilet paper and tissues and female sanitary items were the three groups of items most often ranked as first or second most important.



SERVICES, PROGRAMS and OPERATIONS

When asked what community support services residents would like to see offered onsite (free text box), three priority areas were identified:

- Health services (123 mentions) - including GP and nurse check-ups, allied health (dental, optometry, audiology, physiotherapy, OT), nutrition and healthy cooking support, women's, men's and maternal/child health, preventative care and mental health services.
- Financial support and counselling (118 mentions) - including financial counselling, literacy and planning support, help navigating government services, access to emergency relief vouchers, payment assistance and basic banking services.
- Housing and homelessness support (111 mentions) – including for affordable housing, navigating applications, tenancy help, emergency and domestic violence support and advocacy on housing access and rental pressures.

Other themes consisted of the following in order of importance:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Social work and service navigation
- Community connection & inclusion
- Family and parenting support
- Employment, education and life skills
- Material aid & emergency relief

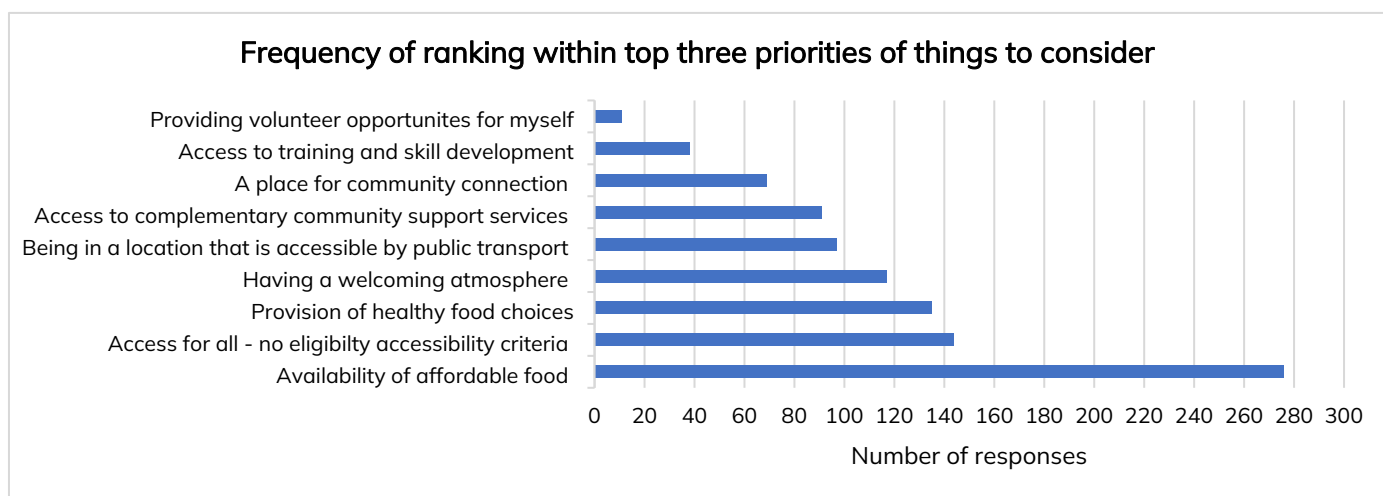
When asked about what programs or workshops residents would like to be offered (free text box), two clear priorities emerged:

1. Cooking and nutrition programs (198 mentions) - that teach affordable, healthy, and practical cooking skills, from basic and children's classes to creative, cultural, and dietary-specific workshops using pantry staples and food hub stock.
2. Budgeting and financial skills development (176 mentions) - including household budgeting, debt and bill management, wise spending and saving, tax and Centrelink help and financial literacy for youth.

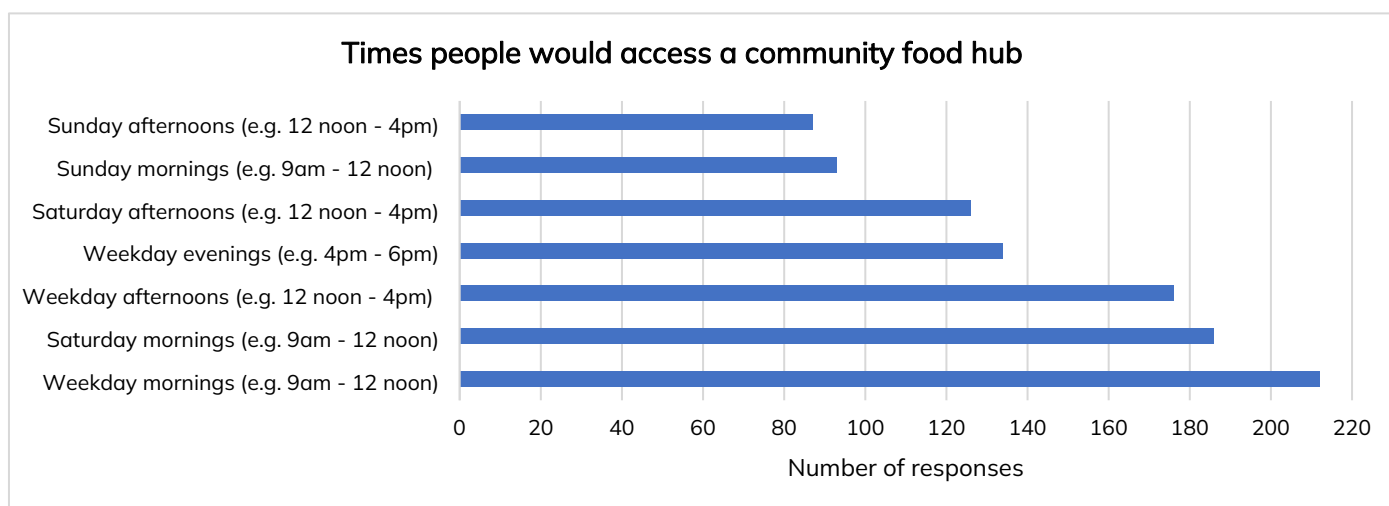
Other ideas included in order of preference:

- Gardening, growing and sustainability workshops
- Parenting, family and children's programs
- Creative development and job readiness
- Health, wellbeing and self-care
- Community connection and peer support
- Practical life skills

When asked to rank the top three things they think are most important for a community food hub to consider, availability of affordable food was the identified as the highest priority, followed by access for all and the provision of healthy food choices. The following shows how often each, were selected in people's top three.



When residents were asked at what time they would access a community food hub, weekday morning, weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings were identified as the most likely times. However, responses were evenly spread.



At the end of the survey, respondents were provided with the opportunity to share any other feedback about a potential community food hub in Seaford in a free text box. One hundred and forty-three people completed this question. Top themes from these comments included:

- General positive comments (e.g. *“it would be a great idea”*) and comments about the service being needed (e.g. *“I know many families locally that would benefit from this”*).
- Suggestions and ideas about services and activities that could be offered (e.g. *“someone to offer advice on dietary requirements – meal planning”*).
- Product ideas (e.g. *“low cost ready to eat meal packs”*).
- The importance of a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere where people’s dignity is respected (e.g. *“I would like it to be somewhere where all were welcome and not embarrassed to be seen there”*).

A small number of respondents (2) questioned the need for a food hub and whether this is council’s role. A further 7 respondents stated that they did not support taxes or rates funding a community food hub initiative.

Your Say ideas boards

An ideas board on the Your Say page invited feedback on what would make a hub feel connected and supportive, as well as general suggestions. Key themes included empowering the community, drawing on local and global models such as food cooperatives and social supermarkets, supporting local producers, creating opportunities for people to care for and share with one another, and highlighting the value of friendly volunteers.

Vision boards, shopping centres stall and community drop-in sessions

Aligning with the Your Say results, other community engagement reported toiletries, toilet paper and tissues, nappies and baby products as a priority. They also highlighted providing for dietary requirements for example low FOD-MAP and gluten free foods and pet food.

Main themes around community services were again similar to Your Say results, highlighting the importance of:

- Health and medication support (pharmacist drop-ins, general health professionals).
- Financial counselling.

In addition, the following services were highlighted as important:

- Access to government and social services support (Centrelink, My Aged Care, Tax Office).

- Legal and administrative assistance (JP services, documentation help).
- Technology support and digital literacy (phone/ICT assistance).
- Use of student placements to support service delivery (social work, ICT).

Program and workshop priorities aligned with the Your Say results, highlighting strong community interest in cooking, nutrition, food-related activities and opportunities for social connection.

When considering what was most important to consider, the availability of affordable food, access for all, having a welcoming atmosphere and a place for community connection featured highly.

We heard that residents would most likely shop on weekday mornings and weekday evenings, showing the need to consider after hours opening for those working. Some highlighted that consideration of pay cycles is important as it is harder to make ends meet towards the end of the fortnight.

To make a hub feel welcoming and supportive, people emphasised the importance of:

- A welcoming and friendly environment with kind, approachable staff and volunteers; a safe and inclusive space to gather.
- Comfortable amenities including comfortable seating, tables, indoor and outdoor areas, light filled spaces and a cozy atmosphere. Many talked about the 'vibe' of a place.
- Social connection and community with opportunities to meet, catch up with friends, build connections and engage in activities together.
- Food and cafe culture with sharing food, tea/coffee, morning or afternoon teas, and casual café style interactions.
- Community engagement and activities with notice boards for events/programs, music, local performances, donations of fresh produce, and spaces for children (creche) or co-located services.

Summary from community feedback

Overall, the community strongly supports this initiative, highlighting the need for a welcoming, inclusive and dignified space with useful products, activities and services.

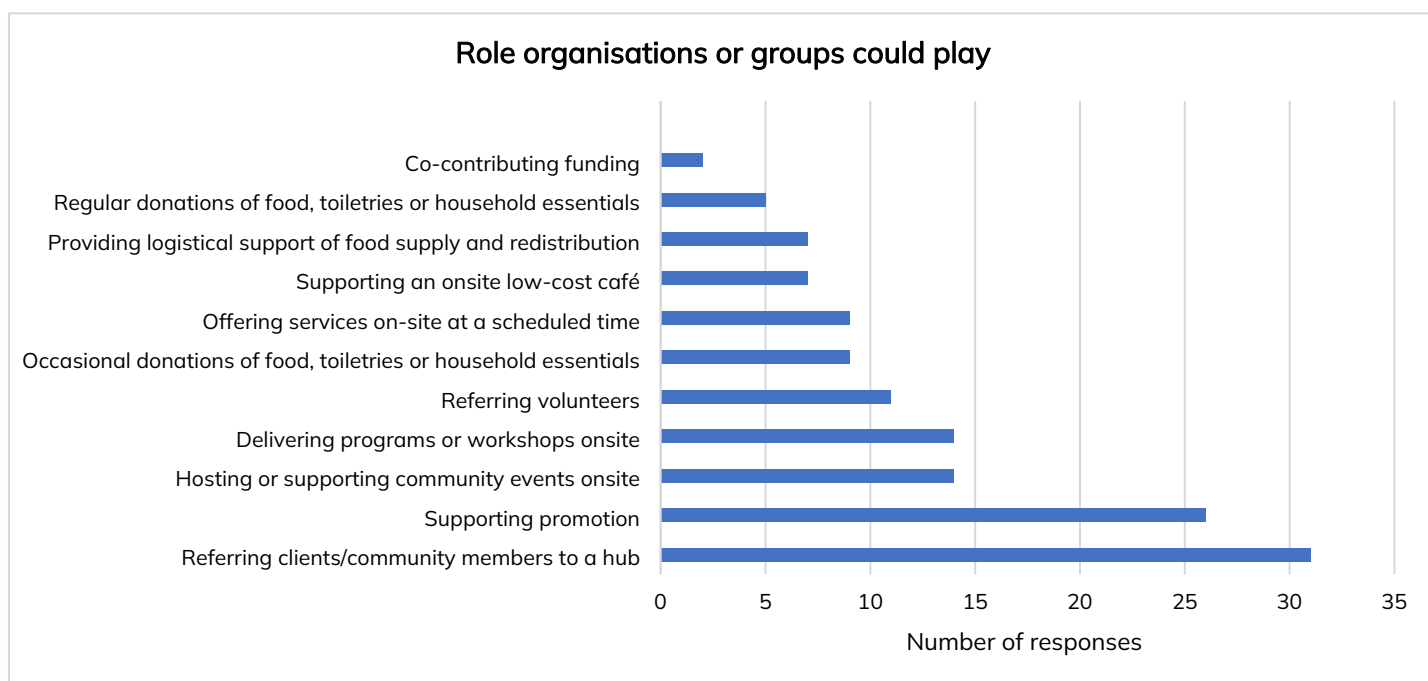
Respondents valued opportunities for social connection, participation and donation as well as engagement with local businesses.

Key considerations included accessible locations, comfortable cafe style spaces, appropriate opening times and fair access to resources. While a few raised concerns about funding and council's role and involvement, the overall response was positive, emphasising the initiative's value and relevance.

2. Community services sector

We received 42 community stakeholder partnership survey responses.

When asked about what role their organisation or group could play, many mentioned supporting promotion and referring clients and community members to the hub. Several also offered to host a program and workshop or provide a service on site.



As part of the scoping, we are exploring a gift card system to provide food relief in a dignified and empowering way; enabling those most in need to shop at the proposed hub just like they would with a Coles or Target gift card. When asking services if they were interested in providing gift cards to their clients or program participants if the need arises, 55% of respondents said they would be interested but would need to consider how this was funded. Eight per cent said they could support clients in this way and have an existing budget to do so.

Of the respondents, 69% also indicated interest in a networked model where we seek to strengthen and connect existing food pantries, food relief services, community gardens and local programs and services.

Eighty per cent of services believe their role could be shared promotion of services and activities and 56% indicated the desire for a platform to share ideas, insights and challenges. Almost half (48%) were interested in both redistribution of excess food across partnerships and joint funding applications.

We asked the community sector to rank what they thought was most important to consider when establishing a community food hub. When considering what people selected in their top three, the following were chosen most frequently:

- Availability of affordable food - 85% (selected as first, second or third priority by 85% of people)
- No accessibility criteria – 54%
- Welcoming atmosphere – 48%
- Accessible by public transport – 42%
- Access to complementary community support services -27%
- A place for community connection – 15%
- Provision of healthy food choices – 15%
- Access to training and skill development – 3%
- Volunteering opportunities – 0%

Similarly to community, the sector valued availability of affordable food, access for all and having a welcoming atmosphere. However, services also indicated that accessibility by public transport is important while the community did not identify this as a high priority. The community place more value on the provision of healthy food choices.

The community sector offered four key insights that they believed would make a hub a place where people are connected and supported. These again aligned closely with community feedback. They included:

- Welcoming and supportive staff and volunteers.
- Collaborative and connected services.
- A safe and accessible location and facility.
- A calm space that encourages connections and interactions.

They also highlighted some challenges to consider. These included:

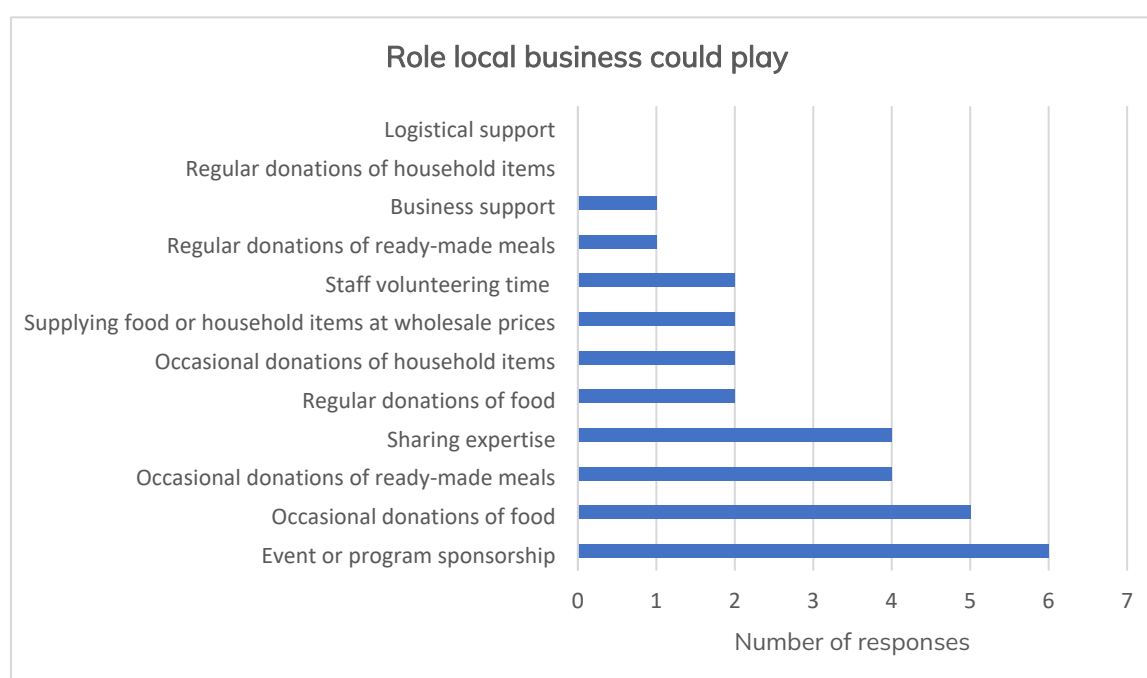
- Uncertainty of funding and long-term sustainability.
- Resourcing Constraints including volunteers and limited organisational capacity.
- Concern about adequate food supply and availability.
- The need for accessibility and infrastructure.

While there are some foreseen challenges, the community service sector was strongly supportive of the proposed hub.

3. Local businesses

We received 13 local business survey responses.

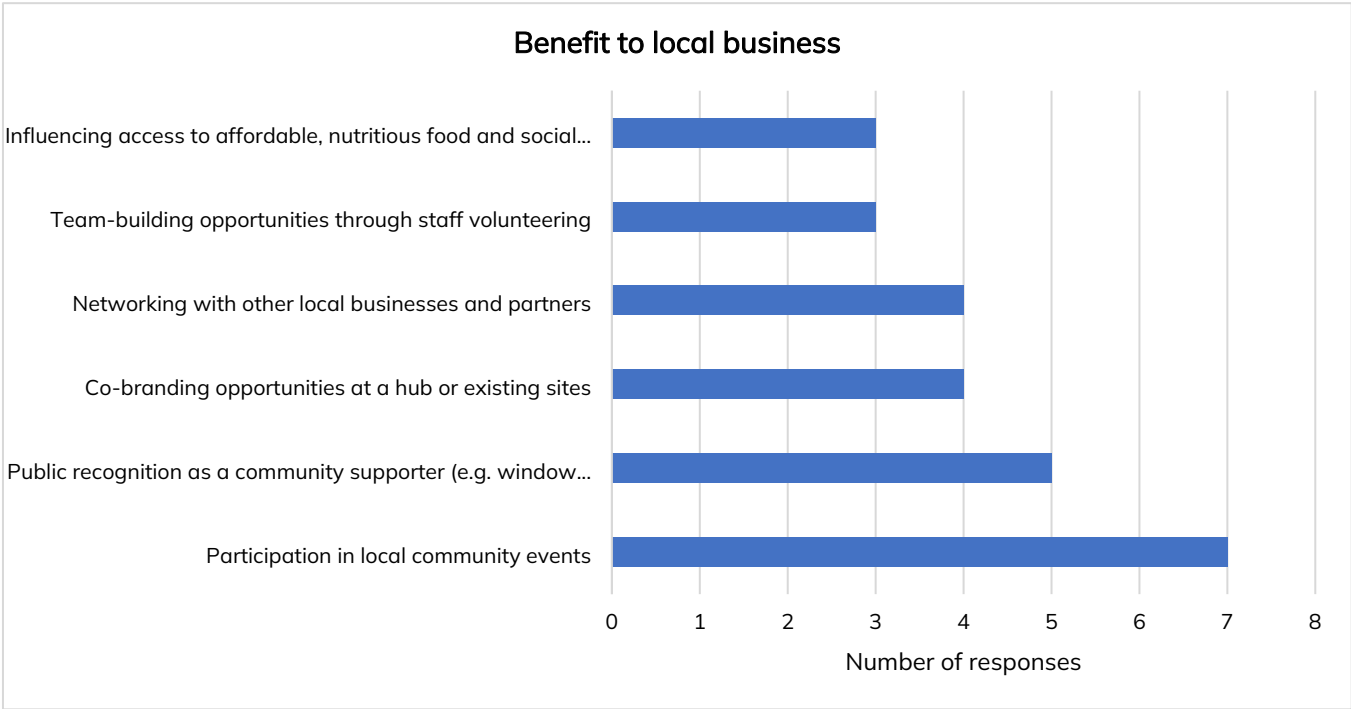
When asked about what role their organisation or group could play, the most common response was support through event or program sponsorship.



Three businesses identified that they would like to consider selling their local products at the proposed hub.

Two businesses were interested in subsidising the cost of fresh, nutritious food for those experiencing hardship through possible community fund and/or gift cards. One supermarket indicated they could provide gift cards to their store.

When we explored how their business might benefit from partnering, most highlighted participation in local community events and through public recognition as a community supporter.



Evaluation

The engagement was successful in achieving its objective for each stakeholder, however more engagement may be necessary at a later stage with local businesses.

The use of both general and targeted Facebook posts proved successful in generating engagement with 43% of referrals to the Your Say page originating from social media.

The Your Say email to registered members in the relevant suburbs generated an additional 19% of referrals to the Your Say page.

Of the 1,040 visits to the Your Say page, 48% lasted for more than one active minute, indicating people were engaged with the content. A contribution rate of 28% also indicates an above average level of engagement.

Face to face engagement opportunities, although connecting with fewer people, allowed for more qualitative discussions.

We now have a clearer understanding of the products the community would like stocked, the services and experiences that are most important onsite and how to ensure people feel connected and welcomed. Key partners have been identified along with their potential contributions, and we have noted some challenges for further consideration. Overall, the response has been positive, and the insights gathered will help us refine our model and strengthen our pitch for external funding.

Sign-off

All feedback reports are to be reviewed by the Engagement Unit
(engagement@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au)

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Appendix

Full list of items listed in response to the question:

Besides the standard food staples like fruit and vegetables, meat and dairy, are there any other food items you would like a community food hub to stock?

Response	Count
Pasta / rice / noodles	42
Bread	36
Tin/can goods	35
Feminine hygiene	29
Cereal / oats	26
Snack / lunchbox foods	26
Personal hygiene / toiletries	25
Nappies / baby food/ formula	22
Pet food	22
Ready to eat / frozen meals	20
Sauces	13
GF foods / special diet	12
Cleaning products	12
flour / baking staples	9
Biscuits/ desserts/ choc/ lollies	9
Tea / coffee	8
Legumes/ lentils	8
Seasoning / spices/ herbs	8
Spreads (jam, peanut butter)	7
Nuts / seeds/ dried fruit	6
Bakery items	6
Sugar	6
Toilet paper	5
Frozen foods (e.g. veg)	4
Vegetarian/ vegan foods	4
Bulk foods	4
Eggs	2
Juice	2

Other items that were identified were blankets, clothing, paper towel, butter / oils,

long-life milk, easy to prepare for rough sleepers, bottled water, vegetable, seeds, soft drink, packaged meat (e.g. ham), Paracetamol, kitchen utensils, school supplies, international foods, foods/meals that don't require heating, long life goods (e.g. milk), laundry items, blankets, sleeping bags.