

Food for Life Market, Warwick Farm, Sydney



Background

In 2004 a telephone survey of 1100 households in WF showed that 21% households were food insecure – that is, they had run out of food and been unable to buy more, within the last 12 months.

WF is a low-income suburb near Liverpool in NSW, with few fresh food outlets, poor transport, and a high proportion of people living in social housing and people from non-English speaking background

Community food co-op

In 2006, the Health Service started working with local residents and with the Salvation Army to explore ideas to improve food access. Many people voted for a food co-op. Community Builders funded the project for three years (\$300,000) to get off the ground, and Housing NSW provided a 3-bedroom house. After many delays for planning approvals, refurbishment and modification (eg wheelchair ramp), the market opened in 2009.

Food is sourced from Foodbank and donations from local businesses, with a focus on healthy foods and fresh fruit and veg. The market opens three mornings a week.

Over 600 residents have signed up as members, and 80-100 shop regularly at the market, where for a weekly membership fee of \$10, they can access a 'green bag' full of groceries and some household items. In just over two years, there have been 8,000 visits with more than 200 tonnes of food provided. The market is staffed by community volunteers who have been trained through TAFE. After two years, the market is making a modest profit.

Evaluation

Evaluations carried out in 2009 and 2010 showed that the market was being accessed by the 'target' group, ie people on low incomes. Furthermore, among those interviewed, the rate of food insecurity reported was lower than the previous year. Access to food and ease of getting food home had both improved. 45% of respondents reported getting all or 50% of their weekly food from the market.

A great sense of community has developed around the market, and many volunteers have gone on to other training courses and jobs as a result of their involvement .

For more information, ring Food 4 Life market on 02 8798 5928.