

Operation Reach

Accountability Report 30 June 2024



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Executive summary

Our food bank (which we call “Operation Reach” because we are reaching people in our community who are really struggling) has grown dramatically from the humble food bank we had prior to Covid-19.

We continue to be so grateful to the Ministry of Social Development for supporting this programme, especially for providing a significant amount of funding (and produce) from 2020-23 that enabled us to scale this programme.

We continue to be overwhelmed by the needs we are seeing in the community, especially with increased costs of living and a marked decrease in available funding across the board.

The key challenge for us continues to be to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme. We have historically received a lot of funding from MSD. However, with much of our funding previously being linked to Covid and adverse weather events, this funding is now significantly reduced, and we now have a funding gap of \$50,000 for 2024. We continue to explore other funders who might fill the gap but sadly there is not a huge well of money available for food banks. Given this environment, we have established a social enterprise (Op Shop) which is partially filling this funding gap.

We continue to be very grateful for the many volunteers who give so much of their time to this cause and the various agencies we work with.



Fresh produce boxes

How does our food bank work?

Prior to Covid-19 (April 2020) our pantry was filled with an assortment of non-perishable food items donated by people. The contents were generally ad hoc and food parcels were created as needs arose based on what was in the pantry at the time.

Post Covid-19, SALT has purchased non-perishable food in bulk and produced standard food parcels (which we call “Booster Boxes”) based on Aotearoa Food Parcel Measure guidelines for content variation and nutritional benefits. Based on recipient feedback we have continued to improve the content and nutritional value of each box. Our 2024 calculations for each Booster box based on a qualified nutritionist assessing the contents is that each box contains ingredients to make approximately 48 equivalent meals.

On a Monday weekly, SALT make food parcels with fresh fruit and vegetables (“Fresh Produce Boxes”), each box containing approximately 21 equivalent meals. A percentage of this is food recovery items from Kiwi Harvest Food Recovery and local food recovery. Increasingly, during 2023 and 2024, we have had to purchase more fresh produce for the Fresh Produce boxes in an attempt to meet the Aotearoa Food Parcel Measure standards. Along with our ongoing purchasing and thanks to a local fresh freight company partnering with a produce supplier to deliver us a generous donation of fresh produce (e.g. potatoes, carrots, broccoli, onions, apples) weekly, we are just managing to meet the AFPM standard according to a recent discussion and calculation with Kore Hiakai staff.

A lot of thought and finessing has gone into what we prepare for our community and Booster Boxes dovetail with our Fresh Produce Boxes to ensure nutritious meals can be made. A registered nutritionist and surveys of key stakeholders has guided this process to ensure food supplied is relevant to recipient's needs.

We have also created our own version of a Social Supermarket where recipients can choose the non-perishable items they want rather than receiving a standardised food box. This has been very successful, with an increase from 66% of recipients in January to 88% of recipients in June choosing to SHOP rather than take a premade booster box.



Part of our social supermarket



A booster box

Due to the significant increase in demand, as of September 2023, recipients are only able to receive a parcel each fortnight – this means we are making 40-65 parcels each week and supporting 80-130 families a fortnight.

As SALT has continued to collaborate and serve the Hibiscus Coast Community, referrals for food parcels are received from a range of individuals, places and agencies, including other Food banks, Te Whata Ora, Plunket, Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police, schools, social workers, youth workers, mental health workers, and community organisations.

SALT has been very fortunate to engage with a large team of volunteers (75-80 people) who fulfil a variety of roles from the unloading of food delivery trucks, packing food and produce boxes, delivering food parcels and meals, and providing follow up care and support.

What outcomes are we seeking?

The key outcomes we are attempting to achieve for our clients are:

- increased food security
- increased dignity through choice
- increased Hauora (physical, mental/emotional, social, spiritual wellbeing)
- reduced stress
- decreased food waste
- increased engagement in community
- increased connection to relevant services (employment, budgeting, social work, parenting courses)
- more equitable distribution of resources
- increased attendance at school

Have we achieved these outcomes?

Analysis of our 2023 recipients shows that 74% of people are receiving between 1-5 boxes a year and only need temporary support to get through a difficult time. Those needing ongoing support have complex situations, many that are not going to change quickly i.e. Chronic illness or injury, terminally ill, refugees/immigrants, mental health & addiction, grandparents raising grandchildren, pensioners, and solo parents with young children. We believe we are achieving our outcomes, albeit it is hard to quantify this. The feedback we are receiving from clients would suggest Operation Reach is definitely addressing some of our outcomes listed.

Client Feedback

In addition to many clients saying how thankful they are, some recent feedback includes:

- My son Jasper also passes along his Thankyou he was soooo excited about the ice cream and biscuits haha it's been a while since we've had treats like that. Pray for me this may be one of my last boxes if I get the job I am going for will be able to give back.
- Hi there I wanted to thank you all for the kindness and generosity that you have given my family. This food really helped us all especially the kids. Thank you again.
- Thank you for all you guys do in the community. It makes a difference
- I come here feeling completely spent and when I leave, I am full and ready to start the week.
- I just wanted to Thankyou once again for saving us. We've been spoilt it was like Christmas when we got home and got to open everything up. It's helping us so much and I already feel so much better after eating something proper. I would love to come help out for a few hours sometime to say Thankyou.
- Hours have improved so possibly last box but you have saved us with all your support. Thanks so much.
- Thanx so much for the meal box put together for me that's a real nice box full of very healthy food. Please tell the team at Church thanks so much. Lots of good nutrition
- Many thanks and appreciation for your wonderful food parcels. they make such a difference in our Community
- It has been amazing and helped us a tremendous amount. Now I am working Mondays and I will still come to help but not as much as I used to. Our income has been much better than 6 months ago. I wish my box to go to someone who is desperately needing one
- Have started job and this is the last Foodbox. Thankyou all so much for the support you have no idea how this has impacted my family
- Getting cleaning products in the SHOP is really helpful, because they're so expensive to buy
- Kia Ora Salt Team. Just wanted to say thank you very much for helping me and my Whanau I with the parcel. Your hard work doesn't go unnoticed. Very much appreciated.
- Thanks for the bedding from Gods shop was all put to great use.
- Client was also very excited to get the flyer for budgeting workshop. In fact, she jumped up and down and spent time in our children's area colouring with her children. It was a very special moment to see the family so happy.

Food parcel and meal statistics

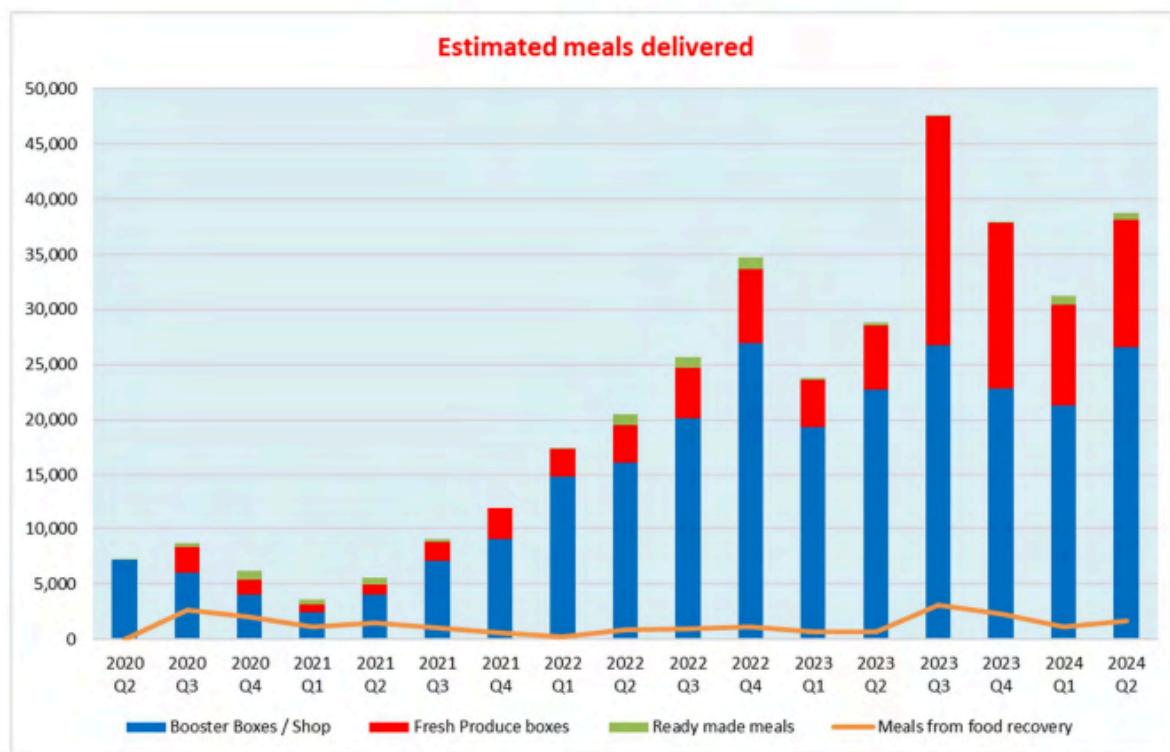
During the first 6 months of 2024 we have produced and/or delivered Booster Boxes (non-perishable food parcels), Fresh produce boxes and ready-made frozen meals as follows:

	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	Total
Booster Boxes					
Food parcels produced	745	705	339	506	2,295
Boxes delivered	891	761	443	553	2,648
Equivalent meals	26,730	22,830	21,264	26,544	97,368
Fresh Produce boxes					
Fresh produce boxes delivered	1,041	752	435	554	2,782
Equivalent meals	20,820	15,040	9,135	11,634	56,629
Equivalent meals from food recovery (approx)	3,123	2,256	1,096	1,626	8,101
Ready-made meals					
Frozen meals delivered	60	24	809	577	1,470
Equivalent meals	60	24	809	577	1,470
Totals					
Total equivalent meals delivered	47,610	37,894	31,208	38,755	155,467
Meals from food recovery	3,123	2,256	1,096	1,626	8,101
Food recovery % (per Quarter)	6.6%	6.0%	3.5%	4.2%	5.2%

Key points to note:

1. The Booster boxes and Fresh Produce boxes are provided to families experiencing food insecurity and the ongoing challenges of the increased cost of living.
2. Since August 2021, Food Recovery produce supplied has been varied in quality and volume. Salt has had to supplement the Produce Box contents with additional product it has purchased.
3. The number of equivalent meals has been estimated based on the following assumptions:
 - Our booster boxes equivalent meals statistics have been updated to 30 meals per box, which more accurately represents the volume of food given.
 - Over time we have significantly increased the quality and volume of fresh items in our Fresh Produce boxes. An exact meal/serving per box total is difficult to calculate but on average is now estimated to be a minimum of 20 single serve meals.
4. For the past 12 months, we have estimated conservatively that the food from rescued or recovered sources has averaged out at approximately 6.0% on the total meals delivered.

Meals delivered since the establishment of Operation Reach (April 2020) are illustrated below:



Preparing to make fresh produce boxes on a Monday

Development of Social Enterprise

Salt received a \$50k interest free loan from Baptist Foundation enabling the establishment of a new social enterprise – an Op shop based in Orewa.

The initial Op Shop in Orewa opened on 1 July 2023 and has proved to be a massive blessing to Salt, providing significant funding for all of the programmes we run (and especially Operation Reach where funding is becoming more scarce). It is fair to say the shop has exceeded all expectations and has provided a much needed reliable source of ongoing income so we can be less dependent on external grants and donations. It has also provided a number of other benefits, including the following:

- Providing a healthy community for volunteers who are lonely and need connection.
- Access to bedding, furniture and clothes for those in desperate need (ie items gifted rather than being sold)
- A walk in fridge has been installed in the rear carpark of the shop enabling storage of fruit and vegetables for Operation Reach
- The brand new tail lift truck that Salt purchased to pick up and deliver furniture for the Shop is also used extensively for Operation Reach (picking up pallets of food from Kiwi Harvest and other suppliers). NB: It is also being used to transport all gear for Easter camp this year which is a massive help for Northgate Baptist.
- The truck is sponsored by a number of parties providing an additional \$24k per annum of income and increases the exposure of Salt in the Community.



Our sponsored truck

Given the success of the first Op Shop, a second Op Shop was established at the beginning of 2024 in Silverdale. This is a smaller satellite shop with all product supplied from the main shop in Orewa. The profit from both shops is contributing to the ongoing running of the foodbank and helping to reduce the funding gap we are experiencing as we continue to try to meet the food security needs in our community.

Highlights from the past 6 months

- Support team for families when picking up their food parcels on Monday afternoons
- Large number of volunteers for Monday Produce Box packing and distribution
- Support from MSD, Baptist Foundation, HereForNZ, KiwiHarvest, NZFN, Treasures & Fresh Freight
- Ongoing development of relationships with local suppliers to reduce costs
- 'SWAP table and 'EXTRAS' tables allowing recipients to take items they want and need, leading to improved satisfaction and reduced waste
- Fully functioning version of a 'Social Supermarket' allowing increased dignity through choice & reduced waste. 88% of recipients chose to SHOP.
- Exploring social enterprise options to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our community – Now two op shops running
- Sourcing bedding and clothing etc. for families in need via Op Shop
- SALT Truck allowing us to pick up pallets of donated and purchased stock without extra transport/overhead costs
- Continuing improvement to internal systems and communication with recipients to increase efficiency and recipient satisfaction
- Strengthened community relationships and collaboration to ensure meeting community needs and pooling resources
- Being able to meet and talk with recipients which helps to assess need and facilitate supportive relationships
- Connecting recipients with budgeting, employment consultants and other care services (pastoral, mentoring, counselling)
- Collaboration with other local food banks to share resources, support development of systems and ensure we are not supplying the same households – equitable distribution of resources

Some of the challenges we have faced

- Funding restraints due to increased numbers/demand and cost of food. Since September 2023 we have moved to recipients only being able to receive a food parcel fortnightly.
- Uncertainty around future funding available from MSD and other funders and a funding gap of \$50,000 for 2024.
- Cost of supporting those needing ongoing support due to complex cases (26% of households) is significant and needs additional funding streams
- Increased costs (staff, equipment etc)
- Reduced protein in boxes due to funding restraints
- Unable to supply families with toilet paper and cleaning products on a regular basis due to reduced supply from NZFN and funding restraints
- Increased fuel costs for delivery drivers
- Less fresh food available from food recovery

Further information

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Some of our volunteer team, Christmas 2023