How to make food in institutions more sustainable.

EMRS Public Sentiment Polling Summary – August 2023

Background

COVID-19 showed us how vulnerable our Australian regional food systems are to disruption. So too have climate impacts like floods, storms, drought, and fires. Our food systems also contribute emissions. For our future resilience we need sustainable food systems that reduce emissions, secure producer livelihoods including SMEs, regenerate our landscapes and biodiversity, shorten supply chains, and provide equitable access to healthy seasonal food. **Internationally sustainable food procurement by institutions is regarded as a significant lever to prepare our food systems for the future.** The Sustainable Institutional Food Procurement Tasmania (SIFPT) Project is jointly funded by Sustainable Table and the Tasmanian Government through the Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan. The project delivers against the recommendations from the 2022 Churchill Fellowship of Leah Galvin.

EMRS Polling

This document shares the high-level findings of the Sustainable Institutional Food Procurement Public Sentiment Polling conducted by EMRS in August 2023. The polling is a key output of the SIFPT project. The purpose of the polling was to gauge the support or otherwise for governments prioritising practices of sustainable institutional food procurement. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the survey tool. An online panel was used to gather the research data. The total sample was 1400 Australians, 1000 mainlanders and 400 Tasmanians. Please refer to Appendix 2 for an explanation of the survey process and the reliability of the data. Per EMRS the sample size of 1,400 yields overall results accurate to within ± 2.62 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

What did the EMRS Polling find?

- **While there is some variation, irrespective of factors such as age, gender, household income, employment status and education level, there is consistently high support for governments to adopt more sustainable approaches to food procurement for institutions such as aged care, hospitals, school meals, Meals on Wheels, university campuses and prisons.**
- **Tasmania has the highest level of support, followed by Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, though all states and territories are supportive of sustainable procurement practices.**
- **When buying food for institutions, universally we want food to be healthy, and for governments to try to source locally, include small and medium enterprises and for the environment and impacts on climate change to be considered.**
- **The results of the survey are shared in the next five Tables which are for the entire sample, by state, age and gender, employment status, household income and education level.**

Next steps – Seek investment in *farm to institution* programs to create a united approach between Tasmanian farmers, processors, institutional food service, businesses, governments, researchers, and sector peak bodies.

If you have any questions about the polling or the *Sustainable Institutional Food Procurement Tasmania* project, please do not hesitate to contact Leah Galvin leah.galvin@live.com.au. Thank you for your interest.

Table 1. All Questions by State – Total Agree %

	Tasmania	All mainland	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	NT	ACT
Meals served in public institutions should be healthy	**91%**	83%	81%	87%	81%	78%	84%	71%	83%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source the food from local[1] farmers and food processors	**91%**	82%	80%	85%	83%	83%	81%	82%	80%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source food from small and medium sized farmers and processors	**80%**	72%	69%	74%	72%	76%	74%	92%	71%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to have a low environmental impact to reduce the risks of climate change	**76%**	71%	68%	74%	69%	70%	76%	70%	76%

[1] Please note the Tasmanian sample were asked, *when buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source the food from Tasmanian farmers and food processors.*

Table 2. All Questions by Age and Gender - Total Agree %

	Gender			**Age**					
	Male	Female	Non-binary	18 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 69 years	70 years or over
Meals served in public institutions should be **healthy**	81%	88%	83%	75%	76%	82%	90%	89%	96%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source the food from local[2] farmers and food processors**	82%	87%	100%	77%	79%	82%	81%	90%	94%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source food from small and medium sized farmers and processors**	72%	77%	100%	66%	72%	72%	71%	78%	85%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **have a low environmental impact to reduce the risks of climate change**	66%	78%	100%	74%	80%	67%	65%	75%	73%

[2] Please note the Tasmanian sample were asked, *when buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source the food from Tasmanian farmers and food processors.*

Table 3. All Questions by Employment Status – total agree %

	Employed full-time or self-employed	Employed on a part-time or casual basis	Engaged in home duties	Retired or on a pension	Unemployed – looking for work	Unemployed – not looking for work	Student
Meals served in public institutions should be **healthy**	83%	88%	80%	92%	69%	88%	74%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source the food from local[3] farmers and food processors**	83%	87%	82%	92%	72%	82%	78%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source food from small and medium sized farmers and processors**	74%	77%	75%	81%	65%	63%	59%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to have **a low environmental impact to reduce the risks of climate change**	71%	78%	72%	72%	66%	67%	80%

[3] Please note the Tasmanian sample were asked, w*hen buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source the food from Tasmanian farmers and food processors.*

Table 4. All Questions by Household Income – Total Agree %

	Under $40,000	$40,000 to $59,999	$60,000 to $79,999	$80,000 to $99,999	$100,000 to $149,999	$150,000 to $199,999	$200,000 or more
Meals served in public institutions should be **healthy**	82%	89%	86%	81%	86%	88%	81%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source the food from local[4] farmers and food processors**	80%	95%	83%	85%	85%	92%	71%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source food from small and medium sized farmers and processors**	71%	85%	75%	75%	76%	74%	65%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to have a **low environmental impact to reduce the risks of climate change**	66%	79%	72%	73%	75%	79%	70%

[4] Please note the Tasmanian sample were asked, *when buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source the food from Tasmanian farmers and food processors.*

Table 5. All Questions by Educational attainment – Total Agree %

	Not completed Year 10	Completed Year 10	Completed Year 12	TAFE certificate or diploma	University graduate	Postgraduate studies
Meals served in public institutions should be **healthy**	89%	84%	79%	87%	86%	87%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source the food from local[5] farmers and food processors**	77%	85%	81%	89%	84%	88%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to **source food from small and medium sized farmers and processors**	60%	76%	74%	77%	77%	77%
When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to have a **low environmental impact to reduce the risks of climate change**	66%	69%	67%	72%	78%	84%

[5] Please note the Tasmanian sample were asked, *when buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source the food from Tasmanian farmers and food processors.*

Appendix 1. Survey

6317-24 Leah Galvin Consulting
Food Service Research
Quantitative Online National Survey

Welcome.

EMRS is conducting a survey to gather the views of Australian adults on the level of community support around some aspects of purchasing and serving food in public institutions.

The survey will only take about 3 minutes to complete, depending on your answers, and at the end you will be provided with the name of the client.

Your survey responses will be protected by strict conditions of anonymity and confidentiality. If you would like to read EMRS' privacy policy, please click the following link: https://www.emrs.com.au/privacy-policy.

Thank you for assisting us with this important research.

Please click on the Next button to begin the survey.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS (1)

DQ1. Thank you. So that we have a good representation of people in the survey, we would appreciate you answering a few demographic questions. **Are you…** **SINGLE RESPONSE**	**1. Male** **2. Female** **3. Non-binary** **4. Other** **5. Prefer not to say**
DQ2. Are you… **SINGLE RESPONSE**	**1. Under 18 years – TERMINATE** **2. 18 to 24 years** **3. 25 to 34 years** **4. 35 to 44 years** **5. 45 to 54 years** **6. 55 to 69 years** **7. 70 years or over** **8. Prefer not to say**
DQ3. Which suburb and postcode area do you live in? *Please start typing and then click on your selection as it appears in the list.* **SINGLE RESPONSE**	**INSERT DROP DOWN MENU OF SUBURBS AND POSTCODES:** **SUBURBS AND POSTCODES IN AUSTRALIA** **Other – TERMINATE**
TERMINATING STATEMENT: Unfortunately, you fall outside the scope for this survey, but thank you for your interest.	

SECTION A – Food Service in Public Institutions

A1. State and Federal governments are responsible for buying food for meals served in public institutions. *Examples of public institutions include aged care, hospitals, Meals on Wheels, schools, prisons, and university campuses.* **On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree", to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** **ROTATE**	
a. Meals served in public institutions should be healthy.	**SINGLE RESPONSE** **1 = Strongly disagree** **2** **3** **4** **5 = Strongly agree** **6. Don't know/ unsure**
b. When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source the food from local [PIPE IN Tasmanian FOR RESPONDENTS BASED IN TASMANIA] farmers and food processors.	
c. When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to source food from small and medium sized [PIPE IN Tasmanian FOR RESPONDENTS BASED IN TASMANIA] farmers and processors.	
d. When buying food for meals in public institutions, governments should always try to have a low environmental impact to reduce the risks of climate change.	

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS (2)

Finally, to help us analyse the results demographically, we have five additional questions.	
DQ4. Which of the following best describes your household? Are you…… **SINGLE RESPONSE**	**1. A single/ couple, have not had children** **2. A single/ couple, all children have left home** **3. Family with children under 18 years living at home** **4. Family with children 18 and over living at home** **5. Other** *(specify)* **6. Prefer not to say**
DQ5. Which is the highest level of education you have received? **SINGLE RESPONSE**	**1. Not completed Year 10** **2. Completed Year 10** **3. Completed Year 12** **4. TAFE certificate or diploma** **5. University graduate** **6. Postgraduate studies** **7. Prefer not to say**
DQ6. What is your employment status? **SINGLE RESPONSE**	**1. Employed full-time or self-employed** **2. Employed on a part-time or casual basis** **3. Engaged in home duties** **4. Retired or on a pension** **5. Unemployed – looking for work** **6. Unemployed – not looking for work** **7. A student** **8. Prefer not to say**

DQ7. Which of the following best describes your annual household income? **SINGLE RESPONSE**	**1. Under $40,000** **2. $40,000 to $59,999** **3. $60,000 to $79,999** **4. $80,000 to $99,999** **5. $100,000 to $149,999** **6. $150,000 to $199,999** **7. $200,000 or more** **8. Prefer not to say/ don't know**

CLOSING STATEMENT:

Thank you for completing the survey and helping us with this research.

The survey has been conducted by EMRS on behalf of Leah Galvin Consulting, policy advisor to governments across Australia.

EMRS is bound by national privacy legislation that respects the rights of all respondents. If you would like to read our privacy policy, please click the following link: https://www.emrs.com.au/privacy-policy/

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact us on (03) 6211 1222, or email enquiries@emrs.com.au.

Please click on the Submit button to lodge your survey responses.

Appendix 2 Survey Methodology – this information was provided by EMRS.

EMRS is certified to ISO20252:2019 the international standard for market and social research, certificate MSR #888027; The project was delivered to the EMRS Quality System.

Methodology

Online Surveying

Online research is becoming a far more popular way of collecting information. Conducting surveys online has several practical advantages, such as they are cheaper than telephone surveys and can be administered significantly faster than more conventional methods, such as mail surveys. A further key advantage of online surveys is convenience. Respondents can more readily participate in the research, they can answer at a time convenient to them, and take as much time as they need to answer the questions.

EMRS has its own online panel of Tasmanian consumers, which has rapidly grown over the last several years. All EMRS panel members have been recruited via phone surveys calling mobiles and landlines. To capture responses interstate, EMRS will subcontract PureSpectrum to collect ~1,000 responses.

To ensure high-quality online data, EMRS and PureSpectrum puts the following vetting measures in place:

- Speedster, i.e., screening out a respondent who shows low engagement by completing the survey quickly without much thought.
- Straight-ling, i.e., screening out a respondent who shows low engagement by providing their answers to a series of questions in the same place on a rating scale.
- Checking the quality of verbatim comments.

Target Audience and Sampling

The target population from which the sample will be drawn is based on 19,893,359 Australia adults (inclusive of 446,279 Tasmanians) (2021 ABS Census). EMRS will gather feedback from Australian adults with the sub-samples for each state and territory in proportion to the population size of each region, with oversampling occurring in Tasmania.

A sample size of n=1,400 would yield overall results accurate to within ± 2.62 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. In other words, if we were to draw 20 sample populations of this size, in 19 out of the 20, each answer given would be within 2.62 points of the answer that would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. While this sample is large enough and statistically robust to analyse the results from a national perspective, the subsamples are too small to analyse in SA, WA, NT, and ACT.

As requested, EMRS will over-sample Tasmania, with 400 completes, which yields a margin of error of ± 4.90 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Quotas

To ensure the sample is representative of the population, EMRS will set quotas for age and gender in proportion to the population statistics according to the latest ABS data at regional level. In other words, the sample profile will match the population statistics according to age and gender in each region, with Tasmania oversampled.

Quotas

n= 1400

	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
18-34	47	47	39	39	29	30	10	10
35-54	54	55	44	46	34	36	11	12
55+	58	64	44	50	37	40	14	16
Total	159	166	127	135	100	106	35	38
	325		262		206		73	

	WA		NT		ACT		TAS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
18-34	15	15	2	2	3	3	54	53
35-54	19	19	2	2	3	3	58	63
55+	18	20	1	1	3	3	82	90
Total	52	54	5	5	9	9	194	206
	106		10		18		400	

Data Preparation and Delivery

Once data collection is complete, EMRS will clean the data, ensuring that the SPSS data labels are correct. EMRS will deliver a clean data file in either SPSS or Excel, along with Excel data tables.