

**Foodbank WA – School
Breakfast Program
Research**

FINAL REPORT

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Foodbank WA

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NOTE: Throughout this report, the dividing pages between sections are illustrated with images that were drawn by children participating in the in-class questionnaire. If the child finished the questionnaire prior to their peers, they were asked to “draw a picture of yourself doing your favourite physical activity or eating your favourite healthy food”.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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1. Executive summary

1.1. Research background

Foodbank WA is a not-for-profit organisation which sources donated and surplus food from the food and grocery industry to distribute to the welfare and community agencies that provide food assistance to people in need. Among the beneficiaries are schools in low socioeconomic areas of Western Australia via the School Breakfast Program (SBP) whereby schools are able to provide their students with a nutritionally wholesome breakfast.

This research was commissioned to assist in the understanding of the processes involved with SBPs as well as the potential outcomes. To achieve this, a qualitative methodological approach was utilised via Case Studies. Two metropolitan and 2 regional schools were included. In each of these schools, researchers conducted focus groups and semi-structured interviews with school leaders and administrators, teachers, parents, SBP volunteers and coordinators, school nurses and children over a period of 2 or 3 days in each school. A 'student in-class questionnaire' was also developed and administered in 6 metropolitan schools (including two of the Case Study schools). Key stakeholders were also interviewed via semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The absence of pre-intervention data, and that this methodology is not an experimental design, is noted as a limitation. The discussion throughout provides a detailed an in-depth understanding of the array of potential outcomes of SBPs rather than quantifying the extent, or degree, to which individuals are impacted. The importance of this qualitative information should not be underestimated, however, as this provides a rich source of information to contribute to a body of shared learnings between schools and guidance for assuring a continued contribution of SBPs.

1.2. Summary of findings

Stakeholders, and all those participating in the case studies, universally acknowledged that SBPs are of high importance (fulfilling a range of needs), and high value (delivering a range of benefits). There is a strong desire for ongoing commitment to SBPs and this research supports their value and contribution.

There are a number of different models for running SBPs – from parent facilitated, external volunteer facilitated, school-lead and teacher-lead. In each of these models, it was consistently expressed that there was a wide range of children reached from those who were food insecure (physical need) to those who may lack engagement in school (emotional need).

There are a range of perceived outcomes of SBPs which were consistently described by participants in this research:

- **Child and school**
 - Food provision to a variety of child cohorts (referenced under Section 8.1).
 - An improvement in child engagement in the classroom and school.

- An improvement in school attendance.
 - An improvement in behaviour management.
 - Development of child social skills.
 - Positive emotional benefits to children.
 - A positive influence on child safety.
 - An ability to create consumption patterns and habitual behaviours.
 - An increase in health education and awareness.
 - An improvement in academic outcomes.
 - Learning responsibility and developing 'life' skills.
- **Parent and community**
 - Easing emotional stress for working parents.
 - Providing financial relief for low SES parents.
 - Fostering family cohesion and parental engagement in the school.
 - Development of social capital and community cohesion.
 - **Volunteers**
 - An opportunity for socialising with other volunteers.
 - An opportunity to build confidence for those not currently participating in the workforce who may be intending on returning to work.
 - A contribution to good mental health.

A potential unintended consequence was noted by some participants in terms of the risk of SBPs creating a mentality of dependence. However, almost all who acknowledged this risk note an overarching perception that this potential risk is far outweighed by the perceived benefits described above.

Overall, consistent feedback was that the success of SBPs at a school level depends on:

- A strong level of advocacy from school leaders to initiate and maintain the SBP within the school.
- The ability to source volunteers (particularly in metropolitan schools) and maintain relationships with volunteers in order to eliminate any impost on school staff.
- The importance of Foodbank WA being an accessible information source to schools, coordinators and volunteers.
- The ability for schools to source additional funding within their community and the role that Foodbank WA can potentially play in assisting with this.

1.3. Overall recommendations

Development of communication materials and information collateral

A consistent theme throughout this research was the desire for Foodbank WA to have greater communication materials and to provide guidance on a variety of topics including:

- School leaders
 - Identifying and understanding the need for SBPs
 - Introducing a SBP to your school community

- How to recognise volunteers within your school
- Volunteers / coordinators
 - Guidelines on starting up a SBP
 - How to engage community partners and develop community links
 - Recipes and menu ideas
- Teachers
 - What SBPs are – their goals and intended outcomes

Explore volunteering partnerships

It is also recommended that consideration is given to exploring partnerships with existing volunteering networks to assist schools in sourcing volunteers that are external to the school – such as actbelongcommit.org, or Volunteering WA. Information collateral would be required to provide to these organisations which would need to describe the role and function of SBPs as well as provide parameters around different ‘options’ for volunteering to enable an understanding of expectation.

Education materials

It is recommended that Foodbank WA consider the provision of basic education materials only, and explore partnerships with existing agencies for the delivery of more detailed health and nutrition materials. Food provision should remain as Foodbank WA’s primary role.

Strengthen funder relationships

It is also recommended that Foodbank WA seek to strengthen its relationship with funders where possible in order to generate greater awareness and knowledge of the contribution SBPs make.

Recognising volunteers

Consideration should be given to additional mechanisms for recognising volunteers in ways that foster shared learnings between volunteers and coordinators and enable Foodbank WA to create greater awareness of the information and materials that can be accessed through it. One example would be an ‘Annual SBP Volunteer Morning Tea’.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY



2. Background and methodology

2.1. Background to the research

Foodbank WA is a not-for-profit organisation which sources donated and surplus food from the food and grocery industry to distribute to welfare and community agencies that provide food assistance to people in need.

Among the beneficiaries are schools in low socioeconomic areas of Western Australia. Foodbank WA has established a School Breakfast Program (SBP), whereby schools are able to provide their students with a nutritionally wholesome breakfast, where they might not have had access to one otherwise.

In addition to the SBP, Foodbank WA is involved in a number of other programs in schools, with a focus on healthy eating and physical activity. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- *Crunch & Sip* – encouraging parents to send a piece of fruit or vegetable with their child to school to have (along with a drink of water) mid-morning or afternoon.
- *Skip Rope, Not Breakfast* – encouraging students to take up skipping as a form of physical activity, and rewarding the development of new jump rope skills.
- *Fantastic Fruit and Veg Adventure* – a board game promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- *Food Sense* – a cooking demonstration in schools.

Schools must submit an application in order to gain access to any of these programs, and applications are assessed on the basis of need by Foodbank WA.

Foodbank WA has a number of objectives stated within its Service Agreement relating to the programs in schools:

1. Through the School Breakfast Program (SBP) to:
 - Improve access to healthy food
 - Improve social and educational outcomes for students involved in the SBP
2. Increase student, teachers and school community:
 - Awareness of recommended types and amounts of foods and drinks to consume and the benefits of healthy eating.
 - Knowledge and skills to adopt a healthy diet (food selection and food preparation).
 - Awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and appropriate levels of physical activity to promote good health.
3. Improve the health promotion and educational environments of schools.
4. Build effective partnerships with education, health and other community agencies to progress these aims.

This research project was commissioned to assist in the evaluation of these objectives.

2.2. Existing research sources and knowledge

While there has been primary research undertaken to evaluate Foodbank WA's programs in the past, this has been focused primarily on School Principals and School Coordinators - that is, the focus of evaluations has been at a 'school level'.

While valuable, stand-alone it does not allow for direct assessment against the primary target audience to which Foodbank WA's programs are designed to reach - children.

Thus, the key objective of this research was to understand the extent to which the programs are fulfilling their objectives as stated in the Service Agreement with the Department of Health through additional exploration of what is 'already known' and additional primary exploration among children and parents.

2.3. The methodology

The methodology was designed to incorporate existing data and knowledge, and gather insights from children and parents, as the primary target of the programs. There were three primary components to the methodology which are summarised briefly overleaf:

- Qualitative case studies within schools
- Quantitative surveys among school students
- Qualitative semi-structured interviews among key stakeholders

2.3.1. Qualitative case studies within schools

A significant proportion of the methodology was the qualitative 'case-study' approach. **Case studies** were utilised for their holistic nature – the ability to examine a topic in an environment and engage with any stakeholders involved, providing a 360 degree view. The many consultations and data sources they entail provide a rich level of detail for each individual case and as an overall whole, allowing us to examine linkages between people and processes involved, rather than treating individuals or systems in isolation.

Case studies allow us to examine issues and themes at a micro level, within individual settings, scenarios, organisations or environs. The depth of research activity means we are able to gauge some of the subtleties and intricacies of situations within a localised context thereby giving us important anecdotes and examples to feed off.

Case studies also enable evaluation at a macro level, examining commonalities and differences, trends and themes which can only be assessed by undertaking case studies in a full range of environments – for example, inclusion of a variety of locations in metropolitan, regional and remote.

In this research, four case studies were conducted. A summary of the elements included is provided below and further discussion is included as an Appendix. In order to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of those participating, the individual schools are not named. However, in order to provide valuable context as to the environmental need for the SBP, a profile of the suburb compared to the Perth metropolitan average (for metropolitan case studies) and the Western Australian average (for regional schools) is provided within the case study sections of this report.

Target audiences included:

	Students	Parents	Teachers	Principal	SBP Coordinator / volunteers	School nurse / population health nurse
Case study 1: Metropolitan primary school Conducted 28 th and 29 th June 2010	1 mini group	1 focus group, 2 family follow-ups	2 concurrent group discussions	2 in-depth interviews	2 in-depth interviews	1 triad interview
Case study 2: Metropolitan primary school Conducted 11 th , 12 th and 17 th August 2010	2 mini-groups (Years 6 and 7)	1 paired interview, 1 individual interview	2 concurrent group discussions	1 in-depth interview	2 in-depth interviews	n/a
Case study 3: Remote district school Conducted 1 st and 2 nd July 2010	3 individual informal interviews	7 individual informal interviews	5 individual discussions	1 in-depth interview	2 in-depth interviews	n/a
Case study 4: Regional district school Conducted 3 rd and 4 th August 2010	1 mini group	1 focus group	1 group discussion	2 in-depth interviews	2 in-depth interviews 1 double interview	1 in-depth interview

Active parental consent was required in order for students to participate.

In all case studies, a high level of flexibility was required in order to speak with the necessary target audiences. As such, some of the interviews would be considered ‘opportunistic’ in nature as it was not possible to pre-recruit participants and all contact with potential participants was done largely at, or via, the school itself.

2.3.2. Quantitative surveys among school students

To complement the qualitative approach, an in-class student questionnaire was developed and sent to the two metropolitan case study schools, as well as four additional schools. Active parental consent was required in order for students to participate. The sample demographics of responding students is tabulated below:

Base: All respondents (n=132)		
	n	%
School year (n=132)		
Year 3	1	0.8
Year 5	5	3.8
Year 6	72	55.0
Year 7	53	40.4
Gender (n=131)		
Male	62	47.3
Female	69	52.7
School (n=132)		
School 1	6	4.5
School 2	14	10.6
School 3	17	12.9
School 4	15	11.4
School 5	52	39.4
School 6	28	21.2

The quantitative surveys were administered only in metropolitan schools. This was because quantitative survey instruments are inappropriate tools for data collection in some of Western Australia’s regional schools (including the two regional case study schools of this research) because of high Indigenous populations.

2.3.3. Qualitative interviews among key stakeholders and partners

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with key stakeholders and partners of SBPs. A total of eight interviews were conducted with:

- Kimberley Population Health Unit
- Cancer Council WA
- South Metropolitan Public Health Unit
- Department of Health (two interviews)
- Curtin University
- National Heart Foundation (WA)
- Unity of First People of Australia

2.3.4. Methodology limitation – non-experimental design

A criticism within the literature around the evaluation of programs such as SBP (primarily in reference to Extended Service School Models, but worthwhile noting for this study) is that they are optimistic in their scope, describing aspirational benefits rather than known outcomes¹. This is an important point to note while reading this report as the case study information – from which the majority of recommendations are based – is derived from qualitative information.

In preparing this report, every care has been taken to capture all perspectives voiced throughout the research and represent them in a way that accurately captures the opinions of those involved in SBPs without over representing. In addition, where possible, the previous research undertaken by Foodbank WA has been incorporated. It is noted, however, that there is a lack of quantitative data (from parents and children) to support many of the qualitative insights obtained as this research does not follow that of an experimental design whereby, for example, pre-treatment and post-treatment data is collected. It is recognised that achieving quantitative data to verify the perceived outcomes would be a valuable undertaking, however, as it would require an element of longitudinal monitoring it was outside the scope of this research.

This report should therefore be viewed as providing an in-depth and detailed understanding of the array of potential outcomes and impacts which can be influenced by SBPs and contribute to a body of shared learnings between schools, rather than quantifying the extent, or degree, to which they are individually influenced. It is not possible to draw conclusions regarding strength of relationships between variables, nor the length of time to influence specific variables from the data collected in this research.

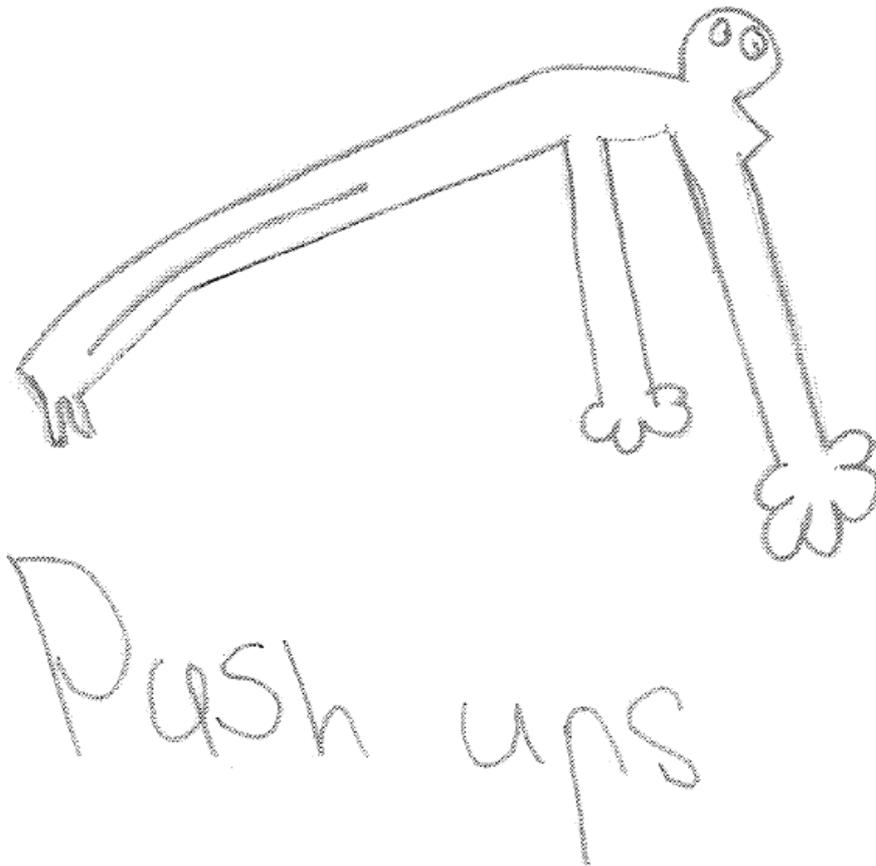
2.3.5. Methodology limitation – lack of ‘pre-intervention’ data

It is noted that within the case study evaluations, there is a lack of benchmark data (either qualitative or quantitative) from which to test and explore several of the hypotheses raised throughout this research and discussed in this report. Similar to that above, this limits the ability to define the extent of impact and degree of influence of variables.

These limitations aside, the importance of qualitative information in forming an understanding of SBPs should not be underestimated. Where possible, specific examples were sought from case study participants in order to explore and provide qualitative evidence against their hypotheses.

¹ Cummings, C; Dyson, A; Papps, I; Pearson, D; Raffo, C; Tiplady, L; Todd, L (2006); Evaluation of the Full-service Extended Schools Initiative, Second Year; London – Department for Education and Skills

OVERALL FINDINGS



3. Overall findings

Throughout each of the case studies and the stakeholder interviews, there was consistent support of the need for SBPs, *“it is incredibly important ...has provided a specific role and space in Western Australia for many years ...its part of the landscape”* (stakeholder).

There were a number of consistent ‘outcomes’, as well as ‘potential considerations’, which emerged and these are summarised below and discussed in further detail in the individual case studies in the following chapter of this report.

Broadly, this research suggests that there are a variety of outcomes impacting on several levels. While the majority of published literature evaluating the impact of SBPs is in relation to benefits to the child, the discussion below is separated into that of benefits / outcomes for:

- The child and school Section 3.1
- Parents and community Section 3.2
- Volunteers Section 3.2

3.1. Outcomes – child and school-level

3.1.1. Food provision

Providing access to food was the most consistent qualitatively mentioned primary ‘outcome’ of SBPs (stakeholders and case studies), and the most frequently mentioned reason for prompting the establishment of a SBP (85.9% rank ‘believed some children are attending school without having breakfast’ in the top three issues that prompted the establishment of a SBP²). In 2009, 254 schools participated in SBP and over 34,000 breakfasts were served per week.

The qualitative case study research suggests that this food provided by Foodbank WA reaches several segments of children:

- Those who are **frequently food insecure** (where breakfast is rarely provided),
- Those who are **infrequently food insecure** (where food is accessible ‘most’ of the time, but there is occasionally some financial hardship experienced in the home),
- Those with **low food motivation** or unwillingness to trial new foods,
- Those **consuming unhealthy breakfasts** (either provided at home, or consumed via the school’s canteen),
- Children who would **otherwise prepare breakfast independently** (because of family members having separate morning schedules).

The potential differences in these cohorts of students has meant that there was considerable discussion throughout the individual case studies in terms of the vast range of observed benefits - these are discussed further throughout this section of the report.

² McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

The benefit of food access is confirmed by participating children. As shown in the table below, children participating in SBPs frequently mention food access as a reason why they ‘like’ attending SBP – 36.6% of all mentions.

Table 3.1.1: Spontaneously mentioned reasons for ‘enjoying’ SBP
 BASE: School student questionnaire, those who have attended the SBP (n=86)

	n	%
Food access		
Eating food/yummy	12	14.0
Helps those who are hungry/don't get breakfast at home	12	14.0
Free food	4	4.6
Lots of variety/different foods	3	3.5
Health		
Learning to make healthy foods	15	17.4
It's healthy	7	8.1
Sociability		
Breakfast with friends/meet people	15	17.4
It's fun/good	13	15.1
Like the helpers/everyone is nice	4	4.6

It is noted that there is no quantitative data in this research that confirms the proportion of children who would have otherwise attended school without breakfast. A recent study commissioned of n=1210 Australians by MBF, however, indicated that “a disturbing number of children skip breakfast claiming there is no time, they are too tired, or can't be bothered having a meal before going to school ...Queensland and Western Australia had the worst record for skipping breakfast”³. This research indicated that 42% of adults reported their child aged 6-18 skipped breakfast at least once a week and on average, breakfast is skipped an average of 1.5 times in a school week in Western Australia compared to the National average of 1.2.

3.1.2. Student engagement

Student engagement, in the school and the classroom, was one of the most frequently mentioned perceived outcomes of an SBP in Foodbank WA's previous evaluation research⁴:

- 93.4% report an improvement in student concentration levels,
- 91.7% report an improvement in engagement in classroom activities.

Throughout the case studies, it was a consistently raised hypothesis that SBPs / eating breakfast positively impact school and classroom engagement - *“levels the playing field ...if kids are hungry they don't engage well in the classroom”* (Principal).

³ MBF Healthwatch survey, 2009, conducted by TNS Healthcare

⁴ McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

Throughout the case studies, Principals, teachers and volunteers discussed the observation that there were both immediate and long-term benefits of increased classroom engagement:

- The **immediate benefits** related to fostering a better classroom environment for other students, and themselves, to learn (increased quality of learning), as well as creating an environment where teachers are better able to focus on teaching.
- The **longer-term benefits** related to overall education and employment outcomes for students (as a result of better immediate engagement).

It is noted that this research does not include quantitative data to support whether concentration and engagement in classroom activities had improved and thus, the strength or degree of impact can not be established. Establishing this would require – for example - controlled, long-term trials and / or clinical testing and was not within the scope of this research. However, the consistency with which this element was discussed within and across the case studies, as well as among stakeholders, is nonetheless indicative of its existence and suggests that it warrants inclusion in this report.

There is a supportive body of evidence within international literature that reviews experimental designed evaluations of SBPs. This literature suggests that cognitive performance of under-nourished children is consistently benefited by the consumption of breakfast. The impacts are less consistent, however, among well-nourished children where in some data there is a notable positive impact and in others, no impact⁵. Taras (2005) summarises much of the literature and acknowledges that the results vary considerably, but concludes that the most notable significant impacts occur among populations who are severely undernourished. Overall, the conclusion reached within this article is that there is an apparent short-term positive impact of breakfast on cognitive skills⁶.

3.1.3. School attendance

Several parents expressed that their children were more willing to attend school on SBP days, for example, *“I always used to struggle to get my son up in the morning, but now he can have breakfast at school he gets out of bed much quicker”* (parent), *“the kids can’t wait to go to school in the morning”* (parent).

Principals and teachers also discussed an observed impact on actual attendance rates, *“I have a child [kindergarten] who I know goes to breakfast club ...they’re always here on Tuesdays and Thursdays [SBP days], but their attendance can be quite poor on other days ...and, they even get to school early on breakfast club days”* (teacher). In the previous evaluation work undertaken by Foodbank WA, 76.8% of Principals / Coordinators of participating SBP schools reported to have noted a substantial or some improvement in class

⁵ Pollitt, E; Does breakfast make a difference in school, Journal of the American Dietetic Association, October 1995 Volume 95 Number 10

⁶ Taras, H, The Journal of School Health, August 2005; 75, 6, Nutrition and Student Performance

attendance. In addition, three quarters (72.8%) report a substantial or some improvement in punctuality to class⁷.

It should be noted that it would be unwise to claim a direct causal relationship between SBP and school attendance rates as there are many variables that influence school attendance. However in the case study schools included in this research, the Principals consistently felt there was “no doubt that it [SBP] was a large contributing factor” (Principal). Below is an example of the change in attendance rates in one of the case study schools since SBP was introduced:

School Attendance Level Records (from Case Study 3)

	Term 1 2008 (pre-SBP)	Term 1 2010 (post-SBP)	% Change
No Students Attending school 90% of the time	78	136	+74%
No Students Attending school 70% of the time	120	242	+102%

NOTE: There is no notable increase in overall student numbers within this school between Term 1 2008 and Term 1 2010.

This observation is consistent with published literature on SBPs. In a review of international studies by Pollitt (1995) it was confirmed in the majority of studies reviewed that school feeding programs increase the attendance rate of children⁸.

3.1.4. Behaviour management

Nine in ten (89.7%) Principals / Coordinators participating in Foodbank WA’s previous evaluation research reported a slight or substantial improvement in the behaviour of students as a result of SBP⁸. There is some discussion in published literature around the hypothesis that SBPs have a positive impact on behaviour management, for example, Terry et al (2000)⁹ in their review of SBPs in Maryland, reported that behavioural problems decreased (among other benefits).

There were consistent spontaneous discussions on the impact of behaviour management throughout the four case studies included in this research. For example, in Case Study 1 it was discussed by the Principal that there was a reduction in suspensions over the two terms post the inception of SBP – however, there was no readily accessible supportive data. In Case Study 2, it was discussed by the teachers that providing children access to healthy foods positively impacted their behaviour, and that having positive adult role models at the start of the day established “a sound platform for the remainder of the day” (volunteer) in terms of behaviour. In Case Study 3, teachers expressed that since the introduction of SBP, and healthy lunches, there was a notable improvement in student behaviour with more

⁷ McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

⁸ Pollitt, E; Does breakfast make a difference in school, Journal of the American Dietetic Association, October 1995 Volume 95 Number 10

⁹ Terry, SG; Lee, TK; Andrews, E; Grasmick, MS; Glendening, PS (2000), Classroom Breakfast, Helping Maryland Students Make the Grade, Maryland State Department of Education

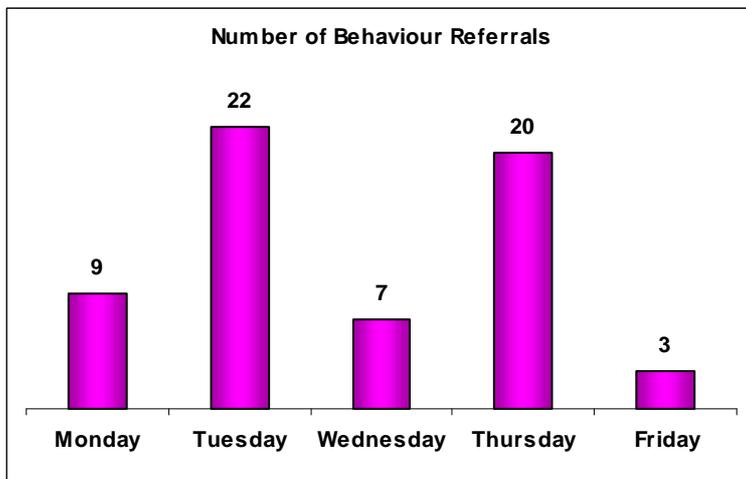
manageable energy levels being “less hyper” (teacher) and “not as quick to pick a fight” (teacher).

In Case Study 4, improved behaviour was cited as a key benefit of the SBP by almost all contacted as part of the research. This view was reinforced by data analysed by the Principal assessing the number of behaviour referrals recorded by day. As shown in the table below, behaviour referrals are highest on Tuesdays and Thursdays – these are the only two days during the school week that the SBP is not delivered. The Principal did not feel there were any other significant factors that would affect the number of behaviour referrals with the exception of fewer children attending school on a Friday.

Behaviour Referrals by School Day (from Case Study 4)

Source: School Daily Behaviour Referrals to the Deputy Principal, data Jan-Aug 2010

NOTE: SBP is provided on Monday, Wednesday and Friday in this school



3.1.5. Development of social skills

There was consistent discussion throughout the case studies that SBP contributed to the development of child social skills. This theory is supported by the previous evaluation research undertaken by Foodbank WA where 86.1% of Principals / Coordinators reported a slight or substantial improvement in social skills¹⁰. It is also consistent with that described in international literature such as that by Bro et al (1996)¹¹ where there was a recorded increase in social interaction between students within two classrooms observed in their experimental design.

The consistently discussed and observed social development benefits across the case studies in this research included:

- **Communication skills** – with children actively engaged in conversations with each other fostered by the sociable environment in which breakfast is delivered.

¹⁰ McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

¹¹ Bro, R; Shank, L; McLaughlin, T; Williams, R (1996), Effects of a Breakfast Program on On-Task Behaviours of Vocational High School Students, The Journal of Educational Research, Nov/Dec 2996, 90, 2

- **Diversification of social skills** – the variety of age groups attending promotes children forming a range of friendships outside what is perhaps their ‘usual’ class group or set of friends.
- **Confidence building** – among children with poor social skills or few friends or assisting in the integration of newer students to the school.
- **Role modelling and peer mentoring** – the ability for children to provide positive role models to each other (i.e. older children with younger children) and observe additional positive adult role models from their interactions with volunteers.

Overall, this development of social skills was perceived to deliver the **development of a broader sense of community** within the school and, in some cases, to **facilitate integration within the school** as it was felt that attending SBP could assist in the ability to “*break down some of the clicks, some of the barriers*” (Principal). In previous evaluation research undertaken by Foodbank WA, 84.6% of Principals and coordinators reported a slight or substantial change in the overall environment of the school¹².

3.1.6. Emotional benefits

The hypothesis that SBPs provide emotional benefits has not been included in Foodbank WA’s previous quantitative evaluation surveys with Principals and Coordinators. However, the perceived emotional benefits for children of attending SBP were mentioned consistently in the qualitative case study environment.

These emotional benefits described included:

- **Reducing a sense of neglect:** Several stakeholders described that lack of access to, and provision of, food could create a sense of ‘neglect’ among young children. It was felt that “*providing breakfast is a nurturing action which has emotional benefits*” (stakeholder). SBP was described as a **caring environment** – “*it starts the day beautifully, it calms them ...they’re happy*” (Principal) and this was reflected by the children themselves – “*it makes you feel happy*” (child), “*they’re like your extended family*” (child). It was also felt to **increase one’s sense of personal belonging** – “*you feel welcomed*” (child), “*they feel accepted and cared for ...valued*” (teacher).
- **Reducing a sense of isolation:** Other stakeholders felt that children who were being taken to school early to facilitate parents arriving to work on time may experience a sense of ‘isolation’ or ‘loneliness’. SBP was described as a program that “*reduces the sense of abandonment with kids who are dropped at school early*” (parent). The SBP provides a social and safe environment which may decrease this sense of isolation.
- **Receiving positive attention:** In each of the SBP case studies that were facilitated by volunteers, it was noted that there were few behavioural problems during SBP. The hypothesis for this occurring was that the children and volunteers had mutual respect for each other and that the children received positive attention from the volunteers, “*they [the children] don’t have to rebel in breakfast club ...they get so*

¹² McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

much good attention from the volunteers that they don't need to seek bad attention' (parent). It was also described as a model that allowed children to leave their home life 'behind' as they prepared themselves for lessons.

Extending on this, the SBP was also described in three of the case studies as a vehicle for providing **pastoral care**. This was achieved because volunteers were familiar with individual children and comfortable in talking to them, and the school's Principal if necessary, about their physical and emotional health – this was, in fact, directly observed by the researchers in two of the four case studies.

The vast majority of published literature around SBPs and nutrition programs in schools does not measure nor discuss the potential emotional outcomes described above as indicators of efficacy – that is, they are focussed more on nutritional health and impact on school characteristics (such as attendance, behaviour management etc) rather than mental health. It is therefore somewhat difficult to provide supportive evidence to this hypothesis through review of external reports. Emotional benefits, and being mentally healthy, may therefore be an unintended benefit of SBPs.

3.1.7. Child and community safety

In several of the case studies, SBPs were also considered to contribute to individual child safety, and overall community safety. This was because children were able to access a safe environment prior to the school's opening hours, and primarily described for parents who would otherwise need to find alternative care for their children or leave them unattended in order to facilitate their employment.

For the surrounding community, it was felt that this meant that providing food insecure children with access to healthy food may reduce negative behaviours within the community as children would be less likely to be unsupervised in the suburb prior to school opening hours, *"it's a safe-haven ...with parents who are going to work early, otherwise the kids are left to wander the street"* (parent).

3.1.8. Consumption patterns and forming habitual behaviours

As referenced earlier in this chapter, there were several groups of children to whom it was felt SBPs reach – from food insecure to those with low food motivation. For each of these cohorts, it was felt that the SBP represented an **avenue to trial new foods**. In all cases, SBP included a greater variety of foods than would be accessible through their home. This facilitated trial and expansion of repertoires in a 'non-threatening' environment through watching the examples set by their peers.

A benefit that was discussed by many stakeholders related to the SBP potential to **encourage habitual behaviours in children** both in terms of the types of foods eaten, as well as the way in which meals are consumed (i.e. encouraging sociability during meal-times).

The benefits of forming habits is discussed widely in the literature, for example Moore et al (2007) who cite that, “habitual behaviours developed in childhood may track into adulthood ...repeated exposure to healthier foods at an early age has been shown to increase the intrinsic rewards associated with their consumption”¹³.

3.1.9. Health education

Health education was also discussed as an outcome of SBPs however, this would be considered a secondary outcome rather than a specific focus of the SBPs included in the case studies as the SBPs did not include any formal education components. Rather, it was felt that children were educated through osmosis via, for example, the types of foods that ‘were’ (i.e. ‘healthy’) versus ‘were not’ (i.e. ‘unhealthy’) available through SBPs. In addition, in some schools it was felt that the SBP was one component of a wider ‘healthy eating’ policy within schools whereby there were ‘no junk food’ policies etc. SBPs, in these cases, were seen as complimentary to a wider health education priority within the school – rather than being able to independently deliver across any health education objectives.

It is worth noting that there were questions raised, in some of the case studies, as to the need for a formal education element within SBPs and in general, it was felt that this was more appropriately linked to the curriculum however further discussion on this is provided in Section 6.6.2.

There were no consistent differences in nutritional education between those children who attended the SBP and those who did not. This includes the naming of which types of foods to eat the least and the most, and how many serves of fruit and vegetables someone their age should eat per day. The data tables are provided in Appendix A.

To provide some anecdotal evidence of this, as referenced earlier in Table 3.1.1 (the spontaneously mentioned reasons for ‘enjoying’ SBP), **health** reasons were frequently mentioned by children (17.4% learning to make healthy foods, 8.1% it’s healthy). In the previous evaluation research undertaken by Foodbank WA, four in five (81.1%) Principals and Coordinators reported an observed substantial or slight improvement in awareness of healthy eating¹⁴.

It is noted that there were few observable qualitative indicators that this element of health education received by the children was also received by parents. While most parents included in this research knew, or expected, that the food included in the SBP would be healthy food, there was no evidence to suggest that it had impacted their family food purchasing or preparation habits.

¹³ Moore, L; Moore, G; Tapper, K; Lynch, R; Desousa, C; Hale, J; Roberts, C; Murphy, S (2007), Free breakfasts in schools: design and conduct of a cluster randomised controlled trial of the Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative in Wales, BMC Public Health 2007, 7:258

¹⁴ McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

In a minority of cases, parents even indicated that they felt access to healthy foods at school 'balanced out' the less healthy food options they were eating at home. One of the most frequently mentioned barriers among parents to consuming healthy food at home was cost, *"you can buy two litres of coke and a bag of chips for less than it costs to buy a watermelon and two litres of juice ...you know it would be better for them, and sometimes they'd even prefer it, but who can afford that all the time?"* (parent).

3.1.10. Academic outcomes

Three quarters (74.7%) of Principals and Coordinators in Foodbank WA's previous evaluation research indicated that there had been a substantial or slight improvement in academic outcomes¹⁵. It is noted that there are many factors that contribute to academic outcomes and that supposing a causal relationship based on this data would be incorrect. However, spontaneous discussions around academic outcomes were consistently mentioned throughout the case studies.

The academic outcomes discussed were most likely to be referred to as 'short-term impact' observations rather than longer-term student or school-level outcomes – for example, *"if you're hungry, you're not really interested in Captain Cook or your times tables"* (teacher), and *"they don't have the fuzzies for the day"* (parent).

This is generally consistent with the literature, which reports on academic indicators (such as conceptual thinking, numerical reasoning etc) pre and post consumption of breakfast. Much of the literature reaches a consensus that there is a plausible link, although not scientifically verified, that SBPs *protect* children against the cumulative impact that the consistent absence of breakfast consumption would have on learning (Pollitt). This qualitative research would certainly support this hypothesis.

Compounding this finding, however, is the fact (as referenced earlier in this chapter) that some students attending SBPs would still consume breakfast daily if it were not accessible through SBP. Therefore, research would need to ascertain more widely the impact that consumption of 'healthy breakfasts', as well as the other broader benefits discussed (for example, the emotional benefits), on students whom are not at high risk nutritionally in order to truly validate that SBPs positively impact long-term academic outcomes.

3.1.11. Learning responsibility and developing 'life' skills

In each of the case studies, there was some discussion around children learning responsibility and skills through their participation in SBPs. This generally related to the following areas:

- **Food preparation:** In the case studies where children participated in food preparation, it was the perception of Principals and teachers that they were

¹⁵ McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

developing the ability to become more self-sufficient in being responsible for their nutrition needs.

- **Responsibility:** In the case studies where children participated in cleaning their own dishes or had assigned roles, it was felt that the SBP provided them the opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility and contribution.
- **Hygiene:** In the regional and remote case studies, it was felt that encouraging children to wash their hands prior to consuming breakfast, and their dishes post eating, would help to reinforce, or teach, basic hygiene skills that they may replicate in their home situation – thereby forming hygiene habits.
- **Dignity and respect:** In the regional case study where china crockery and metal cutlery were utilised, there was a perception by the coordinator that this provided a sense of dignity about the breakfast which was considered important in reducing any stigma about participation. In addition, this case study perceived that this helped contribute to children's ability to learn 'respect' for the property of others by ensuring they were taking due care when used.

Supporting this, in the previous evaluation research undertaken by Foodbank WA, two thirds (64.6%) of Principals and coordinators reported a substantial or slight improvement in the knowledge and skills of children to adopt a healthy lifestyle, and three in five (58.8%) reported substantial or slight change in food selection and food preparation skills¹⁶.

3.2. Outcomes – parents and community

There is little discussion in published literature regarding the benefits of SBPs that are not linked directly to the child as the unit of analysis. This qualitative research, however, consistently suggested that the benefits of SBPs are not limited to children and they can benefit parents and community. Below is a summary of some of the perceived, or claimed, benefits for parents and community to which SBPs may contribute. Because this discussion is based solely on qualitative data, however, it is not possible to provide an indication on the strength of relationship, nor the frequency with which it exists. However, the consistency with which these factors were mentioned throughout the case studies warrants their inclusion.

3.2.1. Easing emotional stress

As referenced in Section 3.1 of this report, one of the student cohorts thought to be included in SBPs were children whose parents would otherwise drop them at school early, or rely on them to prepare their own breakfast independently, such that they could meet their working arrangements.

For these parents, SBP was thought to provide parents with a sense of 'permission' to work, removing any emotional guilt that may be experienced from needing to leave children early to facilitate working requirements. This was considered an important benefit for some parents in

¹⁶ McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

that it provided them a viable alternative to either leaving their children unattended on school premises, or at home – *“you know they’ll be loved and nurtured ...takes some stress away when you’re worried about their wellbeing”* (parent), *“you don’t have to worry about them sitting on a bench somewhere”* (parent).

3.2.2. Easing financial stress

It was also expressed that in some cases, access to SBP may assist in easing financial pressure for parents who may be struggling financially to provide balanced, healthy breakfasts for their children. It was felt that SBP would provide some financial ‘relief’ to parents even if not accessible / accessed every day of the week.

3.2.3. Fostering family cohesion and school engagement

In the case study where parents were invited to attend the SBP with their children, it was a perception of the volunteers that SBP may assist in developing parental socialisation and communication with their children and attending parents that were included in the qualitative discussions agreed with this.

In addition, it was felt that their attendance enabled greater involvement within the school via the ability to connect with other attending parents and build confidence in this regard. Increasing parental engagement in the school was also mentioned in the case studies where parents were not participating in SBP. In these schools, it was from the perspective that increasing parental engagement was a school objective and that SBP was a potential contributor – but not sole driver – of this. However, there was no qualitative evidence of this and therefore, this could be considered an aspirational, rather than actual, outcome at this point.

3.2.4. Developing social capital and community cohesion

There were several community benefits discussed consistently throughout the case studies which included:

- **Child connection to volunteers:** The models which utilised volunteers to run and manage the SBP were felt to contribute positively to developing social capital. This perception was particularly strong in the model where the volunteers were external to the school – *“suddenly, they’re part of something ...they see familiar faces at the shops and they have a connection ...a sense of community”* (parent).
- **Volunteer contributions:** Volunteering has well documented benefits in published mental health and psychology literature in terms of having positive implications for developing social capital. This was evident in this research where it was discussed that SBPs provided volunteers with avenues to contribute to their community more broadly, rather than being perceived solely as a contribution at a school-level.

- **Community donations to the SBP:** A further element discussed was the contribution by community to the SBPs via donations made to assist in its maintenance. This was evident in the four case studies included in this research.

3.3. Outcomes – volunteers

3.3.1. Sociability

In the SBP volunteer models (both parent and external volunteer models), a benefit described by the volunteers themselves was the ability to socialise with each other and form meaningful friendships. While this was not discussed as the primary reason for their participation, it was nonetheless a consistently discussed reason for maintaining their involvement in the SBP.

3.3.2. Building confidence

Among parent volunteers who had been out of the workforce for some time, there was a perception that SBP assisted in building their confidence as a result of successfully setting up and managing the SBP. This was described as something which would assist in building their confidence should they desire to return to the workforce.

3.3.3. Contribution to mental health – the ‘Act-Belong-Commit’ philosophy

The ‘Act-Belong-Commit’ (‘ABC’) framework developed by Donovan and Egger (2007) draws on a wealth of literature and research on mental health and being mentally healthy. Within this framework, and other literature, volunteering is frequently mentioned as a source of satisfaction and an opportunity to interact and be involved with others. There was supporting evidence throughout this research that the philosophy underpinning the ‘ABC’ framework indeed applies here, as shown below:

The ‘ABC’ for good mental health – the volunteering example observed through Case Study 2

	Example in theory	Supporting evidence from this case study
Act	By going along to a breakfast and helping out (this helps them keep socially, cognitively and perhaps physically active)	“keeps your mind active” (<i>volunteer</i>) “reduces their isolation” (<i>parent</i>) “keeps them young” (<i>parent</i>)
Belong	By joining the breakfast club committee (this helps strengthen an individual’s connectedness with the community and sense of identity)	Volunteers expressed it as a way to ‘belong’: “my children are all over east and I have no grandkids” (<i>volunteer</i>)
Commit	By becoming a regular helper at the breakfasts (this provides a sense of purpose and meaning to one’s life)	“personal satisfaction in being involved and contributing” (<i>volunteer</i>)

Thus, there are indications that volunteering in SBPs (as per the theory for volunteering in general) can assist in the maintenance of good mental health.

3.4. Considerations

3.4.1. Fuelling dependency

A potential risk highlighted by some stakeholders and participants in the case studies, was the ‘philosophical argument’ of whether programs such as this fuel dependence on the system rather than assisting in the creation of independence – *“it’s a form of dependence welfare”* (stakeholder). Almost all who mentioned this potential risk, however, were quick to note an overarching perception that the positives do outweigh the negatives – *“who in their right mind would oppose ...the positives far outweigh the negatives”* (teacher).

This research suggests that there are potentially, however, a minority of teachers who strongly believe food provision is a role of parents rather than schools and such teachers may become opponents to the delivery of SBPs in their school. It is noted that this opposition may, in part, be related to a factor outside of Foodbank WA’s control as it relates to teacher relationships with the Department of Education and is also linked to the expanding roles of teachers.

This is suggestive that:

- Foodbank WA should consider providing communication that is accessible by schools, coordinators and SBP volunteers regarding the intentions of SBPs which could be used by the school to provide information to any opposing teachers.
- Foodbank WA should consider one if its objectives as providing guidance and support to volunteers such that the program is run efficiently and according to the needs of the individual schools requiring minimal impost on school resources (where a volunteer model is the preferred model of the school).

3.4.2. Foodbank WA’s expanding role

Many stakeholders discussed a potential risk to both SBPs and Foodbank WA in terms of the broader services and programs they deliver, in relation to ‘role expansion’.

For some, the provision of SBPs was considered an expansion of role from Foodbank WA’s core business of emergency food provision – *“Foodbank was set up as an emergency food relief ...it’s a very important part of their role ...they need to prioritise ...make sure they’re targeting low income and people in poverty”* (stakeholder) and, *“should they be trying to solve the ‘intangible?’”* (stakeholder).

For others, the potential risk of role expansion was related to the number of schools that Foodbank WA seeks to assist through SBP – *“...deliver a comprehensive kids and parents programme in a small number of schools, rather than spreading themselves around thinly in*

lots of schools as they currently do. Current figures don't measure the efficacy of the programme, just the numbers" (stakeholder).

Others also discuss this in relation to the additional programs Foodbank WA seeks to provide schools (such as physical activity and health / nutrition education) – *"Foodbank's mission to address hunger and food deprivation is unique among these types of organisations which in turn gives them a unique position, with schools especially, to successfully introduce other related programmes around nutrition and health. However, it should be remembered that these will always be secondary aims for Foodbank – and, rightly so."* (stakeholder)

This is suggestive that the following should be considered:

- Foodbank WA should maintain the objective of food provision as priority.
- Objectives around physical activity and education are important (further discussion below) but should not undermine the focus on food provision.
- Partnerships with other agencies to deliver physical activity and education components should be explored (further discussion below) whereby Foodbank WA acts as the 'gateway' for potential contact schools, but does not hold primary responsibility for delivery.
- Potential communication of the broader benefits of SBPs – in addition to those associated with food access among those who are food insecure – in order to redirect the strong focus that SBPs should only be provided to those with emergency food needs.

It should be clarified, however, that this risk is somewhat countered by the desire among some stakeholders, and schools, for a greater role of education – in combination with food provision. This is discussed further below.

3.4.3. The need for education – a systems model

Some stakeholders and schools discuss the unique opportunities Foodbank WA possesses in terms of its access to schools and how this access can be maximised to achieve education outcomes as well as food provision, *"you shouldn't have one without the other ...you need to build skill in communities"* (stakeholder); *"the nutrition programmes could be strengthened further by taking a more holistic approach targeting both parents and kids, running the programme over a longer period of time and involving the school more in a bigger nutrition project. This would necessitate a deeper approach, but fewer schools overall ...thereby being measured on efficacy rather than pure numbers."* (stakeholder) That is, the desire for education extended broader than 'the individual child', but extended to parents / families / schools / communities.

Overall, it was felt by many stakeholders and schools that food provision and nutrition / 'healthy lifestyle' education were complementary objectives and that the opportunity to combine the two may yield more positive and longer-term results on those whom the program is designed to reach.

This is suggestive of three considerations:

- There may be relatively **simple ways** to assist in achieving education delivery, for example (as suggested in Case Study 3), the provision of laminated placemats (for optional use within SBPs) which could have an educational element included.
- In the four case studies included in this research, awareness of Foodbank WA's range of education programs was limited. This may suggest that simply **increasing awareness** of the additional tools accessible to schools may assist in achieving an education objective.
- Alternatively, it may suggest that there is greater need for **increasing partnerships** with other NGOs and organisations (such as The Cancer Council and the National Heart Foundation) and to utilise their education tools and programs, rather than 'reinventing the wheel'. Foodbank WA's role, therefore, would be more in facilitating introductions and access of these organisations to schools rather than developing and delivering the programs.

3.4.4. Funding and relationships with funders

A potential risk identified by several stakeholders related to funding – in that there can be a reliance on *“small pockets of funding that come and go ...reduces stability and longevity and undermines the system”* (stakeholder).

In addition, there were comments that the relationship between some funders and Foodbank WA may benefit from additional structure and / or communication, *“some funders put themselves in the position of funder rather than partner ...need a structure that brings everyone together.”* (stakeholder)

This suggests that:

- Where possible, longer term relationships with funders should be explored. A potential avenue for assuring greater longevity in funding may be through the way in which Foodbank WA communicates the efficacy of its programs with funding partners. The provision of additional information regarding the range of outcomes of SBPs may increase funder understanding of the impact of their contribution and therefore their likelihood for maintaining funds. It is, however, noted that this would not be applicable for all cases where 'one-off' or more 'ad-hoc' funding is granted.

3.4.5. Volunteer delivery models

As discussed throughout the case studies, effectively engaging and managing volunteers is a challenge for any organisation or program that has a reliance on volunteers at the heart of its delivery and this is also the case for Foodbank WA, *“one of the biggest issues faced by schools is a lack of volunteers and if Foodbank could help recruit volunteers this may reduce some of the pressure the SBP co-ordinators feel.”* (stakeholder)

There are three potential considerations in relation to volunteers:

- The initial engagement and securing of volunteers
- Maintaining relationships and participation of volunteers once engaged
- Providing volunteers with appropriate access to support

Overall, this suggests several opportunities for consideration:

- Consideration should be given to whether Foodbank WA can play a role in **assisting schools engage volunteers** during the start-up phase of a SBP.
- In addition to assisting schools in engaging parent volunteers, a further finding was that there may be value in **developing a strategy related to engaging volunteers through external organisations and partnerships**, rather than via the school. For example, through exploring partnerships with local governments, senior citizens organisations, actbelongcommit.org etc.
- In both of these scenarios, it was felt throughout the case studies that provision of succinct information tools and collateral may be required. A preliminary framework for the type of information required would suggest that the following elements would be important:
 - **What SBPs are, and what they seek to achieve:** Communicating the objectives of SBPs will be important as awareness and understanding would undoubtedly rely on experience.
 - **Defining parameters:** A barrier to volunteering is the fear associated with 'over-committing' oneself to a volunteer role that is poorly defined. Therefore, outlining broad expectations on what volunteering for an SBP actually means (i.e. defining parameters / setting expectations) would be of value in terms of reducing this fear of the 'unknown'.
 - **Communicating personal benefit:** In addition to the above, it was felt that communication of the potential personal benefits from participation that can be realised from participating would be of value in terms of securing volunteers. There are a variety of personal benefits which are discussed throughout this report including:
 - **Parent – sociability and cohesion:** assisting in integration to the school community and forming relationships with other parents.
 - **Parent – facilitation of employment:** gaining skills that can increase confidence for returning to work, and be utilised as work experience in a curriculum vitae.
 - **Parent and other 'external' volunteers - mentoring:** an opportunity to be a positive adult role model and mentor for children within your community.
 - **Parent and 'external' volunteers:** The 'Act-Belong-Commit' philosophy for good mental health and the role that volunteering can play in one's personal mental health.

3.4.6. Dependence on school's leadership

It was noted throughout the case studies, and by some stakeholders, that the inception and maintenance of SBPs is highly dependent on endorsement from the individual school's leadership. In fact, endorsement and support for SBPs could be considered a 'minimum requirement' as in some cases, the entire running of the SBP depends on school leaders (where volunteer models are not in place).

In these cases, there is significant risk that should the school's Principal (or, primary advocate) leave the school, the SBP would cease. This is because the SBP model (irrespective of whether the volunteers are teachers, parents or external) relies on having individuals in advocacy positions to maintain their presence. This dependence on individuals is a risk for the longevity of SBPs in individual school sites but a learning for Foodbank WA in terms of how the models work – in that they appear to require an individual advocate to both commence and maintain their delivery.

This suggests that:

- Foodbank WA should consider communication direct to Principals regarding SBPs to both raise awareness and influence attitudes and perceptions as this may assist in securing a greater number of advocates throughout the school system. Such communications would need to communicate across two areas:
 - Providing information on models that do not rely on school resources for delivery – to reduce any potential aversion to SBPs that may be linked to the perception that they are an additional burden on schools. Any perception that SBPs will add extra to the requirements of teachers run a high risk of negative reception.
 - Providing information on the wider benefits that SBPs provide to schools – to reduce any perception that it may fuel dependence.

3.4.7. Strengthening regional relationships

It was suggested by a minority of stakeholders interviewed that Foodbank WA's Perth location may inhibit their ability to develop strong relationships in regional locations and that working closely with people in regional areas within complementary areas would be of considerable benefit – *“if they want to succeed in new areas, they are going to have to work more closely with people in the regions that are working in complementary areas. It's about communication”* (stakeholder). Importantly, there appears to be a strong desire for Foodbank WA to form partnerships and relationships with complementary agencies as there are recognised mutual benefits, *“Foodbank WA can build community through its systems ...can get things to places where others give up.”* (stakeholder)

In the regional case studies, there was an expressed strong relationship with Foodbank WA, however, it is noted that there was relatively low awareness of roles, and different ways they could access information and programs through Foodbank WA.

This is suggestive that:

- Foodbank WA should maintain a focus on developing relationships with schools in regional locations in order to communicate the broader programs that are accessible.
- Foodbank WA should ensure that it has strong lines of communication with key stakeholders in regional areas who may already be accessing regional and remote schools to ensure that efficiencies, and reach, are maximised.

3.4.8. Additional food provision

Some stakeholders, and school case studies, referenced that the need for food provision in some cases extended beyond provision of breakfast and that the ability to access food for lunches / after-school food would be of benefit, *“after school food is not provided, this is potentially a gap”* (stakeholder). It is noted that many schools do utilise the SBP food to provide emergency lunches (66.3%) and 59.3% provide other meals or food parcels using Foodbank WA foods¹⁷.

This feedback may, therefore, represent a lack of awareness that Foodbank WA can be utilised as a source to provide additional food.

3.4.9. Maximising partnerships

Several stakeholders referenced the importance for Foodbank WA to effectively manage its partnerships, *“they have a lot of different groups and relationships they have to manage ...this is almost as important as attaining the funding and needs to be a key focus”* (stakeholder).

In addition to managing existing partnerships, stakeholders note that Foodbank WA has a unique position in terms of the potential benefits of extending partnership relationships further, *“...[Foodbank WA] should work with existing infrastructure and agencies to maximise their potential, for example, Centrelink who have existing contact mechanisms with low SES people ...creating a more proactive rather than reactive system”* (stakeholder), *“Foodbank has a network that no other agency does – by giving food to the schools they have an automatic ‘in’ which means the school is open to things they may suggest and provide over and above other agencies and organisation”*.

This is suggestive that exploring partnerships should be a continued focus for Foodbank WA in terms of providing wider services or providing opportunities for complementary programs to be introduced to schools.

¹⁷ McQueen, J; Langsford, Dr S; SBP Evaluation Survey 2009, compiled for Foodbank WA

3.4.10. The SBP inception process

Starting up a SBP was described as a considerable ‘learning curve’ (by the volunteers) in the case study where SBP was relatively new. There was a perceived lack of guidelines and support in terms of requirements to set up and manage an SBP which were considered a potential barrier for schools – particularly for models which rely on volunteers. In addition, there was low awareness and knowledge of how to access Foodbank WA for information, materials, guidance and assistance.

This is suggestive that guidelines should be developed to assist schools and volunteers through this process. There is further discussion provided on what these guidelines could include in Case Study 1.

3.4.11. Knowledge sharing

It was also noted through the case studies that there was a lack of opportunities for knowledge sharing between schools. Overall, it was felt that an avenue for schools to share ‘good’ and ‘best practice’ learnings may increase the probability that SBPs are sustainable.

This is suggestive of the following considerations:

- Providing guidelines and access to additional information in terms of how to ‘start’ an SBP (for coordinators) and how to ‘introduce’ an SBP (for school leaders) that emerged from this research (discussed fully in Case Study 1) may assist in the facilitation of this knowledge. However, this would achieve knowledge sharing for starting an SBP, rather than maintaining.
- Providing opportunities for schools / volunteers to share learnings informally may also increase knowledge sharing by allowing those involved in SBPs. This could be achieved by, for example, hosting ‘morning teas’ for coordinators etc.
- Providing more formal ways to share knowledge between schools could also be a valuable tool. It is noted that there is ongoing research into SBPs via students within academic institutions (eg. health promotion students attending SBPs and tasked to write ‘Reflective Journals’). Consideration could be given as to whether existing mechanisms such as this are a worthy tool for developing – for example – short summaries of individual SBPs for profiling in Foodbank WA’s newsletter / on their website / for communications to school leaders.

3.4.12. Developing an understanding of ‘need’ at the school level

Among schools not currently providing SBPs, some stakeholders believe that there may be a necessity to develop an understanding of how to identify the ‘need’ for an SBP within their school. As referenced consistently throughout each case study in this research, there were several ‘need-states’ identified that warranted delivery of an SBP from an ‘engagement-style model’ (to reach children who are not engaged in the school system), to a ‘food-provision

model' (to reach children who are not eating, eating infrequently, or eating unhealthily), to a 'school community-need model' (for working parents etc).

This is suggestive that in Foodbank WA's communication with schools not currently offering SBPs, there should be clear information provided in terms of how to identify and understand whether there is a **need** for SBP within their school – and broadening the potential boundaries of need away from solely 'emergency food provision' (as some non-participating schools may currently perceive). That is SBPs can fulfil broader needs than providing food to those who can not access food in their home environment.

Iron Carrot.

CASE STUDIES



4. Case Study 1 – Metropolitan Primary School

4.1. The location context

A total of 5,437 people lived in this metropolitan suburb at the time of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2006 Census. According to the ABS, this suburb is within one of the highest rating Statistical Local Areas on the index of relative socio-economic disadvantage¹⁸: The metropolitan suburb is in the 5th decile for socioeconomic disadvantage in Australia and the 4th decile in Western Australia, scoring 965 on the ABS' State Suburb Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage. The index is standardised to have a mean of 1,000 and standard deviation of 100 across all Census Districts in Australia. The suburb has:

- A higher proportion of those with education levels completed that are lower than Year 10 compared to Perth metropolitan.
- A lower median household income compared to the Perth metropolitan average.
- A higher proportion of those renting a home.
- A higher proportion with no motor vehicle in their household.

ABS Census 2006 Profile	All of Perth	This Suburb
Total Persons	1,445,076	5,437
Gender		
Male (%)	49.4	49.1
Female (%)	50.6	50.9
Nationality		
Indigenous / Torres Strait Islander (%)	1.5	2.2
Born in Australia (%)	66.3	66.0
Born elsewhere (%)	33.7	34.0
Age		
Median Age	36	38
People aged 15 and over (%)	80.5	83.4
Household Statistics		
Median household size (people)	2.5	2.3
Median household income (\$/wk)	1,086	900
Families who are single parent families (%)	15.2	18.3
Home Ownership		
Proportion who own or are purchasing a home (%)	72.7	69.4
Proportion renting a home (%)	26.4	30.6
Motor Vehicle Ownership		
Households who do not own a motor vehicle (%)	7.3	9.8
Highest Year of School Completed		
Year 12	51.4	40.3
Year 11	11.7	12.2
Year 10	25.7	29.9
Lower than year 10	11.2	17.6

¹⁸ The index is derived from Census variables such as low income, low educational attainment, unemployment, and dwellings without motor vehicles.

ABS Census 2006 Profile	All of Perth	This Suburb
Total Persons	1,445,076	5,437
Employment Rates		
Unemployment rate (%)	3.6	3.6
Labour force participation rate (%)	62.8	59.7

Note: Non-responses have been excluded from analysis.

Labour force participation rate: is the number of persons in the labour force expressed as a percentage of persons aged 15 years and over.

The school utilised for the case study itself includes children from kindergarten to year 7, and has around 320 students in total.

4.2. The School Breakfast Programme (SBP) Model

4.2.1. The inception of SBP

The main driver and initiator

The school’s Principal initiated introduction of the programme when joining the school, having already introduced the SBP in three previous schools, commenting that they had experienced the benefits it delivered and felt it was appropriate for this school.

Evidence of consultation processes during inception

Parents were consulted via the school’s newsletter informing them of SBP, which was one of a number of initiatives proposed to extend the school service, and also asked for volunteers to help run the SBP. Key community members, the Parents & Citizens Committee (P&C) and teachers were also consulted. The consultation process was undertaken over a period of 12 months before the SBP began.

4.2.2. The ‘start-up’ process

Parent-driven

Following leadership from the Principal, the majority of the early set-up process was then undertaken by a key parent volunteer (one individual). However, before the programme started, a change in personal circumstances meant this individual needed to remove their involvement with the SBP. This meant that two new volunteer parents (‘the parent drivers’) needed to continue to drive the process forwards and undertake the practical tasks involved in getting it underway.

There was little involvement from Foodbank WA in this process with the parents and it was described as a “steep learning curve” with “lots of questions [being asked by teachers and parents] that were difficult to answer”. The primary reason noted for limited involvement with Foodbank WA during this stage was low awareness of whether Foodbank WA had support mechanisms in place to assist in the process.

Forming partnerships

The 'parent drivers' spent a considerable amount of time liaising with local businesses to reduce the initial set-up costs and source donors to purchase essential items such as: a fridge, toaster, crockery, cutlery, storage boxes, a pantry to store food etc. They also received a small grant from the P&C which was used to purchase some essential items.

4.2.3. The ongoing running of SBP

Location

At the outset the SBP was run in the school canteen (which was not previously open early morning) in order to make use of the running water, tables and chairs and other facilities. Subsequently this was found to be unsuitable as it was often needed for other activities and a new venue was agreed on in the joint science & choir room which was not used until later in the day.

Practicalities

The room does not have running water so the dishes are washed in a bowl directly outside with one for 'washing', one for 'rinsing' and tea-towels provided. The programme began using borrowed china crockery so extra parent volunteers were needed to wash up to avoid breakages, but they have now been able to purchase or source donated melamine crockery which means the children can do their own washing up.

A dedicated fridge and storage cabinet is kept in the room for the purposes of SBP.

Additional funding and donations for ongoing costs

In addition to requiring some funding and support during the 'start-up' process, the volunteers found that they needed a way to fund the on-going costs for the SBP to purchase items not provided by Foodbank WA such as margarine, or which Foodbank WA made a small charge for like yoghurt and dried fruit, besides other incidentals such as washing-up liquid.

Some of the children's parents who participated in SBP had enquired (to the parent volunteers) about the funding sources of SBP and indicated they would like to donate money. An anonymous donation box was therefore set up. It is noted that parents are not explicitly asked for donations but some regularly give donations (for example, of \$10 per week), and some provide one-off donations (for example, \$80 a term) which has funded the day-to-day costs of the SBP. Some parents also donate other items such as food or crockery etc.

There are no guidelines imposed, nor expectations given, for making donations and it is all conducted on an informal and anonymous basis. This is evidence of a 'grass-roots' strategy that has emerged in order to fulfil the needs of the ongoing costs, as well as to fulfil the desires of some parents to participate in the programme financially.

Number of children reached

The SBP quickly attracted children with 4 attending on the first day and 35 on the second. Currently it serves approximately 180 breakfasts per week to between 30 and 40 children. It was noted that the busiest days for SBP in this school are Wednesday through Friday, with Monday and Tuesday being considered 'quieter' overall.

4.2.4. Logistics

Parent volunteer model

The SBP is entirely run by parent volunteers (all mothers with children at the school) with only a small amount of assistance from a few teachers. There are two main volunteers who organise the SBP and four other volunteers who assist on a day-to-day basis. It operates every day of the school week with at least one parent available from around 7.15am to supervise the children and start serving breakfast. Parents dropping their children off at the school are informed that they can leave their children as long as one of the volunteer's cars (which are known to the parents) is in the car park.

Two key volunteers come every day except Wednesday, taking it in turns to cover the earlier 7.30 slot. One of the other volunteer parents assists them every day, usually doing the preparation and any cooking required. From 8.00am, when the second key volunteer arrives to supervise, the children play games together outside and with other children who have arrived at school early until lessons start.

Once breakfast is finished, the area is cleaned by the volunteers before 8.30am in preparation for the use of the classrooms by staff. A plate of food (usually toasted sandwiches) is taken to the school reception area so that children arriving later than 8.30am who have not had breakfast may still have something to eat.

Child participation in the process

The children arrive at different times from 7.30am and help themselves to the cooked food and serve their own cereal, fruit and yoghurt. This is a well-supervised process, but retains a high level of informality while simultaneously encouraging respect between the children and the parent volunteers. The children may all help themselves to more food if they want it.

Seating arrangement

The children are expected to sit at a table to eat their food which are set up to reflect a 'kitchen table' / 'family eating' environment to encourage children to eat together. Children are not allowed to eat outside this designated room nor away from these tables and thus full supervision is achieved, as well as interaction and conversation between the children.

Collecting food

The food for SBP is collected by the parent volunteers on an ad-hoc ('every few weeks') basis.

Level of child responsibility

There is a level of responsibility expected for each child. As mentioned earlier, they are expected to wash their dishes after themselves (in containers located directly outside the room) and replace them in the room once finished. They are also expected to replace their chair either in a 'neat' position (if they arrived early) in preparation for the next child, or stacked 'away' (if they are finishing their breakfast closer to 8.30am). These conditions must be fulfilled prior to the child being provided access to the sporting equipment and leaving the room.

The researcher observation of this was that all children did this and the majority without 'instruction' from the parent volunteers – that is, the process had created a 'habit' or, at least, respect for a 'known expectation'.

Physical activity components

In addition to providing access to breakfast, this model incorporates an element of physical activity whereby a parent volunteer (who starts at 8.00am, rather than 7.30am) supervises the children playing games outside in a quadrangle area. The physical activity primarily utilises balls (which are school property) where they are supervised playing 'four-square'. This meant that a change to school rules was necessary as children had not previously been allowed to use sport equipment prior to school hours.

During this physical activity time, the children are encouraged to play in a mixed environment of school year and gender rather than mixing only within their established social circles. Once the children have finished eating their breakfast, washed their dishes and put their chairs away, they are encouraged to participate in physical activity. The observation was that the children attending the breakfast club willingly participate in this.

It was noted that this school had the '**Skip Rope Not Breakfast**' kit but, as yet, had not utilised it. The primary reason for this was that they had started utilising the school balls successfully prior to receiving the kit. As this program was still in early stages in this school, it had not yet been introduced, however, there was a stated intention to use it moving forwards.

Food Sensations

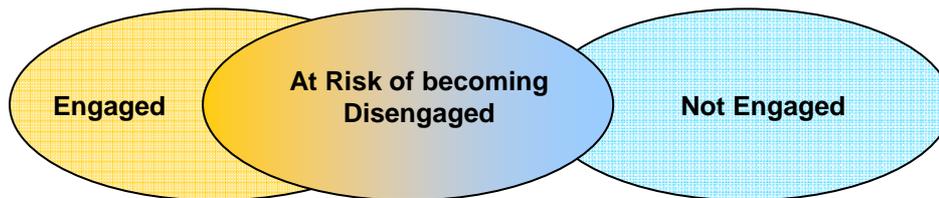
The Food Sensations program was delivered in this school in 2010. As the delivery of this program was to a sub-set of students (rather than all those participating in SBP), it forms a small part of this model review. The coordinators were not aware of Food Sensations and thus unable to comment.

The programme was, however, received positively by the Principal and the teachers involved. It was considered to teach the children vital skills such as preparing healthy food, hygiene skills and encouraging them to try new foods. It was also seen to fit well with the nutrition teaching in the school curriculum.

4.2.5. Target groups

The Engagement Model

The overarching goal of the SBP in this school was to ensure that every student had the opportunity to succeed on a “*level playing field*” by providing a healthy breakfast for all. The Principal advocated the use of a broader model, labelled ‘The Engagement Model’ for identifying target groups rather than just using socio-economic factors. This model categorises three groups of students based on their level of engagement with the school as shown below:



The SBP aims to target both those students who fall into the Not Engaged group and those who are identified as being At Risk of becoming Disengaged but is also available to those who are Engaged which facilitates a wide range of students for inclusion, rather than a single ‘type’ of student. There are a number of other initiatives also aimed at engaging these students in the school and community (described below under ‘*Wider services provided*’ heading).

Access to healthy food

On a more practical level, it was noted that the SBP was targeted primarily at those children who ate no breakfast before coming to school – either because it was not provided for them at home, or because they ate it irregularly. However, the reach of the programme extends much wider and is by no means limited to children at the lower end of the SES scale (as noted above).

Therefore, there were a number of target groups identified:

- Students who ate NO breakfast before school (Primary Target).
- Students who ate an insufficient or unhealthy breakfast (for example, an ‘Up&Go’ drink from the canteen, as per one example provided in the case study).
- Students who sometimes ate breakfast, and sometimes did not.
- Students who would otherwise be in paid childcare or left to look after themselves / prepare their own breakfast before school / dropped off outside school property while parents went to work.

4.2.6. Wider services provided

The SBP was part of a wider programme of extended services recently introduced by the principal such as:-

- After-school Homework Club
- Choir
- After-school Sports Clubs

4.3. How the model functions

In terms of the way this model functions, there are a number of observations in terms of the barriers, risks and strengths which are discussed below.

4.3.1. Barriers

As referenced earlier, this SBP had only been running for two school terms and thus, the majority of barriers discussed below are in relation to the initial stages of setting up and starting a SBP, rather than being related to maintenance.

The 'social stigma'

It was noted in this case study among all those participating in the discussions – with the notable exclusion of students - that a perception does exist regarding a negative 'social stigma' associated with sending a child to SBP. That is, it was discussed that there were some (parents and teachers alike) who perceived that utilisation of SBP was potentially reflective of 'bad parenting'.

This stigma poses a barrier in two areas:

- **Support:** Those that have *strong* perceptions around the extent to which sending a child to SBP is reflective of negative parenting would be unlikely to support the inception and maintenance of an SBP and could, in fact, become a hindrance by opposing its development. This has, in fact, been the experience of the coordinators of this SBP whereby there was a high level of resistance noted by some parents during its inception.
- **Attendance:** Some parents may become concerned that sending their child to SBP is a negative reflection on their parenting skills which may be observed by others (i.e. other parents and teachers), thereby reducing their likelihood to allow their child to participate – hence, impacting child attendance rates. This was noted by the coordinators initially, however, it was felt that this barrier had subsided since its inception as parents were more able to experience the running of SBP, thereby increasing their level of comfort.

Importantly, as noted above, there was no discussion of this 'social stigma' evident when talking to the participating children themselves. No child expressed any negativity – either from fellow students in the school, from parents or from teachers - from participating in the SBP.

Some potential avenues to address this which were discussed in this case study were:

- **The 'Engagement Model' approach:** Overall, it was felt that the 'Engagement Model' (described above) was a potential way to address some of the negativity in that the reach of SBP was to a broader group of children, rather than a specific focus on those children who did not receive breakfast at home.
- **Encouraging parent volunteers:** It was felt that engaging a larger number of parents as volunteers under an arrangement whereby they are, for example, encouraged to assist in the process one week per year / semester / term (as per the need of the school, relative to its size) may increase the reality that parents are, in fact, 'participating' rather than 'depending' on SBP.

- **Promote additional benefits of SBP:** It was felt that encouraging schools to provide parents with discussions on the additional benefits of SBP (specifically in relation to sociability and educational / health-promotion benefits) may reduce perceptions that SBP is simply providing a ‘free breakfast’.

Engaging parent volunteers

Effectively engaging, and managing, volunteers is a challenge for any organisation however, volunteers are an indisputably high value resource and therefore of importance to secure. Volunteers contribute substantially to the economic viability of Australian communities¹⁹ and their encouragement and integration in programs such as SBP – where the model facilitates it - at a school-level is important.

As evidenced by this case study, there were, however, challenges in terms of engaging volunteers in the program. In particular, the challenges related to:

- **Securing initial engagement:** During the inception stages, there was little known about SBP in terms of how to ‘start’, how to ‘run’ and how to ‘maintain’ – that is, there were more questions than answers. Adding to this was low awareness of potential information sources that could assist in this process. Relying on volunteers to learn and implement a program for which there were few known guidelines and support mechanisms is a potentially considerable barrier throughout the inception process.
- **Maintaining volunteer engagement:** There were no accessible guidelines from Foodbank WA supplied to schools regarding how to maintain volunteer engagement of SBP for example, ways to recognise and value their involvement. This is a potential barrier for schools in the maintenance of SBP.
- **Providing volunteers with appropriate access to support:** There was no knowledge of ways to access information from Foodbank WA. During the inception stages of the SBP in this case study, the parent volunteers felt that they were being asked questions from within the school community (parents and teachers) regarding how it ‘worked’ and processes / procedures etc which were difficult for the volunteers to answer as SBP was also new to them. This lack of provision of information, and awareness of how to access it, was a barrier that could have impeded the successful commencement, and longevity, of parent volunteer relationships with SBP.

Engaging opponents – teaching staff

In this case study, there was opposition by some teaching staff towards the SBP. There were several potential reasons for this which emerged, including:

- **Duty of care:** Teachers expressed some concern over volunteers providing duty of care to students prior to 8.30am when duty of care was handed over to the school.
- **The expanding role of teachers:** Previous research conducted among teachers highlights that teachers are concerned over their changing role in the classroom and within the school²⁰. There was discussion that provision of services such as SBP may

¹⁹ Enhancing Volunteering for the 21st Century

²⁰ O’Donoghue, K; Francis M; Innovation in qualitative research to develop a recognition and acknowledgement framework for one of our most important resources – our teachers, AMSRS WA Conference proceedings, March 2010

compound this issue and that some teachers may oppose this service because of this factor.

- **Lines of responsibility:** Corresponding with the point above regarding the expanding role of teachers, there was some discussion regarding the ownership of responsibility for providing children with breakfast and whether this should lie with the school or with the parents. Expanding on this leads to discussion around two different ways of looking at this issue:
 - **Dependency:** Whether SBP fosters a culture of dependency among parents to the system, rather than encouraging assuming responsibility themselves, i.e. a concern that *“parents don’t recognise the need to change because someone else is doing it”* (nurse). This was contrasted with;
 - **The importance of the child:** Whether arguments such as that above should be ‘set-aside’ for the benefit of the child.
- **Relationship with the Department of Education:** There was also discussion that the relationship some teachers have with the Department may influence opposition to programs such as this. This weak relationship has been confirmed in previous research whereby 80 per cent of teachers feel little or no sense of belonging or emotional attachment to the Department²¹. While the program is not delivered by the Department, it was felt that it may still influence their perceptions of the program as it is being delivered within schools and thereby holds some level of association.
- **The extent to which teaching staff are expected to deliver and access new resources:** It was acknowledged that teachers and schools were contacted by a wide range of external parties – commercial, Government and NGOs – in terms of promoting initiatives, career choices, education pathways etc and that one of the potential reasons for negativity was that this was the culmination of a variety of external requests.

Conquering the learning curve

A barrier to schools that are ‘starting’ a SBP noted within this case study, lays with the ‘learning curve’ that is experienced in both setting up and managing a SBP. Parent volunteers may not have been involved in something of this nature before, and therefore, there are many potential ‘unknowns’ throughout the process. These ‘unknowns’ can become barriers if access to information and support is not communicated and facilitated. There was discussion that information on how to organise and arrange the mechanics of the SBP (for example, the types of dishes and the extent of storage required etc) would be beneficial.

Establishing partnerships and community links

A further barrier to schools that are ‘starting’ a SBP, that was evidenced through this case study, was in relation to establishing partnerships and community links. While this was considered an important component for success in this school, it was acknowledged that undertaking such developmental work was a ‘new’ process for the volunteers and that there were no guidelines or support materials on how to facilitate this. It was equally acknowledged that being able to access materials (such as ‘how to guidelines’ etc) would be beneficial in reducing this barrier.

²¹ English et al, Wellbeing of the Professions: Policing, Nursing and Teaching in Western Australia, 2007

Low awareness and knowledge of how to access Foodbank WA information / materials / content

As mentioned previously, there was low awareness of how to access Foodbank WA for information, materials, guidance and assistance and there was low awareness of the website.

Facilities and storage

The physical space allocated to the SBP, and understanding the requirements of what was needed (for example, the size of area, the facilities needed such as a fridge and running water, the storage required such as a cupboard and areas for plates and cutlery) was a barrier during the start-up stage. Provision of some broad guidelines would assist in reducing this barrier as it will reduce potential confusion.

4.3.2. Risks

There are two primary risks for SBP that were evident through this case study.

Reliance on individuals

It was acknowledged that the SBP was strongly reliant upon key parent volunteers and that if these volunteers were to leave the program (for example, if they decided to enter the workforce full-time, or if they changed schools), the program would be at risk of de-railing. This was acknowledged by both the Principal, coordinators and the parent volunteers.

In addition to this, it was observed that the program may also be at risk if the Principal – as the key advocate and initial driver - left the school. As there was a degree of opposition to the SBP still present within the school among some teachers, it was currently still reliant upon support and advocacy from the Principal to maintain its presence.

Low facilitation for knowledge sharing

A further risk factor identified in this case study was the lack of knowledge sharing about SBP between schools. This lack of knowledge sharing was referenced from the perspective of lack of 'facilitation' to share knowledge and information between schools, rather than lack of 'desire'. It was felt that sharing 'good' / 'best' practice and learnings between schools may increase the probability that SBPs are sustainable.

4.3.3. Strengths of the model

Strong leadership

While reliance on an individual to advocate the program within the school (the Principal) is a risk, it is also noted as a strength of this model. Having the school leader's support and dedication to drive the SBP was a key success factor in terms of getting the programme started, and sustaining it, acknowledged by the coordinators. This element was also discussed by the school health nurse who had observed several SBPs in the district, stating that *"the support and involvement of Principals is a critical success factor"*.

Dedicated volunteers

The parent volunteers in this case study had a firm perspective on the benefits of SBP and were personally driven by these benefits. As with any volunteering programs, having dedicated and passionate volunteers is essential in terms of sustaining their relationships.

Flexibility

While the lack of guidelines (referenced previously) was described as a potential barrier to setting up and maintaining a SBP, it was also noted (by parent volunteers, coordinators and the Principal) as a strength of the approach in that it fostered a high level of flexibility whereby the program could evolve naturally and cater specifically to the needs of the school and its community. This meant that the program emerged as one that was tailored specifically to the needs of the school and its community, rather than being based on standard design factors that may not necessarily translate.

4.4. Outcomes

There were a wide range of benefits and outcomes that emerged in discussions throughout this case study. Overall, the outcomes can be summarised below:

4.4.1. Child: access to healthy food

Providing access to healthy food was a core outcome expressed consistently throughout the case study. This access was in relation to:

- **Those who were ‘food insecure’:** Children who may not otherwise have access to breakfast at home. An example provided for this by the nurse was in relation to a young child who *“eyes wide open had said ‘and, I could eat as much as I wanted’ ...their emphasis was on ‘as much as I wanted’ ...it was a relief to them that the cupboard was open, there were no limits ...they were going to be full and satisfied ...something it did not appear they had experienced before. For a child, being hungry can be very stressful, demoralising and emotionally disruptive”*.
- **Those who had low food motivation:** It was felt that the SBP had encouraged some children who would not normally have eaten breakfast – even if available to them at their home. This was because the SBP, in this case study, also had a focus on sociability and physical activity and there were additional child motivations to attend and participate.
- **Those who were consuming ‘unhealthy’ breakfasts:** It was felt that some children attending were those who may have otherwise eaten unhealthy breakfasts. An example given was a child who had previously regularly consumed an “Up&Go” drink from the school canteen for breakfast, who now participated in SBP and therefore had access to a healthier alternative. A second example of this that was mentioned in this case study was a child who had commented to the nurse they had consumed lollies for breakfast and had stated this as a ‘norm’ rather than an ‘exception’. It was felt that SBP would help create new ‘norms’ for these children.

4.4.2. Child: social development

There was consistent discussion that a benefit of SBP in this model was the social development of children. It is noted that this model was designed such that sociability was encouraged as a core component through the seating arrangements (described previously) whereby children were expected to eat in a ‘family meal environment’ around tables. There were several social development benefits that were both observed by the researchers (through observation of the SBP), as well as through the qualitative discussions with the coordinators, volunteers, Principal and the children themselves:

- **Communication skills:** Children were actively engaged in conversations with each other as the seating arrangement fostered interaction. This was described as offering children the opportunity to experience a meal situation that may be different to what they experience at home, for example, where family members may eat at different times and in different rooms.
- **Diversification of social circles:** Children socialised with a range of students of different ages and were not limiting their interactions to children in the same school year as themselves. The children themselves expressed that *“you make new friends”* as one of the aspects they ‘liked’ about going to SBP and that *“its fun having breakfast with friends”*.
- **Development of social skills:** There were consistent discussions that the above two elements promote the development of social and interaction skills. One example of this was a Year three student who, upon entering SBP the first few weeks, would sit independently, avoid communication with other students and communication with the parent volunteers. Throughout the term, the student began to engage with one older student (in Year six) to the point where they sat and conversed with each other each day they attended and had formed a friendship. For the younger child, the SBP facilitated acquisition of a ‘new friend’ and therefore opportunities to communicate with a child they would not otherwise have interacted with and, as described by the volunteers and coordinators, it had helped the young child to *“come out of his shell”*.
- **Fostering a school community:** It was noted by the Principal that encouraging greater sociability between children was an element that assisted in the creation of a sense of community within the school.
- **Role modelling:** In addition to facilitating sociability between children, it was also felt by the nurse that SBP provided children with access to other adults (the coordinators and volunteers) from which they could form positive and respectful relationships, and observe different adult role models.

4.4.3. Child: school integration and participation

There was discussion by the Principal, coordinators and volunteers that the SBP contributed to the ease with which new children were able to integrate into the school community as they had observed those who participated in SBP being more able to quickly form new friendships because of the sociability aspects described above.

That is, it was felt that new students were able to feel more comfortable at the school at a faster pace than may have otherwise been experienced as it helped them to *“break down*

some of the clicks, some of the barriers". However, it is noted that this would have been based on a relatively small number of new students given that the program had only been running for two terms.

4.4.4. Child: school and classroom engagement

A benefit described by the Principal, coordinators, volunteers and the school health nurse were that children, who may not otherwise have eaten breakfast, start the day more engaged in the classroom. It was described as something which *"levels the playing field ...if kids are hungry they don't engage well in the classroom"*. The children in this case study also appeared to recognise this – *"breakfast is important because it keeps the brain going"*.

The benefits of this were described as both:

- **immediate** - in terms of creating a classroom environment that enabled teachers to focus on teaching because the students were engaged, *"makes teachers' lives easier so they can focus on educating which is their core role"*; and
- **longer-term** – in terms of fostering overall education and employment outcomes, *"if you've had breakfast, you're full enough to learn ...you end up with a better education ...which can mean you can get a better job or be more employable"*.

It should be acknowledged that the benefits to teachers described above were not universally accepted by teachers in this case study (some teachers agreed and some disagreed) and this is discussed further below in Section 4.4.9.

4.4.5. Child: health education benefits

While there were no formal educational components within this model, it was nonetheless felt that there were health education benefits associated with its delivery and that this was achieved via the explicit provision of *only* healthy food. When children request a food that was not provided – for example, CocoPops or similar – they are instructed that they are not allowed that particular food because SBP is about eating 'healthy foods'. That is, it was felt there was a process of learning about healthy foods naturally by understanding the 'exceptions'.

Although based on a small qualitative sample, when the children were asked what they have learnt from SBP, there was supportive evidence of this benefit, with spontaneous discussion about *"eating healthy food and grow healthy ...you know how to eat the healthy food and unhealthy food"* and *"learning about eating fruit, it is good for your blood"*.

4.4.6. Child: habit forming and creating norms

A benefit of this model described by the school health nurse was that it facilitated a process of habit forming and creating new norms both in terms of the types of food consumed and the way (i.e. eating in a group setting around a table) in which it was consumed. It was felt that participation in SBP showed children how *"easy it is to eat breakfast [self-efficacy] ...the habit can stay with you for life"*.

As referenced above, development of these habits and norms were considered to provide both immediate and long-term benefits for the child. In addition, it was hypothesised that once the habits were truly formed, it may impact the purchase of food within the home with children potentially requesting healthy food options from their parents. It is not possible to substantiate this (either qualitatively or quantitatively) within this case study as the program had only been running for a relatively short period of time.

4.4.7. Child: emotional benefits

As well as the benefits surrounding nutrition, sociability and education outcomes, there was also some discussion around emotional benefits for children which was primarily an observation from the school's nurse and based on observations not only of this school, but others within the jurisdiction.

These emotional outcomes were described as:

- **Reducing sense of 'neglect':** Lack of access and provision of food was described as something which can create a sense of 'neglect' among young children, and that this emotion would be attributed to neglect not only from parents, but from society more broadly. It was felt that *"providing breakfast is a nurturing action which has emotional benefits"*.
- **Reducing sense of isolation:** It was felt that children who were being dropped at school early to facilitate parents arriving to work on time (discussed further below), may experience a sense of 'isolation' or 'loneliness'. The SBP provides a social and safe environment which may decrease this sense of isolation.

4.4.8. Child: safety

An additional benefit noted for children, by the Principal, coordinators, volunteers, nurse and the children themselves, was the provision of a safe environment in which they could be dropped off at school prior to the school's formal opening hours. This was primarily discussed in reference to those parents who needed to find alternative care for their children, or leave them unattended at home or at school, in order to arrive at work at the prescribed time. The safety element was noted in terms of:

- **Access to a supervised area:** Children are under the care of the volunteer parents, rather than waiting on school property or surrounds by themselves.
- **Not responsible for own food preparation:** Breakfast is prepared by adults in a supervised environment rather than, for example, children using electrical appliances such as toasters to prepare their own breakfast independently at home.

4.4.9. Child: academic outcomes

In this case study, where the SBP had only been running for two terms, it was felt that it was too early to assess whether there were any academic outcomes from SBP, however, it was recognised that this was one of the perceived benefits and there were aspirations by the Principal for academic outcomes to improve. Similar to that discussed for behaviour

management and attendance rates, however, it is strongly acknowledged in this case study that there are many factors contributing to academic outcomes and that an improvement in outcomes could not alone be attributed to SBP.

It is noted that those teachers opposing the SBP were not in agreement that this programme would have the ability to influence academic outcomes. It was felt by the Principal that presenting those opposing SBP with, for example, 'hard data' would not reduce their opposition as this was driven by other factors (as noted previously above) which would also need to be addressed.

4.4.10. Parents: facilitation of employment

In this model, some of the children attending were doing so (according to the Principal, coordinators and volunteers) because their parents had work commitments that either made providing their children breakfast difficult in the mornings due to lack of time, or meant that they needed to drop their children at school prior to the official school opening time such that they could arrive at work at the prescribed time.

It was felt that SBP provided parents with a viable option that helped facilitate meeting their employment commitments. Thus, in some senses, it provided working parents a sense of 'permission' to work.

4.4.11. Coordinators and volunteers: facilitation of employment

In this model, it was felt that there may be benefits to parent volunteers who had not participated in the workforce for a period of time as they had young children. The perceived benefits of this were that it would assist in development of confidence resulting from having set up or managed something of this nature. It was noted that the coordinators in this school were, in fact, discussing re-entry to training or the workforce however this was not specifically linked to their discussion of SBP.

4.4.12. Coordinators and volunteers: sociability

A further benefit of the SBP, as described by the coordinators and volunteers, was the ability to socialise with each other and form meaningful friendships with other parents, which may otherwise not have occurred. Thus, there was a sociability benefit to the volunteers and coordinators as well as the students.

4.4.13. School: behaviour management

It is acknowledged that there are many factors which contribute to behaviour management in schools, and that establishing a causal relationship between a reduction in suspensions and introduction of SBP would be unwise. This aside, however, it was noted by the Principal that there had been a reduction over the past two terms in suspensions at this school and thus, an improvement in behaviour management.

Opposing this, however, there was discussion among some teachers as to whether student behaviour upon entering the classroom was, in fact, improved or impeded by the physical activity component of SBP. Some teachers felt that the children were entering the classroom with high energy levels that made it difficult for them to engage in learning.

This is suggestive of two considerations:

- **Finding an appropriate intensity of physical activity** is important such that it provides children with appropriate exercise without over-stimulating them prior to entering a classroom situation – *“enough to wake up, but not enough to make you hyper”* (nurse).
- **Establishing an appropriate time-frame for the physical activity** component to finish whereby, for example, children stop the physical activity component 15 minutes (as an example) prior to the school commencement time to allow a period of ‘winding down’ before entering the classroom.

4.4.14. School: attendance rates

Similar to that noted above in terms of behaviour management, it would be unwise to claim a direct link between SBP and school attendance rates in this case study as there is a lack of quantitative data and, there are many variables (which would not have been captured during this case study) that influence school attendance.

This aside, however, it was noted by the Principal that there had been an improvement in school attendance over the past two terms.

4.4.15. Community: safety

It was discussed by the Principal and the school nurse that a benefit of this model was improved community safety with students:

- **Less likely to commit small crimes such as stealing:** A specific example given for this was a young male student who had *“come to school with two carrots for lunch ...they still had dirt on them ...he’d stolen them out of someone’s backyard on his way to school”*. It was felt that this type of theft could easily lead to more serious forms of theft and be the potential start of a more extreme pattern of behaviour. It was discussed that providing children with access to healthy food may reduce this level of negative behaviour within the community.
- **Less likely to be roaming the suburb prior to school opening hours:** It was discussed by the Principal, coordinators, volunteers and nurse that providing children access to a safe environment prior to school hours reduced their likelihood to *“roam the streets looking for something to do”* prior to school hours which may reduce some activities such as graffiti, but at a very minimum, provide the child with safety (as discussed earlier in Section 4.4.8).

4.4.16. Community: connectivity

It was felt that providing access to programmes such as this would be beneficial in achieving a 'sense of community' around the school (with parents more involved in the school, as well as community partners), however, it was noted that this was potentially a longer-term outcome.

4.5. Key learnings from this case study

4.5.1. Provision of guidelines for Principals - 'How to introduce a SBP in your school'

A suggestion by the Principal was to establish some "key tips", "guidelines" or "how to" for Principals and schools within the context of introducing the SBP to their school. Some areas for inclusion that were included in this discussion, as well as through the researcher's broader observation of the case study and the triangulation of the insights obtained, were:

The importance of selecting the right venue

- **Don'ts:** Where possible, it is not advised to utilise the staff room as this teacher's area should be kept dedicated to teachers.
- **Don'ts:** It is also not advisable to utilise the canteen as there may be preparation work occurring in the canteen that is not related to SBP and SBP may interfere with this.
- **Do's:** Select a room that has the space to set up desks in a 'meal-style' situation, rather than allowing children to eat their breakfast in an uncoordinated environment. This will foster communication and interaction between children, thereby facilitating sociability benefits.

Involving volunteers

- **Don'ts:** Don't rely on a couple of key parents will make the programme vulnerable - involve as many parent volunteers as possible from the outset.
- **Do's:** Provide the ability for, and communicate that, parents can be involved as 'key drivers / advocates' as well as 'key supporters' – generate awareness that participation does not necessarily have to involve coming to breakfast club every day, it can be a more flexible roster.
- **Do's:** Communicate the broader benefits of SBP to parents to encourage their involvement in order and encourage a wider range of parents to participate.
- **Do's:** Encourage parents to come and observe the breakfast club 'in action' as this may alleviate any concerns they have, help answer their questions and serve as a vehicle to gain their ongoing participation.

A staged and sympathetic implementation process to identify 'need' and address concern

- **Do's:** Recognise, and anticipate, that there may potentially be some opposition at the outset and avoid attempting to rush implementation through this. Provide adequate

opportunities for the school community to voice their opinions and collect their questions, providing additional information where possible.

- **Do's:** Communicate about the introduction and start-up of the SBP through existing communication mechanisms (such as the school newsletter) and provide opportunities for parents to provide input not only in terms of voicing concerns, but also in terms of expressing what they feel the program should 'look like' in order to ensure the programme is tailored to the school's individual needs.
- **Do's:** Engage with the school's P&C and gain their support, they will be an important advocate for the programme.

Inclusion of a physical activity component

- **Do's:** Account for including a physical activity component in the programme.
- **Do's:** Ensure the physical activity component is managed by the volunteers such that it is integrated as a part of the program, rather than something separate the children can undertake at-will.

Encouraging and element of child responsibility

- **Do's:** Identify tasks that the children can do in order to contribute to the programme, such as washing and drying their own dishes. This will facilitate a sense of shared ownership and also helps to create a learning environment whereby children are learning to contribute.
- **Do's:** Encourage multi-age interaction as this will facilitate child mentoring and interaction.
- **Do's:** Employ 'rules' such as the "buddy-system" whereby children needing to leave the room (for example, to access ablution facilities) are required to do so with a "buddy". The "buddy" can change each day (i.e. it does not need to be a defined "buddy" for each individual), but is a way to foster joint ownership of the programme between children.

4.5.2. Provision of guidelines on 'how to set up a SBP for volunteers and coordinators'

This case study suggests that the provision of guidelines for SBP volunteers and coordinators (particularly in a model such as this one where it is run by parents) would be highly beneficial. We would suggest that this includes, for example, a 'FAQ' section as well as some core guidelines:

The basic items you will require

- **Cutlery:** If possible, the preferred cutlery (as expressed in this case study) is melamine as it is washable, but not breakable, meaning that children can assume responsibility for washing their own dishes.
- **Larger items:** A fridge, a toaster, and a toasted sandwich maker are ideal.
- **Storage:** A storage *cupboard* for keeping stocks of food (such as tinned fruit and cereal) as well as a dedicated *fridge* (for storing margarine etc) and some *storage containers* to keep tea towels, serving dishes and cutlery etc.

- **Cleaning:** Detergent to wash dishes and clean tables after breakfast is served as well as cleaning cloths.

Rostering volunteers

- **Develop a roster and specify responsibilities:** If possible, develop a consistent roster for volunteers such that it does not hinge on one or two key parents and separate responsibilities within the roster as this reduces any ambiguity with the responsibility of the volunteer (which is often a barrier to engaging volunteers). For example,
 - Parent 1 arrives at 7.15am to 'set up', and leaves at 8.00am once all food has been prepared and the majority of children are served.
 - Parent 2 arrives at 7.30 to 'help serve', and leaves at 8.30am, and oversees the 'clean-up' process.
 - Parent 3 arrives at 8.00 to 'manage the physical activity component', and leaves at 8.30am once duty of care is assumed by the school.
- **Develop an 'ad-hoc' roster:** Develop time slots where 'parent helpers' can attend to observe and assist on an ad-hoc basis. Getting some participation from a parent may help them commit to a more frequent role.
- **Roles:** Be clear on responsibility for 'other' roles including:
 - Collecting the food from Foodbank WA.
 - Collecting other food or products that may be required in addition to that supplied by Foodbank WA.
 - Cleaning tea-towels on a regular basis.
 - Managing any funds that may be provided to the SBP (either directly from the school P&C, community or parent donations).

Communication

- **Ensure that you have a point of access to parental feedback to the school:** Ensure that you are able to access any feedback about SBP via the school as this can help you develop 'solutions' to ensure the
- **Ensure you have a point of access to Foodbank WA:** Collecting the food from Foodbank WA is not necessarily the most appropriate time to communicate with Foodbank WA as these will all be volunteers. Rather, it is beneficial for them to have contact details of several of the key parents such that they can communicate with your 'team' rather than an 'individual'.

Dealing with opposition

- **Validate the potential for this:** It is possible that you will receive some opposition to SBP through the school community. The key things to communicate about SBP include:
 - The benefits of SBP other than provision of 'free breakfast' (as highlighted previously in this report).
 - Encourage observation of opposers as it can assist in breaking down the barriers.

Collecting donations and securing funding

- **P&C:** The P&C may be a point to gain some 'one-off' funding to assist in, for example, purchasing the up-front items such as the fridge.

- **Community:** Contacting local businesses may help you secure either ‘one-off’ funding or ongoing grants and this can be in the form of either cash, or reduced purchase prices for items such as fridges etc.
- **Parents:** Consider set up an anonymous ‘donations’ box where parents can donate money if appropriate for your school.

4.5.3. Exploring Foodbank WA’s role

This case study highlighted several areas where it would be considered beneficial for Foodbank WA to provide additional services including:

Recognising and valuing volunteers

Recognising and valuing the contribution that parent volunteers make is important and a task that it may be more appropriate for Foodbank WA to undertake, rather than expecting individual schools to deliver this. The potential advantages of this are

- It may positively influence the volunteer’s / coordinator’s relationship with Foodbank WA and hence likelihood to remain involved.
- Recognition at this level (from Foodbank WA rather than the school itself) may help separate Foodbank WA from the Department of Education, thus, reducing some of potential negativity recorded among some teachers (described earlier).
- It eliminates the burden for individual schools to develop ways to recognise their volunteers, noting that schools do not have access to discretionary spend for this.

Some options spontaneously discussed in this case study were inclusive of:

- Providing coordinators / volunteers with collateral such as:
 - Foodbank WA SBP t-shirts
 - Annual certificates of appreciation from Foodbank WA
- Providing coordinators / volunteers the opportunity to attend an annual ‘morning tea’ whereby they can:
 - Meet and socialise with other volunteers and coordinators – noting that sociability was a benefit of participation expressed by parents.
 - Share learnings between schools – facilitating a culture of sharing and promoting best practice.

Regardless of the recognition technique employed, it should be noted that any mechanism in place should follow principles of sincerity and simplicity as it often the case that (as was evidenced throughout this case study) volunteers “aren’t doing it for the sake of being recognised”.

Provision of guidelines

There were several references throughout the report in terms of the need this case study identified for Foodbank WA to provide guidelines on several topics:

- Guidelines for Principals in setting up SBP (as discussed in Section 1.5.1)
- Guidelines for coordinators in setting up and running SBP (as discussed in Section 1.5.2)
- Guidelines for coordinators in terms of appropriate and inappropriate foods and the provision of example ‘menus’ and ‘recipes’.

- Guidelines on how to engage community partners – potentially including scripts of **‘how’** to approach the discussion, as well as ideas on **‘who’** to target.
- Guidelines for teachers who may have concerns regarding SBP.

Raising awareness of Foodbank WA’s accessibility

Also evidenced throughout this study is the potential need for Foodbank WA to raise awareness among volunteers and coordinators of ways to source information from them – either in person, through the website or through specific materials.

5. Case Study 2 – Metropolitan Primary School

5.1. The location context

A total of 11,225 people lived in this regional suburb at the time of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2006 Census. Compared to the 'All of Perth' average, this suburb records:

- A higher proportion of Indigenous / Torres Strait Islander peoples and a lower proportion of those born outside Australia.
- A higher proportion of those with education levels completed that are Year 10 or lower.
- Slightly higher labour force participation rates and comparable median household income per week.

ABS Census 2006 Profile	All of Perth	This Suburb
Total Persons	1,445,076	11,225
Gender		
Male (%)	49.4	49.4
Female (%)	50.6	50.6
Nationality		
Indigenous / Torres Strait Islander (%)	1.5	3.1
Born in Australia (%)	66.3	74.3
Born elsewhere (%)	33.7	25.7
Age		
Median Age	36	35
People aged 15 and over (%)	80.5	80.7
Household Statistics		
Median household size (people)	2.5	2.6
Median household income (\$/wk)	1,086	1,058
Families who are single parent families (%)	15.2	17.6
Home Ownership		
Proportion who own or are purchasing a home (%)	72.7	77.5
Proportion renting a home (%)	26.4	21.2
Motor Vehicle Ownership		
Households who do not own a motor vehicle (%)	7.3	5.4
Highest Year of School Completed		
Year 12	51.4	38.4
Year 11	11.7	15.5
Year 10	25.7	33.8
Lower than year 10	11.2	12.2
Employment Rates		
Unemployment rate (%)	3.6	3.2
Labour force participation rate (%)	62.8	66.4

Note: Non-responses have been excluded from analysis.

Labour force participation rate: is the number of persons in the labour force expressed as a percentage of persons aged 15 years and over.

The school involved in the case study caters for kindergarten through to year 7 students, and has a total of around 330 students.

5.2. The School Breakfast Program (SBP) Model

5.2.1. The inception

The main driver and initiator

The main driver and initiator of this SBP was external to the school. The program was started by the senior citizens centre who had found out about SBPs by one of their members (the President of their group) who had seen it 'in action' in Canada.

This SBP was thought to be one of the first opened in Western Australia and several of the volunteers had been involved since Day 1. Upon initiating the SBP the volunteers recalled having considerable media interest with 'camera crews' etc present on the first day of its opening.

Evidence of consultation

The main driver of the SBP in this school raised it with their senior citizens centre to gain their interest and approval first, then contacted local government (The Shire of Mundaring), and the school community (Principal) to gain support for its inception.

5.2.2. The 'start-up' process

As this model started almost nine years ago, the focus of this case study is not on the start-up process but rather the maintenance of the program.

However, in terms of the start-up process, the following is noted:

- **Externally driven:** This model was initiated and set up external to the school (by the senior volunteers), however, there was a significant amount of school support underpinning delivery of the program.
- **Early forming of partnerships:** Partnerships were explored and pursued early-on by the volunteers in terms of securing essential items such as a second-hand fridge to store food and gaining support from local government. The process of securing community partnerships was considered integral to the commencement and maintenance of this SBP.

5.2.3. The ongoing running of SBP

Location

The SBP is run in the school's art room which has water and sinks for washing of dishes, as well as tables and stools set up which are utilised to simulate a 'kitchen table' setting.

Practicalities

The plastic dishes / cups and serving plates and utensils are stored in the art-room in plastic boxes.

A dedicated fridge and storage cabinet are kept in the room for the purposes of SBP. Both the fridge and cabinet are lockable. There is also a toaster, an urn for hot water and a microwave for making porridge.

Additional funding and ongoing costs

There are a number of ways in which this SBP sources additional funds:

- **Parent / child donation box:** A coin-donation box is set up in the breakfast club where children can make small voluntary donations upon entry. Most children appeared to donate some coins upon entry. There are no guidelines, nor mandatory expectations, for parents to donate monies.
- **Grants:** This SBP has successfully received several grants during its nine years of operation, from a \$1000 community grant from Woolworths (for which the application was driven and submitted by the volunteers) to LotteryWest grants.
- **Community donations:** This SBP has also been successful in gaining one-off community donations. The most recent example was the donation of \$500 from a local tavern. This was sourced via word-of-mouth about the school's Breakfast Club.

These donations and grants are used to fund the purchase of essential items (such as the urn for hot water) as well as additional supplies required such as washing-up liquid, tea-towels and other consumables not supplied by Foodbank WA, or those which incurred small charges.

Number of children reached

In total, around 70 children go to the SBP – equating to around 1 in 5 students at the school. The breakfasts are run on Tuesdays and Thursdays only.

On a typical Tuesday and Thursday, between 30 and 40 children participate. It was mentioned that winter months are usually quieter than summer months and it was felt this was due to weather making it more difficult for children to get to school early.

5.2.4. Logistics

External volunteer model

The SBP is run entirely by external volunteers from the community senior citizens group. There is one main volunteer (the 'coordinator') and 14 volunteers in total who rotate between Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are some additional volunteers who participate on a less frequent as-needs basis.

The volunteers arrive at 7.30am, but the children are not allowed to enter the school until 8am. This is a relatively recent deviation from the way the model has worked in the past whereby students were allowed to enter the Breakfast Club at 7.30am and this was because of additional duty of care requirements relating to construction happening at the school. The volunteers were supportive of this requirement however, the children had noticed this difference and expressed that they 'preferred' it when they were allowed to enter the school

earlier as it meant they did not feel as rushed to eat their breakfast and had greater opportunity to interact both with their peers and the volunteers.

Child participation

The children do not participate in terms of food preparation and cleaning and the entire process is facilitated and managed by the volunteers.

Seating arrangement

The children are expected to sit at a table and eat their breakfast to reflect a ‘family-meal’ environment whereby interaction between students and volunteers is naturally facilitated. Children are not allowed to eat outside this designated room nor away from these tables and thus full supervision is achieved.

Collecting food

The food for SBP is collected by the ‘coordinator’ on a monthly basis.

Parental participation

While parents are not volunteers within this model, parents are invited to participate in SBP by attending with their child and several parents did this on the two occasions this SBP was visited for the purpose of this case study. This provided the opportunity for parents to:

- Interact and communicate with their child.
- Observe their child socially.
- Interact and communicate with the senior volunteers.
- Help their child integrate into the SBP.

Roles

Each volunteer had a dedicated role within the SBP and these include:

- **Record keeping:** One person is responsible for ‘sign-ins’ / register for children attending for which the details are passed back to the Principal
- **Toast:** Two are responsible for making toast (with butter, chocolate mud spread, vegemite, jam, marmalade, honey, cheese spread)
- **Cereal:** One is responsible for dispensing cereals (Nutrigrain, porridge, cornflakes)
- **Drinks:** One is responsible for dispensing drinks (orange and apple juice, Milo, Quik)
- **Washing up:** One is responsible for washing up – but others help at the end to finish cleaning and packing away cutlery.

Record keeping

As noted above, there is a ‘sign-in’ system which records the individual child, their school year and ticks off which days they come to breakfast club. This record keeping enables the Principal to understand the number of children participating, the frequency with which they participate and assists in formalising a monitoring process between the volunteers and school administrators.

The children each have individual name tags which are laid out on the table for the children to put on upon entry and then take off on exit. These were designed and made by one of the parents and the feedback was that they were initially embraced (novelty) and all kids wore,

but now only a few wear them however, the volunteers know students by name perhaps minimising their ongoing usefulness.

Physical activity components

The focus of this SBP is on food provision and there are no physical activity components. There are several reasons for this:

- **Timing:** The breakfast club starts at 8am, thereby leaving insufficient time for children to eat breakfast and undertake physical activity prior to entering the classroom.
- **Teacher supervision:** Teachers would be required to supervise the physical activity component, thus reducing one of the perceived positives of this model that teacher involvement is not required.
- **Focus:** The focus of this SBP was on food access, sociability and mentoring - introducing a further component may dilute this focus, and potentially not be of interest to the volunteers to accommodate.

Food Sensations

This school had not received the Food Sensations sessions.

Extensions

Through the SBP and their involvement with Foodbank WA, this school had extended the model to include a component of “giving back” whereby children are encouraged to donate food (tinned and packaged food) on an ad-hoc basis (encouraged as weekly, but families are free to donate according to their desire for involvement and capacity) to give back to Foodbank WA for “food for the homeless”.

It was felt that this encouraged a culture of “caring” within the school and was a two-way process whereby children and families benefited from access to the program delivered by Foodbank WA but also contributed to it.

Broader volunteer participation within the school

It is noted that some of the volunteers in this model volunteer in broader aspects of the school community than solely SBP. For example, there is involvement in the school’s reading program.

Inclusion of volunteers within the school

The volunteers are acknowledged and included within the school community via:

- **Recognition:** Certificates of Recognition have been presented to volunteers at school assemblies.
- **Inclusion:** Invitations to school functions; providing them with copies of school newsletters; writing about them in the school newsletter; inviting them to staff morning teas.

Communication of SBP within the school

There are several communication mechanisms by which parents can find out about SBP:

- **School newsletter:** The SBP is mentioned regularly in the school’s fortnightly newsletter which is distributed via email to parents.

- **School assemblies:** The SBP is referenced in school assemblies which parents are invited to attend – particularly when the school recognises the volunteers in these assemblies with Certificates of Appreciation.
- **Word of mouth:** It was also acknowledged that word of mouth between students, and parents (both other parents in the school, and by informally approaching parents on the P&C) was a mechanism for raising awareness of the SBP.

5.2.5. Target groups

This SBP is open to, and accessible by, any student within the school - individual students and parents are not targeted. Because the SBP had been running for many years, and the original coordinator had since passed, it was difficult to establish the original motivation and target group for inclusion. The current target group, however, was based on engaging those who needed access to either of the two key elements below:

- **Food provision**
 - for parents who were unable to provide breakfast regularly;
 - for parents who may be providing breakfast, but experiencing financial difficulties or stress, thereby providing them some assistance;
 - for children who did not normally consume healthy foods and / or, were reluctant to consume new / different foods; or,
 - for children who recorded low desire to eat breakfast as a way to encourage consumption.
- **Emotional / mental / social support systems**
 - if their child benefited from additional adult role models and mentors; or,
 - if their child benefited from sociability between students.

That is, this SBP is designed to fulfil more than simply food provision but to also provide mentoring and emotional support to children via the volunteers.

5.3. How the model functions

In terms of the way this model functions, there are a number of observations of the barriers, risks and strengths which are discussed below. It should, however, be noted that this SBP has been operating under the same model for nine years and therefore, the management and maintenance process is well embedded.

5.3.1. Keys to maintenance and overcoming barriers

Sourcing and maintaining the volunteer cohort

Having a good network of available volunteers was considered a critical key to the maintenance and ongoing success of SBPs. For this model, this means having a core group of ‘consistent’ volunteers who are able to commit to a weekly involvement, but also a second group of ‘back-up’ volunteers for when individuals were sick / on holidays etc who are willing to commit to a more ‘ad-hoc’ involvement. The coordinator’s role in terms of organising / rostering, and assuming ownership of this, is a critical key to the ongoing maintenance of SBPs operating under this model.

There were several barriers identified in this case study to sourcing and maintaining a volunteer cohort:

- **Commitment aversion:** It was discussed by several of those interviewed in this case study (the volunteers themselves, teachers, Principal and parents) that one of the barriers to volunteering with SBP lays with the fear of committing, or ‘over-committing’, oneself to a volunteering role. It was felt that this was because there is a lack of defined parameters, or awareness of what the volunteering role will entail – *“there needs to be a volunteer system that doesn’t make people feel like they have to over-commit”* (parent).

This obstacle is somewhat common to volunteering – regardless of the sector or task – in that volunteering can be perceived as a potentially over-burdensome commitment if there are no defined parameters or options for commitment presented.

A potential solution for this is to **provide guidelines** to coordinators and / or schools regarding potential ‘options’ in volunteering in terms of providing boundaries that are;

- *Frequency / duration-specific:* for example, volunteer once a week for one year / volunteer for one term / volunteer for one month etc.
 - *Role-specific:* for example, help on the ‘toast station’ at breakfast club / help by picking up the food once a month for breakfast club etc.
 - *Encouraging ‘trial’ rather than ‘commitment’:* for example, asking parents / other volunteers to ‘try’ volunteering rather than provide an open-ended commitment.
- **Lack of awareness and knowledge:** A further potential obstacle which emerged from this case study related to a lack of awareness and understanding of what SBP actually is and involves. This lack of awareness and knowledge can create a sense that one is volunteering ‘for the unknown’. Similar to that described above, lack of awareness and understanding of the program among potential volunteers is a common obstacle to volunteering in general. There are three potential solutions identified through this case study which may assist:
 - *Generating awareness via other organisations:* It was suggested that Foodbank WA could communicate directly with local government associations / senior citizens associations to inform them of the program and

the need for volunteers as well as the benefits of volunteering – “*they might be happy to come in but have just never been asked*” (parent).

- *Production of information leaflets:* It was also suggested that it may be beneficial to have short information leaflets available for the use of schools and coordinators which provide some information on SBP and communicate some of the benefits of volunteering with SBP.
- *Inviting parents to have breakfast with their children so they can experience first-hand:* It was also felt that there may be benefits in encouraging parents to attend SBP on one / a couple of occasions, with their child as a way to introduce them naturally to the SBP in a ‘non-threatening’ environment. Parents would then be able to more clearly understand volunteer roles and observe first-hand the potential benefits of volunteering.

It is noted that there were also more obvious barriers to volunteering relating to time and availability of parents in the workforce or parents with infant children. However, it is not felt that these are easily addressed by Foodbank WA and they were therefore not explored further within this case study – rather, the focus was on the attitudinal and awareness barriers described above.

Sourcing and maintaining additional funding

The experience with this case study was that sourcing additional funding was important and that failing to acknowledge its importance could be a critical barrier to the ongoing sustainability of an SBP. The key reasons for this related to:

- **Additional consumable items:** Some items considered necessary / important were not accessible through Foodbank WA – for example, fruit juice and Milo etc. It was felt that these items (described as “a few special extras”) were important in terms of maintaining children’s interest in attending the SBP as it increased the perception – and reality – that there was variation in the food offered.
- **Replacement items:** There needs to be an allowance for some items to be replaced medium / longer-term for example toasters / urns / microwaves.

There were two potential solutions identified for maintaining additional funding:

- **Grants:** Obtaining grants was one way in which this was achieved – this is primarily used to address the financial needs of replacing items (described above). Applying for grants in this model was lead by the coordinator and endorsed by the school / Principal. There were a number of potential sources which had been accessed through this SBP including:
 - Woolworths community grants
 - Bendigo Bank community grants
 - Local businesses

Because applying for grants is an element that requires proactive pursuit, it may be beneficial to provide coordinators / schools with information around the variety of grants available, as well as ideas on how to approach them or information kits on how to submit grant applications.

- **Donations:** In addition, as referenced earlier when describing the logistics of this case study, some funds can also be sourced through small donations made by attending students / parents. Such a donation system is voluntary whereby students are encouraged to make a coin donation on attending the SBP - this is more likely to address the financial needs of providing additional consumable items (as described above). It should be noted that there does need to be clarity around donations in that they are voluntary in nature (if this is the intended approach) as there was confusion among a few (children and teachers) within this case study as to whether a donation was obligatory for attendance.

Communication with the school

The experience of this case study is that maintaining good lines of communication with the school (the Principal / school Administrators, as well as teachers) is an important consideration in the sustainability of SBPs. In this case study, this involved two aspects:

- **Maintaining an attendance register:** As referenced in describing the logistics of this case study, a register is used to record the attendance by individual student name and school year. This register is passed back to the Principal for their information. This serves to 'formalise' the SBP as a part of the school's operation and school community, and ensures that school Administrators are aware of the functioning and reach of the SBP.
- **Inviting and encouraging observation:** The Principal and teachers were also encouraged to observe and attend the SBP if so desired. Many of the teachers and Principal knew the volunteers by name and had strong awareness of their roles and contribution to the school.

Acknowledging the 'social stigma'

The strength of this factor (the perceived negative social stigma by parents associated with sending a child to SBP) was not as strong as that described in Case Study 1. However, there were still some mentions of this element present in that some may feel it is the parents' responsibility to feed their children, rather than the school. This perception is *not* described by the children.

This would suggest that it may be important to acknowledge the potential for this to exist, rather than ignore, as this may serve to 'prepare' and better equip schools / volunteers / coordinators to deal with the potential existence of this element.

Consistent with that described previously in Case Study 1, there were two potential solutions identified within this case study to assist in addressing this:

- **Broad reach:** Broadening the reach of who the SBP is inclusive of – i.e. to not only include those children who may be food insecure, but also include children whose parents may need to drop them at school early to get to work, those who have social / interaction issues, or those who would benefit from senior / adult mentoring and alternative role models. Achieving this broad reach can be achieved, at least in part, by active and wide communication of the SBP throughout the school in formats such as school newsletters and assemblies.

- **Encouraging parental participation:** Encouraging parents to attend the SBP on an ad-hoc basis as observers, rather than volunteers, may assist in breaking down any negative stigma associated.

There is one additional solution which emerged from this case study:

- **Assuring the endorsement of the school's P&C:** It was considered important to have the support and in principle endorsement of the P&C because it was noted that parents would informally approach parents involved in the P&C to gauge their opinion and level of support. As the P&C are representative of the school's parent body, their support for SBP (even if passive support) is considered an important element to secure.

Appropriate storage and supply spaces

There was also some discussion around the provision of storage within the school and the format of supplies which were deemed important to consider in terms of sustainability of SBPs. It was referenced that many of the products supplied by Foodbank WA come only 'in bulk' and that this can be an issue for SBPs if there is not sufficient storage allocated at the school.

There are two notes in relation to this consideration:

- **Parameters:** Foodbank WA could consider providing some guidelines or parameters in terms of the 'ideal' level of storage required. The purpose of this would be to create awareness of this among coordinators, as well as generating a shared understanding with schools, as to the extent of storage space required to maintain a SBP.
- **Non-bulk items:** There was mention that it would be beneficial to access items in smaller quantities to facilitate storage on a more manageable scale at the individual school level. This may be of particular relevance to schools that are not running the SBP daily as they would move through supplies less frequently.

5.3.2. Risks

Reliance on individuals

The only potential risk identified in this case study was its reliance on individuals and volunteers, which would be common to any program that relies on volunteers. In this case study, this risk is somewhat mitigated by the fact that there are several volunteers involved who are highly familiar with the SBP. That is, while the model still relies on volunteers / individuals (i.e. not paid school staff), it has a strong network / pool of volunteers on which it can rely and this is therefore also a strength of this model (discussed further below).

5.3.3. Strengths of the model

Dedicated and consistent volunteers

Having a relatively large number (13-14) of volunteers with a long-term relationship and commitment to SBP is a key strength of this model. There are several examples which illustrate the benefits this element presents:

- **Broader school benefits:** Some of the volunteers have integrated into the school more broadly and also participate, as mentioned previously, in the school's reading programs. That is, their dedication has extended more widely into the school and therefore benefits the school in other areas – not just SBP.
- **Volunteer familiarity and understanding of individual children:** An observation in this case study was that the senior volunteers paid attention to the emotional and physical well-being of individual students. An example of this was a volunteer who mentioned to the Principal that they had observed a particular child acting “differently” that day and that they had asked the child whether they felt “ok” or if they felt a bit “depressed”. This information was received constructively, taken seriously by the Principal and later followed up with the student's teacher. This would only be achievable when the volunteers have a high level of familiarity with individual students and their personalities and is considered a strength of this model as it provides another layer of support for participating children.
- **Non-reliance on school leadership:** The trust and relationship that has been built over the years between the coordinator / volunteers and the schools Administrators / leaders means that the SBP can run independently without reliance on the school and its staff. This decreases any potential that SBP will be considered to contribute to the expanding role of teachers and is therefore a significant strength of having dedicated and consistent volunteers.

External volunteers

The fact that the volunteers are external to the school's community (i.e. it is not run by school staff or by parent volunteers) is a strength of this model for two reasons:

- **Mentors and role models:** It means that participating children and parents are exposed to an additional set of adults from which they can receive mentoring and observe positive role modelling. In turn, this means that the children form relationships with other people within their broader community which fosters a sense of community connectedness.
- **Absence of pre-judgement:** It was also discussed that their externality can mean that children feel less ‘judged’ because, *“they don't know who they are at home and whether they've been in trouble the night before, they don't know their teacher's perception of them – they can start with a clean slate and there's no judgement”* (parent).

Model extension

A further strength of this model is that it encouraged ‘giving back’ by creating an environment where children / families donated food to the school for collection by Foodbank WA. It was felt by parents, teachers and the Principal that this fostered a greater sense of ‘giving’ within the school community. In addition, it was felt that this had changed the way the SBP was

viewed by the school's community in that it was not simply considered a 'hand-out' and 'passing of responsibility'. Rather, it was considered, in part, a reciprocal relationship.

5.4. Outcomes

There were a wide range of benefits and outcomes that emerged in discussions throughout this case study.

5.4.1. Child: consistent access to healthy food

Access to healthy food was considered a primary outcome of SBP. This access was in relation to those who were food insecure, those who had low food motivation and those who would otherwise consume unhealthy breakfasts. Elaboration on these three groups was provided in Case Study 1 and is therefore not repeated here as the findings were similar.

In addition, in this case study, it was felt that a key outcome laid not just the provision of healthy food, but with the **consistent provision** of healthy food. This was expressed by children, *"you always know you can have food for breakfast"* and teachers *"knowing it's always there makes a difference ...it's the consistency"*, as one of the benefits of breakfast clubs.

5.4.2. Child: adult mentoring / role modelling

Exposure to alternate adult role models was described by the children, parents, Principal and teachers as a positive outcome of SBP and it was felt that this provided the children an additional layer of emotional support, *"they're like your second family ...you can talk to them ...they're always there for you"* (child). The volunteer role was considered to include components of mentoring – not just food provision - by the school and parents.

5.4.3. Child: emotional benefits

There was also some discussion around emotional benefits for the children which related to:

- **Reducing sense of isolation:** Similar to that described in Case Study 1, it was described that being able to attend SBP *"reduces the sense of abandonment with kids who are dropped at school early"* (parent).
- **Experiencing positive emotions:** It was also described that the caring environment of the SBP *"starts the day beautifully, it calms them ...they're happy"* (Principal) and this was reflected by the children themselves, *"it makes you feel happy"* (child).
- **Increasing a sense of belonging:** It was consistently mentioned that this SBP model increases a sense of personal belonging among the children, *"you feel welcomed"* (child), *"they feel accepted"* (parent), *"they feel accepted and cared for ...valued"* (teacher).

- **Receiving positive attention:** It was mentioned frequently, and observed directly, that there were very few behavioural problems during SBP. Overall, it was discussed that this occurred because the children and volunteers had a great deal of mutual respect and fondness for each other, but also because the volunteers give each child positive attention, know the children by name and it is clear to the children that they are participating out of desire rather than compulsion, *“they [the children] don’t have to rebel in breakfast club ...they get so much good attention from the volunteers that they don’t need to seek bad attention”* (parent).

5.4.4. Child: social development

There was consistent discussion that a benefit of SBP was that it contributed to the social development of children:

- **Diversification of social circles:** It was both discussed and observed that the children interacted with a variety of different ages rather than only their own year group. This was considered beneficial by the Principal, teachers and parents in terms of developing a broader sense of community within the school. The children consider those attending SBP as a social circle, *“you get to see your friends”* (child).
- **Peer mentoring:** Because the children are interacting with a variety of ages, it was commented that the older children act as mentors to the younger children, *“the range of kids ages and they all interact ...they try to help each other ...it encourages them to feel like they can be a role model and play a part ...they love helping people younger than themselves”* (parent).
- **Confidence building:** It was also referenced that children were able to develop confidence in their social and communication skills over time by attending SBP, *“he used to try and leave breakfast early ...was really shy ...but, is now really social and confident ...you could see a total change in his personality and confidence after going for a while”* (parent).

5.4.5. Child: academic outcomes

It was hypothesised, although no supportive quantitative school data was available, that SBP has a positive impact on academic outcomes, *“if you’re hungry, you’re not really interested in Captain Cook or your times tables”* (teacher), *“they don’t have the fuzzies for the day”* (parent).

It should be noted, however, that it was mostly clarified that consuming breakfast (in general) has a positive impact on academic outcomes, and there was a belief that most, but not all, children at this school would otherwise consume breakfast at home if SBP was not available.

5.4.6. Child: safety

A further positive outcome cited in this case study was safety for children. This was primarily referenced in relation those whose parents may need to deliver their children at school prior to the school commencement time of 8.30am, *“it’s a safe-haven ...with parents who are going to work early, otherwise the kids are left to wander the street”* (parent).

5.4.7. Child: trialling new foods / food variety

There was discussion by both parents and volunteers (i.e. those observing the children’s consumption habits during SBP) that the school breakfast environment encouraged trialling of new foods. The potential reasons cited for this relate to two factors:

- **A non-threatening place to trial:** It was felt that the SBP represented an environment in which children could comfortably trial new foods by encouragement from the volunteers or from watching the examples set by their peers, *“the kids will try new foods ...it’s a more comfortable environment to do it ...they won’t do it if its me [the parent] telling them to”* (parent).
- **Variety of foods available:** It was also discussed that the variety of foods available at SBP would impact the children’s likelihood of trialling new food because there are food ‘choices’ at breakfast time, for example; *“there’s more choices than there is at home ...you might have one kind of cereal at home, but here there’s a few”* (parent).

5.4.8. Parents: fostering family cohesion

Because parents in this model are invited and welcome to come to SBP with their child, it was an observation of the volunteers that it may assist in developing parental socialisation and communication with their children thereby assisting with fostering family cohesion.

In addition, it was discussed that it may foster their involvement within the school as they connect to a school-supported program and communicate with other parents attending.

5.4.9. Parents: easing pressure

In this model, there was reference that the SBP assisted parents in easing pressure in two areas:

- **Financial:** There was a perception that parents who may be struggling financially, but still providing breakfast to their children, would experience some financial ‘relief’ from the SBP in that their child’s breakfast was provided two days per week. While it was noted that these parents may still voluntarily donate money to the SBP, it was felt that the donations would be lesser than the cost of providing a balanced breakfast such as that available through SBP, and that the foods they were able to provide would be more limited than that through SBP.
- **Emotional:** In addition, it was discussed that there may be some emotional benefits to parents through knowing and trusting the volunteers, *“you know they’ll be loved*

and nurtured ...takes some stress away when you're worried about their wellbeing" (parent), *"you don't have to worry about them sitting on a bench somewhere"* (parent).

5.4.10. School: behaviour management

While there was no statistical evidence available, there were several points noted in relation to behaviour management:

- **SBP contribution:** It was discussed that, among the children who attend SBP, there were minimal behaviour problems – *"they're all good kids ...there are no behaviour problems from these kids"* (Principal) and it was felt that this model of providing the SBP may contribute to this.
- **Healthy food access:** In addition, it was discussed that the fact that SBP provides access to healthy foods contributes positively to the behaviour of those attending, *"behavioural problems are reduced by eating healthier foods ...they're not eating CocoPops before coming to school which is high in sugar"* (teacher).
- **Volunteers:** It was also felt that the format of this model contributed to behaviour management with the evidence cited as that which occurs during the breakfast club itself in that, *"we never have any problems, they never misbehave"* (volunteer). It was felt that there was a high level of respect for the volunteers which contributed to the good behaviour of the children while in the breakfast club and established a sound platform of behaviour for the remainder of the school day.

5.4.11. School: attendance

There was some discussion regarding the potential for SBP to positively impact school attendance. Some teachers felt they had not observed any difference while others were able to cite very specific examples; *"I have a child [kindergarten] who I know goes to breakfast club ...they're always here on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but their attendance can be quite poor on other days ...and, they even get to school early on breakfast club days"* (teacher).

In addition to this, some parents discussed that their children were more 'excited' to go to school on SBP days, *"they'll get up early and want to come"* (parent) indicating that there was a stronger desire to attend school on SBP days.

5.4.12. School: reputation

It was also discussed that this model of SBP contributed to a positive reputation of the school more broadly within the community, *"it shows the school cares about more than just academic things ...cares about their emotions and wellbeing ...they're not just a number to the school"* (parent).

5.4.13. Coordinators and volunteers: good mental health – the ‘Act-Belong-Commit’ philosophy

According to Donovan and Egger (2007)²², three areas – Act, Belong and Commit – form a hierarchy of increasing contribution to an individual’s sense of self and mental health:

- **Act:** Maintain or increase levels of physical activity (e.g. walk, garden, dance), cognitive activity (e.g. read, do crossword puzzles, study), and social activity (e.g. say hello to neighbours, chat to shopkeepers, maintain contacts with friends).
- **Belong:** Maintain or increase level of participation in groups if already a member or join a group. Maintain or increase participation in community events and with family and friends.
- **Commit:** Take up a cause or challenge (e.g. volunteer for a good cause, learn a new and challenging skill).

Volunteer work is frequently mentioned as a source of satisfaction, and also provides a source of activity and involvement with others. As such, the Act-Belong-Commit framework can help explain the motivation of the retiree helpers in volunteering:

The ABC for good mental health – the volunteering example observed through this case study

	Example in theory	Supporting evidence from this case study
Act	By going along to a breakfast and helping out (this helps them keep socially, cognitively and perhaps physically active)	“keeps your mind active” (<i>volunteer</i>) “reduces their isolation” (<i>parent</i>) “keeps them young” (<i>parent</i>)
Belong	By joining the breakfast club committee (this helps strengthen an individual’s connectedness with the community and sense of identity)	Volunteers expressed it as a way to ‘belong’: “my children are all over east and I have no grandkids” (<i>volunteer</i>)
Commit	By becoming a regular helper at the breakfasts (this provides a sense of purpose and meaning to one’s life)	“personal satisfaction in being involved and contributing” (<i>volunteer</i>)

A wealth of research exists in the field, with the majority agreeing with this theory:

- According to a critical review of the literature by Petriwskyj and Warburton (2007)²³ there are a number of commonly cited motivations to volunteering, including social motivations, wanting to contribute to society, and to feel good/needed. Barriers include age, health problems, perceived lack of ability/confidence, lack of time, and work commitments.
- Willigen (2000)²⁴ noted seniors experience a greater benefit from volunteering than younger adults. Furthermore, the study found volunteering to be positively associated with life satisfaction and perceived health among older adults.

²² Donovan, R. & Egger, G., 2007. Lifestyle Medicine – Happiness and Mental Health: The Flip Side of S-AD, McGraw Hill, Australia.

²³ Petriwskyj, A. M. & Warburton, J., 2007. Motivations and Barriers to Volunteering by Seniors: A Critical Review of the Literature, The International Journal of Volunteer Administration, XXIV(6), p3-25.

²⁴ Willigen, M. V., 2000. Differential Benefits of Volunteering Across the Life Course, Journal of Gerontology, 55B(5), S308-S318.

- Research by Lum and Lightfoot (2005)²⁵ uncovered a positive correlation between volunteering by older individuals and self-reported health, depression levels and functioning levels.
- A study by Windsor, Anstey and Rodgers (2008)²⁶ corroborated with previous research in the field, suggesting there is an association between good mental health and moderate levels of volunteer activity.

The volunteers in this case study indicated that there were indeed benefits such as those described above in participating in SBP. Further discussion on this is provided in the 'key learnings' section of this case study.

5.4.14. Community: developing social capital and cohesion

Volunteering has well documented benefits in published mental health and psychology literature in terms of having positive implications for developing social capital. This case study indicated that this was indeed evident. There are two elements of this:

- **Children:** The fact that the volunteers were external to the school was described as providing links between the school and its students with others in the community – *“suddenly, they’re a part of something ...they see familiar faces at the shops and they have a connection ...a sense of community”* (parent). It was felt that this ‘connection’ remains with the students post graduating primary school, *“my daughter is in year 8 now so isn’t at this school anymore, but she still comes back to say hello and they’re really interested in how she’s doing”* (parent).
- **External volunteers:** As discussed above, it also provides senior citizens within the community to contribute to their community in a meaningful way with a diverse group of students including some of whom are disadvantaged.

Additional evidence of this was related back to the “giving back” component, the extension of this SBP, in terms of collecting food to donate to Foodbank WA for homeless people. This was considered as evidence of strong sense of community within the school, *“[giving donations] makes you feel happy ...you’re giving not taking ...you’re helping someone”* (child).

²⁵ Lum, T. Y. & Lightfoot, E., 2005. The Effects of Volunteering on the Physical and Mental Health of Older People, *Research on Aging*, 27(1), p31-55.

²⁶ Windsor, T. D., Anstey, K. J. & Rodgers, B., 2008. Volunteering and Psychological Well-Being Among Young-Old Adults: How Much Is Too Much?, *The Gerontologist*, 48(1), p59-70.

5.5. Key learnings from this case study

5.5.1. Avenues for engaging senior / external volunteers

A key learning from this model is the potential benefits of engaging senior volunteers to deliver SBPs. Overall, it was discussed that this process should be driven by Foodbank WA via community organisations, rather than relying on schools to source external volunteers. In this way, the volunteers then approach the school to form a partnership rather than the school seeking volunteers.

In order to do this, the key benefits - or messages – which could be communicated to seniors were qualitatively explored and these largely related to **the personal satisfaction**. The senior volunteers cited the personal satisfaction of being involved with children and developing rapport as one of the strongest positives of being involved in SBP.

This has strong links to the ‘Act-Belong-Commit’ approach to mental health as part of the Mentally Healthy WA campaign whereby they:

- **Act** by keeping themselves socially active with their peers;
- **Belong** to a group of senior volunteers who participate in SBP; and,
- **Commit** by volunteering for a good cause.

Thus, it is recommended that potential partnerships be explored by Foodbank WA within the ‘A-B-C’ framework to encourage external volunteering in SBPs.

5.5.2. A focus on Foodbank WA’s primary role but inclusion of a secondary role supplying education

Once SBPs are ‘established’ (that is, not necessarily during the inception period as there is a steep learning curve), there may be a desire for some educational materials. Notably, however, this is from the school’s perspective rather than the volunteers’ perspectives. For models that are run externally, it is recommended that any educational component be approached through the school rather than through the volunteers as this would be considered separate to the contribution of their volunteer role.

Qualitative feedback on the types of educational components which may be attractive for schools include:

- “Skip Rope, Not Breakfast” – however, this would not be linked to SBP but would be a tool that teachers could use at the beginning of the day to start their classes.
- “Food Sensations” – as a classroom tool or something which could be delivered to class groups in the school’s canteen.
- Healthy food posters to display around the school and age appropriate learning materials around ‘healthy eating’ and ‘nutrition’.

It was, however, noted by the majority that they considered education materials a secondary priority for Foodbank WA and that they would only be appropriate if it did not detract from

funding and resources allocated to SBPs, *“it shouldn’t compromise it, but is ok if it’s complementary”* (parent).

5.5.3. Providing guidelines for school-level recognition of volunteers

It was evident throughout this case study that the volunteers felt appropriately recognised by the school and that this was their primary indicator of acknowledgement. Recognition by Foodbank WA was considered important, but stand-alone would be insufficient to value their contribution.

Where external volunteers are engaged in administering SBPs, it is recommended that Foodbank WA consider preparation of some guidelines in terms of how schools can recognise the contribution volunteers are making. As a starting point for such guidelines, in this school the school acknowledges its volunteers by including them in the school community via:

- Inviting them to attend school functions such as assemblies.
- Giving them copies of the school’s newsletters so they are informed about the school community more broadly.
- Principal visiting the SBP on an ad-hoc basis (for example, once every few weeks) to connect informally with them.
- Providing ‘thank you’ morning teas with school staff.
- Providing school certificates of recognition for their contribution which are presented at assembly.
- Writing about SBP and thanking the volunteers in the school’s newsletter.
- Using existing school mechanisms (such as school choirs / performance groups) to present ‘back’ to the volunteers – for example, a Christmas performance at their senior citizen’s centre.

6. Case Study 3 – Remote District High School

6.1. The location context

A total of 1,211 people lived in this remote suburb at the time of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2006 Census. Previous research by TNS Social Research found a total of 35 indigenous communities lived within the surrounding region as at 2008²⁷.

According to the ABS, this suburb ranks the highest on the index of relative socio-economic disadvantage out of all Local Government Areas in Western Australia:

- The remote suburb is in the top percentile for socioeconomic disadvantage in both Australia and Western Australia more specifically, with a score of 665. The index is standardised to have a mean of 1,000 and standard deviation of 100 across all Census Districts in Australia.
- It has a significantly higher proportion of indigenous / Torres Strait Islander persons than broader Western Australia.
- The median household income is lower, and more families are single parent families.
- Motor vehicle and home ownership is significantly lower relative to the figures for Western Australia as whole.
- Fewer people have completed through to year 12 of high school.
- The unemployment rate for this suburb is higher than that for total Western Australia.

²⁷ Research conducted for the Department of Indigenous Affairs into the Environmental Health Needs of Aboriginal Communities in Western Australia.

ABS Census 2006 Profile	WA	Remote Suburb
Total Persons	1,959,086	1,211
Gender Split		
Male (%)	49.8	47.1
Female (%)	50.2	52.9
Nationality		
Indigenous / Torres Strait Islander (%)	3.0	70.4
Born in Australia (%)	70.6	95.0
Born elsewhere (%)	29.4	5.0
Age		
Median Age	36	28
People aged 15 and over (%)	79.8	73.5
Household Statistics		
Median household size (people)	2.5	2.8
Median household income (\$/wk)	1,066	612
Families who are single parent families (%)	14.8	36.2
Home Ownership		
Proportion who own or are purchasing a home (%)	71.0	10.6
Proportion renting a home (%)	28.0	86.1
Motor Vehicle Ownership		
Households who do not own a motor vehicle (%)	7.1	41.5
Highest Year of School Completed		
Year 12	47.5	25.0
Year 11	12.3	12.8
Year 10	27.9	31.7
Lower than year 10	12.3	30.5
Employment Rates		
Unemployment rate (%)	3.8	12.3
Labour force participation rate (%)	62.3	42.3

Note: Non-responses have been excluded from analysis.

Labour force participation rate: is the number of persons in the labour force expressed as a percentage of persons aged 15 years and over.

The remote school chosen has around 360 students, ranging from kindergarten to year 12.

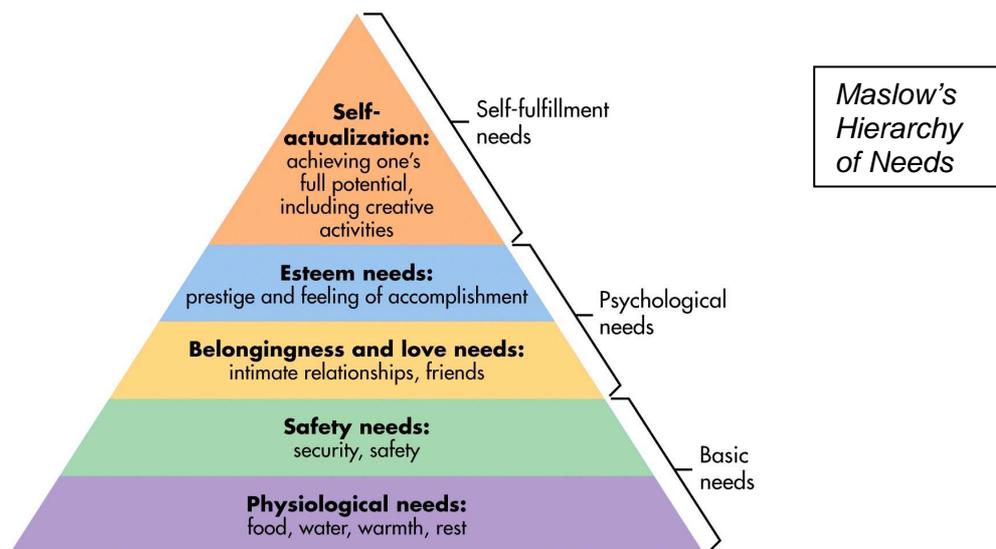
The community has access to medical facilities, educational institutions (school and TAFE), Youth Centre and Aged Care Services. A new childcare centre is currently being built and will open next year. The centre will provide a course for new parents, teaching them life skills such as how to look after their child and what to feed them.

6.2. The School Breakfast Program (SBP) Model

6.2.1. The Inception of the SBP

Approximately four years ago, this school was identified as needing systems support by the Department of Education, and this was one of the underlying reasons the current Principal was employed into the school. There were a number of issues which were identified (for the school itself, but also linked to the surrounding community) which ranged from transiency and non-attendance to social dysfunction.

The Principal associated the situation at the school to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (referenced below), where the basic physiological needs of many of the children were not being met. For the children whose basic needs were being met, they were often making poor nutrition choices – for example, *“at recess and lunchtime the whole school used to empty over to the roadhouse and come back with chips and gravy and soft drink in hand”*. It was felt that these basic needs had to be addressed before the children could even begin reach their full learning potential.



The school implemented a number of initiatives to address this issue, including introducing the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

6.2.2. The ‘start-up’ process

Teacher-driven

From commencement, the SBP was driven by senior school staff as it was deemed that the most effective way to run the programme was to make it part of each teacher’s role and build it into the school day. The Principal was closely involved in the practical tasks of making it happen and described the process of working with Foodbank WA and setting up the SBP as *“fairly straightforward”*.

There was some budget available from the school funds to finance the initial set-up costs and the Principal leveraged existing relationships with local businesses to negotiate lower prices on the electrical goods etc needed.

6.2.3. The ongoing running of SBP

Location and delivery

The SBP takes place every weekday morning before school starts, usually from 7.30-8.00am when school lessons start and children arrive anytime during that period. Breakfast is provided in the individual classrooms as a class-level, rather than ‘all of school’ level.

Teacher facilitated model

The SBP is run in individual classrooms by each class’ teacher. Some teachers allow latecomers to help themselves to breakfast, but others feel that this interferes with teaching time and have a strict cut-off time for breakfast at 8am. The SBP is flexible and the teacher can decide on the food they want to provide.

Practicalities

To facilitate this, a fridge was installed in each classroom, along with toasters and cutlery/crockery etc. All classrooms already had sinks suitable for washing up and hand washing.

Number of children reached

At first, the SBP was offered only to those students who needed it (i.e. had not had breakfast), but this was found to limit the intended effect as many children were reluctant to eat the breakfast provided due to the social stigma attached to it. To overcome this, the SBP was widened to provide for every child in the school and this proved far more successful in providing a healthy meal for all students as this reduced the negative stigma attached. Virtually every child in the school now participates in the SBP at least some of the time.

The Principal described the SBP as having a “*profound impact*” on the students and the obvious benefits (described fully later in this report) led to a wider Nutrition Programme being rolled out to provide healthy snacks and lunches for the children. Part of this Nutrition Programme is supported through Foodbank WA foodstuffs and the school has raised funds from various sources to cover remainder (although they currently have a shortfall).

6.2.4. Logistics

Ordering, collecting and storage of food

The Foodbank WA orders are organised by the School Nutritionist and deliveries are received twice per term. This food is then kept in the stock cupboard and teachers are allocated food on a weekly basis, or as they need it. Due to the school being in a remote location, the foods provided by Foodbank WA are generally long-life and non-perishable and no fresh produce can be donated. The school purchases the extra products need for the breakfast such as bread and margarine/butter.

The key foods provided for breakfast were:

- Toast with butter, honey or vegemite
- Weetbix and milk
- Canned fruit
- Porridge with honey (only provided by the kindergarten teacher)

Level of child participation and responsibility (older students)

In all of the older classes (Years 7+) the children were preparing their own breakfast under the supervision of the teacher. This included making toast and serving themselves to cereal and fruit. The children were encouraged to sit at a table to eat and many of the children sat with their friends, some also sat on their own.

It was observed that most of the children washed their own dishes without prompting from the teacher. In between breakfast the students are free to participate in outdoor games such as basketball before lessons start. This is encouraged but not enforced and not all students are involved.

Level of child participation and responsibility (younger students)

In the younger classes (kindergarten and pre-primary) the teacher makes breakfast for the children and they are seated around a table together to eat. The children talked to each other, and to the teacher.

The dishes are cleared away and washed up by the Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA). The children then all take part in an outdoor 'assault course' (physical activity program) and are encouraged to perform the Breath Blow Cough (BBC) programme before going into lessons.

6.2.5. Target Groups

The primary target groups when the SBP was set up were those children who ate no breakfast before coming to school, and those who ate an unhealthy breakfast e.g. *"pie and soft drink"*. Since the SBP was widened to include all students it now picks up a much wider range of target groups inclusive of:

- Students who ate NO breakfast before school (Primary Target).
- Students who ate an unhealthy breakfast (Primary Target).
- Students who were often late to school.
- Students with low attendance records
- Students who sometimes ate breakfast, and sometimes did not.
- Students who could eat at home but choose to come and participate in the SBP.

6.2.6. Wider Services Provided

The SBP was one of a number of initiatives implemented by the school including:

- Healthy lunch provided for all students
- Crunch & Sip Morning Snack provided for all students
- School sporting teams (with before school practice)
- Community Merit Certificates - student nominations from broader community to encourage positive behaviours and links with the community.

6.3. How the Model Functions

There were many outcomes noted in this case study. Prior to discussion of the outcomes is a summation of the barriers, risks and weaknesses.

6.3.1. Barriers

The Principal was of the opinion that the SBP was not difficult to set up as he was already familiar with Foodbank WA and it was staffed by willing teachers rather than needing to rely on finding volunteers. There were, however, some barriers discussed and these are noted below.

Set-up Cost

The most significant barrier discussed in this model was the set-up cost of locating fridges and other equipment in each room. However, the school had a budget allocated and the Principal was able to liaise with local businesses to achieve favourable pricing on the products purchased. Therefore, this was overcome relatively easily in this case study.

Community Support

It was noted that the School Committee was consulted and fully supported the project. However, there were some members of the wider community who voiced concerns about “*taking away the parents’ responsibility*” or “*creating a welfare dependency*”. These were not considered to be key stakeholders and it was felt that their opinions were in the minority.

The ‘social stigma’

When the breakfast programme was first introduced it was aimed solely at children who were not provided with breakfast at home. However, it was felt that this increased the level of social stigma and created a “*shame factor*” around eating the school breakfast. This stigma created the barrier that many children would not eat the breakfast, even if they were hungry or had not eaten breakfast. The solution to this was to make SBP accessible to the entire school rather than targeted selection of individual students. Indeed, it was felt that this solution removed the stigma entirely as almost all children now participated, at least sometimes, in the SBP.

6.3.2. Future Risks

Due to the way that the SBP was embedded in the school with the workload spread across all the teachers and the breakfast incorporated into the school day it was felt that the SBP was in a good position to continue with few risks to its' sustainability. There were two potential risks noted, however, which are discussed below.

Nutrition Programme

The wider Nutrition Programme was felt to be at greater risk of being changed or withdrawn due to a shortfall in funding. Some funds had been sourced from charitable foundations and it was believed that the proposed solution of collecting \$10 per week from the parents would ensure its continuation, however so far only some parents were making this contribution and there was therefore still a shortfall in funding.

In addition to the cost of the food, the School Nutrition Co-ordinator role also had to be funded from the same budget and this caused additional pressure on funding, although the Principal stressed the importance of this role in the changes and improvements to the school Nutrition Programme.

Staff retention and transiency

The Principal discussed the difficulties of finding suitable staff in a remote school and this was felt to be a key risk. It was highlighted that the Nutritionist and canteen staff were continually changing with most lasting less than 6 months making it difficult to ensure consistent delivery of high-quality healthy food. This was, indeed, also noted in the Metropolitan case study where the Principal had introduced SBP into a previous remote school they were employed in and the transient nature of regional school staff was noted as a potential risk for these models' sustainability.

On the whole, staff retention was considered to be more of an issue with the lunches and snacks rather than the SBP but was noted as a risk to the future provision of the Nutrition Programme.

6.3.3. Additional observations

The school had progressed significantly against its key goals of driving student and parental engagement with and meeting the students' basic physiological needs at school in preparation for better quality learning. However, there were still a number areas which could be improved further which were discussed by the school – some within the scope of the school, but some extending beyond its' reach.

Parental Engagement

Part of the school's overall aim was to improve parental engagement with the school and the parents we spoke to generally viewed the Nutritional Programme as a positive move by the school and could see the benefits. However, there was no current parental involvement with the SBP, it was driven and run entirely by the school. The school staff had little feedback on

the parents opinions and it was generally agreed that “no news was good news” as the parents were usually quick to complain about issues and problems.

Change of eating habits in the home

Most parents only had a vague knowledge of what food was served at the school (although all knew that it was healthy), and the ‘trickle through’ effect into the home appeared to be quite limited. There was some anecdotal evidence to suggest that children (mainly younger children) were asking for the same healthy food they got at the SBP when they were at home, but most parents had not changed their purchasing habits or the food they served. Some parents even viewed the fact that their children were eating healthily at school as permission to serve junk food and less healthy options at home because it was being “balanced out” by what they were eating at school.

A number of parents also discussed how difficult they found it to say ‘no’ to their children and even if they initially refused to buy lollies or ice cream at the store they would eventually give in to their children’s demands for what they knew to be unhealthy food.

Several parents raised the issue of the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables and meat which was seen as prohibitive by some, especially as it was seen to “go off quickly”. Some parents said they bought frozen food to keep the cost down, but also talked about the relatively low price of ‘junk food’ which was felt to be much more affordable than fresh fruit & vegetables.

Parental understanding of Healthy Eating

Virtually all the parents spoken to in this case study professed to understand which foods were healthy and which were not and to serve foods at home which were healthy. This is not an unusual, nor unexpected response in research such as this, particularly given the situation where the discussions took place (i.e. at school) where parents may feel the need to conform to what they knew were socially accepted behaviours²⁸. Some said they took their information from television advertising such as “2&5”, some had knowledge of the diabetes campaign, others had information from the community health centre and some said they had learnt it from their parents or other family members.

However, on further questioning it was apparent that this understanding was not necessarily complete or accurate. While the obvious foods such as lollies, chocolate and soft drinks were all identified as unhealthy and fruit and vegetables identified as healthy, some parents described ‘healthy meals’ as containing meat and hot chips, fried food or sandwiches with spreads and cheese. Most parents also reported they found it easy to give their children two serves of fruit and five serves of veg every day. However, nutrition research on the “Go for 2 and 5” campaign at a state-wide level in Western Australia does not support this and, in fact, indicates that in regional locations, the average serves of vegetables consumed daily (among adults) is 2.87 serves, and the average serves of fruit consumed daily is 1.42 serves – which are both behind the ideal consumption levels²⁹.

²⁸ Middleton K., Jones J. *Socially desirable response sets: The impact of country culture*. Psychology and Marketing

²⁹ Cancer Council WA, Go for 2 and 5 campaign evaluation, September 2009

It could therefore be hypothesised that the model has, thus far, influence parental ‘awareness’ of nutrition and healthy eating, but is yet to influence their behaviours. However, as noted in the Metropolitan case study, achieving parental behaviour change would be considered outside the scope of Foodbank WA.

6.4. Outcomes

The SBP was recognised by all those included in the case study as having a wide range of benefits and being very successful – so much so that the school subsequently rolled out a full Nutrition Programme providing lunch and snacks to all children at the school. In keeping with the breakfast menu, the lunch menu had recently been changed to also include only foods which fall into the Department of Health’s ‘green’ category in the traffic light system.

It is important to note that the SBP and wider Nutrition Programme overlaps considerably in the opinions and viewpoints expressed by all of the respondents. This makes it impossible in some cases to separate the specific benefits and outcomes of each and should be taken into account when reading this report. It is also worth noting that the majority of the teachers at the school had been there less than 3 years and therefore had not experienced, first hand, the school environment and the children prior to implementation of the SBP. These teachers therefore could not compare the outcome of the SBP with the previous situation.

6.4.1. School Level: Attendance

Attendance was one of the key issues identified at the school which needed to be addressed. Since 2008, when the SBP became available to all students at the school, attendance rates had improved by +74%, with 136 students achieving the 90% required by the DoE. In addition, the number of students attending school for 70% of the time had increased by over 100% to 242 students, which equated to two-thirds of the school.

School Attendance Level Records

	Term 1 2008	Term 1 2010	% Change
No Students Attending school 90% of the time	78	136	+74%
No Students Attending school 70% of the time	120	242	+102%

It was recognised that the SBP and Nutrition Programme was not the only initiative involved in improving the attendance rates, but the Principal had “no doubt that it was a large contributing factor”. Several teachers also agreed that some children come to school “just to get something to eat” so it was widely acknowledged that the SBP had a positive impact on attendance rates.

6.4.2. School Level: Behaviour

Social dysfunction and behavioural problems were also identified as key issues at the school. One teacher (who was involved with the new child health centre being built in the town) was of the opinion that a significant number of the students at the school were affected by Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), a condition caused by heavy alcohol consumption by the mother during pregnancy. FAS has been proven to cause a number of problems in children such as learning difficulties, behavioural problems, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder³⁰. Other teachers also discussed the high level of behavioural issues among students and having to “mediate fights in the classroom” and constantly managing behavioural issues.

Since the introduction of the SBP and the healthy lunches almost all the staff noted a significant improvement in the children’s behaviour, both in the classroom and on other occasions like school assemblies. They were seen to have more manageable energy levels and be “less hyper” and “not as quick to pick a fight”.

This was one of the primary reasons why the SBP and Nutrition Programme was viewed positively by staff and was recognised as reducing classroom disruption and enabling teachers to concentrate more on teaching, thereby improving the quality of both the teaching and learning.

6.4.3. School Level: Engagement

Engagement and attention spans, although less measurable, were also considered by teachers and the Principal to have significantly improved due to the combined effect of having all their nutrition needs met and eliminating sugary foods during school hours. The students were described as “more willing to sit and listen, more engaged”. This in turn was felt to improve the quality of learning.

The SBP also encouraged those students who were often late for class to get to school early enough to get breakfast with one of the parents noting “I always used to struggle to get my son up in the morning, but now he can have breakfast at school he gets out of bed much quicker”. The students are therefore more engaged in the lessons and with the school in general.

6.4.4. Child: Social & Personal Development

The SBP was seen by teachers and the Principal to help teach the children key life skills which they would not always learn from their families at home. It is noted that the way this model operated gave the children a considerable amount of responsibility in preparing their own breakfast and clearing away afterwards. It was also apparent through the observation of the SBP that children of all ages were developing social and personal skills:

- **Preparation of Food:** All of the children aged 7+ were preparing their own food and this was considered to help give them the ability and self-sufficiency to take

³⁰ www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

responsibility for their own nutrition needs. Therefore it was felt by parents and teachers that the children would take this skill home and be more able to prepare their own food in the home.

- **Understanding Healthy Eating:** It was felt and observed by the staff that many children did not eat nutritious meals at home and a high proportion of the food served by parents was ‘junk food’. Therefore learning which foods were healthy and which were not healthy through the SBP and Nutrition Programme was seen to embed on a daily basis what was being taught in the curriculum.
- **Responsibility:** In some classes each child was assigned a role to help run the SBP, for example, getting out and putting away the placemats, or putting the food away in the fridge. This was used by the teachers to develop a sense of responsibility and duty in the students.
- **Hygiene Rules:** Basic hygiene was seen to be something not always enforced in the home. All of the children were encouraged to wash their hands before they ate breakfast, and all (except the youngest) had to wash their cup and plate or bowl after using it, and most of the children did this without prompting from the teacher. This established simple habits which it was felt would transfer (at least partially) to their home life.
- **Sociability:** For many of the children, it was felt by the staff, meals in the home were often eaten on their own without sitting at a table. The SBP gave all the children an opportunity to develop the social skills needed to talk with their classmates over breakfast. Some children were also making toast for others, evidence of consideration for their classmates.

6.4.5. Child: Access to Healthy Food

It was felt by all the staff and the majority of parents included in the case study that the SBP delivered a fundamental benefit in providing food for those children who otherwise would not have eaten breakfast. This was echoed by teachers in all the classes, from the kindergarten up to 17 year olds. There were a number of benefits identified:

- **Guaranteed food:** Those children who didn’t have access in the home to regular meals and therefore relied on the food provided by the school were felt to have a greater feeling of security and certainty around food. Some teachers noted a major difference on a Monday morning when some of the younger children would come in and ask for food as soon as they got to the classroom because they had not eaten properly with their families over the weekend. The breakfast provided at the school was therefore seen to be one their few substantial meals of the day and aimed to “*put something in their bellies*”. Some children also had a tendency to hoard their food, eating some of it at school and then keeping some back saying “*I’ll save that until later*”. It was felt that this was another indicator that some children weren’t receiving enough food at home and were saving the food so that they would have something to eat after school.
- **Healthy food:** As previously discussed, many of the children tended to consume a high proportion of ‘junk food’ which is widely proven to contribute to cognitive and

behaviour problems³¹, besides the well documented health issues it may lead to in later life³². The food provided at the SBP and through the Nutrition Programme all met DOH guidelines and was considered healthy by both staff and parents. This was perceived to have significant health benefits in both the short and the long term - *“the kids look healthier, shiny skin, hair, eyes – it’s everything”*.

- **Immediate effects** – As mentioned earlier the key short term benefits of the healthy food were mainly related to improvements in behaviour, greater engagement and attention in class leading to improved quality of learning. When the school lunch menu changed to contain only healthy foods the positive effect on the children’s behaviours was seen within a week – a point corroborated by several teachers.
- **Long term effects** – Parents had a greater tendency to look at the longer term effects on children’s health – *“Eat healthy – healthy in mind, body and soul”*. There was some discussion around the effect of too much sugar in the diet contributing to diabetes which several parents mentioned to be a particular problem among indigenous people and was a reason why they believed healthy food was good for children. Establishing healthy eating patterns and habits early in life was also felt by the Principal and School Nutrition Co-ordinator to increase the likelihood that these habits would be taken through into adulthood and deliver lifelong benefits to the individual’s health.
- **New or Different food:** Teachers, parents and children discussed SBP in the context of trying new foods or eating things they wouldn’t normally have eaten. For example, one mother said that she had been trying unsuccessfully to get her daughter to eat Weetbix at home, but since she had been attending SBP she was now actively asking for Weetbix as it was what she was used to eating at school. Children also said that they got more choice at the SBP compared to what they were offered at home, *“I like that I can have fruit”, “I can have toast or cereal [with the emphasis on ‘or’]”*.

6.4.6. Child: Pastoral Care

The breakfast time was often used by teachers for general pastoral care and to talk informally to the children understanding any problems they may have or issues in their home life. This dedicated time had the advantage of transitioning the children into school and allowing them to leave behind their home life (and any associated problems) in order to prepare themselves for lessons.

Many teachers incorporated the breakfast into a morning routine involving physical exercise such as basketball or a mini assault course which was encouraged before lessons in some classes. The younger classes also included the Breath Blow Cough Program into this routine – a DoH initiative to improve ear health.

³¹ Bellisle, F. 2004 *Effects of diet on behaviour and cognition in children*. British Journal of Nutrition

³² James, W., Nelson, M., Ralph A., Leather S. *Socioeconomic determinants of health: The contribution of nutrition to inequalities in health*. British Medical Journal

6.5. Critical Success Factors

6.5.1. Funding

Sufficient funding was identified as one of the key factors to making the programme work – both initial set-up costs and on-going funding of the programme above and beyond what Foodbank WA could provide. As a remote school they only receive long-life goods from Foodbank WA so have to cover the cost of the extras required themselves. The set-up costs were significant as they provided a fridge, toaster and microwave for each room or area, besides food items not supplied by Foodbank WA such as margarine, fresh fruit etc.

The funding is even more crucial for the lunch and snacks which the school provide because the majority of this food is purchased by the school in contrast to the breakfast which mainly uses food given by Foodbank WA. The school had received some funding from other sources such as the Australian Children's Trust and Andrew Forrest, but this still had not covered the entire cost of all the meals provided. Both the Principal and the nutrition co-ordinator were very clear that the SBP could not exist at all without the food they receive from Foodbank WA.

6.5.2. Staff support

The support of all the staff (teachers, Principal, Nutritionist and School Nutrition Co-ordinator) was seen as a crucial enabler to running the SBP. The teachers at this case study school were acknowledged to take on a far more pastoral role in general than in a lot of other schools, for example, teaching hygiene skills, basic manners, life skills, healthy eating and even toilet training some of the kindergarten children. All the teachers we spoke to listed a number of benefits to the SBP which they believed directly and positively influenced the children. The programme had the full support of all the teachers, and was run on a day-to-day basis by each teacher for their class. This meant that the SBP was fully embedded in the school and not reliant on a few key people or the continued good-will of volunteers as with other models. In the long run the programme was thought to have the ability to become self-sustaining and was considered far more likely to continue in the future even if the Principal or other key co-ordinators were to leave.

6.5.3. Time

Sufficient time was seen as another factor for success – both to run the breakfast on a daily basis and to organise the food etc needed. The day-to-day workload was incorporated by each teacher into the school day and often used as a time to develop social skills, find out about any family issues and generally bring the children into the right frame of mind to begin lessons. The organisational side was covered by the School Nutrition Co-ordinator who placed orders and managed the logistics of providing the food while the Principal was heavily involved in the initial set-up and in the on-going funding of the programme. Therefore, the burden was spread over a number of people which made it more manageable than if just a few people took responsibility for everything.

6.6. Opportunities for Foodbank WA

6.6.1. Broaden understanding of Foodbank WA's capabilities among staff

There was a relatively low awareness of Foodbank WA's contribution among teachers. The distinction between what the school purchases and what Foodbank WA donates is blurred, but some teachers thought that all the food came directly from the school and had no knowledge of Foodbank WA.

The key contacts with Foodbank WA, the Principal and School Nutritionist, were very positive about Foodbank WA and the service it delivered. However, they viewed Foodbank WA's role as largely limited to the provision of food and had very little knowledge of any of Foodbank WA's other programmes such as Food Sensations or Skip Rope, Not Breakfast. They had received the Physical Activity Program pack but had not received enough support from the teachers to implement it – partly because there were already some established physical activities in place, but potentially also because it was “not pitched right” to the staff or pushed enough by the Principal.

The School Nutrition Co-ordinator also has plans to start a school vegetable garden. This is an area where Foodbank WA could advise and assist in setting up to improve their chances of success.

If Foodbank WA could create greater engagement with the staff directly, or broaden the existing relationship with the Principal and School Nutritionist it would create more potential to roll out other Foodbank WA programmes and create further benefits for the school.

6.6.2. Greater integration with the nutrition teaching in the curriculum

The school teaches nutrition and healthy eating as part of its curriculum and has access to a home economics teacher (through the High School) to deliver this. It was felt that there is an opportunity for Foodbank WA to integrate with the curriculum teaching and provide teaching aids or posters for the classroom and laminated placemats to be used by the children at breakfast time. These could include, for example, the Food Pyramid or Nutrition Wheel to help embed these key concepts with the daily routine of breakfast. It was also suggested by an Indigenous teacher that ‘bush tucker’ should be included on the visuals to increase the relevance to indigenous children eg. Kangaroo, emu, bush vegetables.

7. Case Study 4 – Regional District High School

7.1 The location context

A total of 424 people lived in this regional suburb at the time of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2006 Census. The suburb has:

- A higher proportion of those with education levels below Year 10 compared to WA.
- A higher proportion of Indigenous / Torres Strait Islander persons.
- A higher proportion of people renting a home.
- A higher proportion of single parent families.
- A higher unemployment rate.

ABS Census 2006 Profile	WA	This Suburb
Total Persons	1,959,086	424
Gender		
Male (%)	49.8	49.1
Female (%)	50.2	50.9
Nationality		
Indigenous / Torres Strait Islander (%)	3.0	45.3
Born in Australia (%)	70.6	92.2
Born elsewhere (%)	29.4	7.8
Age		
Median Age	36	32
People aged 15 and over (%)	79.8	70.5
Household Statistics		
Median household size (people)	2.5	2.7
Median household income (\$/wk)	1,066	953
Families who are single parent families (%)	14.8	33.3
Home Ownership		
Proportion who own or are purchasing a home (%)	71.0	54.1
Proportion renting a home (%)	28.0	45.9
Motor Vehicle Ownership		
Households who do not own a motor vehicle (%)	7.1	18.2
Highest Year of School Completed		
Year 12	47.5	23.8
Year 11	12.3	12.5
Year 10	27.9	38.7
Lower than year 10	12.3	25.0
Employment Rates		
Unemployment rate (%)	3.8	9.1
Labour force participation rate (%)	62.3	61.8

Note: Non-responses have been excluded from analysis.

Labour force participation rate: is the number of persons in the labour force expressed as a percentage of persons aged 15 years and over.

The school utilised for the case study itself includes children from kindergarten to Year 10.

7.2 The School Breakfast Program (SBP) Model

7.2.1 The Inception of the SBP

The school breakfast programme had been running in the school for over four years – in various formats and with various degrees of success. The current format had been in existence for almost 2 years and this format was initiated by the previous Principal and was supported fully by the current Principal who was a strong believer in its positive effects, especially with regard to improved behaviour among the children.

Previous SBP Format

It was felt by some of the teachers and one of the breakfast co-ordinators, that the SBP had not been as successful in its previous format because the prior Principal was not fully supportive of the SBP. It was felt that the prior Principal considered that it was *'not the school's role'* to provide food for the children, believing that the parents should be responsible for feeding their children. This resulted in the SBP being held off the school premises at a Community Centre which was deemed not to have worked because it did not engage the children with the school, nor did it encourage attendance because the children could easily skip school after the breakfast.

7.2.2 The 'start-up' process

Paid Staff

The current SBP format was facilitated and initiated by the previous Principal almost two years previously. This Principal had allocated responsibility for the ordering and liaison with Foodbank WA to one of the school administrators, and agreed with one of the Aboriginal Teaching Assistants (ATA) to change their working hours to facilitate the day to day running of the SBP on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Volunteer

The school chaplain was also regularly involved in the SBP, and had been for a number of years, helping with the general food serving and cleanup and otherwise supporting the main co-ordinator two days a week.

7.2.3 The ongoing running of SBP

Location and delivery

The SBP was held in the Home Economics room and ran on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday, starting at 8am and finishing at 8.45am with the children arriving at any time during this period.

Teaching Assistant facilitated model

This SBP was run by the ATO (the main co-ordinator) who always arrived early to prepare the food and setup the breakfast prior to the children's arrival. This was counted as part of the working day and therefore the ATA finished work earlier on the days when the SBP was run.

The kindergarten class had its own separate breakfast in their own classroom which was run by the kindergarten Teaching Assistant (TA). This had only been running separately to the main SBP for around 6 months and utilised the same foods (still provided by Foodbank WA) but was provided every day of the week.

Practicalities

The Home Economics room was felt to be ideally suited to running the SBP because it had all the necessary facilities such as a cooker, hot water, sinks to wash up, tables and chairs, cupboard space etc. In addition this room was not used first thing in the morning so the timing worked with hosting the breakfast as the co-ordinators made sure everything was cleared away by around 8.50am.

Facilities

There was a fridge used purely for the purposes of the SBP and there was a large lockable pantry which held all the ambient foodstuffs for the SBP. The main coordinator had loaned the school a freezer which was used to store perishable goods such as bread etc. The school chaplain had organised plates, cutlery, cups etc which were for the exclusive use of the SBP.

Kindergarten

The kindergarten classroom was equipped with sinks, microwave, toaster and kettle, plates and cups etc. The children sat together around a table to eat breakfast and the TA gave them a choice of food which was prepared for them.

Food

There was a choice of food available to the children including:-

- Weetbix
- Rice Puffs
- Milk
- Tinned fruit
- Fruit juice
- Milo
- Toast
- Spaghetti and beans (mixed)
- Porridge
- Spreads such as margarine and syrup.

The children helped themselves to the cold foods, with assistance from one of the co-ordinators where necessary and were served the hot food by one of the co-ordinators. On Fridays the co-ordinators cooked a 'special' breakfast with sausages (provided by the school chaplain from a local butcher), and eggs (purchased by the school).

Number of children reached

The main co-ordinator kept a log of the children who attended on a daily basis which showed attendance rates varied from around 8-25 children. On the day of the research there were between 10-15 children at the main SBP and 6 having breakfast in the kindergarten class. The Principal was of the opinion that around 50% of the school attended the SBP at some point with different children attending on different days.

7.2.4 Logistics

Ordering and delivery of food

The orders were placed by the school administrator who also maintained all the paperwork. The main co-ordinator informed the administrator when any particular food was running low and the administrator would contact the local Foodbank WA depot to place an order.

The school received a delivery from Foodbank WA approximately every two weeks with fresh fruit and any other food ordered. There was a good relationship between the Foodbank WA depot manager and the school administrator who felt that the manager always tried to put in extra food that would be suitable for the school if it was available at the depot.

Level of child participation and responsibility

The majority of children were serving themselves breakfast, with only the hot food having to be served to them. They were all expected get a chair for themselves and wash up their own dishes which they were all observed to do without being asked by the co-ordinators. The children sat at a table to eat, sometimes on their own but mostly with other children where they would talk to each other, or to the co-ordinators.

In the kindergarten class the TA prepared the breakfast and washed up the dishes for the children but they helped to set up the chairs around the table where they all sat and ate breakfast with their classmates.

Physical Activity

There was no organised physical activity component currently arranged with the SBP although the children were all encouraged to participate in games such as football and basketball. Sports equipment such as balls, hoops etc was available for the children to use before school and during breaks.

The Principal expressed interest in equipment which Foodbank WA could provide and there was some considerable discussion among the teachers about the benefits physical activity could provide.

7.2.5 Target Groups

The key target children for the SBP were those for whom no breakfast was provided in the home. However, some of the teachers were of the view that it was often the children whom

they might not expect to attend SBP who actually came to have breakfast i.e. those whose parents the teachers felt could afford, and would provide, breakfast for their children. The key target groups were felt to be:-

- Students who ate NO breakfast before school because it was not provided in the home.
- Students who were usually given an unhealthy breakfast at home.
- Students who were given money to purchase breakfast at the shop but generally made poor choices such as ice-cream.
- Students whose parents would give them breakfast but used the SBP as support to help feed their children on a tight budget or when they had to go to work before school started.
- Students who could eat at home but chose to come and participate in the SBP.

7.2.6 Other Food Provided

Fruit

At morning recess the children are all given fresh fruit which was provided by Foodbank WA. This was viewed very positively by the teachers and the children as it was generally liked by the children while the teachers felt it provided a snack to keep the attention of the children going until lunchtime. It was also felt by the teachers that this might be the only fresh fruit that some of the children were eating so it was providing much-needed nutrition and encouraged healthy eating behaviours.

Healthy Eating

There was no canteen at the school and the children were all expected to bring their own packed lunch from home. The Principal had recently implemented strict guidelines around what was allowed with all junk food being banned in the school. This was felt to have had a positive effect on the children's behaviour as well as helping to cement the learning process of what was healthy food from the SBP and the curriculum teaching. There was a general feeling from teachers and parents that the awareness of healthy eating was increasing and behaviours were changing due to these measures.

Emergency Lunches

There were a number of children however who were not always provided with a packed lunch from home and the SBP food was sometimes used to provide emergency lunches for these children. The local Women's Group also provided lunches sometime to those who needed it, but there did not seem to be a systematic approach to providing for these children and the Principal expressed a desire to secure a more regular source of appropriate, guaranteed food to ensure lunch was available for those children who had none provided.

7.3 How the Model Functions

7.3.1 Barriers

Set-up Cost

The main set-up costs of the fridge and other equipment were covered by the school. The school chaplain also utilised community contacts to organise the donation of crockery, cutlery and other essentials while the main co-ordinator had loaned a freezer for the programme. It was not felt that the set-up costs were difficult to meet, but this could be because they happened gradually and some time ago, and also because the school chaplain was well-used to arranging for donations and already had a considerable community contact network to call on for assistance.

On-going Cost

The school funded some food not provided by Foodbank WA from its own budget eg. margarine, syrup, Milo, eggs. The school chaplain funded the sausages provided on a Friday, and had also funded other foods when there had been a problem with deliveries from Foodbank WA. These costs were felt by the Principal to be manageable at the current level, but could be more difficult if the SBP grew in terms of either the number of children attending, or the number of days it was provided. This was seen by some to be a barrier to increasing the number of days on which the SBP was run as this would '*stretch the budget*' which currently covered three days a week to cover five days a week. It was anticipated this would reduce the quality of what was currently provided.

SBP Location

Several people mentioned that the location of the SBP in the Home Economics room had been a contentious issue. It was felt that there had been some disagreements over using food and equipment intended for the SBP, and that it was a significant inconvenience for the Home Economics teacher to share the room with the SBP as it meant they could not prepare for classes etc while it was being used. It was generally felt that ideally the SBP would have its own room, but that given the circumstances the Home Economics room was the most suitable place to hold the SBP.

7.3.2 Future Risks

Principal and Teacher Support

It was felt by the school chaplain and some of the teachers that a key element of the success of the SBP and its continuation was the support of the Principal and Deputy Principal. They had been involved with the SBP at a time when it was not supported by the Principal of the time and felt that this was very detrimental to the SBP and therefore the students. This lack of support had led to the SBP being held off school premises and a much lower attendance rate and was viewed as a key risk if the senior staff left the school and their replacements were not supporters of the programme.

Reliance on main co-ordinator

The teachers and the Principal all agreed that without the main co-ordinator it would be extremely difficult to keep the SBP running. The teachers and the Principal were all willing to help out when necessary e.g. when the main co-ordinator was away or sick, but it was felt that having teachers or the Principal run the SBP full time was not possible due to a lack of time and over-reliance on the goodwill of staff to put in extra hours over and above their job.

The school chaplain had attempted to gain extra support from other community members and parents but this had not worked in the past because the volunteers had “*just not shown up*” on the allocated day. This reliance on the main co-ordinator was therefore seen to be major risk if circumstances changed.

7.4 Outcomes

The SBP had strong support from all the key stakeholders involved in the research who recognised a wide number of benefits for the children and the school. As a result of the discussions and interviews during the research process the Principal felt that it would be beneficial to roll out the SBP five days a week and intended to develop a plan which would allow that to happen.

7.4.1 School Level: Attendance

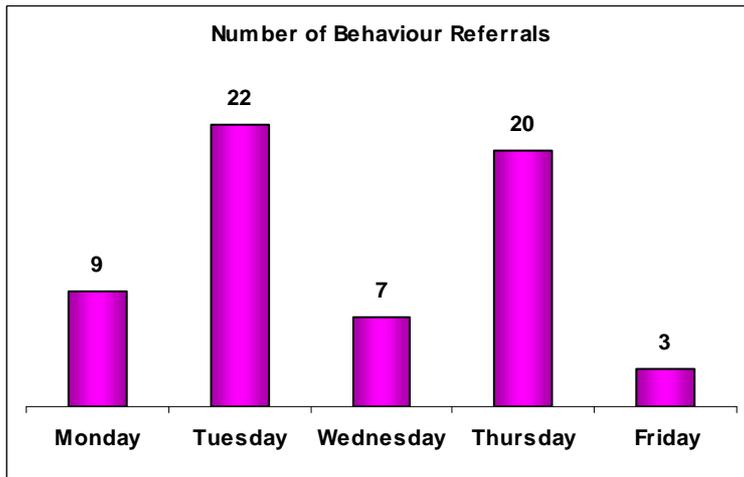
Attendance at school was one of the key measures which the Principal aimed to improve at the school. The SBP was one of a number of initiatives which was aimed at increasing attendance and the Principal believed that it had contributed to the 5-7% increase in attendance rates seen in 2010 vs. 2009. However the Principal could not easily compare attendance rates before the SBP was implemented as the data was not available.

7.4.2 School Level: Behaviour

Improved behaviour was cited as a key benefit of the SBP by almost all those contacted as part of the research. The Principal and deputy Principal especially felt that a key root cause of behavioural issues was often a lack of food. Children branded as ‘troublemakers’ had very often not eaten breakfast or lunch and it was felt that until these basic needs were met it was not possible to tackle the remaining behaviour issues.

Behaviour Referrals

This view was reinforced by the data below which the Principal was prompted to analyse after the interview for this research. The apparent relationship between the number of behaviour referrals and the days on which school breakfast was not provided (i.e. Tuesdays and Thursdays) surprised even the Principal, and led to a further discussion about how the SBP could be extended to 5 days a week. This is tabulated overleaf:



Source: School Daily Behaviour Referrals to the Deputy Principal, data Jan-Aug 2010

The data above shows that on average the number of behaviour referrals was reduced by approximately two-thirds on the days when the SBP ran compared to the days when no breakfast was provided. There were no other factors thought to be affecting the number of behaviour referrals (other than fewer children attending school on a Friday) and therefore the Principal attributed this positive effect entirely to the provision of the SBP.

7.4.3 School Level: Engagement

Student Engagement

The parents, teachers and Principal all noted the difference in the student's attention and engagement in the classroom when they had eaten a healthy breakfast at the SBP compared to eating either no breakfast at all, or a high sugar breakfast. Those students who had eaten unhealthily in the morning, were felt to be *'bouncing around'* and *'hyper'* compared to having much more manageable energy levels and paying greater attention in class when they had eaten at the SBP. Those students who had not eaten any breakfast in the morning were felt to be much more likely show low concentration levels or behaviour issues, compared to having greater attention levels and increased learning abilities when they had eaten breakfast. In both cases it was felt that this led to an improved quality of learning, not just for the students directly affected but also for the rest of the class as the teacher was able to focus on teaching rather than managing behaviour.

It was also felt that the SBP was a good way to create a positive experience of school, and build positive relationships with others - especially for those children who had behavioural issues or those with low attendance rates. The parents felt that the SBP had a positive effect by encouraging their children to go to school in the morning – *'the kids can't wait to go to school in the morning'*. Therefore the SBP was seen to not only increase the children's engagement with school, but also help parents by making their job easier.

Parental Engagement

One of the key objectives of the Principal in joining the school at the beginning of the academic year was to drive greater engagement of the parents with the school as parents were felt to hold a negative opinion about many aspects of the school. However, the SBP was cited by many of the parents as being one of the positive features of the school and they felt that it was a safe environment which enabled them to send their children to school early if necessary (when working etc), besides providing food. The Principal felt that this showed that parents understood the benefits of the SBP and appreciated the help and assistance provided by the school in the form of the SBP as they could see a direct benefit to themselves. The parents themselves listed a number of benefits for both the children and themselves which they felt the SBP provided including:-

- Increasing attendance by encouraging the children to come to school
- Preventing the children roaming the streets before school
- Keeping the children alert in the classroom
- Teaching children to sit around the table to eat together
- Making it easier and quicker for the parents to get the children ready for school because they looked forward to the breakfast
- Assisting the parents of large families who may be struggling by providing food for the children

However, this did not translate into direct parental engagement with the SBP in the form of parent volunteers to help run breakfast. There was a general feeling from most of the research participants that the parents would not be willing or committed to volunteering. There was one parent who had volunteered to help, but her offer had not been utilised. There was evidence to suggest that this may have been because the main co-ordinator (despite professing a desire to have more help with running the SBP) was actually reluctant to show new volunteers what to do and felt that they would *'just get in the way'* or interfere with their way of doing things.

7.4.4 Child: Social & Personal Development

The SBP was felt by all the participants in the research to be doing more than just providing food by developing broader skills and learning different behaviours.

- **Understanding Healthy Eating:** It was felt by both teachers and the nurse that regularly seeing and eating 'healthy' foods for breakfast would teach the children about the right sort of foods to eat and develop good habits for them to continue in the future, both short and long term. This was further reinforced by the recent introduction by the school of a 'no junk food' policy in lunchboxes. The children themselves understood that they should eat healthily to get *'energy'* and keep *'healthy and strong'* and if they ate unhealthy food they were aware of some of the consequences such as developing diabetes and *'your teeth go yellow'*. The children were learning healthy eating messages at the breakfast both from what was served, and directly from the co-ordinators, e.g. *"Alison tells me not to put sugar in the Milo"* and *"don't put golden syrup on toast"*.

- **Dignity and Respect:** The school chaplain felt that using china crockery and metal cutlery for the children at the school breakfast (rather than using paper plates and plastic cutlery as they had done previously) provided a sense of dignity about the breakfast. The chaplain felt this was important to avoid any stigma or sense of shame about what was essentially a free meal and that it would also teach the students to respect other people's property and look after it well when they used it.
- **Responsibility:** The students all took responsibility for washing their own dishes and the co-ordinators reported that some children would remind their peers to wash their dish if they forgot. The SBP was felt to teach the children to take responsibility for clearing up after themselves.
- **Hygiene Rules:** The school nurse felt that reinforcing good hygiene rules which might not be enforced at home such as washing the dishes etc was a positive effect of the SBP, and that by repeated exposure to these practices the children would learn to adopt good hygiene habits.
- **Exposure to other adults:** Several participants believed that it was important that the SBP was run by adults whom the children would not necessarily come into contact with on a day to day basis (i.e. not a teacher or a parent). They felt that this meant the co-ordinators were able to reinforce important basic rules such as hygiene, healthy eating, manners etc.
- **Social Skills:** The teachers and parents felt that the SBP was teaching the children basic social skills such as sitting down at a table to eat, manners and respect for adults.

7.4.5 Child: Safe and Trusted Environment

Secure place

The teachers felt that the SBP provided those children who need it a guaranteed, secure source of healthy food and a place to go regardless of what was happening at home or in the classroom. They felt that many of the students experienced a considerable amount of change in their home life e.g. staying with different family members overnight. There was also a lot of change at school because there was a reasonably high turnover of staff. In this context the SBP provided a constant surety which it was felt the children could rely on whatever their circumstances.

Family feel

This environment was felt to be enhanced by the fact that the SBP was run by '*one of their own*' - i.e. the Aboriginal Teaching Assistant – because this created a different atmosphere to either the classroom or their home environment. The children at the SBP showed considerable respect for the main co-ordinator, saying please and thank-you and doing what they were asked. There was clearly a great deal of familiarity too with many of the children calling the main co-ordinator 'Aunty' or 'Nanna' as many of them were related in some way. This led to a 'family' type feel to the breakfast occasion which it was believed would be lost if a teacher ran the SBP.

Separate environment

This atmosphere was felt to be important in giving the children time in a separate environment to leave behind any problems at home and get in the '*right frame of mind*' for school and the classroom. This was seen as especially key for those children who had younger siblings and were expected to take more of an adult role at home in caring for their siblings, but who were expected to '*behave like a child and do as they were told*' when they came to school. This dichotomy was seen to potentially lead to conflict and behaviour issues in the classroom so having the breakfast transition time was viewed as beneficial for those children.

7.4.6 Child: Pastoral Care

Teacher-Student relationship

It was felt by the teachers that the school breakfast provided an opportunity for them to build a relationship with the children away from the classroom environment. This was viewed as an important way to understand the needs and priorities of the children better and to promote the caring role of the school as a place where children could receive help when they needed it.

Individual attention

In the kindergarten class, during the research, the TA identified that one of the children who came in early for breakfast had a very bloodshot and slightly bruised eye. The TA was able to give the child individual attention and ask the child about it in the unofficial environment of the school breakfast and also alert the teacher to the injury when they entered the classroom. This example shows the nature of the benefits of the SBP in the context of wider pastoral care for children.

7.5 Critical Success Factors

7.5.1 Paid co-ordinator and administrator

Paid staff

The Principal felt that one of the key success factors in the general running and continuation of the SBP was to have paid staff taking on the key responsibilities rather than relying on volunteers or teachers. This ensured that the goodwill of teachers was not overly stretched – although they were generally very willing to help out whenever needed.

It was also felt that, although assistance from parents and other community members was very welcome and helped to build school and community links, it was unwise to rely entirely on volunteers in a programme of this kind as it could leave the programme very vulnerable. It was viewed as highly likely that volunteers would withdraw their commitment at some point and the programme would then be unable to continue.

The Principal recognised that using paid staff to run the programme meant that there had to be cuts in other area e.g. the main co-ordinator was only present as the ATA in the classroom for the morning on the days they ran the SBP, and on those afternoons the teacher was on

their own in the classroom. However, the Principal felt that the benefits of having the SBP far outweighed any potential downsides.

7.5.2 Clear roles and responsibilities

There were clear roles set out to ensure the smooth running of the SBP and it was felt that this was a key contributor to the success of the programme. Each person involved was responsible for an area which played to their strengths and did not ask them to undertake responsibilities which they felt uncomfortable with. For example, the school administrator was only responsible for the ordering and the main co-ordinator was only responsible for the cooking and general day-to-day running of the SBP. This was felt to be a key factor in making the SBP work well and its ongoing sustainability.

7.5.3 Staff support

The teaching and administration staff were all very positive about the SBP and clearly subscribed to the benefits for the children and their learning. The Principal felt that this was important in making the SBP work and that it was another key factor in the success of the programme. This was seen to be a key part of the set-up process of a new SBP and an area Foodbank WA could assist schools with by providing a document containing the advantages of a SBP and *'hard evidence and statistics'* around the benefits it delivered in order to illustrate to teachers (and parents) the positive effects it could have. This would have the additional benefit of helping schools to address the 'negative stigma' about the SBP held by some teachers and parents, as identified in Case Study 1.

7.5.4 Community links and support

This school had involved the school chaplain closely in the SBP which was viewed as a positive move to develop better links with the community. It also enabled the programme to utilise the existing network of contacts which the school chaplain had with various individuals and organisations which meant that getting donations for money, crockery, extra food etc was felt to be easier than in other schools.

7.6 Opportunities for Foodbank WA

7.6.1 Assistance with the provision of emergency lunches

The Principal raised the issue of funding emergency lunches for those children who came to school without any lunch. The SBP food was sometimes used for this, but it was felt that different food would be appropriate for lunch, besides the fact that this was depleting breakfast programme food. Lunches were sometimes provided by the local Women's Group

but there was no way to guarantee that all children were receiving lunch and the Principal felt that this was a real gap in the services which the school could provide.

However, there were no funds currently available to provide lunches and therefore the school would require assistance from a third party in order to fill this gap. This could be an opportunity for Foodbank WA to expand the service it provides and support specific schools further, and it was felt there would be other schools which would also benefit from this kind of support from Foodbank WA.

7.6.2 Education of co-ordinators on additions to Foodbank WA supplies

In this case study there were additional foods provided by sources other than Foodbank WA than in the previous case studies – supplied either by the school or by the school chaplain e.g. margarine, golden syrup, honey Milo, sugar, sausages and eggs etc. Although the children and the co-ordinators all talked about limiting the amount of the high fat and high sugar foods allowed, it was observed during the SBP that the children would often add a significant amount of extras to their food. For example, some children were adding significant amounts of golden syrup and margarine to their porridge and the co-ordinator was often supervising or serving these additions.

Therefore it is recommended that the co-ordinators be given more comprehensive guidelines on these types of additional foods and the quantities which children should be allowed in order to control the amount of fat and sugar consumed at the SBP. This is all the more important because, as discussed earlier, the eating habits learnt at the SBP are likely to be adopted at home and for the longer-term future.

7.6.3 Raise awareness of Foodbank WA's other programmes

There was very limited knowledge among the co-ordinators and the Principal of any of Foodbank WA's other programmes, but most research participants were open and receptive to the idea of other programmes.

Physical Activity

There was considerable interest and discussion among the teachers about the benefits of involving the children in physical activity at different times of the day and at different levels of intensity. The appropriate amount of activity was felt to depend very much on the individual children, their ages and their general level of energy. The physical activity was felt to be the role of the teacher rather than the SBP co-ordinator, who was also the best judge of what was suitable.

It is therefore recommended that in order to best meet the needs of schools Foodbank WA should provide materials, suggestions and guidance for the physical activity component but encourage the school to be flexible in the actual activities which the children participate in.

There was also some concern expressed by the parents that the sports equipment provided was not always suitable for younger children so a range of materials and suggestions appropriate for different age groups should be made available.

Nutrition

There were already some projects underway in the community to help improve nutrition and cooking skills, but there was not necessarily a good awareness of these projects and some of them were felt to very vulnerable because they relied on grants or individuals which could leave the project exposed.

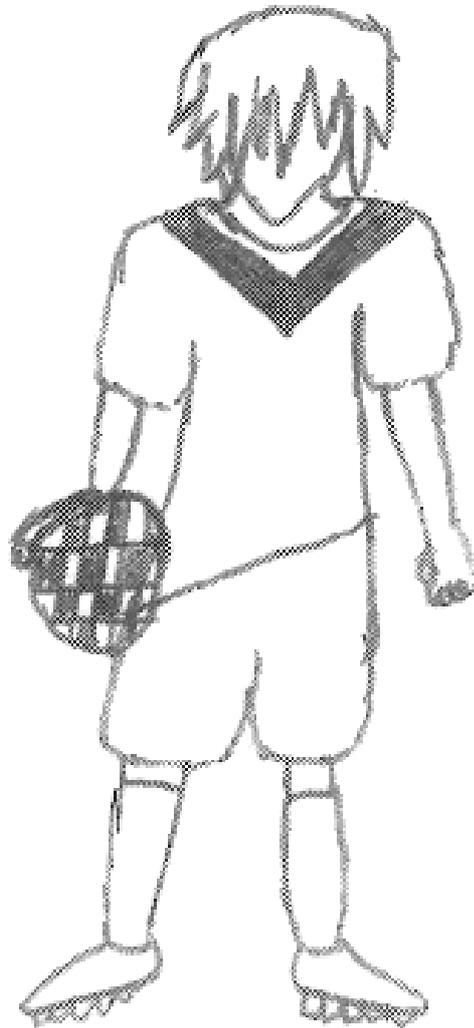
This would be a good opportunity for Foodbank WA to link with some of the other organisations arranging these projects to provide joint services such as cooking or nutrition classes. These projects would then have a greater level of security and longevity due to Foodbank WA's support, and this approach would also enable Foodbank WA to extend its reach and level of integration within communities.

7.6.4 Assist with the application of grants for funding

One of the reasons some of the projects discussed above were unable to continue was because grant applications had not been submitted or were not successful. The parents expressed a sense of frustration that some projects they viewed as worthwhile (e.g. YAKKA – Young Aboriginal Kids Kicking Attitude – which contained nutritional education among other things) had been discontinued because the grant application had been overlooked or unsuccessful. One of the parents intended to apply for a grant for the next financial year to re-start the programme, but felt that they had very limited knowledge of how to go about it and what they needed to do.

This is an area where Foodbank WA could provide practical assistance in highlighting the funding sources that are available, and also helping with advice on completing the required paperwork etc. The parents involved in this research very receptive to the idea of receiving such assistance from an organisation such as Foodbank WA as there was no such service currently provided to them.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



8 Conclusions

8.1 Perceived importance and reach

Stakeholders, and all those participating in the case studies, universally acknowledged that SBPs are of high importance (fulfilling a range of needs), and high value (delivering a range of benefits). That is, there is a strong level of desire for an ongoing commitment to SBPs.

This research suggests that there are at least four broad delivery models for SBPs in Western Australia, with each including similarities in terms of their challenges and benefits, as well as elements of uniqueness:

- Parent facilitated models
- External volunteer facilitated models
- School chaplain (other school staff) facilitated models
- Teacher and Principal facilitated models

The SBP was felt to reach a wide range of children, inclusive of:

- Those who are **frequently food insecure** (where breakfast is rarely provided),
- Those who are **infrequently food insecure** (where food is accessible ‘most’ of the time, but there is occasionally some financial hardship experienced in the home),
- Those with **low food motivation** or unwillingness to trial new foods,
- Those **consuming unhealthy breakfasts** (either provided at home, or consumed via the school’s canteen),
- Children who would **otherwise prepare breakfast independently** (because of family members having separate morning schedules).

There are several models for identifying target audiences and need for SBPs which, in this research, included:

- **The engagement model** – targeting not only based on SES status, but also on the child’s engagement, or risk, level within the school.
- **The support model** – targeting not only those who need food support, but also those identified in need of emotional / mental / social support systems.
- **The basic needs model** – targeting any who have unmet physiological needs.

8.2 Process

There were several consistent conclusions in relation to process throughout the four case studies.

Funding, relationships with funders and partnerships

The perceived reliance of Foodbank WA, by some stakeholders, on small pockets of funding is considered to potentially undermine the longevity and stability of Foodbank WA’s essential role. It was also raised by some stakeholders that Foodbank WA may have relationships with some funders that should be strengthened and turned into partnerships rather than being pursued as funding arrangements.

In addition, there were some perceptions that Foodbank WA's unique position in Western Australia, in terms of its access to lower socio-economic-status schools, elevates its importance to pursue partnerships with other NGOs and Government agencies that would benefit children and communities.

Volunteer delivery models

SBPs rely on volunteer delivery (either internal or external to the school). Engaging and maintaining volunteers was consistently described as a process barrier which could impede both the inception and maintenance of SBPs. This reliance on volunteers suggests that Foodbank WA should place continued emphasis on its relationship and recruitment of volunteers.

The importance of school leadership and support

All models in this research were reliant on a strong level of fundamental support and belief in SBPs from school leaders. It is considered unlikely that an SBP would exist without such support and thus, the support and advocacy of school leaders is integral to the inception and maintenance of SBPs.

Regional relationships

A minority of stakeholders considered that Foodbank WA's ability to develop strong regional and remote school relationships was impeded by the metropolitan location. While the regional and remote case studies in this research expressed strong working relationships with Foodbank WA, there was low awareness of roles and different ways information and programs could be accessed. It is recommended that strategies are developed to strengthen relationships with regional and remote locations in terms of information delivery and support mechanisms.

Starting up a SBP

The initial stages of starting a SBP are potentially challenging for parent and external volunteer models and of critical importance to the successful implementation. Volunteers, coordinators and schools perceive a lack of guidelines and information sources, or at least awareness of where to find information, in terms of how to establish and run the program and this is therefore a potential barrier to the progress of SBPs.

Accessing food and supplies

In general, perceptions around processes to access food and supplies were discussed positively. In some schools however, particularly those not running the SBP every day of the school week, it may be desirable to access supplies in smaller quantities as the provision of storage facilities on school premises for SBP food can be limited.

Physical activity component

The physical activity component ("Skip Rope Not Breakfast") was not widely used in the case studies included in this research. In some models (for example, the external volunteer model), additional components such as this are potentially not appropriate and more suited for school-level delivery. In all models where a physical activity component is advocated,

some guidelines on ‘appropriate’ physical activity should be developed in terms of the intensity and timing of activity.

Education role

Foodbank WA’s role in providing health education is considered of value to schools, but secondary in terms of importance and should not undermine capacity for food provision. There are barriers related to its integration in terms of external volunteer and parent volunteer models whereby the focus of SBP delivery is on food provision, rather than education. Similar to that for the physical activity component, it is recommended that education materials are directed at a school-level rather than via volunteers. In addition, it is recommended that partnership opportunities with existing NGOs and government organisations be explored with respect to the development and delivery of education materials.

The Food Sensations program, as an education tool, was discussed positively by all who were familiar to it, and by those to whom it was their first exposure in the discussions.

Mechanisms for knowledge sharing between schools

There is a lack of opportunities for knowledge sharing between schools, but an expressed desire for this ability. It is recommended that mechanisms are explored to facilitate knowledge sharing between schools, as well as volunteers and coordinators.

8.3 Perceived outcomes

The perceived outcomes uncovered through this research covered a variety of areas. While the degree of impact, and frequency with which they occur, can not be concluded from this research, the array of perceived outcomes include benefits relating to the child and school, as well as to parents and volunteers:

- **Child and school**
 - Food provision to a variety of child cohorts (referenced under Section 8.1).
 - An improvement in child engagement in the classroom and school.
 - An improvement in school attendance.
 - An improvement in behaviour management.
 - Development of child social skills.
 - Positive emotional benefits to children.
 - A positive influence on child safety.
 - An ability to create consumption patterns and habitual behaviours.
 - An increase in health education and awareness.
 - An improvement in academic outcomes.
 - Learning responsibility and developing ‘life’ skills.

- **Parent and community**
 - Easing emotional stress for working parents.
 - Providing financial relief for low SES parents.
 - Fostering family cohesion and parental engagement in the school.

- Development of social capital and community cohesion.
- **Volunteers**
 - An opportunity for socialising with other volunteers.
 - An opportunity to build confidence for those not currently participating in the workforce who may be intending on returning to work.
 - A contribution to good mental health.

8.4 Other considerations and potential unintended consequence

There was discussion in the case studies, and among stakeholders, that SBPs risk – either in reality, or via their association – of creating a culture of dependence. However, almost all who acknowledged this risk in this research note an overarching perception that this potential risk is far outweighed by the benefits described previously.

The prevalence of this perception can not be concluded from this research, but this potential negative and barrier should be acknowledged by Foodbank WA. It is recommended that assisting schools in determining ‘need’ for SBPs according to broader models of inclusion (such as that identified in Section 8.1) could assist, as well as in ensuring that there are appropriate communication materials to generate awareness as to the broad benefits attending SBPs – alongside food provision – can deliver.

9 Recommendations

9.1 Continuation of SBPs

Throughout all stakeholder interviews and Case Studies, there was unanimous support for the role Foodbank WA plays and the continuation of SBPs. SBPs are described as contributing a wide range of benefits to a wide range of individuals (children, schools, parents, community, volunteers) which extend beyond food provision. This research certainly supports the case for the continuation of SBPs.

9.2 Development of communication and materials

It is recommended that Foodbank WA consider the development of additional communication materials, or raise awareness of information sources that are currently available, across the key areas summarised below. Many of these communication tools are support mechanisms designed to assist those involved in SBPs.

Identifying and understanding the need for SBPs

Collateral should be provided to assist schools in their understanding of the broad benefits SBPs can deliver to children, parents, volunteers, schools and community in order to minimise perceptions that SBPs foster a culture of dependency.

This could be achieved via:

- **Standard information packs** provided in ‘start-up’ or ‘introductory’ kits for schools. These should highlight the various ‘needs’ that SBPs can fulfil as well as the potential broad range benefits that can be experienced.
- **Facilitating knowledge sharing** through schools that are currently using SBP either through ‘case study’ pamphlet communications / examples or via coordinated information seminars.

Guidelines on introducing and starting a SBP

Schools and volunteers who are starting a SBP require greater access to assistance and guidelines to help navigate the process.

There are two separate communication tools required:

- **Guidelines for Principals** – how to introduce a SBP in your school. Refer to Case Study 1, Section 4.5.1 for more specific detail.
- **Guidelines for Volunteers and Coordinators** – how to set up and run a SBP. Refer to Case Study 1, Section 4.5.2 for more specific detail.

Guidelines on recognising volunteers

Foodbank WA may benefit from providing school leaders guidelines on different mechanisms and ideas for recognising volunteers within their school. Refer to Case Study 2, Section 5.5.3 for more specific detail.

Guidelines on engaging community partners and developing community links

Volunteers and coordinators – particularly those newer to SBPs – would benefit from guidelines on ‘how’ to approach community partners to seek ad-hoc funding, as well as information, or links to information, regarding potential funding sources (such as Woolworths community grants, Bendigo Bank community grants etc).

Recipes and menus

Some volunteers and coordinators would benefit from access to information regarding appropriate and inappropriate foods, and potential ‘menus’ / ‘recipes’. There are several mechanisms that were considered appropriate to access these:

- Via Foodbank WA’s website if a dedicated section to SBP coordinators / volunteers could be designed.
- Via direct email communication to coordinators / volunteers with, for example, a different recipe or menu idea featured monthly.

Communication to teachers

Specific communication to teachers regarding SBPs, their intention and efficacy, may broaden the range of advocates at a school level thereby increasing their chances of maintenance. Such communications should not focus on encouraging teachers to run the SBPs, but rather deliberate on their intended goals and potential outcomes. In addition, they should provide information to teachers on Foodbank WA’s broader capabilities and programs that can be accessed – such as Food Sensations, Skip Rope Not Breakfast, Fantastic Fruit and Vegetable Board Game etc – as these programs will be, in many cases, more suited to school-level delivery rather than via the SBP itself.

It is worthwhile exploring whether such communications could be included in existing mechanisms for communicating with teachers such as the Department of Education’s “School Matters” magazine, or even EdEmail.

9.3 Targeting volunteers that are external to schools

As discussed in Case Study 2, there were several benefits related to the use of external volunteers in delivering SBPs and these were benefits for the children, the school, the community and the volunteers themselves. Securing volunteers is one of the more frequently mentioned challenges of introducing and maintaining a SBP and providing collateral to schools in terms of how to approach external volunteer groups (such as local Senior Citizens groups).

Foodbank WA could also consider potential partnerships with organisations which promote volunteering, such as ‘Act-Belong-Commit’ (actbelongcommit.org.au) or ‘Volunteering WA’. In order to do this, communication materials would be required to communicate the ‘boundaries’ of the volunteering expectation for SBPs as well as the potential benefits.

9.4 Education materials

This research suggests that there is a desire for some level of basic education materials that are optional for inclusion in SBPs. This may include, for example, laminated place-mats with basic health and nutrition information included.

However, it is recommended that more detailed health and nutrition information be targeted to schools directly rather than to SBP coordinators and volunteers. There was a strong sentiment that Foodbank WA's education role should not jeopardise or interfere with resources allocated to its primary role of food provision and support. It is also suggested that the potential for education components to be delivered via partner agencies be explored. In this scenario, Foodbank WA's role would be in providing these agencies access and networking opportunities to schools and / or including communication to schools of their availability.

9.5 Strengthen relationships with funders

Some stakeholders recommend that Foodbank WA should seek to strengthen its relationship with funders. This could be achieved, in the first instance, by providing funders with greater communication about SBPs and the role they play in order to generate awareness and knowledge and form positive dispositions.

9.6 Foodbank WA's recognition of volunteers

It is noted that Foodbank WA provides Certificates to SBP coordinators to recognise their contribution. For some, this is an adequate level of recognition – particularly when they are recognised and valued through other means within their school (as discussed in Case Study 2, Section 5.5.3).

An example of an appropriate additional mechanism for recognising volunteers would be an 'Annual Volunteer Morning Tea' hosted by Foodbank WA with volunteers and coordinators invited. In an example such as this, the benefits of this would be three-fold:

1. A form of recognition that is relatively informal, but nonetheless appreciative of volunteer contribution. It is not recommended that this be formalised such that there are 'awards' etc.
2. A mechanism for volunteers and coordinators to network with each other and share learnings.
3. An opportunity for Foodbank WA to raise awareness of the materials available to volunteers and coordinators and how they can be accessed.