

Your business can help transform our food system

As a hospitality or food retail store in the Illawarra, you are a key player in the food system of our region. You have an opportunity not just to impact the community with what you offer, but how you manage your footprint — this guide is here to help you do just that.



Reducing food waste - save money and the planet

Did you know that food businesses in NSW throw away over 30% of their food? We know you see it every day in your business, and it can be generated across the process, from ordering to storage and customer's plates. At the end of the year, it all adds up, losing you money in ingredients, staff hours, and waste collection. Read on for what to do about it, and how your waste can make a difference in the community.

Carla Urosevski **Alexander's Bakery**

“ At the close of each day, our staff box up any unsold items and place them in a designated area in our coolroom reserved specifically for donations. Our entire team is trained to follow this routine consistently. ”



Donating surplus edible food

Donating your surplus edible food is an easy way to make a positive impact and can also help your business increase staff morale and customer engagement. Instead of paying to have good food thrown out, you can redirect it to local food relief organisations who will put it to good use, feeding people in need and strengthening your reputation as a socially responsible business. You are also not liable when you donate food! The [Civil Liability Act 2002 \(NSW\)](#), protects businesses that donate food in good faith, provided it's safe to eat, given freely for a charitable purpose, and accompanied by any info needed to keep it safe (like storage or expiry details).

It's more than just food.

In the Illawarra, over 35 food relief agencies support vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. They assist a wide range of people, from struggling families to individuals experiencing homelessness. Food relief often serves as a soft entry point to build trust and connect people with broader support services like counselling, financial advice, housing, and legal aid.



Did you know that donating food is also tax deductible?

As a business or organisation, donating your surplus food can provide the added perk of an eligible tax deduction:

- The donation is made to an organisation with deductible gift recipient (DGR) status
- It must be voluntary, meaning the business must not receive any material benefit or advantage in exchange for the donation
- The business donor keeps a record of the donation, generally a receipt from the gift recipient.

For more information, visit the [Australian Taxation Office](#).

Why donate?

- Boosts staff morale and increases customer engagement
- Helps people and the planet
- Decreases waste costs
- Gets your business ahead of upcoming waste regulations in NSW

Email

foodfairness@healthycities.org.au

to begin donating your surplus food!

What food can I donate?

- Surplus retail stock, eg. meat, canned goods/pantry items, eggs, fruit & veggies etc
- Container meals - eg. pastas, stews, curries etc
- Blemished/imperfect produce
- Products close to their use-by
- Products close to or past their best before date
- Products with incorrect, damaged, or no labelling/damaged packaging
- Leftover unused portions of food that have not been served to customers, eg. salads, sandwiches, cakes etc
- Food grown at farms that doesn't meet the cosmetic or size criteria set by supermarkets



IN ACTION: How Balinese Spice Magic lower food waste and give back to the community

What does this look like practically in your business? Here's how Balinese Spice Magic owner Jules Mitry weaves reducing waste and food relief seamlessly into daily life in the kitchen.

Reducing food waste

The restaurant orders only what it really needs straight from the farmers, and use a nose-to-tail ethos. Celery? Don't throw out the leaves! Jules trains all her staff to utilise whole produce in dishes, including the leaves and ends. In her words, "it's all good stuff from the earth." Surplus ingredients will be used for weekly meals cooked for food relief.



Catering events

After catering a wedding, BSM packs up untouched leftovers in containers (at no extra cost) for the couple to donate to a charity of their choice.

Diverting surplus food to food relief

On a Monday or Tuesday, between the school run and admin, Jules spends 3-4 hours in the kitchen cooking up over 100 meals for local charities that give them to people in need. She uses up any ingredients that haven't been utilised over the previous few days, helping to reduce the business's waste costs, along with a few fresh items, dishes the meals into takeaway containers, dates them, then jumps in her car to drop them off - but staff and patrons are also happy to help!

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What can you do right now? Join the Illawarra Food Donations Whatsapp Group!

Make donating surplus food quick, easy and local.

Whether you have a tray of sandwiches left over, extra produce, or baked goods that won't keep, don't let it go to waste. The Illawarra Food Donations WhatsApp group connects local hospitality businesses and food relief organisations in real time. It's a simple way to reduce waste and feed people in our community when the opportunity arises — perfect for businesses who would love to take action but can't currently commit to a regular donation.

How to use the group

If you've got surplus food that you would like to donate, simply send a message to the group containing:

- 1) What** (Eg. "leftover pastries and sandwiches at COB, amount varies depending on season/day)
- 2) Who** (Your business)
- 3) Contact** (Name + phone number/email)

