

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Food Security in Victoria

Melbourne – Tuesday 20 August 2024

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WITNESSES

Dr Sue Kleve, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, Monash University; and

Dr Rachel Carey, School of Agriculture, Food and Ecosystem Sciences, Melbourne University.

The CHAIR: Good morning. Welcome to the continuation of the Inquiry into Food Security in Victoria. Joining us this morning in this section are Dr Sue Kleve from Monash University and Dr Rachel Carey from Melbourne University. Welcome, doctors.

I will quickly ready this to you: all evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to provisions of the Legislative Council's standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during this hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any actions for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same thing, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. The transcript will be ultimately made public and posted on the committee website. Just for the recording purposes, could you please state your full name, title and the organisation you are representing.

Rachel CAREY: I am Dr Rachel Carey. I am a senior lecturer in food systems from the School of Agriculture, Food and Ecosystem Sciences at the University of Melbourne.

Sue KLEVE: My name is Dr Sue Kleve. I am from Monash University. I am from the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, and there I am the course director of the Master of Nutrition and Dietetics and senior lecturer in public health nutrition.

The CHAIR: Thank you so much for coming in. It is very nice to have some really qualified professionals giving evidence today.

I will quickly introduce the committee. My name is Trung Luu; I am the Chair. The Deputy Chair is Mr Ryan Batchelor. Michael Galea is to my left. This is Mr Aiv Puglielli and Mr Joe McCracken. Dr Renee Heath should be back here shortly as well.

We are just running slightly behind time. I know we have got your submission, but I will invite you to quickly give an opening statement before we go through the questions.

Rachel CAREY: Thank you. I might go first. Firstly, thank you very much for the opportunity to come and present to you today. I am just going to make a short opening statement. Much of my evidence will draw on the findings of a research project that I have been leading since 2015 called the Foodprint Melbourne research project. This inquiry of course focuses specifically on people's access to adequate food, but to develop effective policy solutions to increase people's access to adequate food we also need to understand the bigger picture food system drivers that influence people's access to food, so my opening statement is going to aim to do two things.

Firstly, I want to emphasise that there are fundamental changes taking place in the broader food system drivers which influence food prices and therefore people's access to food. Those changes mean that we do need new responses to the problem of food insecurity in Victoria in future. Our current approaches, in my view, are not fit for purpose. Secondly, there is a need for greater government accountability to address rising food insecurity in Victoria, so I believe we need a new whole-of-government legislative and food policy framework which is grounded in the human right to food to ensure that all Victorians have access to adequate food.

I will first outline the changes that are taking place. Our food systems are being affected by more frequent and more severe shocks due to climate change – so fires, floods, droughts, pandemics, of course COVID-19 – and also geopolitical shocks such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These shocks are also interacting with underlying environmental stressors such as water scarcity. This combination of shocks and stressors is contributing to the rising food prices that you have already been hearing about and of course contributing to growing food insecurity in Victoria such that the proportion of Victorians who ran out of food and could not afford to buy more rose to around 8 per cent in 2022, and that was an increase of 40 per cent in two years. The

issue is that these are longer term trends. We can expect food prices to be more volatile in future due to these more frequent and more severe climate shocks particularly but also due to other underlying environmental stressors.

The main approach that we have to address food insecurity in Victoria currently is emergency food relief, which is primarily provided by charitable organisations based on donations of surplus food by the food industry. People accessing emergency food relief can experience stigma and shame, which can be a barrier to using services. A Foodbank survey in 2022 found that less than 40 per cent of food insecure households surveyed had accessed those services. The food may be highly processed, it may not be culturally appropriate and crucially it does not give people control over their food choices – over what they eat. In that sense it does not support the human right to food.

The human right to adequate food is the right to feed oneself in dignity by either buying or producing one's own food rather than the right to be fed. The human right to food is a human right under international law. It is enshrined in a number of international treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Australian government has ratified this treaty, so it has obligations to ensure that right in cooperation with state governments, but the right to food has not been legislated in Australia, meaning that there is not an enforcement mechanism currently and there is also no framework to implement that right nationally.

To my second point, we do need a new legislative and policy framework that is fit for purpose in a changing climate, and I believe the human right to food should underpin that framework. It could be legislated in Victoria by amending Victoria's human rights and responsibilities charter to include the human right to food as part of the right to an adequate standard of living. A legislative framework is needed, with a new food security Bill that establishes clear accountability for the development and implementation of a whole-of-government food security strategy developed through collaboration with all relevant government portfolios; that has an action plan, targets for implementation of the human right to food and a requirement for regular reporting against those targets; and that establishes an independent advisory board to advise on the development of the strategy and an action plan to monitor its effectiveness.

And finally to my last point, I believe a legislative framework should establish clear ministerial accountability for ensuring that all Victorians have access to adequate food. We have ministers for basic human needs – transport, education and health – and I think few needs are more fundamental than whether people have access to sufficient healthy foods. I would argue that we need a new Victorian minister for food. I will leave it there.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Carey. Dr Kleve.

Sue KLEVE: Thank you. I just want to point out that the submission from Monash is not only from just my department but also from the Monash Centre for Youth Policy and Education Practice. While I do not actually have lived experience of food insecurity, I have been working in this space for the last 20 years, as a community dietician and now as a researcher. In that time I have worked with people with lived experience and community-based organisations looking at solutions, looking at pathways out, working with local government and advocating for better surveillance and monitoring of this issue and better action. What I want to share with you first with my presentation today will further add to that lived experience – what this actually means for people – and give two clear policy solutions that we should actually be adopting.

First, I want to share. This is a story from 10 years ago – 10 years ago and we are still hearing the same thing and we are still having the same conversations. So this is about Clara. Food for her is about being around the table with family, but having that stability of food around the table is a struggle – it is a constant struggle. The stakes are so much higher for her, as she describes, because she has got children:

It's a stress and a strain, Gas and electricity ... I need to be able to budget for it, we do usually go over the due date, because we just don't have \$800 spare ... I ... do try and budget for it. But the costs go up and you'll have the incidentals ...

these bill shocks. It is a constant juggle she describes as 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' and 'walking a tightrope. Now, Clara does not want her children to miss out. She does not want any visible signs that they are struggling. She does not want someone to take pity on them, thinking that the children are missing out. They do not miss out, because she sees they do not. Food is planned and rationed within their household, but she is the one who misses out. She tries to get by. She does not want to access food relief because she sees that there are people who are perhaps potentially more deserving than her, but she wears that stress and strain, day in, day out, and it

impacts her physically and emotionally. As I said, that is a story from 10 years ago and we are still hearing stories like that.

As Rachel has said, food is a fundamental human right. When people cannot have that access to food then that is a breach. Food insecurity, as you would have heard today, is a complex issue. There are many factors that come into play that impact people's ability to put food on the table to feed themselves and their households. Fundamentally, it is also indicative of both material and economic deprivation and impacts on people's physical, financial and social access to food. We have heard a lot about the triggers, the flashpoints, for households, and these are varied. But ultimately food is the part of the budget that is the flexible component. That is where there might be sacrifices that are made.

Why is it so important that we have this conversation? Food insecurity is an issue about equity; it is a determinant of health. We have heard it is fundamentally a determinant of health. We know the outcomes of it impact both adults and children. We know that it has impacts on growth and development for children. It is detrimental to physical, social and mental health, and it also impacts on people's ability to engage in social community, education and employment. I think food relief, as Rachel has described, is a last-stop response for people to access that, but many Australians or many Victorians, we know, do not access that, and that is because of the shame and stigma that invariably goes with that. It was designed as a safety net, and it should not be the ongoing solution for people to meet their daily requirements of nutritious food. As Lucas said to me:

[QUOTE AWAITING VERIFICATION]

I feel like I'm being watched when I go there. I think since we don't have any other sources of food access, it's hard to have a balanced and healthier diet. You don't have the luxury of getting necessarily fresh food. You just eat what you get and that's it. You can't really complain.

I think how we frame this issue is really important in solutions. With that, we need to be thinking of not only having what I would say are the people with the lived experience being involved in that solution generation. It is really important that they have a meaningful seat at the table as well and be part of the conversation. I think it is an opportunity – the scale and the urgency for us here in Victoria has certainly escalated – to actually look beyond the short-term food-based solutions and funding these. What we need to be thinking about is what I call nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive responses. By that I actually mean that if we are looking at food-based responses, we need to ensure that they meet the cultural needs and the nutritional needs of people, and that is in a dignified manner and place-based, which allows for inclusion within community. Things like social supermarkets, as we heard before, models like The Community Grocer are really important as well. Nutrition-sensitive probably picks up on Rachel's point as well that we actually need a whole-of-government approach to this. We need to be thinking of, from a government perspective, that cross-departmental policy action and sustained resourcing of programs, so that investment. And this needs to be across portfolios, as Rachel outlined, because we know that one decision in one area may impact people's access to food.

I think for me – as I said, I have been here 20 years – I really hope that what we can achieve is a vision where people in Victoria have that access to food. I really hope that this inquiry is actually a catalyst for that. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you, doctors. We might go straight to questions. Ryan.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Thanks very much. What do you think the most effective policy lever that government could pull would be to address food insecurity?

Rachel CAREY: I am going to say – I know this may sound like a cop-out, but I am going to explain my reasoning here – I think it is really important that firstly an appropriate legislative and policy framework is put in place. I am a food systems person, which means that what I look at is the interactions between different elements of the food system. In other words, you can pull one policy lever, and what can happen if you pull one policy lever is you can have unintended consequences in other parts of the food system. As an example, let us say we are trying to make food more affordable for consumers, for householders. Depending on the way that we do that, we can take one policy approach that might have unintended consequences for farmers, for the livelihoods of farmers further back down the food supply chain, and for the livelihoods of all of those workers through the food system – some of whom are of course the most lowly paid, marginalised people, who are often themselves often food insecure in the sense that they are on low wages. So we have to think really carefully about how it is that we do this, and this is why we keep saying a whole-of-government approach is

actually required, because whenever we are developing policy in this area, we have to actually put the environmental, health, social equity and the economic livelihood aspects of this together, and we have to do it in a coordinated way. Hence, when we are asked about what lever we can pull, we are going to come back to you and say we have to actually do this in a coordinated way and it is really important that we get the right legislative and policy framework in place. The legislative framework becomes important because we have to have the accountability in place and we have to have the governance framework in place to develop that appropriate policy framework so we can centre the health, the environmental, the economic and the social equity outcomes. Unless we have that, then what can tend to happen is that one of those can come to the fore. Often it is the economic outcomes that come to the fore, leaving the health or other equity outcomes marginalised. So yes, there are particular levers that we can pull, but it is really important that we do that in a coordinated way and that we get the right governance and legislative frameworks in place, and I personally think it is really important that that is underpinned by the human right to food.

Ryan BATCHELOR: So your evidence is that there is no sort of simple, one-off solution that we could adopt here and that we need to be cautious about such initiatives because they might have unintended consequences across the system?

Rachel CAREY: That is what I am arguing, yes. I am absolutely arguing that I would be very cautious about coming out of this inquiry and adopting one kind of simplistic solution out of this, because what is likely to happen is that it will have unintended consequences elsewhere. Unless we are coming out with an approach – because basically, from a food systems point of view, the food system has multiple outcomes. Those outcomes are: economic, they are on livelihoods, they are on health, they are on environment, they are on social equity. Unless we recognise that and centre all of those things in policy and governance approaches that we develop, we will have unintended consequences elsewhere, and that is exactly what happens now. We do not have a coordinated approach. We do not recognise those things. And so we need to change the way that we do this and we need to put the appropriate governance frameworks in place. And that is well-recognised now in other parts of the world too, and so governments around the world are starting to move towards more coordinated approaches. And certainly governments around the world – at the UN level they are very much starting to talk about a human right to food approach and a food systems approach.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Aiv, do you want to continue?

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you, Chair. Good morning – or almost afternoon. Thank you for coming in. Just picking up on that – with respect to the human right to food and making sure that governments are accountable to those rights that people should have, what is the best mechanism for doing that?

Rachel CAREY: I think firstly, as I have said, the human right to food could be legislated at state level.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Do you recommend that?

Rachel CAREY: Yes, absolutely. Well, we are lucky in the sense that we already have a charter in place at state level that could be amended. We need to have a national framework in place for human rights as well. But we could do that at a state level. We could go ahead and we could be a leading state nationally in doing this, and then we put in place the kind of broad-scale food security Bill which gives us the framework to implement an action plan. Sorry, I will hand over to you.

Sue KLEVE: Yes. And I think with that, it is also thinking from the perspective of – we also need to look at what are those other core drivers. What are the core drivers? Okay. So, yes, that is important, but we also need to think about, as I have heard other people speaking about today, the hard-hitting issues also around unemployment, underemployment, rental stress, mortgage stress – all those sorts of things that impact ultimately on people being able to put food on the table, essentially. So, I mean, it is described as a complex issue, but this is an opportunity to really have those conversations around how we can actually make a difference.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Sure. Thank you. And just further, we spoke about caution just before – the importance of caution in terms of addressing the full complexity, the scale of the issue at each end, the full supply chain and

a sense of the community broadly, not just the check-out itself. Would you also say that it is important that that caution does not temper action, because action is necessary?

Rachel CAREY: Of course, absolutely, and there are things that we can say about what that is likely to look like. There are concrete examples around the world, so we can start to say, ‘Okay, what might some of the core building blocks of that human right to food approach look like?’ We can already say that and we can point to examples around the world.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Could you speak a bit more about that? What are some good international examples where they are getting it right?

Rachel CAREY: Okay, so firstly, in terms of what a legislative and policy framework might look like, I would point to Scotland’s *Good Food Nation Act* as being the best example of a comprehensive legislative and policy framework which is being underpinned by a human right to food approach. They have not legislated the human right to food there yet, and they are looking at that, but they have got the clear framework in place where there are clear ministerial accountabilities, with a whole-of-government plan being developed that must have regard to the human right to food, and they are looking at how to operationalise that. To your point when you were talking about centring policy around people who have lived experience of the issues, that is exactly what they are doing. They are looking at how to operationalise that. How is it that we can develop approaches to ensuring that people have adequate food that are co-developed with people who are actually experiencing these issues? That is what they are doing there. I would also point to some of the key policy initiatives around things like universal access to free school meals. These are approaches that are being used in other parts of the world. This is a lever that we do have control of at state level. That is an approach that would ensure that every child had access to at least one healthy meal a day.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: With that particular policy, is there an international example that does it best?

Rachel CAREY: Well, there are various countries that do it. There would be Finland, for instance, that does that at pretty much all levels of school. There would be the UK that does it at some levels of school. There would be the United States where in different parts of the states they might do universal access in some regions or universal access in some schools depending on the particular conditions in a certain area. There are different ways of doing that, but there are examples in different parts of the world where that is done.

Sue KLEVE: Exactly. And they may look slightly different. I think core to that is being what Rachel has described as having a universal approach rather than a very singled out, ‘This student gets it; this student doesn’t’ approach, but this student may then experience that stigma as well. I think building also on what Rachel was saying in terms of the Scottish government really being the leaders in what they have done, they describe that they want to see food banks no longer being available. They have focused on what they call a prevention approach, which is a cash-first approach. And whilst I recognise this is certainly something to consider at a federal level, I think it is something that we can certainly advocate for. Things like having emergency financial assistance – that is the core driver for people. Having this monetary advice, that support and those wraparound services that we heard about before is crucial, so it does not just become, ‘Let’s give more people more food,’ and the next person comes in and we are still creating the ongoing issue. Let us look at how else we can actually support people to make that difference.

I think the other thing that the Scottish government have outlined really well is called dignity in practice, so they have again developed with people what does this look like if people are going to access food. What does this look like for people? It is about that they have that sense of control. They are able to participate in community life in those settings-based or local-based services. They feel nourished and supported. They are involved in the decision-making, and they feel like they have value and are able to contribute. That is why that seat at the table of lived experience is really important.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Joe, we move to you.

Joe McCRACKEN: Yes. A few quick ones from me. I was really interested in the talk about lived experiences. I think, Sue, you might have said economic deprivation is one of the biggest factors for putting food on the table, and the support services are probably the safety net whereas the focus should be, as you

talked about with the Scotland model, about getting it before it gets to that point. A few of the others here this morning talked about some of the other factors that cause economic deprivation. In your work what have you seen are the big factors that cause economic deprivation, that lead to food insecurity?

Sue KLEVE: Look, it really varies, but I think what we can talk about is there is a whole raft of things. So yes, it can be rental stress, it can be mortgage stress. It can be in terms of unemployment and underemployment, casualisation of workforce – so people not guaranteed the hours that they may need. It can relate to health – either physical health or mental health can also impact on that. We know that racism can impact on that. We know that interpersonal violence can have an impact on that as well. So it is this very complex kind of web, but we need to actually look at what we call the key causes and consider these within our solutions.

So yes, a food-based response is important, but it should not be our only response because, as I have heard over the years, this kind of narrative: if we are giving people more food, yes, it is actually going to potentially solve the immediacy of the issue, it is not going to lift people out of the chronic experience. And that experience of food insecurity is a spectrum, as you have heard. It goes from that really chronic experience to being what we would say is maybe an intermittent kind of experience like when there are big shocks that come in in terms of bills and things like that. That can be enough to kind of put people in, but they can come out of that experience as well.

Joe McCracken: I represent a lot of farmers in my electorate, and they talk about the cost of production – things like gas, electricity. Particularly dairy farmers –

Sue KLEVE: Yes. Sorry I did not mention those as well. Yes, absolutely.

Joe McCracken: No, cool. Is that some of the stuff you have come across – the cost of production and I guess that flowing on through the supply chain, which in effect means that you have got like a waterfall that cascades down to the end person who has to pay more?

Sue KLEVE: Yes. I think certainly that those primary producers are doing it tough – that is certainly what I would say – and certainly they themselves experience this as an issue. Rachel, I am not sure if you want to have some more conversation about that.

Rachel CAREY: Yes. I can make some comment on that. We have been doing some research about that, particularly around the impacts of shocks and stresses and how they are impacting right the way through those food supply chains. And of course it is really difficult to pull apart what is the impact at the moment of different shocks on different parts of that supply chain. If you were to take a rise in food price, how is that –

Joe McCracken: Because even different parts of agriculture have different drivers of costs.

Rachel CAREY: Precisely. If we just were to take Russia's invasion of Ukraine, then we have got issues around the price of oil going up. That underpins the whole food supply chain. We have got fertiliser prices being impacted. We have had issues around the supply and price of grains, for instance –

Joe McCracken: They were 40 per cent, I think –

Rachel CAREY: Precisely. So we have had impacts on the prices of inputs, availability of different types of inputs, but then at the same time as that we have had other sorts of climate shocks that have happened, which have also had impacts on the price of food. All these things are coming together. So what we have got at the moment is we have got these kind of cascading impacts from multiple different types of shocks and stresses that are often happening at the same time. It becomes really hard to pull apart what is actually the impact of which shock, so it becomes important to think about how we actually strengthen our food supply chains to any sort of shock that hits the system in the future.

Joe McCracken: I guess my natural question after that – and I think Ryan might have mentioned it before as well – is what are the levers that the state can pull, knowing that a lot of the stuff in the supply chain is probably not within the state's direct control? That is the hard one, because as policymakers here we have got to consider what levers we pull to make sure that whatever stress there is on the supply chain we can limit that or at least protect against it so that the flow-on effect means that there are lower prices.

Rachel CAREY: Well, I think to start with that is about actively planning. That is about actively planning for shocks and stresses, and that is thinking about this whole-of-government food security plan. We have to build that in, right. We have to be thinking about, through the whole food supply chain, what measures are there that we need to take, how can we make our food supply systems more diverse, how can we ensure that we are thinking about what the impacts of different shocks and stresses are likely to be, and how can we ensure that they are having less impact in the future? But we are going to need to plan all the way through those food supply chains.

Joe McCracken: Yes. It is a long conversation. I think my time has run out; I am so sorry.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Joe. Michael.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you both for joining us. It has been a fascinating discussion to listen in to. I think a definite theme and message, loud and clear, that we have heard is that there are many structural elements to this and that we need to be very mindful that what might look like a glossy short-term fix might actually lead to some of those unintended consequences. Having said that, I would like to take you into two details to get some feedback from the both of you and your perspectives and experiences with these. Firstly, Dr Carey, you spoke about free school meals with some excellent international examples, and you have spoken about Scotland a bit as well. You would be aware as well of course that there is the Victorian school breakfast clubs program, and very excitingly just this year it has been announced that that will now be rolled out to be available to every single, at least government, primary school and secondary school. I am just curious as to – I think there has been something like 40 million meals already delivered through that program – what sort of impact does that have? In terms of the breakfast side of things at least, are we on the right track?

Rachel CAREY: I have not looked sufficiently, I will be honest, at the research evidence around that, so I would want to go off and look at that before I came back to you. I am not sure, Sue, if you have looked at that.

Sue KLEVE: I mean, I agree with Rachel, but I think also that yes, that is a good policy response but it should not be the only policy response. I think we also need to be cautious about looking at outcomes, and I think one of the things we do need is a much better monitoring and surveillance system here in Victoria. I am not singling out Victoria; nationally we need it as well. Rachel mentioned that the prevalence of food insecurity is suggested now to be 8 per cent. One of the things that we are relying and the work with community-based organisations – they are needing timely data around prevalence and at a local government area level at the very least. And when I say that measurement, it needs to include both adults and children. The United States Department of Agriculture Household Food Security Survey Module is considered the gold standard in measurement to give us that experience and the severity of experience across adults and children, okay. That is also going to be a great evaluation marker for policy levers that we might be looking at.

Michael GALEA: For any such ones that we may be discussing or looking at through that legislated approach that you advocate – interesting.

Sue KLEVE: Yes.

Michael GALEA: So that US model you would say is a good one –

Sue KLEVE: Absolutely.

Michael GALEA: at least in terms of that specific part of it, perhaps not some other things from our American friends.

Sue KLEVE: I mean, I would like to congratulate the surveillance and monitoring team through the Victorian population health survey, because through a lot of advocacy we have now actually got a slightly better measurement than what we had before, but it is going to probably show a much higher prevalence level, a more accurate prevalence level.

Michael GALEA: Not necessarily an increase but more accurate data?

Sue KLEVE: The accuracy, yes, of the data.

Michael GALEA: As a principle – and again not wanting to go too far into what might be considered as part of the broader approaches – would things such as free school meals for all students and not singling them out and having that universal approach be something that is good policy?

Rachel CAREY: I would say so. Absolutely. Look, there is a global movement towards that. There are more and more countries joining that global movement aiming to do that by 2030. Yes, I think there is good evidence there to suggest that there are a whole range of very beneficial outcomes from doing that in terms of educational outcomes and health outcomes, multiple benefits. I think it is certainly something that we could look at as the sort of cornerstone of a human rights food approach to addressing the issues.

Sue KLEVE: Tasmania have implemented a pilot of having that school lunch program as well.

Michael GALEA: That is good to know too. There is a lot more than I would love to ask you, but my time is up. Thank you very much.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Michael. Dr Heath.

Renee HEATH: Thank you. Thank you so much for your presentation. I really listened to what you said, both of you, and it seems like – and I remember health promotion at university – what we are doing is very downstream; it is trying to rescue people, when what we need to do is go upstream and build some guardrails. But how can we do that when the price of food is not going to come down while energy prices go up? It is just not. You mentioned how it is not about, in a sense, just feeding people, the human right to food is actually about buying and producing food. Then the third thing – I have written lots of little notes here – is food insecurity downstream to all of these other things, and is it ever sustainable trying to just pull people out?

Sue KLEVE: I am going to comment on this from the perspective that I think we need to be in this for the long game rather the short game. I think up until now we have been in it for the short game, okay? I think, yes, from a health promotion perspective, we need to have those upstream kinds of population-based approaches, but we still need some targeted approaches as well. So I think, as I said before, we need to have those nutrition-specific and those nutrition-sensitive policy factors as well.

Rachel CAREY: Well, you have really come to the heart of the issue there. You have asked very good questions, and you have come to the complex nub of the issue. When people are unable to afford access to adequate food for themselves, what is that about? Well, it is about a complex range of issues, but fundamentally it is about poverty, isn't it? It is about people's lack of economic entitlement to food, which is caused by a whole range of different issues. What do we do about that? If we are supporting people's human right to food, ultimately they need to have control, they need to have choice and they need to have the economic means to buy that food for themselves or to produce that food for themselves, which means access to land and resources to produce food. For most people here that would be an extra additional thing that you would do.

Okay, so how do we give people those things? We are going to need a whole range of different measures. Fundamentally of course that is about income, that is about employment, that is about welfare and that is about setting income support levels at levels at which people can afford to buy a healthy, culturally appropriate diet. It means monitoring that, and it means understanding the income level for a range of different households that is required to enable access to adequate food. And what does adequate food mean for different households? We need to understand that as well. We need to monitor that, and we need to monitor the way that food prices change in response to these shocks and stresses that we have been talking about.

We do not know any of these things at the moment, and we do need to know that in the future. Then we need a range of different mechanisms. This is getting back to which lever you pull. There is not going to be one lever, there will be multiple different policy levers that are required to ensure that people have access to the economic means or to the tools to either buy or sometimes produce some of that food for themselves. But there will be fundamental building blocks that we can use. I think it will involve a range of different things, and some of those things will be fiscal measures. There might be taxation measures et cetera that we use or there will be income support-type things. I think there probably will be free school meals and there will be a whole range of different things that we need to use to support but to give people control, choice and to make sure they have dignified access, which is the key thing.

The CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. We are running a bit over time now. Thank you so much for your submission and your evidence here today. I think your recommendation was that with the community we have a holistic approach to the framework. I think that is something that we need to look carefully into with your submission, and we will make recommendations down the track. Thank you very much for your time and your evidence today.

Witnesses withdrew.