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One in four Tasmanians have experienced food shortages during COVID-19

One in four (26%) respondents to [The Tasmania Project's](#) food survey reported running out of food because they could not afford to buy more during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Tasmania Project, led by the Institute for Social Change at the University of Tasmania, surveyed more than 1,170 Tasmanians from across the State about food access and supply during the COVID-19 pandemic. [The survey](#) included a series of questions asking whether Tasmanians had enough healthy food to eat every day.

“Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have significantly worsened food security in Tasmania,” said Dr Katherine Kent, Research Fellow at the University’s [Centre for Rural Health](#).

“Previous studies have found that between 6% and 11% of Tasmanians are food-insecure, and our survey results far exceed these statistics.”

The survey showed that the most vulnerable groups were young Tasmanians (18-24 years), single-parent households, those with a disability, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders and temporary residents who experienced levels of food insecurity between 31-59%.

Financial stress was a major finding, with one in two (52%) respondents on JobSeeker payments reported running out of food and being unable to buy more. Change to income was another factor, with the majority of people (65%) who lost more than 75% of their usual income reporting food insecurity.

“Food insecurity is a complex problem, and a [coordinated and collaborative approach](#) is needed to strengthen Tasmania’s food systems to provide better nutrition outcomes for the whole community, regardless of their financial means or geographical location,” Dr Kent said.

Director of the Institute for Social Change Professor Libby Lester said that findings from The Tasmania Project are revealing a complex picture about how residents are experiencing life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This finding from the most recent survey highlights stark differences between how Tasmanians are being impacted by the pandemic,” she said. “We will continue to monitor these differences closely, particularly while economic impacts remain so uncertain.”

Regular updates on findings from the study, including from the first general survey and the food survey, are available at The Tasmania Project website on utas.edu.au/tasmania-project, and are also being provided directly to government, business and service providers.

A new general survey has opened this week and includes questions that seek to understand how Tasmanians continue to fare through the pandemic, and their opinions and intentions in relation to their and the State's future. To participate in the new survey, go to utas.edu.au/tasmania-project or telephone 6226 7542.

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