

GROCERY PRICE COMPARISON STUDY

A longitudinal study in partnership with Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Rationale

Fresh fruit and vegetable prices vary widely across rural and regional Victoria, with limited retail options, supply chain challenges, and socio-economic disadvantage affecting affordability in many communities.

As part of a three-year partnership between the Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit (LMPHU) and Sustain: The Australian Food Network, this study addresses a key evidence gap by examining how these factors influence food access, affordability, and health equity.

The collaborative research compares fresh food retail environments across metropolitan and regional communities, with a particular focus on the unique conditions of the Loddon Mallee region.

The aim of the project was to understand the variation in fresh food costs across the Loddon Mallee Region. The project was initially planned to cover four local government areas surrounding Bendigo; however, the project was expanded to cover all local government areas across the region based on an analysis of socio-economic data.

Objectives

The project compares fresh food basket costs across different retail environments, including supermarkets, greengrocers, and independent retailers.

It examines how prices vary within and between communities based on levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and geographic location.



SMEEC team members Ruwacy Al-Dakhil and Mitchell Rayson

At A Glance

- **Year One** regional price comparison completed
- 166kg of food donated to community **food pantries and food relief**
- Developed produce **quality tool**
- **31** food retailers assessed
- Findings to inform future **healthy food system planning**

