

Final report:

Frankston Interim Meals Closure

June 2017

"It's really nice to just sit at a table with other people to eat a meal - it's really nice."

"This is part of my social life - I'll miss it."



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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Disadvantage in Frankston

Frankston City Council (FCC) covers an area of 131 square kilometres and has an estimated population of 129,000 people. On many measures, the Frankston area is disadvantaged compared to Greater Melbourne, Victoria and Australia.¹

Frankston's median weekly household income of \$1,140 is below the averages for Melbourne, Victoria and Australia. Frankston has a higher proportion (23.4 per cent) of households spending 30% or more of gross household income on rent or mortgage payments than the state average (20.4 per cent).

Rates of university attendance and degree completion are lower than the city, state and national averages; participation in vocational education is higher. 19.7 per cent of young people in Frankston were disengaged from school or work, compared to 15 per cent across the state. Unemployment was 5.8 per cent, slightly higher than Melbourne as a whole.

Frankston's SEIFA index of disadvantage in 2011 was 997, compared to Greater Melbourne's average of 1020. The 2011 VicHealth survey found that Frankston has lower levels of satisfaction with feeling part of their community than the Victorian average.²

Frankston also experiences concentration of severe disadvantage. It has the highest proportion of people experiencing primary homelessness in the Southern Metropolitan region of Melbourne.³ Frankston North has been identified as one of Victoria's most disadvantaged suburbs and areas.⁴

The Federal Government is the major funder of emergency relief programs for disadvantaged and marginalised people and there has been a \$100,000 per annum reduction in funds available in Frankston in recent years.

Closure of CityLife

CityLife, a community church and social support organisation and the Frankston Churches Community Breakfast provided a social inclusion and meals program from a Clyde Street Mall premise that serviced some of the City's most vulnerable and marginalised community members. CityLife also sourced and hosted a range of other community services to support the primary and secondary homeless, including a RDNS nurse, showers and occasional dental services. CityLife reports that it provided 14,000 meals for the disadvantaged in the community. CityLife was self funded and had a strong volunteer group that supported the church's program.

The owner of the building that housed CityLife sought a planning permit to redevelop the site; the planned redevelopment would not include CityLife. The building permit was approved provided adequate time (12 months) was provided to CityLife to source an alternate home. However, at the end of June 2016, CityLife closed its doors after protracted negotiations with State Government failed to yield alternate accommodation.

1.2 The program

Following the closure of CityLife, and in expectation that an alternate location for CityLife would be found, an Interim Meals Program (IMP) was established to provide meals to disadvantaged members of the Frankston community. As of May 2017, the IMP comprised two different prepared food services providing 135-140 meals per week, as shown in Table 1.⁵

The service provided for lunchtime sandwiches distributed on Tuesday and Thursday from Community Support Frankston that have been prepared by Avocare. On Wednesday night, a hot evening meal is served at Leawarra

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all data in this section is sourced from the 2011 Census.

² Community Indicators Victoria

³ Evaluation of RDNS Homeless Persons Program

⁴ 2015 Dropping Off the Edge report

⁵ The IMP initially included a meal served by CityLife on Monday nights at Frankston North Community Centre; this service ceased in December 2016.

House, overseen by volunteers from Seaford Housing Coalition Action Group (SHAC). Leawarra House is a FCC community building, and was provided by Council at no cost to the meals program.

The cost of meals has been met by Frankston City Council and then reimbursed by State Government. The program will conclude on 30 June 2017 and there is no commitment from any source for food and materials funding, or an agreed venue/venues for clients.

Table 1: Interim Meals Program (IMP): Description

| | Leawarra House | CSF |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Site | Beach Street, Frankston East | Beach Street, Frankston |
| Description | Hot sit-down meal served each Wednesday night | Sandwiches served on Tuesday and Thursday lunchtimes on the grounds of CSF |
| Meal source | Meals on Wheels kitchen | Avocare |
| Served by | Community volunteers from Seaford Housing Coalition Action Group (SHAC) | CSF staff |
| Funded by | meal costs paid by FCC and then invoiced to State Government for reimbursement FCC (building rent forgone) | meal costs paid by FCC and then invoiced to State Government for reimbursement |
| Usage⁶ | 25 meals per week | 120 sandwiches per session |

Section 2: Methodology

2.1 Scope

Department of Health and Human Services commissioned MGN Consultancy to investigate the implications of the cessation of the IMP with particular reference to supporting client users to transition to other services and support options.

Project brief

The project's focus was to:

- develop, implement and document a responsible strategy for winding down the council support meals program by 30 June 2017, including identifying and facilitating alternative support arrangements for existing service users as necessary and appropriate.
- create a shared responsibility amongst the local service providers for supporting the respective cohorts attending the meals programs within available programs and initiatives.
- identify and facilitate opportunities for other meal providers in the area to coordinate their efforts, thereby providing broader coverage of available meals programs.

⁶ Based on data for May and June 2017, as supplied by service providers

Transition Out Plan

The project's first output was to develop a Transition Out Plan for approval from DHHS and FCC – see Appendix B.

The Plan identified six steps to be undertaken to gain an understanding of the broader service coordination needs and to provide timely advice to meal service users on the IMP's closure:

1. Governance
2. Service user needs assessment
3. Communication strategy
4. Food program services mapping
5. Stakeholder management
6. Risks and mitigation

2.2 Data and Information Collection Modes

2.2.1 Service users

In conjunction with the Advisory Group, MGN developed a short survey instrument which formed the basis for interviews with recipients of meal services.

MGN personnel attended each of the three services for the first time without conducting any interviews to provide observational information and to introduce themselves and the project to the meal service users. Interviews were then conducted at a total of 8 separate meals, asking respondents about their past and current use of meals programs in Frankston, their financial and housing circumstances, and the impact that the cessation of the IMP would have on them. Responses were captured using an interview template, as shown in Appendix A.

Interviewees were selected at random and advised that the interview was voluntary and that their privacy would be protected. Only two of those approached chose not to be interviewed. 58 interviews were completed across 8 service visits, as set out in Table 2

To ensure that service users were aware of the impending closure, MGN compiled a series of materials for distribution to relevant stakeholders regarding the cessation of the IMP. These included:

- Email to be sent from FCC to service providers in the Frankston area, advising of the closure and requesting that they inform their clients
- Signs to be posted at IMP service sites, advising of the closure
- Fliers to be distributed to clients at IMP service sites, advising of alternate meal options in the Frankston area

Copies of these materials are at Appendix C.

Table 2: Total number of interviewees by location by date and by gender

| Site | Date | Interviews | Gender | |
|----------|-------------------|------------|--------|--------|
| | | | Male | Female |
| Leawarra | Wed 24 May 2017 | 8 | 11 | 6 |
| | Wed 31 May 2017 | 6 | | |
| | Wed 7 June 2017 | 3 | | |
| | TOTAL | 17 | | |
| CSF | Thurs 25 May 2017 | 9 | 23 | 18 |
| | Tues 30 May 2017 | 2 | | |
| | Thurs 1 June 2017 | 9 | | |
| | Tues 6 June 2017 | 9 | | |
| | Thurs 8 June | 12 | | |
| | TOTAL | 41 | | |

2.2.2 Stakeholder organisations

The project has been supported by an Advisory Group that has the express purpose:

“To assist with a short term project aimed at meeting the needs of people attending time-limited meals program in Frankston with a view to improving their access to supports [that are] appropriate and reduce reliance on the meals program.”⁷

The group has included a broad range of locally or regionally focused services with direct or indirect responsibilities for supporting the disadvantaged, as listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Advisory Group Members

| Organisation | Name |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| DHHS | Kathleen Alonso |
| | Paul Maher |
| | Chris Allen |
| | Di Mossenton-Brown |
| FCC | Liz Daley |
| | Ken Liddicoat |
| Salvocare Eastern | Liz McCasker |
| Community Support Frankston | Steven Phillips |
| RDNS Homeless Persons Program | Kathy Rodis |
| Mentis Assist | Mark Smith |
| Centrelink | Maria Monypenny |
| Launch Housing | Andrew D’Arcy |

MGN personnel also conducted phone and in-person interviews with individuals from 9 stakeholder organisations, as listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Face to face and telephone interviews

| Organisation | Name |
|---|--------------------|
| Frankston City Council | Dr. Gill Kay |
| | Liz Daley |
| | Ken Liddicoat |
| Community Support Frankston | Steven Phillips |
| RDNS Homeless Persons Program | Kathy Rodis |
| Casper Free Shower | Steve Winterton |
| Breakfast Program | Trudy Poole |
| CityLife | Mark Whitby |
| Matt’s Place (St. Chads) Chelsea | Jacqueline Hendrey |
| Wintringham Community Housing and Support | Helen Small |
| Seaford Homeless Action Coalition (SHAC) | Noel Tudball |

⁷ Advisory Group Minutes

Section 3: Service user profiles

The 58 interviews conducted across a three week period have produced data and information regarding this cohort that is not usually available. Only two service users declined to be interviewed, with many offering to be involved to make sure their issues and views were included.

This section outlines a range of demographic and social conditions reported by interviewees, as a whole group, and with reference where appropriate to differences between the Leawarra Wednesday hot meal group and the Tuesday/Thursday CSF sandwich group.

3.1 Identified gender, age and suburb of residence

Figures 1 to 3 provide a summary of the demographics of IMP service users. They show that there are slightly more men than women using the service (Figure 1), a wide spread across age groups (Figure 2), and that the vast majority of service users live in Frankston or other nearby suburbs (Figure 3).

Figure 1: IMP service users by self-reported gender

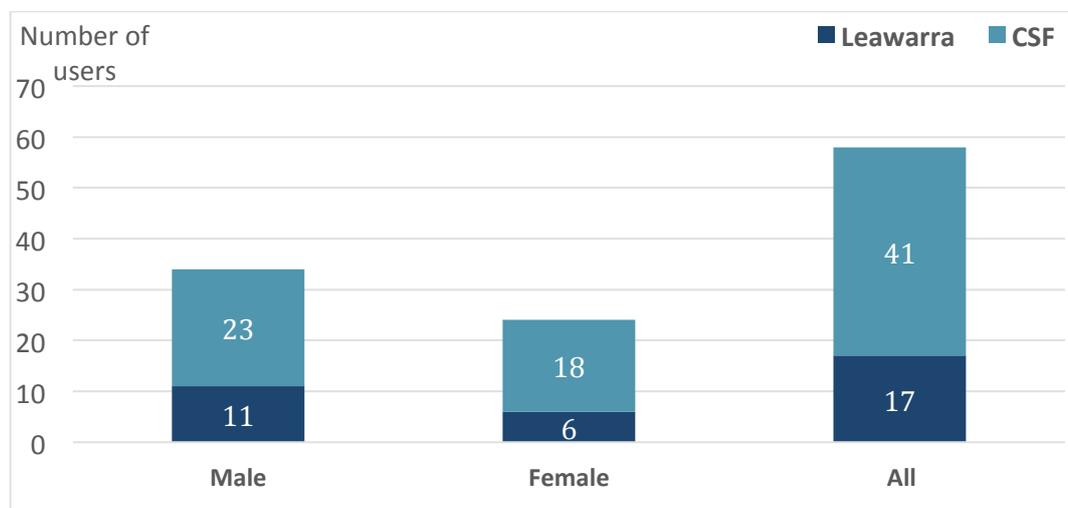


Figure 2 shows that IMP service users come from all adult age groups in the community. Nine per cent (5 of 58) are over the age of 65, and 19 per cent (11 of 58) are aged 35 or under. Although none of the respondents were under the age of 18, several reported having primary caring responsibilities for one or more children, including two participants who had responsibility for grandchildren.

Figure 2: IMP service users by self-reported age

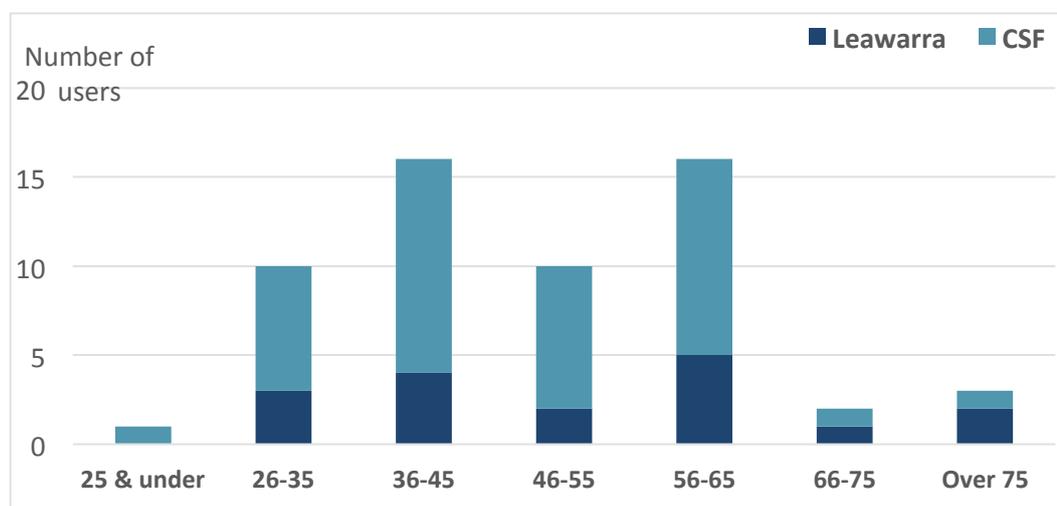
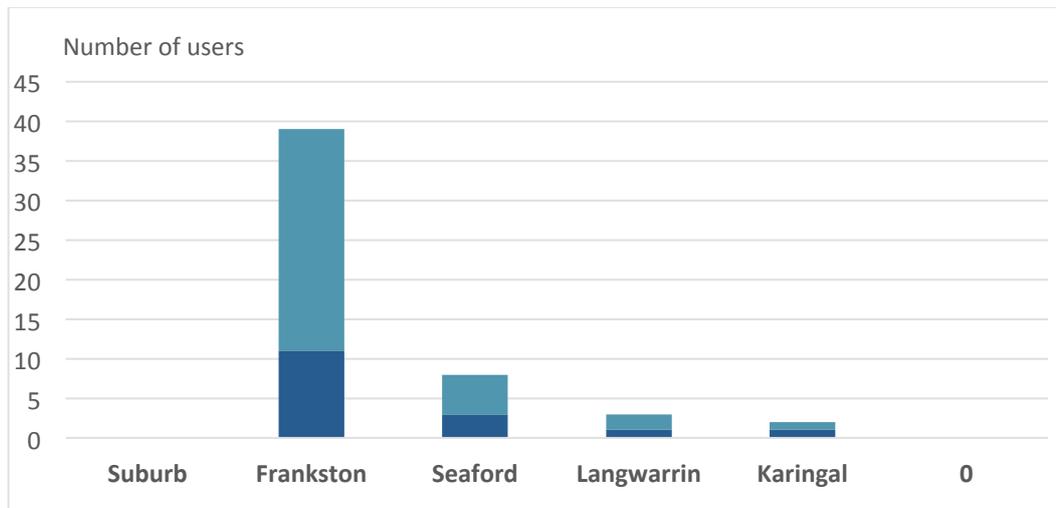


Figure 3 shows that the vast majority of service users came from Frankston or nearby suburbs. Only two people identified as living outside the boundaries of Frankston City Council, and in each case they reported that they were only visiting at CSF and only dropped in very occasionally. Four participants reported 'living rough', either in their cars or in one case, in a tent in a paddock.

Figure 3: IMP service users by self-reported suburb of residence



Note: 'Other' comprises one respondent from each of Carrum, Hampton, Mornington and Skye

3.2 Housing, income and transport

Figures 4 to 8 show the current housing and transport circumstances of IMP users. Taken together, the data show that those accessing the IMP at CSF are much more likely to be vulnerable than those at Leawarra. A higher proportion of CSF users do not have stable housing (Figure 4 and 5), are on Newstart (Figure 6), and do not have access to a car (Figures 7 and 8).

74 per cent of interviewees self-reported stable housing. It is important to note that the expression 'stable' has many connotations attached to it: it relates to expectations, means and opportunity to access housing. In some cases, it would appear that people who indicated that they were in 'stable housing' were referring to very different circumstances, from one gentleman who inherited his mother's house years ago to another who had finally found a 'good boarding house' after seeking assistance from Salvocare Eastern following approximately 12 moves over 2 years. Figure 4 shows that almost all program users in an unstable housing situation attended the CSF program, and that more than a third of CSF service users (15 of 41, 37%) were in an unstable housing situation. All but one Leawarra service user has stable housing.

Figure 4: IMP service users by housing stability

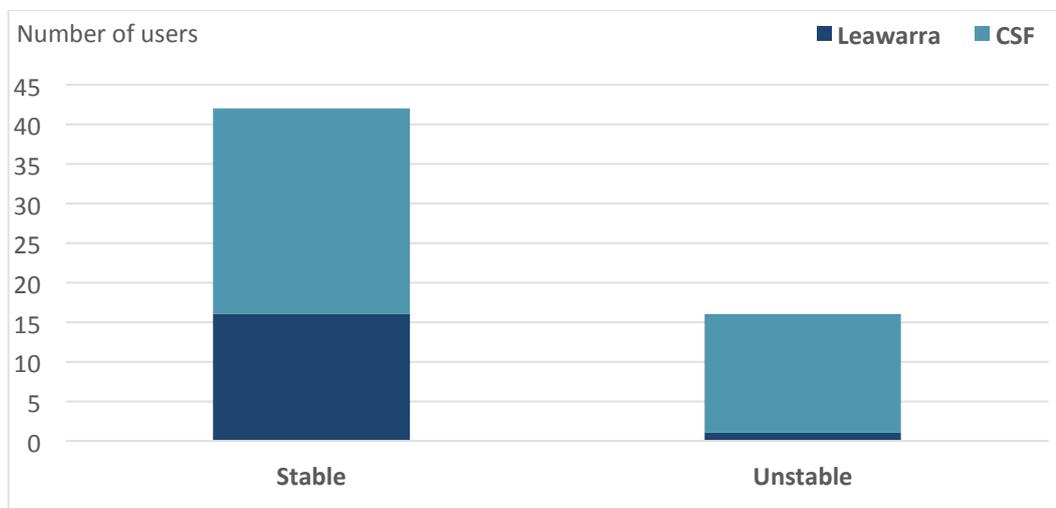
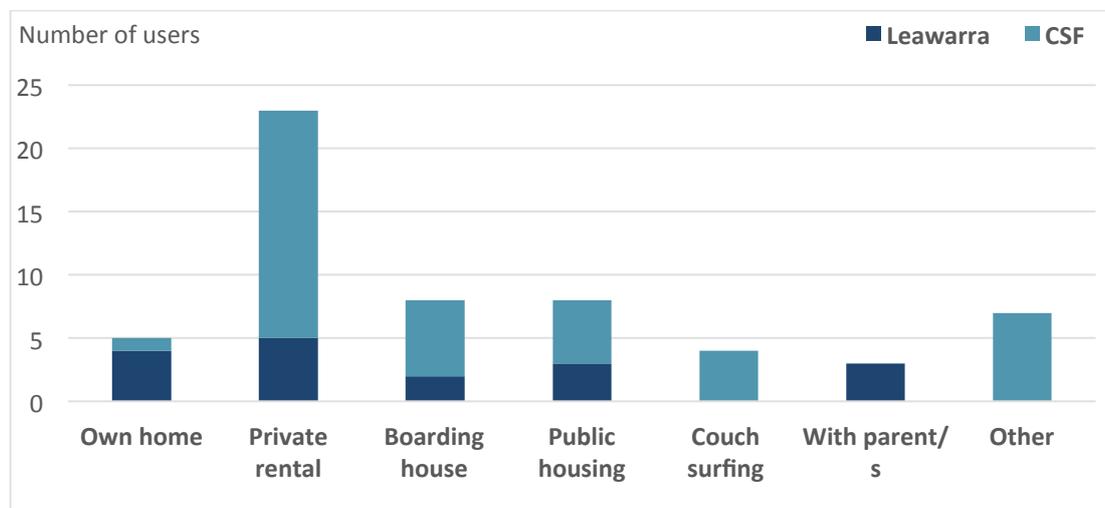


Figure 5 shows that while Leawarra service users are relatively evenly split between living in their own home, private rental, and public housing, CSF service users are most likely to either be in a private rental or in a primary, secondary or tertiary homelessness situation.

Analysis of Centrelink Benefits/incomes received by service users and those using private rental is an indicator of increased financial vulnerability as they experience higher levels of rental costs.

Figure 5: IMP service users by current housing type

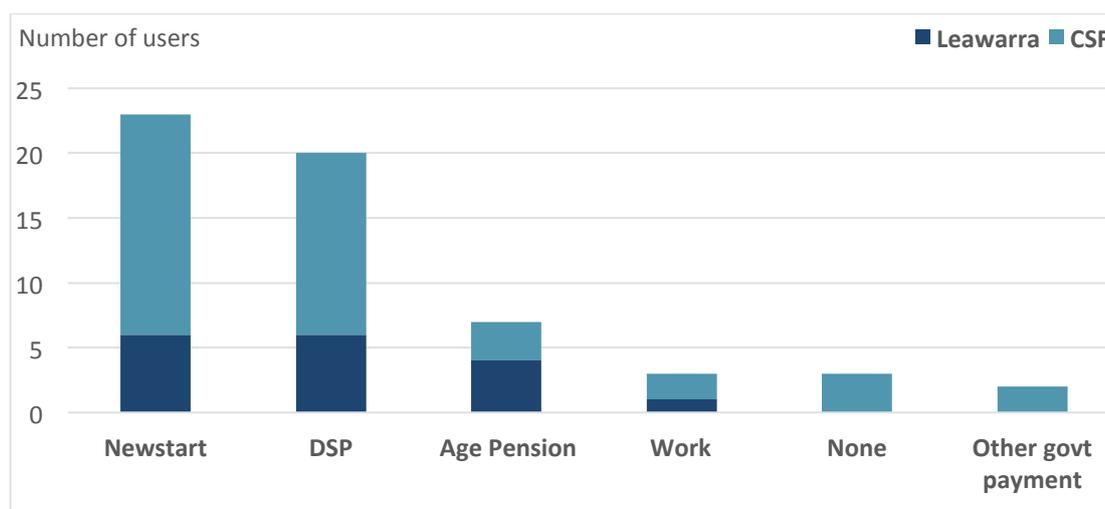


Note: 'Other' comprises two residents who are squatting, and one respondent in each of the following categories: SRS, caravan park, homeless, living in car, tent in bush. Anecdotal evidence from interviews suggests that the majority of 'own home' have mortgages.

Figure 6 shows that service users at Leawarra are relatively evenly split between Newstart, Disability Support Pension (DSP) and the age pension as their primary income source. More than 40 per cent of CSF users are reliant on Newstart, and around a third are on DSP. Three service users report having no current source of income.

In two of these cases, the person had attended at CSF to register for support and then participated in the sandwich offerings because they were 'really hungry'. The third CSF user was immediately connected with a service agency worker who was visiting CSF at the time.

Figure 6: IMP service users by main source of income



Note: 'Other govt payment' comprises one respondent on a carer's payment and one on a family payment.

Figures 7 and 8 shows that fewer than a third of service users (16 of 58; 28 per cent) have access to a car as a regular means of transport; again, this group is over-represented amongst attendees at Leawarra compared to CSF. The majority of service users rely on combinations of walking, cycling and public transport to attend the IMP and for transport generally.

When analysed in combination with the service access data shown in Figure 11 below, we find that 56 per cent of respondents with cars (9 of 16) attend meals services other than the one they were interviewed at, whereas only 40 per cent of respondents without cars (17 of 42) do so. This reinforces the importance of considering the accessibility of potential locations for any future meals service.

Figure 7: IMP service users by transport mode used to travel to IMP on date of interview

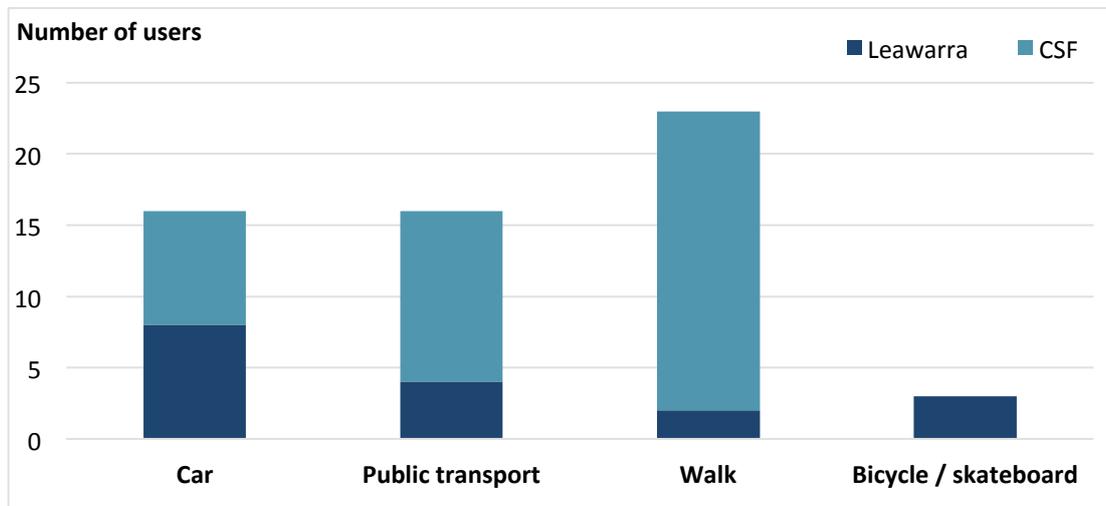
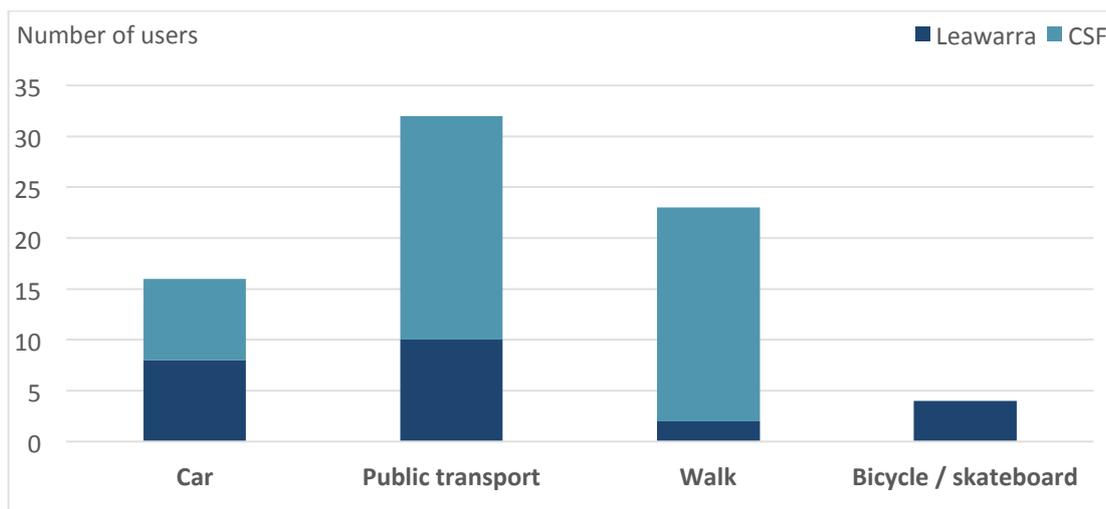


Figure 8: IMP service users by usual transport modes



Note: Some respondents provided more than one answer.

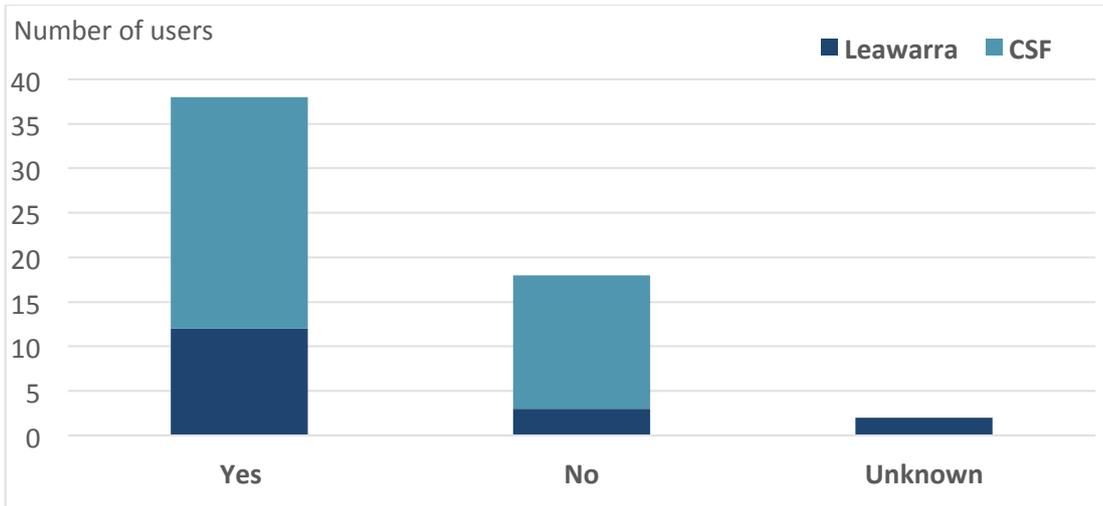
3.3 Use of meal/food services

Figures 9 to 14 show the usage of food services by IMP users.

Previous connection to CityLife

Figure 9 shows that the majority of Leawarra service users (at least 12 of 17) were previous attendees at CityLife; anecdotal evidence from interviews suggests that this group, which appears to have relatively strong social connections with each other, moved as a group to the Leawarra service over a period of time. 60 per cent of CSF service users (26 of 41) were previous CityLife attendees.

Figure 9: IMP service users by previous use of CityLife services



Frequency of IMP service use

Figure 10 shows that just over half (31 of 58, 53 per cent) of service users across both locations were regular attendees at the program; the remainder either reported being occasional attendees, or that this was their first time attending.

The number of first time users at CSF (12 of 41, 32 per cent) indicates that those presenting at meals services are not only those who have known about the service move from CityLife days: they are new residents or have been in the Frankston area over time, and have now found themselves in a situation where an opportunity to have free meals is essential to their weekly cost management.

Figure 10: IMP service users by frequency of IMP service use

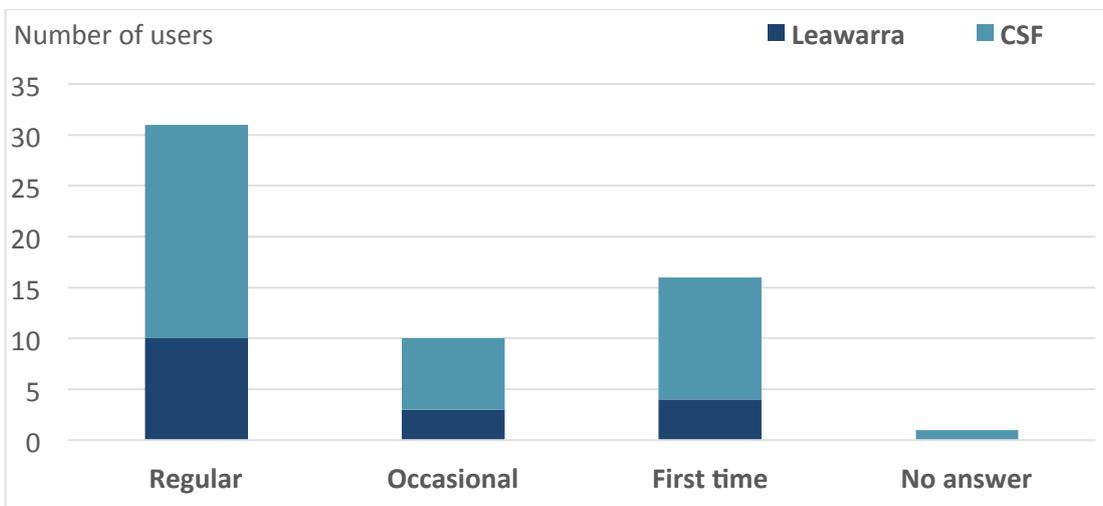


Figure 11 shows that fewer than half of all IMP service users (26 of 58, 45 per cent) reported attending any other meals service (including the IMP service other than the one they were interviewed at). While three quarters (13 of 17, 76 per cent) of Leawarra attendees reported attending other meals services, fewer than a third of CSF attendees (13 of 41, 32 per cent) did so.

A possible explanation may be that the more tight-knit group of Leawarra service users may have created greater awareness of other options, which some CSF service users may not have known about. As noted above, it could also reflect the Leawarra group’s better access to transport and generally more stable circumstances.

Figure 11: IMP service users by use of other meals services – use of any other service

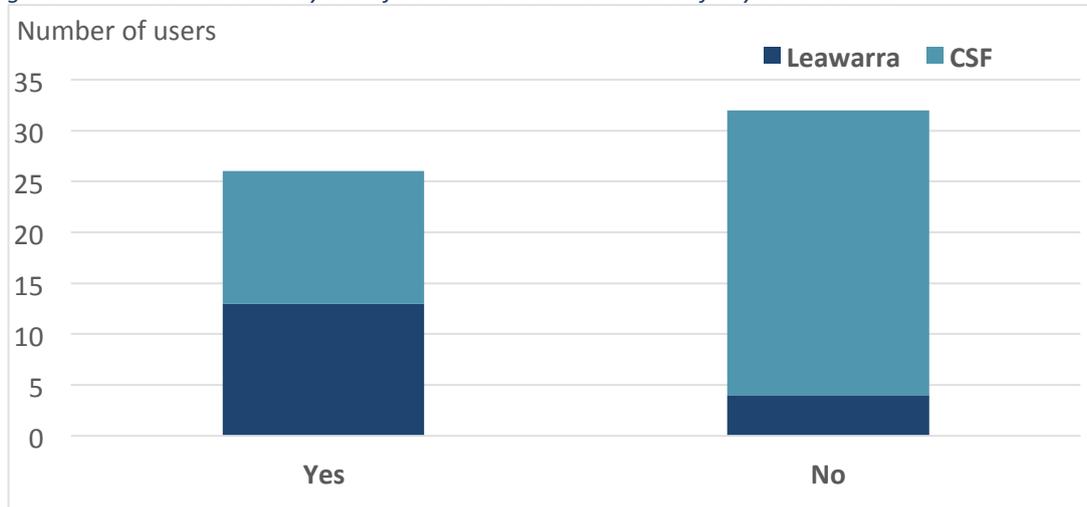
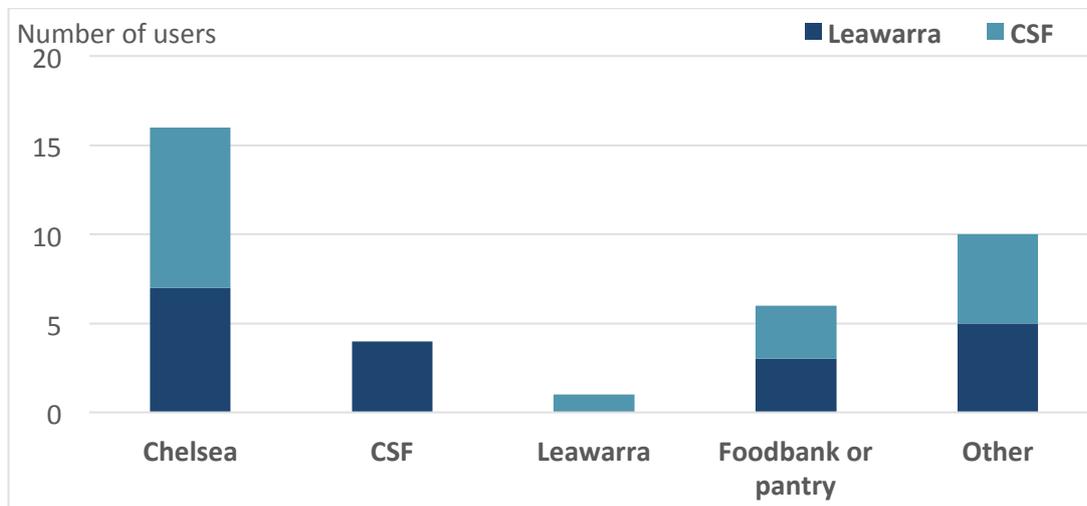


Figure 12 shows that, while IMP service users attend a variety of other meals services, very few (5 of 58, 9 per cent) attend the alternate IMP service from that at which they were interviewed. The single most popular other service is the Tuesday lunch offered by Matt’s Place at St Chad’s, Chelsea.

Figure 12: IMP service users by use of other meals services – by service



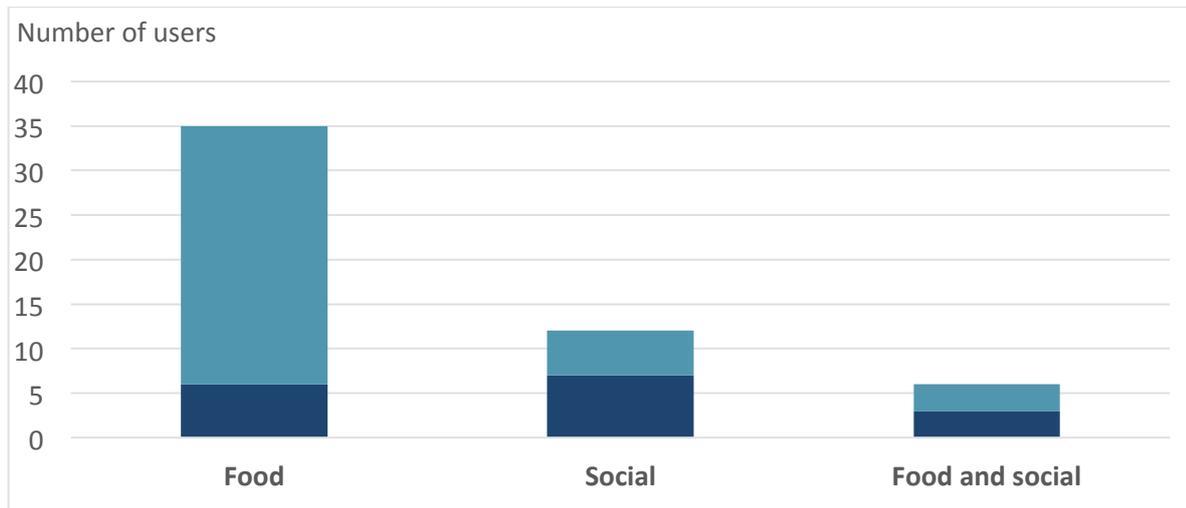
Note: ‘Chelsea’ refers to Tuesday lunches provided by Matt’s Place at St Chad’s, Chelsea. ‘Other’ includes St John’s Food Van; coffee van; Wednesday church lunch; Wednesday breakfasts in Chelsea; BBQ; and sausage sizzle. Some respondents provided more than one answer. Data accuracy may be reduced due to respondents describing the same service in different ways.

Most people’s reasons for using the IMP can be broadly categorised as either needing access to food, or welcoming the opportunities for social engagement it provides.

Figure 13 shows that at CSF, respondents were more likely to cite access to food as their primary reason for attending; several of the clients in vulnerable circumstances said that they would be hungry as a result of the closure. However, many of those citing food as their primary reason also noted the social interaction made possible by the service.

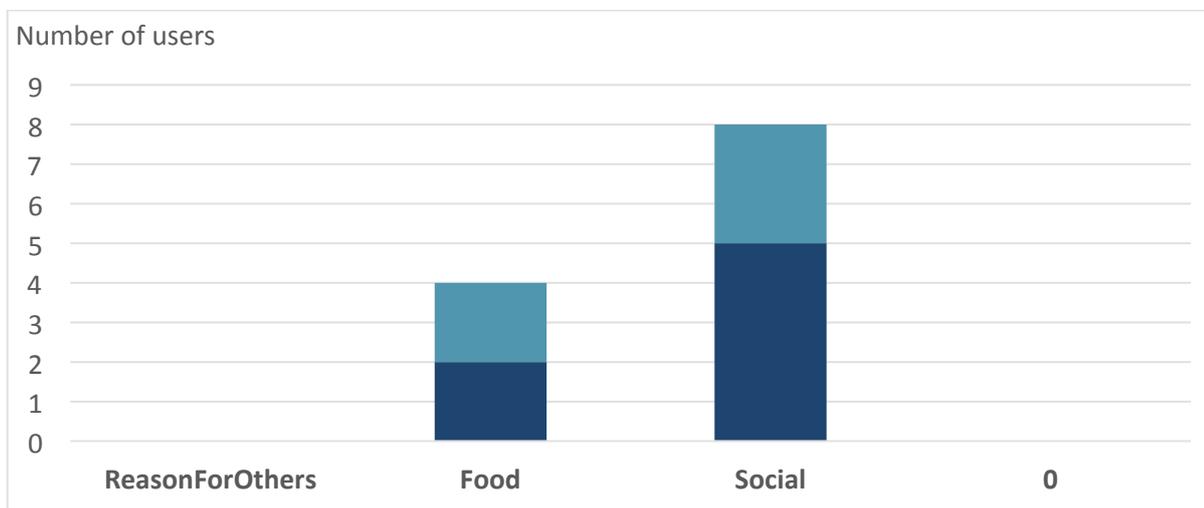
Figure 13 also shows that many respondents reported that the social opportunities were at least as important as the food, particularly for those who do not have access to other social outlets such as having a meal in a restaurant.

Figure 13: IMP service users’ reported main reason for attending IMP



Note: ‘Other’ includes accessing other CSF services such as medical, financial or other advice; internet access; and curiosity.

Figure 14: IMP service users’ stated main reason why others attend IMP



Note: ‘Other’ includes using CSF services such as the foodbank or other services. Note that response rates for this question were relatively low (n=23).

3.4 Action taken to mitigate impact of program closure on client users

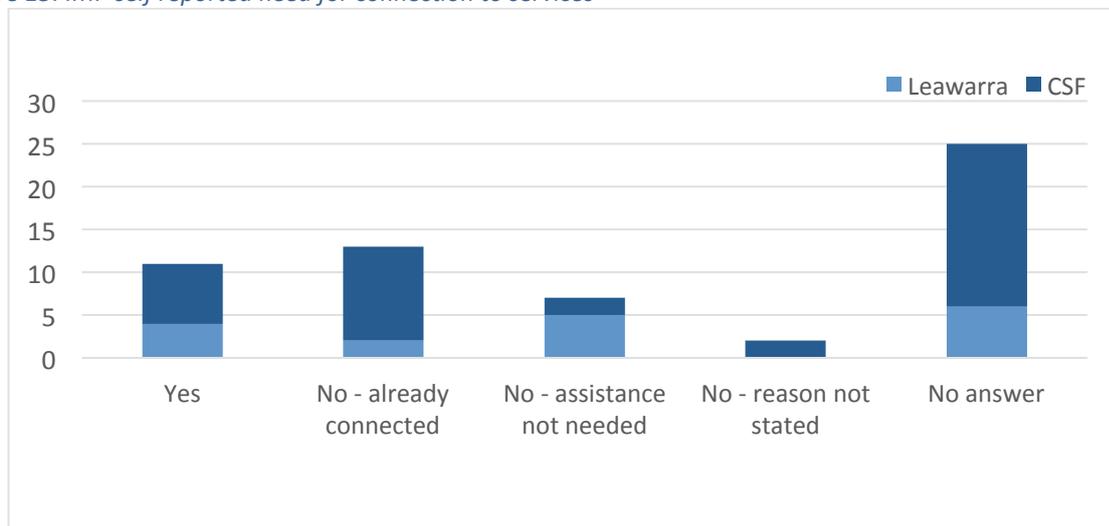
MGN personnel asked all interview subjects if they required assistance to connect to services. Nine requested this assistance, and details were passed on to the relevant service provider, as documented in Table 5.

Table 5: IMP service users referred to services

| Assistance provided | Number of service users |
|---|-------------------------|
| MGN provided contact details of service user to CSF | 5 |
| MGN introduced service user to CSF staff in person | 2 |
| MGN connected service user to other service providers | 1 |
| Assistance/information provided by FCC | 1 |

Most interview subjects did not request assistance to connect to services, as shown in Figure 15. In most cases, this was because they were already working with one or more service providers. In some cases, subjects indicated that they did not currently need services, but were aware of where they could go to seek assistance if needed.

Figure 15: IMP self reported need for connection to services



Section 4: Findings

The review has focused on three levels of stakeholders:

- a. INDIVIDUAL:** supporting both the Department of Health and Human Services and City of Frankston to develop and implement a transition out strategy to ensure that current service users are:
 - informed of the program closure
 - aware of other services available in Frankston for food and meals
 - aware, and if requested, facilitated to connect with other services
- b. SERVICE ORGANISATIONS:** identifying other services available for current Interim Meals Program service users and understanding of service organisations' capacity, capability or interest in extending their services in the meals programs arena.
- c. SYSTEMIC CHANGE:** record stakeholder comments, views and issues with addressing community need and expectation for reintroduction of a food service and/or improved service coordination

4.1 Action taken to identify new venue and/or new service model

CityLife provided a 'one stop shop' operation for meals and food production and delivery as well as auxiliary services when available. The combination of food and social interaction provided an important place for many people in Frankston and its loss is clearly felt by some of the participants.

The most obvious issue in the first instance was to find a replacement venue for CityLife to operate. Considerable effort has been expended in understanding CityLife's needs and identifying private rental, Council owned facilities and other state instrumentalities' infrastructure that may be available.

It is important to note the level of support provided, primarily by Frankston City Council, to address this issue. A summary of the range of options is provided below. It is unclear how the selection of an acceptable venue would be financed (and/or supported) over time given the current lack of local and state government capacity to provide any further financial support to the program:

- The possible relocation of a CityLife similar program at a range of current community sites owned and operated by FCC: Ebdale Hub, Leawarra House and Seaford Community Centre. Each was found to have limitations such as proximity to residential locations, current venue tenant mix and infrastructure layout
- There were also identified concerns regarding some group mixes for co locating at a council venue, including childhood services located at the same venue with a cohort with complex behaviours, and the cost to Frankston of re location of a wide range of current services users to other locations
- Leawarra House and Seaford Community Centre are both Public Use Zone 6 Local Government, only Local Government use (or use operated by or on behalf of Council) can currently be conducted there. Building and works permits, and rezoning, would be required for alterations and use by an independent service provider such as CityLife. There is also a pre-existing capital works proposal to expand Seaford Community Centre to an integrated community facility, with \$200,000 targeted for Stage 1 planning and works
- A possible site was identified at Chisholm TAFE with an unused set of offices and classrooms – this site is now being occupied by Chisholm TAFE
- A number of rental properties were also considered and deemed not suitable either by City Life, Breakfast Club volunteers

- Frankston City Council lodged an expression of interest to VicTrack regarding land at 53 Davey Street Frankston. The application was not successful. The Frankston Homeless Support Service, City Life and the Breakfast program have indicated ongoing interest in the site and for a purpose built facility not funded by Frankston City Council or other government
- The provision of \$300,000 in funding from DELWP for an upgraded commercial kitchen upgrade to Wintringham's Angus Martin House, and SRS located in Frankston. The kitchen was designed to provide a streamlined meal preparation service for meals to then be transported to venues operating meals services. The meal production and delivery would be undertaken by Wallara, a disability service, as a component of its training and employment programs to provide its students with an opportunity to gain qualifications and experience in hospitality. The kitchen was installed at Angus House and there has not been an agreed model for utilisation of the upgraded kitchen

4.2 Stakeholder group findings: client users

There are three findings for client users:

- a) Different service requirements. It is not possible to draw definitive conclusions from a group of 58 participants and with a survey instrument designed to encourage conversation and not seek to interrogate answers or other validation: however, the overriding issue that presents itself is there are two different groups of people presenting for meals, with some expected overlap:
 - *Those requiring food*
Those who are seeking food are often hungry (and found it difficult to admit that was the case). This cohort will accept second helpings or rounds of food and avail themselves of other products or produce available at the time. It is important to note however that those who appear to have experienced hunger and crisis appear also most likely to ask if there is anyone more deserving or in more need before accepting the extra. For these clients, the loss of the meals options, and particularly at CSF for those who do not have funds for public transport and walk to all services, was received with noticeable disappointment and occasionally – ‘You’re kidding right?’
 - *Those seeking social connection*
The other group is one that seeks to have some level of social connection in their week. This group is more diverse in its housing stability and level of food crisis.

Many stated that it was the social element that brought them to the service, and the reasons were:

- i. ‘I can’t afford to go out to eat so sitting at a table and having a real meal means a lot’
- ii. ‘it gets me out of my flat – sometimes it’s the only thing I do for a few days’
- iii. ‘the people here are great and the volunteers treat us really nicely – it’s a long way to come but I look forward to it each week’

This group was present, not only at Leawarra, but also at CSF on a Thursday when the free tea, coffee and muffins and the opportunity for a shower (albeit a portable one) encouraged conversation. Several people brought their own camp chairs and appeared content to sit and talk on the footpath (CSF was not designed for managing the sandwich program and does not have seating for program users).

Users also commented on not wanting to favour the food or the social connection as over time they were both vital.

b) Assumptions regarding service coordination requirements by service users

The project has had an assumption that 'wrap around services' will deliver direct and tangible benefits to those currently using and needing the meals programs. The reality has been somewhat different: many service users expressed knowledge of services, understanding of where they would seek information if required and did not see their desire for social connection or a mechanism to reduce food costs as directly connected to government support programs. They felt quite in control of their own world circumstances and were seeking something different from formal programs and services.

c) Impact on confidence that the needs of the disadvantaged are being eroded over time

The meals group at Leawarra, who overall were in less crisis than those who attended CSF, wanted to use their sense of concern and frustration at the closure of all meal programs to create change. There has been a sense of 'How many more things are there to take away from us?' and several requests to find out what the real annual cost of one meal per week is for any level of government.

4.3 Stakeholder group findings: Organisations

There are four issues that emerge from responses by service providers and government:

- a) There is no service provider or level of government that has identified itself as being able to lead the community through a process of identifying an appropriate strategy for continuation of any form of community meals programs. Each provider or service sees itself connected to a discrete section of need. This is not to attribute blame given the past years of financial restraint at Federal level for programs and the current impact of rate capping from State Government for local government to absorb and realign. However, it is critical that it is stated that there is no leader in the group of organisations on the Advisory Group or other stakeholders.
- b) The current responsibility for direct service delivery is focused on local churches. In the same manner that CityLife developed its own business model to be self-funded, the churches are providing sustainable meals programs without government support. It is not for this review to comment on the capacity of the single churches or collectively the church groups to work collaboratively, but contact made by MGN indicated that there may be opportunities to expand or increase volume. The difficulty here is that it would be unacceptable to place responsibility for developing and resourcing a strategy on the churches without direct financial support to develop a strategy and model. The provision of an experienced independent consultant or worker to provide support would be a requirement as church volunteers cannot be expected to undertake social policy initiatives of this size.
- c) MGN interviewers discussed other social connection options with service users, suggesting Elderly Citizens Clubs, Men's Sheds and other local groups. Many of the current service users shy away from structure and membership and find the atmosphere of the Leawarra meals program helps to meet some of their social needs for a limited amount of time and to help with their long term financial costs which are not short term issues.
- d) The lack of progress with the upgraded kitchen at Wintringham indicated some frustration from service providers that this major contribution had not delivered either meals to those in need or training to the disabled. Confirming all service agreements and arrangements prior to installation would have strengthened the service's outputs.

4.4 Stakeholder group findings: Systemic issues

Four issues have emerged:

- a) There is considerable goodwill, compassion and concern for the loss of the programs. Service agencies expressed frustration and concern regarding how these service users will progress from another service closure. It is also interesting to note that many service agency representatives were interested to know where many of the CityLife clients are now: the numbers of participants at meals (up to 150) is not mirrored in any activity since its closure. St. Chads says it identified a small group of people who transitioned from CityLife but it has not had a huge impact on the volume of service required
- b) There is a lack of overall strategic direction for the whole of provision of physical space and meal/food support to the disadvantaged across the Frankston area. The focus has been on the physical replacement of a building, originally with CityLife continuing and as that has not come to fruition, there has not been a move to identify strategy. For example:
 - The focus to date since the CityLife closure has continued to be on a 'one stop shop' approach. There is evidence that the decentralisation of meals to different sites has been successful in attracting numbers, and also provided different groups of people with local access (between Leawarra and CSF). Local support services may work more effectively for those who cannot access a more centralised option in Frankston CAD area. Small, local services may be the most effective way to provide discrete and focused services and will remove the need to find a multipurpose building that has already been unsuccessful despite considerable effort.
 - The churches, including the Breakfast Club from CityLife, state that they may be able to provide more support to the cohort. The Advisory Group has only included government service agencies and not included those who are actually delivering some level of service. One of the challenges here may be the need for appointment of a facilitator to work through these issues with different stakeholders for creating a future (grass roots?) model as presently all people involved are active stakeholders and decision makers
 - The former coordinator of the Breakfast Club has indicated that there is philanthropic monies available to support a new project. This cannot be verified through this review but requires further investigation
 - The previous twelve months has seen significant input from a wide range of organisations including:
 - ❖ Both Frankston City Council and the State Government have expended considerable funds and time to working to achieve an acceptable outcome for CityLife and for service users.

The State Government has:

 - Provided a \$300,000 kitchen to Wintringham
 - Provided the funding for the twelve month extension of the meals program
 - Overseen the Advisory Group
 - Funded the consultancy project

Frankston City Council has:

 - Investigated options for venue relocation, including both private rental and Council owned infrastructure
 - Supported CityLife by including a twelve month stay on the landlord's planning permit to allow time for a new location to be found
 - Facilitated stakeholder consultation/forums to discuss options for the future
 - Overseen the Advisory Group
 - ❖ The role of CSF in undertaking twelve months of sandwich lunches twice a week also needs to be acknowledged. The CSF site is not designed for

managing thirty people arriving almost simultaneously, and the mostly volunteers have worked to ensure that all clients have their food needs met on the day. Most days there have been extra food items such as yoghurt, juice and protein bars as well as occasionally fruit and other produce. CSF also accepted the task of being the conduit for referrals as required and the Manager has made himself and his team available to MGN on a number of occasions

- ❖ The volunteers at the Seaford Housing Action Coalition have also provided workforce power through their coordination of Leawarra House and for their volunteers who attend each meal evening, serve food and sit down and talk with users.
- c) Outreach and connecting with clients through meals program. The interviews were welcomed by participants and many enjoyed the opportunity for direct connection and the opportunity to ask questions regarding other information and services available. There is an important opportunity here for service agencies to build some level of formalised (i.e. rostered) soft engagement with service users. This would provide action on one of the known difficulties for service users, that they find it difficult, and uncomfortable to attend agencies. 'Meet them where they are' may be a useful maxim here
- d) There are many volunteers supporting these programs, and there is an opportunity for future consideration for how can agencies and government support volunteers working with increasingly complex cohorts. There is potential for a broader role in supporting and coordinating volunteer effort through linking agencies, providing free workshops on relevant subject matters and creating a stronger sense of a collaborative approach to working together for a common good

Section 5: Conclusion

The Interim Meals Program has provided an important one year of extra services for those people in Frankston and environs that seek support for no cost social inclusion and support with meals and food services. There has been considerable activity undertaken to identify venues to provide an appropriate place for CityLife or similar entity to recommence services.

There has been a focus on supporting the individual service users who will be disadvantaged or affected by the program closure. The interviews undertaken have created connections with participants, and all have been offered, and in a small number of cases, been provided with, direct referrals or information.

The range of structural and systemic issues facing this cohort are also a reminder of the breadth of situations and needs the chronic poor experience. Many interviewees are not in crisis situations, but are long term disadvantaged who know and understand how to access additional services when required. A small number

The issue of need for this disadvantaged, and often disconnected group of people will not simply recede. It is a long term issue that may require different ways of working together, and strengthened community responses through financial support and volunteering.

The closure will not cause a crisis for most people but will take away another 'safe place' where service users can feel accepted and supported, emotionally and materially.

The meals program closure has been achieved with:

- Website updates of meal closure and meals available
- Brochures for handing out to clients at CSF and Leawarra
- A letter to all service agencies asking for their support to put information on their noticeboards
- Provision of the consultancy that has given many client users an opportunity to talk about their own life circumstances and the impact of the closure will have on their financial, social and physiological wellbeing
- Increased information regarding the cohort and how they require services that meet different needs given the acute or chronic level of need at the time

POSTSCRIPT

Immediately following the presentation of this project's draft report, an agreement was entered into with a new volunteer group wanting to support the disadvantaged with material aid through food. The Sikh Volunteers Australia (SVA) group provides food and meal services currently in Dandenong and has sought to include Frankston in its weekly food van services. Frankston Council has been in discussion with the group over the last month and its first service was the fourth July 2017.

The service will be located at the Young Street East car park and operate on Wednesday and Saturday evenings from 6.30 to 7.30. The SVA does not seek any government support as its purpose is for its members to make an active contribution to people in need. The food van will provide a range of foods including pasta, rice, dahl and curry and all food will be vegetarian. The One Voice shower will also operate alongside the food van.

In discussion with DHHS, DHHS offered to speak with its service agencies to encourage workers to 'spread the word' to their clients as well as to go to the Young Street East car park to welcome the new food van and engage with the Sikh representatives.

Appendix A FRANKSTON INTERIM MEALS PROGRAM: SERVICE USER INTERVIEW

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Name: | Date: | Age (or age range) |
| Location: | Identifying gender: | |
| | Identifying suburb: | |
| Housing status: Current | Housing status: overall | |
| Transport: today for this meal | Transport: Usual (if different) | |
| Income source/s: | Previous CityLife client? | |
| This meal program: | | |
| No. of times attended or frequency: | Other meal or food programs attending and how frequently? | |
| What is the most important/best part of coming? For you: | | |
| For other people in the group; | | |
| Do you know that this service (and others) is closing on 30 June? | Y / N How did you find out? Will it have any negative affects on you? | |
| Are you connected to any support services in this area? | | |
| If not, have you previously used any services? | | |
| Could we assist you to make a connection to a service for you? | N (question: do you know how to make contact with any local service if you need something? Which one would you contact?) | |
| Mobile: | Y - we can take a contact number and give it to CSF who will follow up with you - Do you want to be introduced to someone? Have you spoken with SHAC or CSF about your situation while you are here at the meal program? | |
| Agreed process for connection • Mgn will send an email to CSF • What is the agreed way to give back information to you? (you can share your mobile and you can be rung or texted or mgn can give you face to face information at the next meal) ARRANGEMENTS between meal user and mgn: | | |
| Is there anything you want to tell us about yourself or the meals program/s? | | |
| | | |

Appendix B: Transition Out Plan:

Governance

Governance for the project will be overseen by and the Acting Place Manager, Prahan Renewal, Bayside Peninsula Area, Department of Health and Human Services and the Manager, Community Development, City of Frankston.

Program support is provided by the Frankston Interim Meals Program Advisory Group, which comprises a range of local service agencies, including:

- SalvoCare
- Community Support Frankston
- WAYSS
- Launch Housing
- Centrelink
- Mentis Assist
- RDNS Homeless Persons Program

Output:

Attendance and contribution at all meetings

Service User Needs Assessment

Information regarding basic demographics, reasons for attending the service, current understanding and use of other service agencies will be collected weekly (for at least 3 weeks) at the Wednesday evening meals service. Non identifiable data will be collected. It is understood that CSF has compiled a Top 20 user spreadsheet and other client information will not be available.

Information from service agencies of their Top 20 service users will also be collated to strengthen information known about those who access meal and food programs.

Output:

Needs Assessment as a component of the final report

Communication Strategy

Communication of the upcoming changes need to be communicated quickly, repeatedly and through different modes. Three separate messaging approaches will be devised and distributed:

| Target group | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| Service agencies | Information sheet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information regarding closure of service ○ Request for updating of all media so that service users have accurate information re meals programs |
| Service users | Attendance at weekly meals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share information on meals options and local service coordination options |
| | Meal and food program information sheet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A timetable of meal availability with contact details |

Output:

Communications strategy material

Food program service mapping

Service mapping will be undertaken with specific focus on current food and meal service provision. The information will form the basis of an information sheet for current users (see above) to ensure they are able to access other options, and will also be provided to all stakeholders with a request to add the information to their social media modes, and to check for accuracy of current information.

Output:

Diagram of available services with relevant contact information

Stakeholder management

There are myriad stakeholders in this space. We will work with the service mapping information provided by the RDNS Homeless Persons' Program evaluation as the starting point for contacting relevant agencies and agents. Given the short time lines, most consultation will be by phone.

Stakeholders will be considered in terms of:

- Current role
- Historical role
- Direct role with food and meals provision
- Different forms of support: infrastructure, financial, workforce
- Local service provision in and around Frankston

Output:

Consultation with stakeholders.

Risks and mitigation

A number of risks are evident for stakeholders in undertaking this project. The governance structure outlined in 2.1 will assist in providing a regular meeting format and connection point to check on progress and any concerns.

Risks include:

- Reputational risk
- Negative media
- Accurate information distribution
- Consistent messaging
- Clear understanding of major stakeholder parameters

IMPORTANT NOTICE

MEALS AVAILIABILITY IN FRANKSTON FROM 1 JULY 2017

THREE SERVICES ARE FINISHING:

- WEDNESDAY EVENING DINNER
MEALS AT LEAWARRA HOUSE FINISH 28 JUNE 2017
- TUESDAY BAGGED LUNCH
SANDWICHES AT CSF FINISH ON 27 JUNE 2017
- THURSDAY BAGGED LUNCH
SANDWICHES AT CSF FINISHES ON 29 JUNE 2017

Meals in Frankston are available:

Tuesday - 5pm to 6pm

John Paul College Food Van, Corner Clyde & Station Street

- Food parcels, tea, coffee, soup and non-perishable foods

Wednesday - 12:15pm to 1pm

Uniting Church, High Street

- Free sausage sizzle

Friday - 12noon to 1pm

Braap Community Support BBQ, 35 Playne Street

- \$2 sausage sizzle (free for homeless and disadvantaged)

Every 1st and 3rd Friday - 7pm to 9pm

Soup Food Van, Young Street carpark next to Tasman meats

*For more information on how to access the above meals service and emergency food relief in Frankston, please contact Steven Phillips at Community Support Frankston on 9783 7284 or visit 35 Beach Street, Frankston.

NOTICE AS OF 30 JUNE 2017

The following meals services will close:

- **Wednesday evening hot meals service at Leawarra House and**
- **Tuesday and Thursday sandwich lunches at Community Support Frankston**

Frankston City Council (FCC) and Community Support Frankston have been working collaboratively to provide a twelve month interim meal and sandwiches service funded by the Victorian State Government following the closure of CityLife in 2016.

As of 30 June 2017, these services will cease operating. Some of the service clients may not be aware of these changes if they only attend occasionally. Informing clients, particularly those who do not attend on a regular basis is an essential focus at the present time. A consulting company has been appointed the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to work with DHHS and FCC and attend meal and sandwich services, interview service users and offer soft referrals to other services for social inclusion and food options.

You can assist our messaging in three ways:

1. Update any social media and hard copy brochures to only include services available from 1 July 2017
2. Inform all relevant workers and agency staff who have direct contact with clients
3. Put the attached poster up on any noticeboard where clients can read.

With the closure of these services, please let your clients know of the following free (or low cost) meals available within and close to Frankston.

Tuesday lunch: Matts Place providing free hot lunch for homeless, lonely or disadvantaged people
11.30am – 1pm; St Chad's Church, 12-14 Thames Promenade Chelsea

Tuesday night: John Paul College Food Van providing food parcels, tea, coffee, soup and non-perishable food
5pm – 7pm; Cnr Clyde & Station Street, Frankston

Wednesday breakfast: Chelsea Community Church of Christ, 3-5 Blantyre Ave, Chelsea 7:45am – 9:45am

Wednesday lunch: Uniting Church providing free Sausage Sizzle
12.15pm – 1pm; 16-18 High Street, Frankston

Friday lunch: Braaap Community Support BBQ providing \$2 sausage sizzle (or free for homeless and disadvantaged)
12noon – 1pm; 35 Playne Street, Frankston

Friday night (usually the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month) Lifegate Inc. Food Van
7pm – 9pm; Young Street carpark next to Tasman Meats

The following fresh and non-perishable food services are also available within and close to Frankston.

Monday: 9am – 12.00pm, Food Pantry (non-perishable food and some toiletries provided), Chelsea Community Church of Christ, 3-5 Blantyre Ave, Chelsea

Wednesday: Pantry 5000, 9.30am – 1pm, St Aidan's Church Hall, Cnr Poulson St & McLeod Rd, Carrum
Providing food hampers. You will need to live in postcode 3195, 3196, 3198 or 3201 only. Health Care Card required; Support Agency referral.

Thursday: 10am, St Mark's Uniting Church, 50 Barkly Street, Mornington - Free fresh food donated by farmers, wholesalers, markets and supermarkets

Friday: 9am – 12.00pm, Food Pantry (non-perishable food and some toiletries provided), Chelsea Community Church of Christ, 3-5 Blantyre Ave, Chelsea

