

University Tasmania launches Inveresk Food Hub

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Tasmanian University Student Association (TUSA) partnered with the University to announce the launch of the Inveresk Food Hub in Launceston, the next step in expanding access to nutritious and affordable food for University of Tasmania (UTAS) students across all campuses.

The Food Hub Initiative is part of a broader Food Security Program designed to address food insecurity, provide essential food relief, and support student well-being. Food insecurity among tertiary students is a growing concern. Findings from the UTAS Sustainability Survey indicate that 53 per cent of UTAS students now experience some level of food insecurity, up from 42 per cent in 2022.

This trend is reflected across Tasmania, where the Foodbank Hunger Report 2024 found 30 per cent of Metropolitan Tasmania and 40 per cent of Regional Tasmania face food insecurity. Risk factors are particularly high among international students, younger students (aged 18- 25), and those living on campus. The effects of food insecurity extend beyond hunger, impacting students' physical and mental health, academic performance, and overall university experience.

To address this urgent issue, TUSA launched the Sandy Bay Food Hub in July 2023 with support from UTAS, Loaves and Fishes Tasmania, Gateway Life, and Foodbank. The Food Hub provides free and affordable food, along with cooking and nutrition education, helping students maintain a balanced diet, develop lifelong food skills, and improve mental well-being through shared activities focused on food production and education.

Since its Southern launch, the Food Hub has recorded over 8,000 student visits, redistributing 700kg of donated and purchased food to students weekly.

TUSA President Jack Oates-Pryor noted that the Food Hub's impact on students' lives has, in some instances, been transformative. "It's such a privilege to see TUSA's work in this space, helping to address food insecurity and student wellbeing. But additionally, the focus on improving community and student connections has been fantastic to watch grow," Jack said.