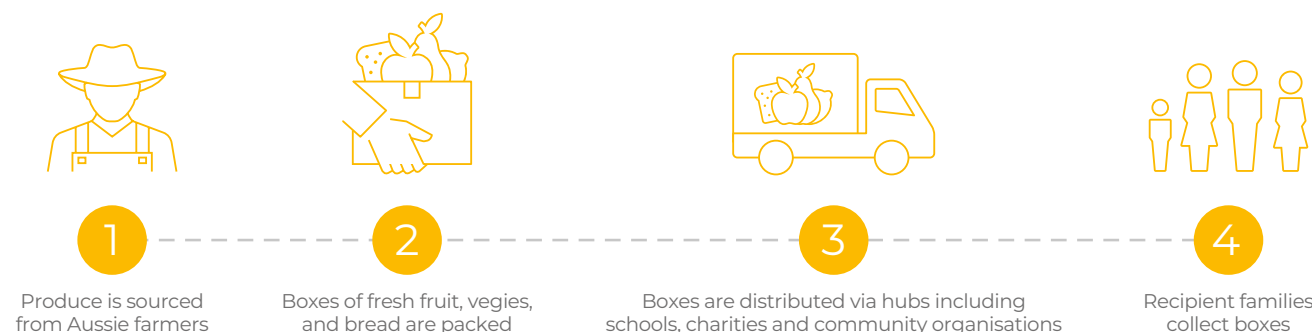


Nurturing Mental Wellbeing With a Fresh Food Solution



Executive Summary

Our fresh food relief charity is driven by a mission to ensure that as many people as possible have dignified, reliable and regular access to fresh, nutritious food.



Our impact in 2023

Almost 115,000 fresh food boxes	2,500 families supported across Australia each week	Over 1 million kg of fresh produce purchased	104 program partners, over 6 states
Every \$1 donated turns into 0.63 kg and \$1.98 worth of fresh food	A box of fresh produce worth \$25 RRP is distributed for a cost of only \$12.61	2nd most efficient food relief charity, and the only one to purchase 100% of its food	Recipient families estimate the box saves them \$41.76 per week (up 48%)

This impact is supported by our internal data and validated through independent research conducted by Monash Business School.

The latest evidence-based evaluation of The One Box reaffirms the validity of Monash Business School's 2021 Social Impact Framework and highlights the program's comprehensive impact on the mental wellbeing of the communities it supports.



All quotes in this report have been taken directly from independent interviews conducted in 2023 by the Monash Business School team with parent and carers across Australia.

CEO Introduction

The One Box mission is first and foremost supporting as many families in need with dignified food relief on a week-to-week basis. We have now been doing this for 7 years and in that time, we have built a body of data that we believe gives critical insight into aspects of food insecurity.

We are extremely proud to now present our third research report, where the **findings highlight the significant improvement in mental wellbeing experienced by families in The One Box program.** This builds upon our second research report, which demonstrated how The One Box, through its weekly giving, fosters community connections that open new opportunities for recipients.

This research trend that we are collating makes us even more passionate in our belief that it is not only food relief that is the solution to food insecurity, it is more about human connection and ensuring that those in need are not isolated.

Thank you to our research partner Monash Business School who we have been working closely with since 2020. Also to all the schools that are facilitating the connection with our family recipients which is an absolutely critical component of the program. Lastly to our donors that not only keep supporting The One Box but importantly are endorsing what we do.

Martin Halphen
CEO, The One Box



"We definitely have a stronger connection with the school now. My son was not happy at school, he would shout at the teacher or just make trouble with other kids. But now, [since receiving The One Box], he listens to the teacher, follows instructions and even does his homework which makes me feel happy. I also feel more connected with the school."

Beneficiary

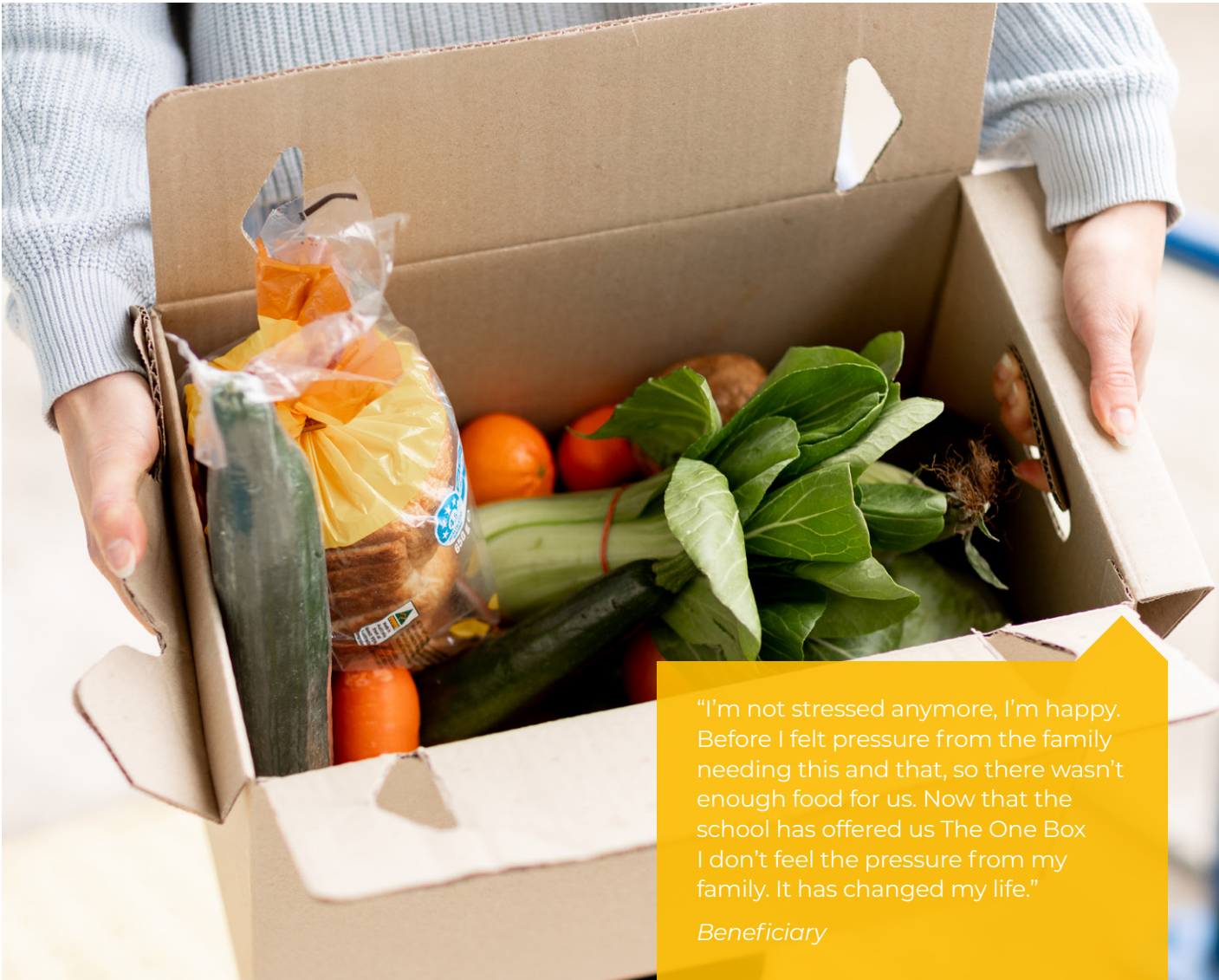
Redefining Fresh Food Relief

At The One Box, our mission is clear – to ensure as many people as possible have dignified, reliable, and regular access to fresh and nutritious food.

Our unique model harnesses our partnership with The Fruit Box Group, leveraging its national infrastructure, purchasing power, and supply chain, enabling us to operate efficient food relief programs. Each week, our dedicated team hand-packs boxes filled with fresh fruit and vegetables sourced directly from Australian farmers, along with bread. The boxes are then distributed via schools and community groups who have identified those in need.

This collaboration helps us address our recipients’ fundamental nutritional and financial needs while also building community connection and trust, inclusion and dignity, and greater family wellbeing.

Thanks to the support of our main contributor The Fruit Box Group, along with donors, community grants, and school partners, The One Box was able to distribute approximately 115,000 boxes with a retail value of \$25, across 104 schools nationally in 2023.



“I’m not stressed anymore, I’m happy. Before I felt pressure from the family needing this and that, so there wasn’t enough food for us. Now that the school has offered us The One Box I don’t feel the pressure from my family. It has changed my life.”

Beneficiary

What Sets The One Box Apart?

Fundamental to The One Box is our ongoing commitment to internal and independent research and evaluation. Since 2020, we’ve been privileged to work with Monash Business School, Department of Accounting, to continuously measure the efficiency and impact of The One Box program while **validating what sets us apart from other food relief charities; or moreover what makes us a ‘food security’ charity.**



Guaranteed and Weekly

The consistent nature of the program is integral not only for physical benefits, but also for mental health benefits such as reducing stress and anxiety as indicated in our research. With a service they can rely on, recipients can better budget and plan for their needs, with some families even migrating off the program.



Support and Connection

The One Box helps families who may be too embarrassed to ask for help. As recipients are invited to participate by their school or community centre, this is a far more humanising experience than approaching a charity; leading to improved mental wellbeing.



Dignity and Self-Esteem

The One Box preserves the dignity of recipients as they are receiving fresh, purchased food as opposed to old, rescued produce that can be unappetising and/or mouldy. Recipients, therefore, feel respected and cared for, with research showing how important this is for both children and their parents or carers.



Creating Communities

Program coordinators are given the opportunity to better connect with recipients as they build trust. Both internal and independent research confirm that families in The One Box program are able to overcome barriers and expand their support networks within their communities, leading to improved overall wellbeing.



“We’ve had families in the past who won’t send their kids to school on the days they don’t have lunch. When they are in class, it’s a challenge to engage them in learning opportunities because they lack concentration due to hunger or thinking about food. They also compare themselves to the students with full lunch boxes which leaves them feeling overwhelmed with the amount of food some have. There’s a real self-esteem and emotional aspect, and The One Box addresses that.”

School Coordinator

The One Box's Internal Research Program

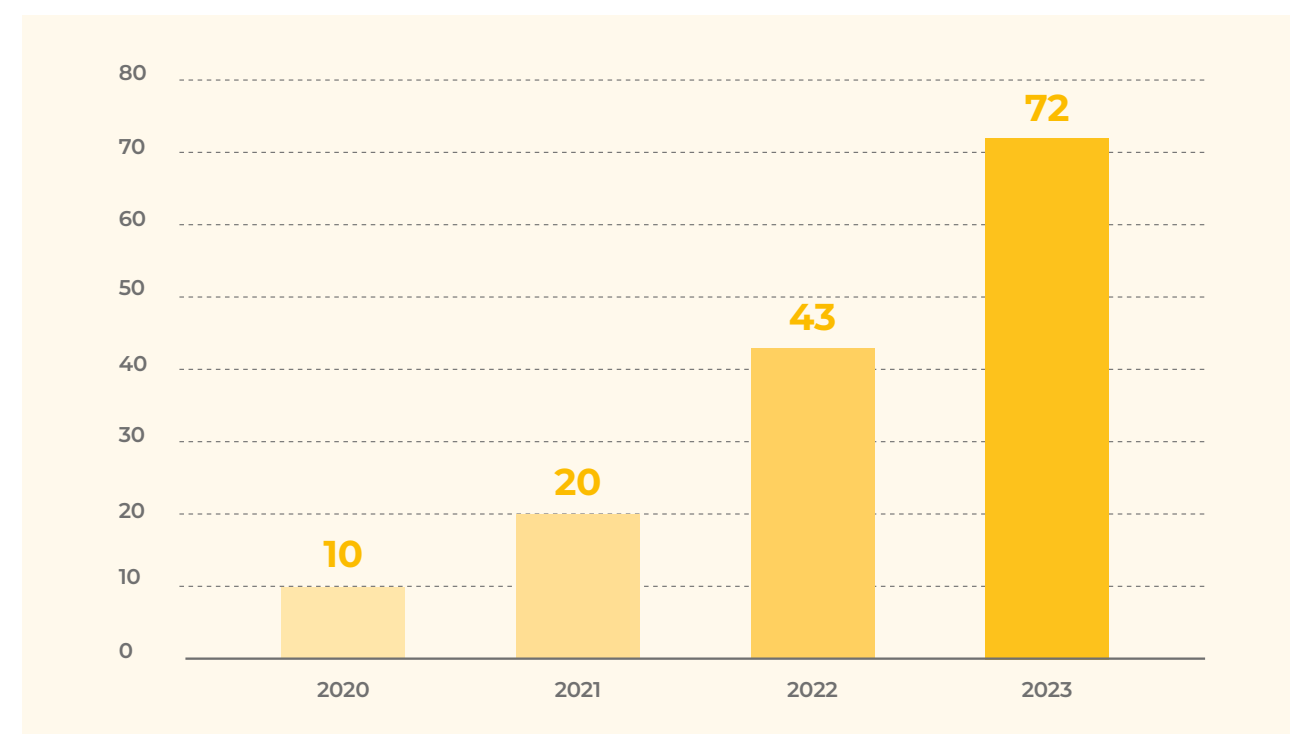
Australian families can face restricted access to fresh and nutritious food due to a range of challenging factors:

- The rising cost of living
- Difficulties accessing government support services
- Unemployment or underemployment
- Social isolation, relationship breakdown, or domestic violence
- Disability, illness, or injury

Our reports consistently show that financial hardship, often stemming from one or more of these factors, is a major cause of food insecurity among our recipients. The One Box helps alleviate this strain by providing regular and reliable access to fresh produce throughout the school year.

Our School Waitlist Continues to Increase

As awareness of The One Box broadens, over 70 schools sit on our program's waitlist, an increase of 67% since 2022. With such overdemand, we are increasingly using data such as the Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) values to prioritise our outreach and ensure our resources are directed to communities and families in areas of the most acute need.

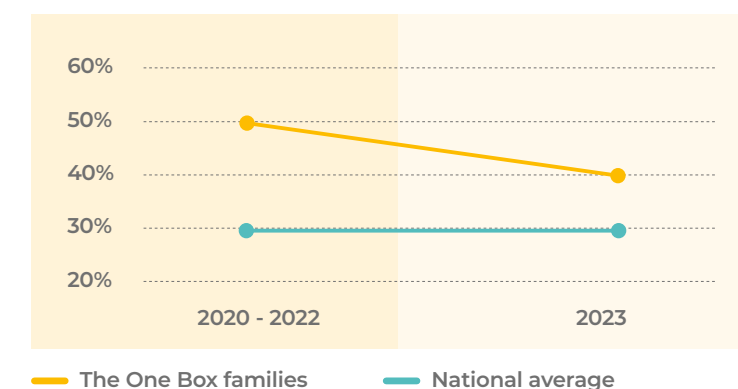


Schools on our waitlist

The One Box's Internal Research Program

The One Box asks program participants to volunteer information about their household, to help us better understand who we are reaching.

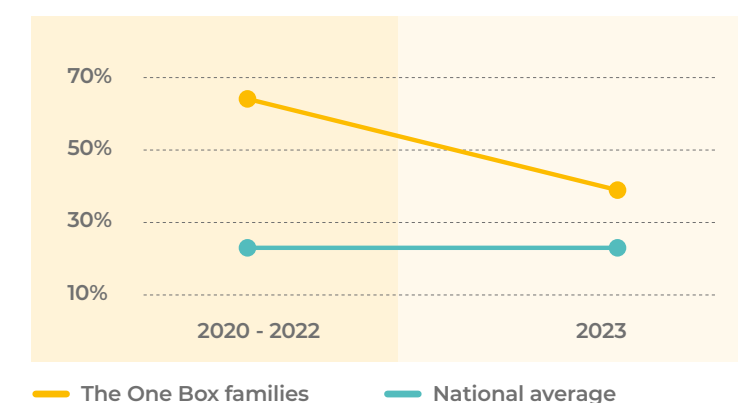
In 2023 we collected social and demographic data from 60% of the program participants. The latest data reveals a narrowing gap between The One Box recipients and the national averages reported by the 2021 Australian Census, suggesting that food insecurity is increasingly affecting a broader range of Australian families compared to previous years.



Recipients with a family member born overseas



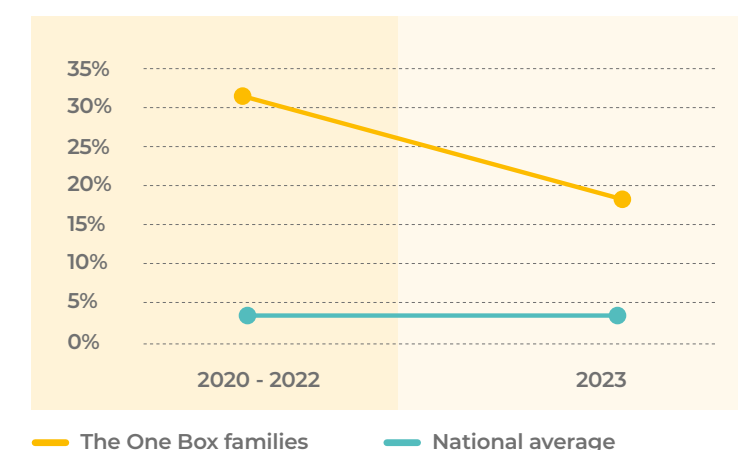
- 40% of households receiving The One Box have at least one family member born overseas
- This is higher than the 30% of Australia's general population
- Our data marks a 20% shift from 2020-2022 where 50% of households reported at least one family member born overseas



Languages other than English spoken at home



- 42% of recipient families use languages other than English at home
- This represents a 36% decrease from prior years, moving closer to the national average of 23%



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin



- 19% of households identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin
- This demographic is represented 6 x more than in the average Australian population data

Research Partnership with Monash Business School



A Word From Monash

Since 2020, Monash Business School and The One Box have joined forces to address the pressing yet overlooked issue of food insecurity in Australia. We are proud of the real-world impact our research program has made by supporting The One Box in providing families with young children access to nutritious, healthy fresh food, which enhances their overall wellbeing. We hope that this shared dedication will lead to exceptional outcomes in reducing food insecurity within the Australian community. Our research outcomes with The One Box contribute to Monash University's strategic focus on Thriving Communities by fostering community resilience and wellbeing and enabling a thriving, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

Professor Ralph Kober, Associate Professor Dr Paul Thambar and Dr Zhiyun (Maleen) Gong

Department of Accounting, Monash Business School

Comparative Analysis Study

Each year, Monash Business School conducts a comparative analysis of The One Box alongside several other food relief charities. The following key insights were identified for 2023:

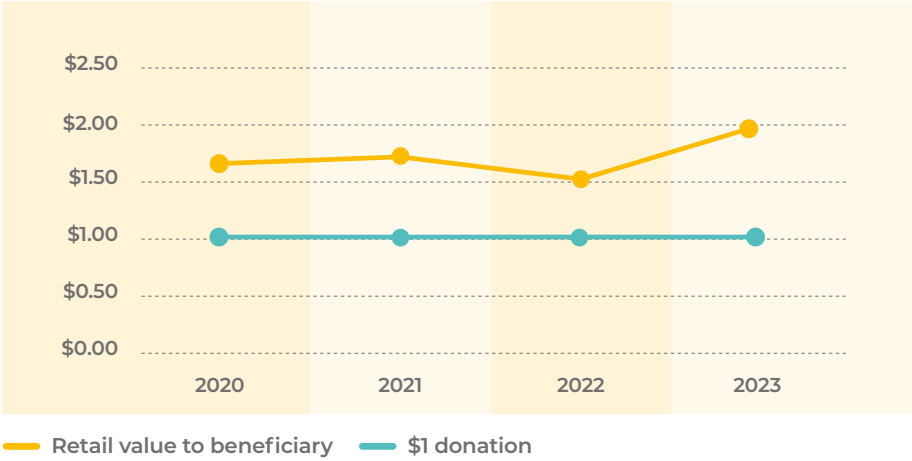
- Regular operational reviews of The One Box program include a thorough examination of the procurement, packing, and delivery processes
- In 2023, The One Box delivered a box of fresh produce with a retail value of \$25 for a total cost of \$12.61

A box of fresh produce worth **\$25** distributed for almost **1/2** that cost

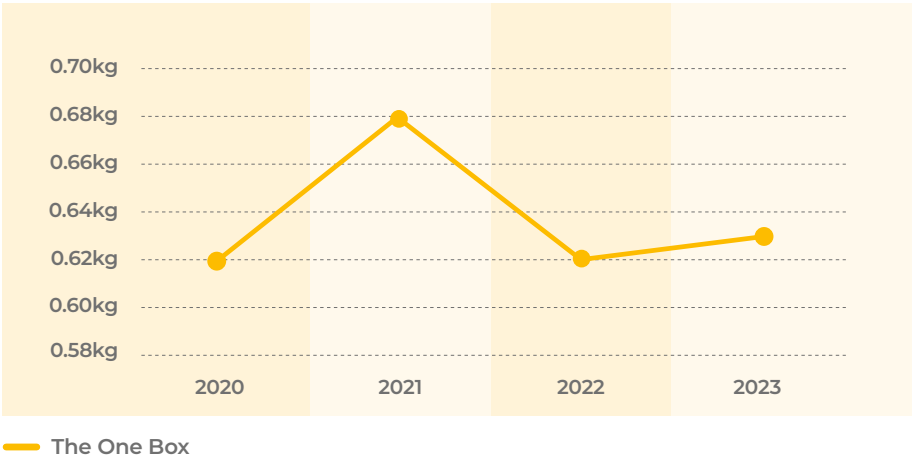
Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers used the financial statement data provided by The One Box. For the other food relief charities, data was sourced from publicly available financial reports and each charity's annual report.

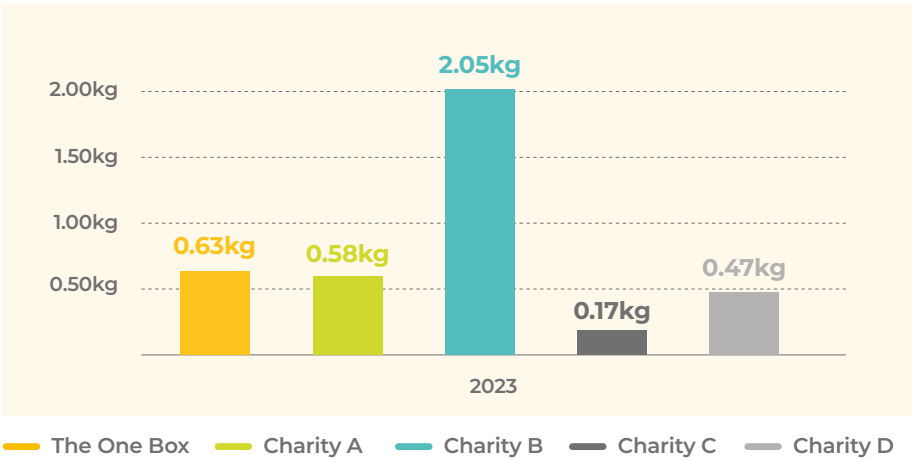
Research Partnership with Monash Business School



- Doubling each donation**
- For every \$1 donated to The One Box, families receive \$1.98 worth of fresh food
 - This marks a 14% increase over the previous year and a 30% rise compared to our last report



- Kilograms of food in the hands of a recipient from a \$1 donation compared to other charities**
- As part of the comparative analysis, Monash Business School compared available data from well-known food relief charities Foodbank, SecondBite, FareShare and OzHarvest
 - The One Box is the second most efficient food relief charity, with each \$1 donation delivering 0.63 kilograms of fresh food
 - The One Box has consistently maintained second position in all comparative analyses to date
 - Given The One Box is the only food relief charity to purchase 100% of its food this is a significant achievement



Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Strengthening Our Impact Through Research

In 2020, The One Box formed a valuable partnership with Monash Business School's Department of Accounting. Guided by Professor Ralph Kober, Associate Professor Dr Paul Thambar, and Dr Zhiyun (Maleen) Gong, this collaboration has been instrumental in shaping how we measure and enhance our program's impact. Through the development of a Social Impact Framework, the independent research findings not only address the prevalence of food insecurity but also provide critical insights into the benefits our program brings to the community.

Building on this foundation of evidence-based evaluation, 2023 saw the continuation of our partnership with Monash Business School for a longitudinal study within the Dandenong Local Government Area (LGA) in Victoria. This three-year study aims to uncover the long-term benefits and overall impact of The One Box, ensuring we remain at the forefront of delivering meaningful and sustained support to families in need. In the first year, the study consisted of 43 interviews; 36 with program recipients and 7 with school and community hub coordinators.

Interconnections Between Framework Outcomes

Since the development of the Social Impact Framework in 2021, our understanding of The One Box program's impact has evolved. Structured around three key themes – Nutrition and Wellbeing, Community Building and Support, and Financial Benefits – the framework has provided a comprehensive view of how our program creates value for the families we support. **This new round of research demonstrates a strong interconnectedness among the framework's outcomes, each contributing to an overall improvement in recipients' mental wellbeing.**

- **Nutrition and Mental Wellbeing:** as families develop nutritional literacy, and children become more engaged in class, mental and physical wellbeing improves long-term. Families report significant improvements to their mental wellbeing.
- **Financial Benefits and Mental Wellbeing:** families are seeing a notable reduction in financial strain and time spent on grocery shopping, which helps ease anxiety and stress, leading to long-term improvements in their mental wellbeing. This financial relief allows families to allocate resources to other household needs, better supporting their children's mental and physical development.
- **Community Connections and Mental Wellbeing:** both recipient families and program coordinators note that The One Box provides a foundation for promoting and strengthening community ties and enhancing social connections. As families build friendships, exchange information, and build support networks, they convey the improvements in their mental wellbeing.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers conducted 43 interviews with:

- 36 parents/carers receiving The One Box
- 7 program coordinators

Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Social Impact Framework

The Social Impact Framework illustrates how each domain overlaps and contributes to enhancing mental wellbeing.



Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Social Impact Framework – Nutrition and Wellbeing

The One Box is empowering families to avoid the tough choices that come with limited personal and financial resources. Schools and recipients report improved eating habits and stronger family bonds from preparing meals together, both significantly improving mental wellbeing.

Healthy Eating

The One Box is playing a crucial role in improving dietary habits by increasing the quantity and variety of fresh food available. More importantly, **the program helps support parents’ nutritional literacy, encouraging them to adopt healthier eating habits and explore unfamiliar foods.**

In the culturally diverse Dandenong LGA, where many families are newly arrived refugees, schools find that parents who have come from limited means often treat their children with sweets or less nutritious foods. Through both educational support and a healthy food supply, The One Box fosters healthier eating practices and better mental wellbeing for parents and children.

“There’s a need for greater education, not just about food access but also about the quantity and nutritional value of certain foods. The understanding of what constitutes a nutritious meal and how it directly impacts concentration and academic success is limited. Additionally, the concept of bringing your own lunch to school, which is common in Australia, differs from practices in other countries where cooked food is provided. Adjusting to these differences can take time, but financial constraints remain the most significant challenge.”

School Coordinator

Family Wellbeing

The latest research reaffirms that The One Box positively contributes to improved physical and mental health. Recipients emphasise the mental health benefits, expressing that the weekly food The One Box provides significantly reduces stress and anxiety while providing a sense of care and security. **The regularity of the program becomes a beacon of hope, helping families feel more capable of caring for themselves and their children despite challenging circumstances.**

One mother of an autistic child highlights the significant behavioural improvements in her son since he started regularly consuming fruit and vegetables. She’s found him to be less cranky, less lethargic, and more focused. Another mother shares similar improvements in her child with ADHD, reducing both his challenges and her own stress.

“When it comes to my son with ADHD, he’s been able to concentrate more, which means his grades have gone up, and we’re not having to rely so much on medication anymore.”

Beneficiary

Some children now express a sense of responsibility towards their families, helping their parents collect the boxes, and using the contents to cook together at home. One mother notes that **before The One Box, she was always conscious of hiding how little food they had whilst secretly preparing basic meals, now she’s no longer ashamed and loves getting her family involved.**



“We never used to eat broccoli and avocado, but slowly after using the produce in The One Box, we’re familiar with the taste and we like it.”

Beneficiary

“When you get The One Box every week, you feel some relief that you can offer something for breakfast. After receiving the boxes I’m not only thinking about the kids eating, I’m also thinking about my own eating.”

Beneficiary

“Having different varieties, we’ve been able to cook more, which means the kids are able to get more involved in the kitchen, which brings us stronger together as a family.”

Beneficiary

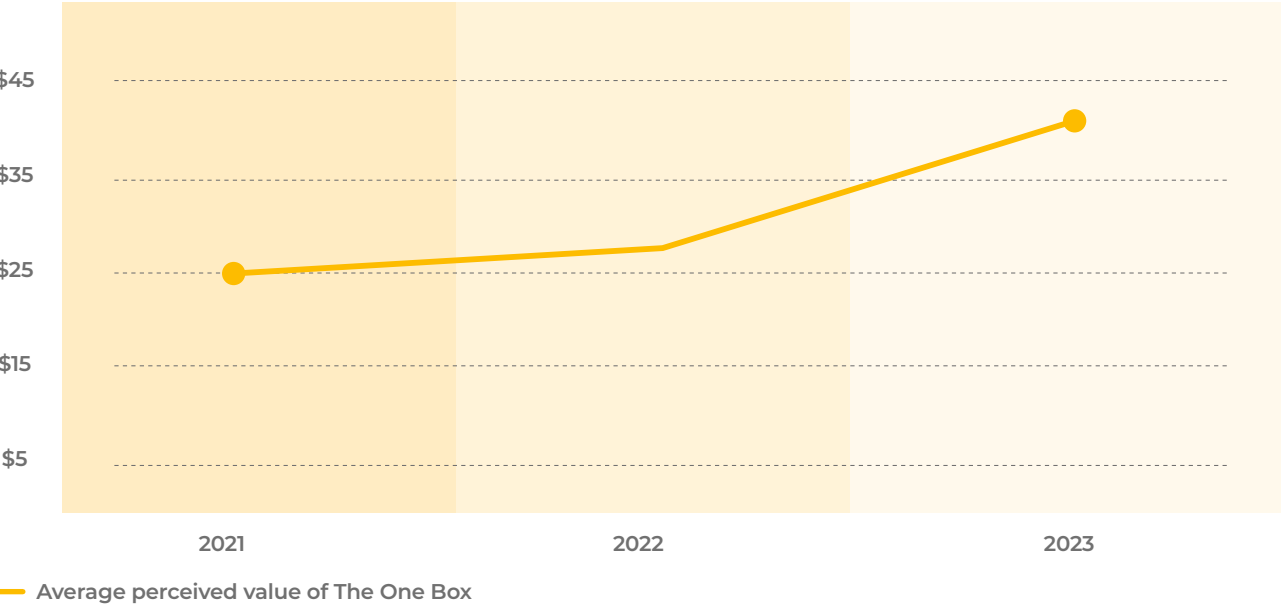
“We don’t know which fruit is good to eat here. Now, when the children want to eat, they just take fruit from the box. I see the children happy and I’m happy.”

Beneficiary

Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Social Impact Framework – Financial Benefits

The financial impact of The One Box program has continued to grow over the years, providing crucial relief to families facing rising costs. In 2023, the benefits of The One Box became even more pronounced. **The average perceived weekly savings have increased to \$41.76*; reflecting the escalating costs of living and increasing value of the program.** This indicates a 48% increase in perceived value from the previous year, which highlighted savings of \$28.21.



*Savings identified are based on households' perceived value if purchasing their own fruit, vegetables, and bread.

These savings translate into real-world relief. Families use the extra funds to cover essential daily expenses, such as paying off utilities and rent, buying protein rich foods, securing vital medication, and buying necessary clothes for their children.

Not only does The One Box reduce financial burden, but it also allows families to invest in activities that support both physical and mental wellbeing. Whether it is enabling children to participate in swimming lessons or school excursions, saving some money for a family trip or enabling mothers to join a gym, these opportunities help reduce stress, positively influence mental health, and foster closer community connections.

"I believe it has a triple effect. If a family can save \$50 a week by receiving fresh fruit and vegies, they use that money for something else for the child - such as new school uniforms, which they had never been able to do before. The child feels proud to come to school, and they feel good, and when you feel good, you are more willing to learn."

School Coordinator

"We're thankful for The One Box. It gives us roughly \$50 each week to use for car fuel, oil, power, and other utilities. We're not having to stress about finding the money to pay for them."

Beneficiary

"Receiving the boxes has had a great impact, especially since they arrive at the end of the week when we usually run low on groceries. When I open the box and see all the great vegies and food, it's a big help for the family. We save around \$30 - \$40 each week because of it."

Beneficiary

Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Social Impact Framework – Community Building and Support

Each year our research continues to prove that The One Box’s impact extends far beyond providing nutritious food. By regularly supplying essential food items, The One Box acts as a tangible bridge between schools, families, and the broader community, particularly supporting those who may feel disengaged or are struggling. **What begins as a simple act of giving evolves into a robust, interconnected community that nurtures the wellbeing of all involved, building resilient families.**

“The One Box is a very good thing. It’s a link between people and acts as a bridge between the people who are here to help and the people needing help.”

Beneficiary

The two sub-domains, Connected Communities and Resilient Families identified in the framework go hand in hand. The initial connection made through receiving The One Box often serves as a gateway for families to engage more deeply with their school. A school wellbeing officer noted, **“Because we’re providing a material thing, we build trust with the family, educating them that the school is a resource for them and that the school is a safe place. It allows you to build that relationship with the families, and that can lead to learning more about their situation and re-engaging them in other programs.”**

This trust paves the way for families to participate in additional programs offered by the school, such as playgroups, educational workshops, and even skill-building activities like English language classes, sewing, cooking, and driving lessons. **Through these programs, many parents, particularly mothers, acquire skills that increase their chances of finding employment, thereby improving their family’s resilience and independence, whilst meeting people along the way.**

“We’ve had healthy cooking classes, information about gardening and how to grow your own vegetables, sewing classes, English classes, swimming for women, computer classes and lots of cultural celebrations.”

Beneficiary

The relationship built through The One Box isn’t one-sided. Grateful families often find ways to give back, whether by contributing to the school’s food pantry or volunteering in various activities. This reciprocity strengthens the bonds within the community, creating a network of support that extends beyond the immediate needs of food security.

Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Furthermore, The One Box facilitates the formation of new social connections among families, especially those navigating transitions such as refugees or recent immigrants. These connections foster a sense of belonging and mutual support, as families share resources and encouragement. **Over time, this network of support results in a more resilient community, where there is always someone to help navigate difficulties or celebrate successes.** And, as families participate more in school and community programs, their confidence grows – not just in their ability to manage daily life, but in their capacity to contribute to and thrive within their community.



“It is one of the hardest things when you are facing hard times – you feel alone and disconnected. You feel isolated. You feel like you’re in a vacuum. And just like that, people start reaching out and helping you in any way they can. Sometimes it is just that little bit of support that makes you feel you can continue.”

Beneficiary

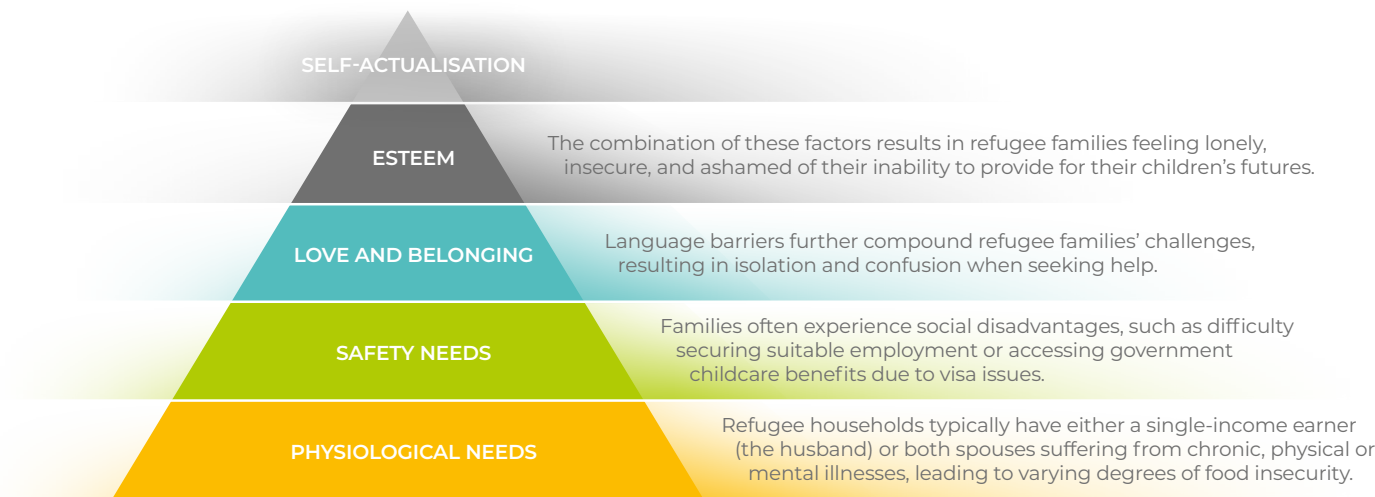
Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Enabling and Energising Refugee Resettlement

The longitudinal study conducted by Monash Business School in the Dandenong LGA has revealed The One Box program's significant impact on the resettlement of refugees in this community. The research shows that the program does more than just meet immediate nutritional needs; it helps refugees integrate into their new communities, offering a path to long-term stability.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a useful framework for understanding The One Box's impact on refugee families. This theory suggests that human motivation arises from a hierarchy of five fundamental categories: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation.

Refugee families meet challenges at every level of the pyramid.



The Monash Business School research analysis indicates that The One Box program can assist refugee households in achieving self-actualisation.

Fulfilling physiological and safety-level needs via direct assistance:

- By providing essential food supplies, The One Box program alleviates the immediate economic burden on refugee families, ensuring their basic nutritional needs are met
- Having lived in a state of food insecurity due to prolonged exposure to wars, many refugee families have developed eating habits focused on satiation (e.g. high-carb canned foods)
- The One Box helps gradually cultivate healthier eating habits by regularly providing fresh produce while acting as the catalyst to facilitate nutritional literacy with the assistance of schools
- This was highlighted by several recipients and school coordinators as the most significant difference between The One Box and other food relief programs, which generally approach assistance from the perspective of a benefactor, aiming primarily to address basic sustenance needs

Research Partnership with Monash Business School

Meeting love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation-level needs via indirect support:

- As The One Box is distributed by school partners, many refugee families have established their initial social connections with schools and the broader communities within them
- After witnessing the school's willingness to help, recipients became more inclined to attend school social programs
- Gaining necessary survival and employment skills (e.g. English language training, sewing, cooking, and driving), significantly increases the likelihood of these vulnerable refugees fulfilling their safety needs
- Refugee families have extended their social networks in this unfamiliar and unsettling new environment, forming new friendships, gaining a sense of belonging, and accessing crucial social resources



One refugee mother shared how The One Box helped her connect with school staff and social workers, leading to her securing permanent residency and childcare support. She was not alone in this experience; many families have credited The One Box with marking the beginning of their journey toward self-sufficiency. Through these connections and the support they received, these families have been able to go beyond just surviving in their new environment, finding the strength and resources to thrive.

Research Partnership with Monash Business School

"My mentality, my finances, my confidence – everything, including socialising, has improved. I feel like I can seek help now. Last year, my doctor encouraged me to reach out for support, but I always denied it. I kept saying no because I was worried about groceries and taking care of my kids. But then The One Box came into our lives, and everything started to change."

Beneficiary

"Time saved is one of the best things. When you have young kids, going to the grocery store is a nightmare. The One Box takes away that frustration and it makes meal planning a little bit easier. You can see the ingredients in the box rather than starting at ground zero with nothing. I save about two hours a week."

Beneficiary

"It's made me feel a lot more comfortable, knowing the school understands my situation and can offer support. I was never really one to go to school events because I was socially awkward, but now I've been attending and learned it is easy to talk to the teachers. No one is judging you; they just make you feel comfortable and included."

Beneficiary

"The school is very helpful and my connection with the school has improved a lot since receiving the box. I try to attend programs through the [school] hub and any information sessions related to food or any support the school can offer the families."

Beneficiary

"The One Box has helped us have a variety of fruit and vegetables and has given my son the opportunity to try more variety. He is a fussy eater, so if I buy something I worry about waste. But with The One Box we have the box and sit at the table and try things."

Beneficiary

"It's great, it's not only about eating healthy, but also helps my child's mental health. By me going to the school struggling, he's learned he can talk to adults and they're there to help."

Beneficiary

Thank You to All Our Contributors and Supporters

Through ongoing collaboration with our program partners and insights from The One Box recipients, it is unmistakably clear that addressing the deep needs within our community is paramount. Partnering with the Department of Accounting, Monash Business School, we are dedicated to understanding the tangible differences The One Box makes for the diverse, resilient and resourceful families that access our programs. We are grateful to the many families and schools who candidly share their experiences, feedback, and ideas, enabling us to broaden the impact of The One Box across Australian communities.

As The One Box evolves, we recognise the broadening challenges of food insecurity in Australia, and we are grateful our program can help families in more ways than one. We are committed to elevating the voices of those affected, shedding light on the realities of food insecurity and sparking a collective effort to address the pressing issue. **We need to work together to highlight the reality of food insecurity and hunger and put it on the national agenda.**



The One Box wishes to acknowledge The Fruit Box Group for their generosity and for continuing to be a major sponsor of our programs and research.

We would also like to thank:

- Professor Ralph Kober, Associate Professor Dr Paul Thambar and Dr Zhiyun (Maleen) Gong from Monash Business School for their partnership, research seed funding and in-kind support
- The Dandenong LGA schools and program participants for their generous participation in our independent research
- Our wonderful school communities who enable the program to run effortlessly, and also play a crucial role in amplifying the positive outcomes and benefits for the families we serve
- The strong and resilient families who receive The One Box

"This year, my son's been eating healthier snacks, more fruit and vegetables, and I would say he concentrates better and is less cranky. He tends to have meltdowns due to his condition, but I've noticed that he's less prone to those when he eats less processed food."

Beneficiary

The One Box Research: Looking Ahead

The One Box is committed to continuing our research activities in partnership with Monash Business School. Our focus remains on validating and sharing the impactful story of The One Box while maintaining our core research values:

- Prioritising the comfort, dignity, and agency of our program participants and partners
- Respecting the sensitivity of food relief, ensuring our research minimises the impact and burden on participants
- Generating high-quality research data that informs The One Box's mission, implementation, and strategy
- Raising public awareness of food insecurity in Australia by sharing insights from our program operations and research efforts

Research Goals and Objectives for 2024

As we move into years 2 and 3 of our longitudinal community study, the research will progress our prior research efforts in evaluating the long-term impact of The One Box program. In 2024/25 our data collection methods will include:

- A survey to gather quantitative data on the incremental changes in beneficiary lives across the three domains of the Social Impact Framework
- In-depth interviews with families who have voluntarily transitioned off the program, exploring their journey with The One Box and their experiences post-transition
- Case studies with families and schools to assess the effectiveness of The One Box fresh food relief program

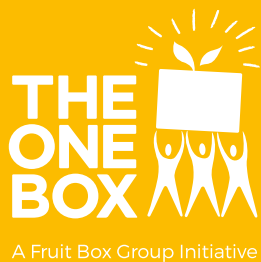
Support The One Box and help to put fresh food on the table for families in tough times.

Every \$1 donated to The One Box is converted into almost \$2 worth of fresh food in the hands of Australians experiencing hardship and adversity.

Donate at theonebox.org.au or email info@theonebox.org.au



*It's surprising how far
one box can go*



theonebox.org.au