# Video transcript - Food Unity Hub

**Katie:** Drought, bushfires, Covid-19 and now floods have significantly increased the call on our food relief in our region. Because of this, we need to have a fit for purpose, scalable emergency food relief system based in our region that works locally.

[On-screen text: Food relief demand have surged y 200%]

[On-screen text: Katie Warner, Ovens Murray Regional Partnership]

**Katie:** Recognising this, the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership is working with the Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare and Wodonga TAFE to seek funding to develop a Food Unity Hub.

This will increase access to important food relief, will increase our food resilience in the wake of natural disasters, and will also provide training and employment opportunities in our region.

**Simon:** The Food Unity Hub will be a purpose-built facility that will enable us to deliver a unique delivery model for social services.

[On-screen text: Proposed development site at Wodonga TAFE]

[On-screen text: Simon Welsh, Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare]

**Simon:** It uses food at its core; so it will bring people in for food relief but when they’re here we will have co-located with us social service providers. So, we’ll be able to wrap those people up with the social supports, the services that they need.

Then, more than that, there’s a whole other third layer to it. Which is that we will be able to connect them into education and training programs so we can start to build capacity to help to lift themselves out of poverty.

[On-screen text: 1 Food, 2 Support Services, 3 Education and Training]

**Simon:** Food Insecurity is so invisible in our community. It’s not till you stop and realise that in 2022 alone, Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare put out 2.5 million meals worth of food. That’s when you start to understand the scale of the problem.

[On-screen text: 2022 Food equivalent to 2.5m meals]

**Simon:** So, to be able to deal with the volume that we need to put out our operation is quite disparate. We have warehouses, we have a social supermarket where people and come and shop using vouchers from social support agencies, and we are trying to improve our education programs around food hygiene and food preparation. The Food Unity Hub will enable us to bring all of that together in one space so we can do more, and we can do it better.

**Phil:** The Food Unity Hub provides an opportunity for all our students to participate in practical experiential learning. And it also helps the community with the distribution of food across our region.

[On-screen text: Phil Paterson, CEO Wodonga TAFE]

**Phil:** The opportunity for practical experiential learning is really key in the Food Unity Hub because what it does is it provides the opportunity for that learning experience to be immersed within a practical experiential learning environment. And that includes logistics, supply chain, forklift, warehousing. But also, things like food operations; hospitality, catering, business administration and disability.

**Simon:** So Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare is already returning about $40million in social return on investment, and about $11 worth of food for every $1 invested.

[On-screen text: $40m in social returns]

**Simon:** The Food Unity Hub will enable us to better those figures through that integration and efficiency that we can get.

We are working very closely with hundreds of local agencies and local suppliers of food.

[On-screen text: 225+ agencies, schools and community groups, 70+ food suppliers]

**Simon:** That local story is so important to be able to respond quickly to the needs of the community. Not just in times of emergency, but in the day-to-day goings on with the degree of poverty and disadvantage that there are in communities like this.

**Katie:** We invite government to work with FoodShare and Wodonga TAFE to access funding for this initiative.

[On-screen text: Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare services 12 LGA’s across 2 states.]

[On-screen text: image showing the local government areas of Wodonga, Wangaratta, Indigo, Towong, Benalla, Alpine, Mansfield, Albury, Snowy Valleys, Greater Hume, Federation]

**Katie:** Food insecurity and natural disasters are not going away in our region. This transformative investment will double our region’s ability to respond to this food insecurity and the increasing rate of natural disasters in our region.

[On-screen text: A $12m investment doubles our capacity to respond]

[On-screen text: Regional Partnerships Ovens Murray, Victoria State Government]