



# ACT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2011

## SUSTAINABILITY STORIES

### OzHarvest Canberra: rescuing food and reducing waste



OzHarvest Canberra delivers to 'The Blue Door' (Photo courtesy of OzHarvest)



OzHarvest delivers the goods! (Photo courtesy of OzHarvest)

OzHarvest began when Ronni Kahn, founding Director, decided she was not prepared to be part of the waste cycle that is a usual outcome of the hospitality industry. When she found no available option in Sydney, she decided to set up a food rescue charity herself. Ozharvest has now expanded to Newcastle, Adelaide and Canberra.

OzHarvest Canberra has been operating since February 2008 and is managed and supported by Communities@Work, a community based not-for-profit organisation. It has delivered over 1,000,000 meals to more than 60 charities and refuges in Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass. This helps charities focus more of their resources on other ways to help the community.

As well as helping vulnerable people in the community and providing a waste management solution for the hospitality and retail food industries, OzHarvest delivers sustainability and environmental benefits. To date over 370 tonnes of food have been saved meaning less food ending up in landfill. On average, every kilogram of food that OzHarvest rescues will save 2kg of greenhouse (kg CO<sub>2</sub>-eq) emissions and avoid the use of 143 litres of water.

Food donors to OzHarvest Canberra include food retailers, supermarkets, clubs, caterers and local markets. However, some potential donors think that the easier option is to throw food away rather than risk being sued if anything goes wrong. Critical changes in legislation and the reliability of the OzHarvest pick-up and delivery service means that this fear is unfounded and that donating is a great option.

There are still challenges ahead for OzHarvest Canberra. Some charities have become dependent on OzHarvest as their main source of food, so establishing long term financial viability for the organisation is extremely important.

At present, OzHarvest Canberra has only limited food storage facilities so most food collected needs to be redistributed on the same day. Additionally not all charities have the facilities to store food so they can only accept food that can be used on the day of delivery. In the future, OzHarvest Canberra hopes to expand its storage facilities to create a small bank of food to assist charities to cope with peak demands.

For more information see the OzHarvest Canberra website, <http://www.ozharvestcanberra.org/>

