

Turning commitment into impact with 1.4 million kilograms of food rescued



Woolworths New Zealand: Reducing food waste and supporting communities through partnership

Strategic goals only matter if they translate into real-world outcomes. Woolworths is demonstrating what that looks like in practice by combining clear targets, operational investment and a focused partnership with KiwiHarvest to drive a 435 percent increase in rescued food over four years.

Woolworths serves millions of customers each week through a nationwide network of supermarkets. As one of the country's largest food retailers, the business recognises the important role it plays in helping shape a more sustainable food system.

“ Reducing food waste and repurposing food surplus has been a key Goal within our Sustainability Plans since 2020. Across our operations, we are working to ensure that good food does not go to waste and that surplus food is redirected to people who need it most.

Supermarkets operate at the centre of the food supply chain. While our systems are designed to minimise waste, surplus food can still arise from changing demand, short shelf-life products and the complexities of managing large volumes of fresh food.

For us, the focus is on ensuring surplus food is put to the best use wherever possible.

Catherine Langabeer,
Head of Sustainability at Woolworths

One of the most effective ways the business delivers on this commitment is through its partnership with KiwiHarvest, New Zealand's largest food rescue organisation. Through this collaboration, surplus food from Woolworths stores is collected and redistributed to community organisations across Aotearoa.

Partnering to reduce food waste

KiwiHarvest operates a nationwide food rescue network, collecting surplus food from businesses and delivering it to foodbanks, charities and community groups supporting people facing food insecurity.

The partnership between Woolworths and KiwiHarvest ensures that food which cannot be sold is quickly redirected to communities where it can make a difference.



Food rescued from Woolworths stores includes fresh produce, bakery items, chilled goods and other nutritious food that remains safe to eat but may no longer be suitable for sale.

KiwiHarvest collects food from Woolworths in Auckland, Dunedin, Queenstown and Invercargill and through its network of community partners. These include foodbanks, community hubs and social service organisations, who distribute the food to organisations providing meals and food parcels to families, individuals and communities experiencing hardship.

For many of these organisations, rescued food plays an important role in supporting people experiencing food insecurity while also enabling charities to stretch their resources further.

Scaling food rescue across New Zealand



Since 2022, KiwiHarvest estimates the amount of food rescued through the collaboration has **increased by 435%**.



Food rescued through the partnership has risen from approximately **300,000 kg** in 2022 to over **4 million kg** between May 2025 and April 2026.



This includes the equivalent of **more than 2 million meals** from Woolworths.

The growth demonstrates the impact that coordinated partnerships can achieve when businesses and community organisations work together to redirect surplus food to people who need it most.

This increase reflects deliberate investment by Woolworths in both systems and operations to better manage surplus food. It has implemented technology that tracks where excess product is directed – whether to food rescue organisations, animal feed or landfill – providing greater visibility and accountability across its network.



Alongside this, operational changes have been made to embed food rescue into day-to-day store processes, ensuring surplus food is consistently identified and diverted to partners such as KiwiHarvest as part of normal operations.



Finally, Woolworths currently invests more than \$1m per annum (including customer donations) into the food rescue sector as grants, supporting business development and resilience. This has included nearly \$300,000 (including contributions from a customer roundup campaign) in operational funding for KiwiHarvest in the 2025 financial year.

The scale of growth seen by KiwiHarvest is a direct result of these investments, demonstrating how internal system improvements, operational discipline and long-term sector engagement can significantly increase the volume of food diverted from landfill.

Environmental and social impact

Food waste has significant environmental consequences.

When food ends up in landfill it produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas. In New Zealand, more than 1.2 million tonnes of food are lost or wasted every year, contributing to around 9 percent of the country’s methane emissions (Ministry for the Environment).

Diverting surplus food through partnerships like the one between Woolworths and KiwiHarvest helps reduce landfill emissions. At the same time, food rescue initiatives help address a growing social challenge. Many community organisations are seeing increased demand for food support as households face rising living costs.

By partnering with KiwiHarvest, Woolworths is able to support communities while reducing the environmental footprint of its operations.



Collaboration across the food system

Food rescue at scale requires strong collaboration between businesses, charities and communities.

Retailers like Woolworths have access to surplus food, while food rescue organisations such as KiwiHarvest provide the specialist logistics, safety processes and community relationships required to redistribute food effectively.

By working together, these organisations can address two challenges at once — reducing food waste while helping ensure good food reaches people who need it most.



\$1m+



invested annually in the food rescue sector

\$300,000



operational funding for KiwiHarvest in FY2025

Driving Growth



through system improvements, discipline and long-term sector engagement

Lessons and takeaways for similar initiatives

The partnership between Woolworths New Zealand and KiwiHarvest highlights several lessons for businesses seeking to strengthen their sustainability and community impact.



Partnerships enable scale

Collaborating with specialist organisations allows businesses to extend their impact and reach communities more effectively.



Align impact with core operations

Food rescue works because it aligns closely with Woolworths’ role in the food system and its sustainability priorities.



Focus on both environmental and social outcomes

Food rescue initiatives can simultaneously reduce environmental impacts while supporting communities experiencing food insecurity.

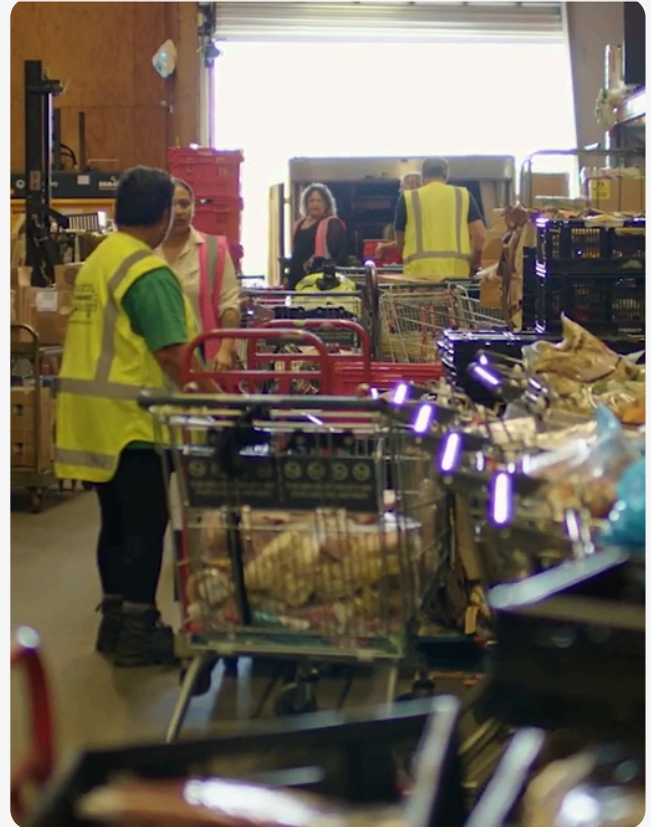


Build long-term partnerships

Long-term relationships between businesses and community organisations enable programmes to grow and deliver greater impact over time.

About Woolworths New Zealand

Woolworths New Zealand is one of the country’s largest supermarket retailers, serving millions of customers every week. Through its nationwide network of stores, the company is focused on delivering quality food while reducing its environmental footprint and supporting the communities it serves.



About KiwiHarvest

KiwiHarvest is New Zealand’s largest food rescue organisation, collecting quality surplus food from supermarkets, wholesales, distributors, producers and farmers and redistributing it to charities and community groups across Aotearoa.

Since launching in 2012, KiwiHarvest estimates it has rescued more than 19 million kilograms of food, the equivalent of over 42 million meals, supporting 235 charitable organisations nationwide. In 2025 alone, the organisation estimates it rescued a record four million kilograms of food, preventing more than 12 million kilograms of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂-e) emissions. The impact helps ensure good food reaches people who need it most while reducing the environmental cost of food waste.

