



goongerah good foods

FOOD & AGRICULTURE / THINK LOCAL

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The township of Goongerah is nestled in between the Snowy River National Park and the Errinundra National park in Far East Gippsland. It is over an hour's drive from the closest shops which are located in Orbost. The population of Goongerah fluctuates seasonally, but is usually around 60 residents, including children. Like many families living in Far East Gippsland, the majority of people in Goongerah survive on a low income due to a lack of employment opportunities, which is clearly related to isolation.

The Goongerah Good Foods Buyers Group was established in the 1980's to provide high quality whole foods to isolated families from the Goongerah area. Goongerah Good Foods has been an integral part of this community, providing bulk whole foods at a marginal cost compared to that of the local supermarkets.

In early 2009, local community group GDAEE (Goongerah and Districts Arts Education and Employment) sought funding through the Centre for Rural Communities and the East Gippsland Shire Council to conduct a feasibility study to investigate the possibility of reinvigorating and possibly expanding the Food Co-operative service.

At the end of six months project worker Jennifer Ruch produced a report outlining recommendations for Goongerah Good Foods. These recommendations included streamlining the ordering system (which is now done mostly electronically on an excel spreadsheet and email) reducing the number of suppliers, tailoring the products to the needs of the current Goongerah population, and reducing the surplus food left over at the end of the order. Payment is now taken with the order, so that cash flow problems are no longer an issue.

On average 12 families now place orders once a quarter which total around \$9,000 per annum. There are over 50 products available which include flours, dried fruit, grains, spices, nuts, oils, pasta, pulses, seeds and sugar.

