

PARTNER VOICES

1. UN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION – PROFESSOR FANG LEE COOKE

Fang Lee Cooke has completed a trilogy (three books) with Dr Nikolai Rogovsky, for the International Labour Organization (ILO). This collection (published by the ILO in 2021, 2023 and 2025) focuses on global challenges, social justice and productivity. It aims at providing a better understanding of how social justice—encompassing universal human rights and capabilities, equal access to opportunities for employment and productive activity, fair distribution and just transitions—is linked to productivity growth. Social justice has always been a major focus of the ILO. It was described as the Organization's ultimate goal in the Preamble to the ILO Constitution of 1919 (ILO 2021a).

This trilogy is informed by the ILO's social justice framework. The first volume examines the impacts of global challenges on human resource management (HRM) policies and practices in BRICS countries (Rogovsky

and Cooke 2021). The second volume investigates the extent to which productivity improvements in four major Asian economies, namely China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea, has been underpinned by human-centred productivity improvements (Cooke and Rogovsky 2023). The third volume (Cooke and Rogovsky, 2025) aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between social justice and workplace productivity. It pays particular attention to women and older workers, investigating how national-level policy frameworks and enterprise-level HRM practices can help to ensure that workers from these two vulnerable groups are treated equitably and are able to continue contributing to productivity growth.

It is important to note that the authors do not confine themselves simply to workplace productivity (or labour productivity), but also examine other indicators of economic performance in the workplace and at the macroeconomic level. Moreover, they consider social performance measures that reflect improvements in areas such

as labour legislation, social protection, health and well-being, access to lifelong learning, quality of employment, and the labour market inclusion of women and older workers.

Social justice and workplace productivity are influenced by a range of macro-level factors and global trends and by HRM policies and practices at the enterprise level. Women and older workers are often disadvantaged in the labour market and in workplaces. Several factors impact women's productivity, some of which are linked to various dimensions of social justice, including gender discrimination in the labour market and in the workplace. Similarly, older workers are often faced with stereotypes, which can lead to unfair treatment and discourage them from continuing to work or from working productively. By investigating issues related to social justice and the productivity of women and older workers, this latest volume sheds light on what needs to be done to strengthen social protection for these groups of workers, enabling them to enjoy a better future.

THEY CONSIDER SOCIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES THAT REFLECT IMPROVEMENTS IN AREAS SUCH AS LABOUR LEGISLATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, ACCESS TO LIFELONG LEARNING, QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT, AND THE LABOUR MARKET INCLUSION OF WOMEN AND OLDER WORKERS.

2. THE ONE BOX | AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO FOOD INSECURITY – PROFESSOR RALPH KOBER, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PAUL THAMBAR, DR ZHIYUN (MALEEN) GONG

THE PROBLEM OF FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity is a growing problem in Australia. Currently, 48% of Australian households experience some form of food insecurity, and this is expected to increase given the current cost of living crisis (Foodbank, 2024). This is concerning given that food insecurity is linked with reduced physical and mental health, including increased rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and depression (Gundersen and Zilak, 2015; Martin et al., 2016). The main way of addressing food insecurity is with rescued food, which can be unpredictable and lacking in nutritional value (Simmet et al., 2017). Receiving rescued food also stigmatises recipients (Purdam et al., 2016) and has limited long-term benefits (Loopstra and Lambie-Mumford, 2023). Consequently, there is a need to explore alternative models of food relief.



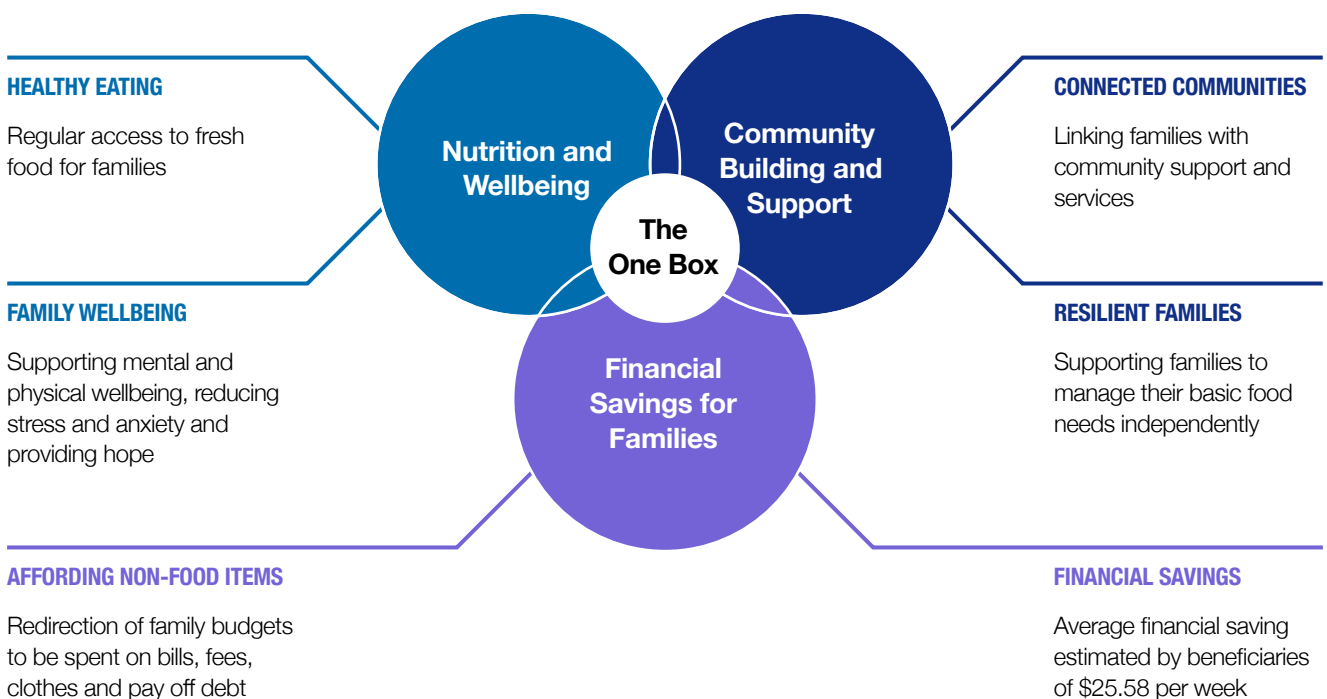
We have done this since 2020 via our research collaboration with [The One Box \(TOB\)](#), a charity that provides families with a guaranteed weekly box of freshly purchased fruit, vegetables, and bread through schools.

OUR RESEARCH – DEVELOPMENT OF AN IMPACT FRAMEWORK

By interviewing over 80 beneficiaries and school coordinators, asking them to self-identify the impacts of TOB’s

program, we developed an impact framework (see Figure 1) to measure the benefits of TOB’s alternative model of food relief on recipients’ health (Nutrition and Wellbeing), social (Community Building and Support) and economic (Financial Savings) outcomes. This framework enables TOB to evaluate and communicate the impacts of its program to stakeholders.

Figure 1. Impact framework



OUR RESEARCH – EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF TOB'S ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF FOOD RELIEF

We conduct annual interviews with beneficiaries and school coordinators to assess the impact of TOB's alternative model. Our findings based on a thematic analysis of these interviews reveal the following health, social and economic benefits to recipients:

Nutrition and Wellbeing (Health Outcomes)

- Increased nutritional intake
- Improved physical health
- Improved mental health of parents due to reduced anxiety about food provision
- Improved mental health of children due to not facing exclusion from classmates for lacking lunches

Community Building and Support (Social Outcomes)

- Improved school attendance and class engagement
- Establishing trusted connections, allowing schools to refer beneficiaries to additional services (e.g., accommodation for domestic violence cases).

Financial Savings for Families (Economic Outcomes)

- Estimated weekly savings of \$41.76 per family in 2023, used to pay-off debts, buy uniforms, etc.
- Lifting people out of poverty. Due to the guaranteed food provision parents have time and mental space to seek employment. In some schools 25% of families have voluntarily withdrawn due to achieving self-reliance.

In the last year, we have focused on schools in the City of Dandenong, which is a low socio-economic council

with many migrant families. We found that the impacts described above were especially pronounced for refugee families. Receiving fresh food helped re-establish healthy eating patterns after a prolonged period of relying on canned food. Families also felt comfortable participating in social and skill-building programs, helping them to improve employability. Overall, the program had a profound impact on facilitating refugee families' resettlement in Australia.

IMPACT OF OUR RESEARCH

TOB has used our research highlighting the benefits to recipients of their model of food relief to secure grant and philanthropic funding, allowing it to triple its program from 40,000 boxes in 2020 to 120,000 boxes in 2024, with over 1,800 families being helped each week. TOB's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager notes that funders appreciate the inclusion of our research in applications, which helps TOB secure funding, facilitating the tripling of the program. Consequently, our research has contributed to improving the health, social and economic situation of beneficiaries, lifting people out of poverty (SDG 1), reducing hunger (SDG 2), and enhancing health and wellbeing (SDG 3).

3. FROM THEORY TO AISLES: CO-CREATING NUTRITIONAL SERVE PRICING THROUGH BUSINESS-ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR FIONA NEWTON

In a collaboration bridging academic research and retail practice, Monash Business School led a strategic partnership with Deakin University and Ritchies Supermarkets—an Australian independent grocery chain—to address a national public health challenge: the under-consumption of vegetables and fruit.

Despite well-established nutrition guidelines recommending five 75g serves of vegetables and two 150g serves of fruit daily, only 6.5% of Australian adults meet the vegetable target, and over 55% fall short on fruit intake. One contributing factor is the way fresh produce is priced. While guidelines refer to consumption per nutritional serve, supermarkets typically price items per kilogram—bundling multiple serves together—which can make produce seem less affordable and reduce perceived value for money.

To address this, the Monash-led team developed a novel dual pricing tool—nutritional per-serve pricing—which supplements standard per-kilogram prices with the cost of a single recommended serve (e.g., \$0.97 for a 75g serve of green beans). This tool helps consumers better understand the actual cost of healthy portions, aiming to enhance perceived value and promote healthier purchase decisions.

Working closely with Ritchies, the team piloted this intervention in a Victorian supermarket. Four additional stores served as control sites, selected based on similar transaction volumes, product ranges, pricing, and customer demographics. Following the introduction of per-serve pricing in the trial store, loose vegetable purchases increased by 6.2%—suggesting that clearer, serve-based pricing can positively influence shopper behaviour. No significant change was observed for fruit, likely due to its larger recommended serve size (150g).

To validate and extend these insights, the team conducted online experiments in the UK, where standard serving sizes for both fruit and vegetables are 80g. Results showed that per-serve pricing significantly increased purchase intentions for both categories (i.e., vegetables and fruit), primarily by enhancing perceived value for money.

OUR RESEARCH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO IMPROVING THE HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF BENEFICIARIES, LIFTING PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY (SDG 1), REDUCING HUNGER (SDG 2), AND ENHANCING HEALTH AND WELLBEING (SDG 3).

In 2024, Ritchies scaled the intervention across its 70+ stores nationwide, supported by the Monash-Deakin team in developing staff training, in-store signage, consumer-facing materials, and a white paper outlining the evidence and rationale behind the dual pricing approach. The Australian Government's "Eat for Health" per-serve calculator was also embedded into the Ritchies website to support decision-making.

Nutritional serve pricing may offer a rare public health win-win: a low-cost, scalable approach to boost fruit and vegetable purchases while potentially increasing retailer revenue. An embargoed national evaluation will provide further insights into its effectiveness and impact. In sum, this partnership exemplifies how academic research, when paired with business insight and operational implementation, can deliver measurable social and environmental outcomes.



This case for nutritional serve pricing is now embedded in undergraduate marketing education at Monash University to demonstrate how behavioural science, economics, and social marketing can drive societal benefit. Furthermore, in 2025, third-year Peninsula campus marketing students are collaborating with AUSVEG—the national peak body for Australian vegetable growers—to co-design interventions promoting vegetable consumption, reinforcing the real-world relevance of classroom theory.

4. PARTNERSHIPS FOR A CIRCULAR TRANSITION – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR GLEN CROY, PROFESSOR AMRIK SOHAL, AND DR ALKA NAND

The current linear economy model generates waste at an astronomical scale. In Victoria alone, this equates to 4.5m tonnes of landfill per annum, constituting \$1.3b of lost economic value. Unfortunately, these huge numbers are repeated around the world. The circular economy is seen as the solution, however the needed transition is going much too slow.

To accelerate the circular transition, Amrik Sohal, Glen Croy, Alka Nand, and colleagues have crafted collaborations to address key sticking points and magnify the possibility for change. Each of these collaborations has purposefully brought influential circular actors together.

Their first focus has been on raising awareness of and confidence in the circular economy. For this, they have hosted the annual *Monash University Circular Economy Forums*. At each *Forum*, circular achievements from industry, government and research are showcased, and the audience of industry leaders and policymakers explore actionable strategies for circular transformation.

The second focus has been advancing the front of the circular transition. Through their regular *Monash University Circular Roundtable*, they have brought together circularity leaders, from government and industry, in a collegial environment to share experiences, opportunities, and challenges, which fosters and encourages accelerated advancement at the leading edge of the circular transition.

The third focus is on building on advancing research to foster this circular transition at an international level. They have now co-hosted three *International Circular Economy Workshops*, building collaborations for research leadership in circular action (each hosted in Italy). The workshops have established strong circular research capacity across 12-partner universities, and a number of other participants. Each workshop has fostered research collaborations for impact at-scale.

5. PARTNERING WITH AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PACKAGING (AIP): BRINGING INDUSTRY VOICES IN CLASSROOM – DR ANANYA BHATTACHARYA

As the lecturer of Global Sustainable Operations and Supply Chain Management, I always aimed for industry collaboration for students to get a 'reality check' on sustainability and its complexities. This led me to partner with the AIP whose work in the packaging area is phenomenal.

The award-winning experts from local and global businesses shared their insights about different sustainability topics and provided hand-on-experiences through industry visits.

This collaboration bridges academic theory and business practice to help students crafting innovative solutions for real-life business challenges from theoretical insights.



OUTCOME AND IMPACT

Through industry partnerships, students gain critical thinking skills and a strong sense of responsibility—equipping them to lead meaningful change across communities and sectors.

6. HOW CLIMATE CHANGE COULD THREATEN VICTORIA'S WHEAT CROPS – PROFESSORS PARAM SILVAPULLE AND SISIRA JAYASURIYA, DR NATALIA BAILEY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANKE LEROUX AND PROFESSOR MERVYN SILVAPULLE

Under some climate change scenarios, heavy losses are predicted for Victoria's wheat crops. But there are steps farmers can take to mitigate the impact. Australia's agricultural sector is a major contributor to the economy. The impact of climate change is predicted to affect the national economy and put the livelihoods of rural communities in peril. But the wide divergence of climate conditions across the Australian continent means that the impact of climate change can differ substantially across different agricultural activities and regions.

This requires location-specific analyses for each sub-climate. A research team from Monash Business School's Department of Econometrics and Business Statistics and Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability (CDES) has been investigating the impact of climate change on wheat yields and farm profitability in Victoria's major grain-

producing regions of Northwest Victoria—the Mallee and Wimmera regions.

Professors Param Silvapulle and Sisira Jayasuriya, Dr Natalia Bailey, Associate Professor Anke Leroux and Professor Mervyn Silvapulle partnered with climate scientist Kevin Hennessey (from climate change consultancy, Climate Comms) and the industry organisation ORM, in collaboration with CSIRO, and worked interactively with farmers and agricultural scientists on this challenging project.

The team received funding from the Victorian Virtual Centre for Climate Change Innovation Grants in the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

"Northwest Victoria relies heavily on rainfall for its wheat cultivation. Farmers in the region are certainly not strangers to hot and dry seasonal conditions, with 2019 being one of the driest years on record", Professor Param Silvapulle explains. This new record combined with a series of tough years has encouraged growers and researchers to pose a much broader question: What seasonal extreme weather conditions will wheat farmers face over the next few decades with on

Extreme temperatures and wheat crops. The research focused on the impacts of extreme temperature (hot and cold) exposures on wheat yields

to generate future yield predictions for the next 45 years under various climate change scenarios. "While there are several Australian studies of climate change impacts on agriculture, this is the first study to utilise a unique farm-level dataset to make more realistic predictions of wheat yields and farm profits over the coming decades", Professor Silvapulle says. Dr Natalia Bailey explains that by developing an innovative modelling approach they were able to take into account the ground realities at the farm level.

"The results showed that frost and high-temperature exposures adversely affect wheat yields but increased rainfall can partially offset them", Dr Bailey says.

Up to 30 percent of wheat crops at risk. The project used the ten climatic projections provided by CSIRO that included a range of scenarios including warmer and wetter conditions, and hotter and drier conditions. Under some scenarios ('warmer and slightly wetter' and 'warmer and wetter'), future wheat yields improve in both regions due to a variety of factors such as fewer freezing days, warmer temperatures and better rainfall effectively offsetting the exposure of the crop to higher temperatures. But climatic projections released by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) in the Australasia Factsheet indicate that hotter and drier scenarios are more likely to eventuate in the Mallee and Wimmera regions.

Under such conditions, the modelling suggests that increased exposure to high temperatures and low rainfall could result in a steady decline in long term average yields as well as a greater level of volatility from year to year. The negative impact of the 'hotter and drier' scenario will be felt more in Mallee in comparison to Wimmera. Yields may fall by up to 30 percent in Mallee compared with an 11 percent fall in Wimmera. "In collaboration with CSIRO, we generated predictions of gaps between potential and actual wheat yields ('yield gaps'). These can help farmers and scientists to work together to design suitable adaptation methods to increase future farm yields. Ours is the first study to generate such predictions", says Dr Bailey.



The next stage of the project looked at how much farm profitability may be affected by climate change. Professor Silvapulle points out that the economic impacts on local farm businesses and communities within the Mallee and Wimmera regions will largely be determined not only by which climatic scenario eventuates but also by how farmers respond and adapt. “This highlights the need for modelling to incorporate the adaptive behaviour of farmers into any realistic analysis”, she says. Farm adaptation strategies may include adopting new cultivation practices that are better suited to the new climatic conditions, or considering new varieties and crop management strategies to minimise the impacts of climatic variation. The analyses of historical farm-level data and the interactions with farmers helped the research team to understand farm-level constraints and how farmers can respond to changing conditions. “Farmers are very dynamic and active in responding to changes in the climatic conditions and market opportunities”, Associate Professor Anke Leroux says.

Farmers have been changing their cultivation practices and diversifying farming operations already to protect farm profitability—for example, by planting more drought-tolerant crops such as pulses targeting new export markets such as India.

Climate change makes both crop yields and farm profits more volatile.

“Financial services providers such as insurance companies and banks should plan to develop appropriate farm finance products and services to cater for increased levels of volatility”, Associate Professor Leroux explains.

Professor Silvapulle emphasised that these results are location specific.

“There are important differences even between Wimmera and Mallee”, she says. “This means that studies like this are required for each cultivation region to understand the impact of climate change and to plan for appropriate management responses”.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON LOCAL FARM BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE MALLEE AND WIMMERA REGIONS WILL LARGELY BE DETERMINED NOT ONLY BY WHICH CLIMATIC SCENARIO EVENTUATES BUT ALSO BY HOW FARMERS RESPOND AND ADAPT.