

CITY OF BALLARAT

FOOD STRATEGY WORKSHOP

SUMMARY NOTES
OF THE PARTICIPANT CONTRIBUTIONS
COMPILED BY THE SESSION FACILITATOR

29th June 2018



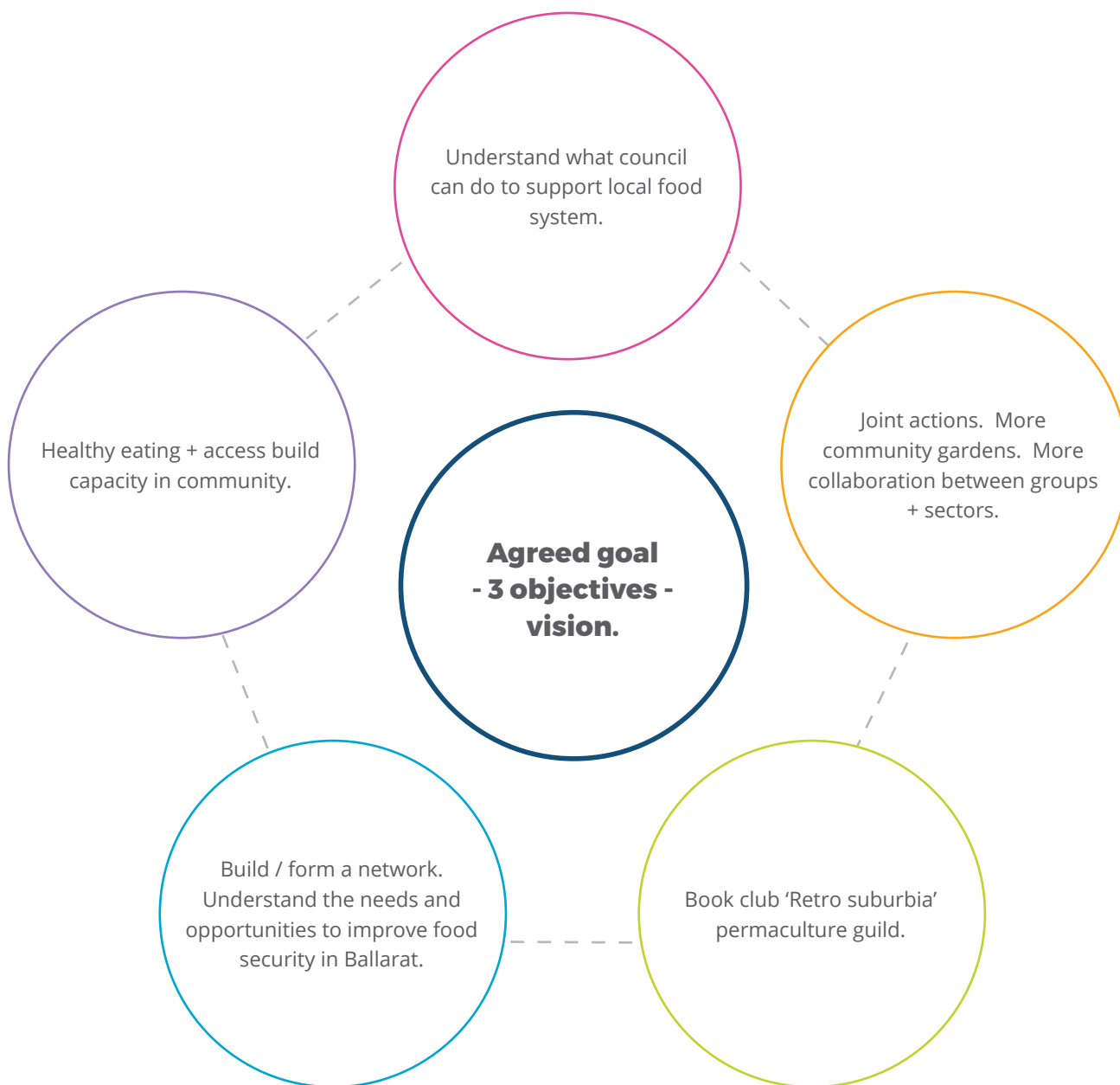
OUR SESSION PURPOSE

To explore what can be done by Council to help support a more healthy, productive and sustainable food system.



OUR HOPES

Participants shared their collective hopes for the gathering at the start of the session





OUR INSIGHTS

Participants spent some time reviewing similar strategy documents from other Councils to consider some key insights to hold onto in thinking about the new strategy.

Watching for the gaps.

What's not in there: example - no mention of waste - don't say building community capacity - impact of by laws.

Capacity to grow food - transport - unspoken parts of their strategies - no education mentioned behaviour change not supported.

Who is the target audience? Capture general public? COB document is to guide council - accessible for all.

Moreland don't talk about food waste - big gap.

Doesn't talk about economic circumstance - looks at symptoms not overall problems.

Food system is complex - not linear - graphics need to reflect complexity + be circular.

Moreland food strategy good example - plain English etc.

NE document snapshot image (pg4) - good graphics.

OUR FEEDBACK

Having spent the morning in conversations participants looked across 8 big themes to share some of their thinking on possible ideas for consideration in the new strategy.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Food literacy + food waste education
extension of kitchen garden programs in schools - to all schools - plus education to shop / cook budget to store food for household.

Specific community grants available for food / food literacy activities. Identify target populations groups in most need of this (i.e. disadvantaged, ensuring we are not just making food more accessible for those who already afford or access).

Local producers network development to act as voice regarding council policy around food security, production, food safety, eco dev, agri - business + urban farming.

Please get involved with the retro suburbia book club concept.

Community impact grants to include food waste, that provision of healthy foods be included in application guidelines.

All primary schools should have a kitchen garden program with community links i.e. not behind large fences - make them public spaces open 24/7 (sorry, ed. Dept.).

Consider mental wellbeing when building community capacity around healthy eating.

Promote practical skill workshops to increase community / household capacity to grow more at home. Build whole community capacity, not just 'target' demographics. Establish networking groups + support local food businesses / programs e.g.. mentoring programs, program sharing opps.

Support non profit community groups to run free skills (food growing / composting / household waste management) workshops for those most in need - support via free venue + perhaps modest tutor fee.





FUNDING

Primary / Secondary school based education programs on food production / nutrition / food preparation. Grants to support community groups / programs to meet the needs of their clients. Clearer process - more specific to food targeted area.

Provide for the Ballarat food hub to expand development beyond the food bank warehouse.

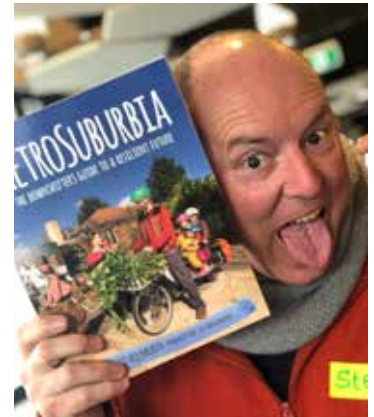
Create a discrete food security category for community grants.

Provide funding to community led major infrastructure projects that add value to and supports the local food eco system! Subsidising kitchen + facility access - providing space + land for activities - providing personnel + marketing support.

Programs that highlight local production systems - food production - food systems - food producers - Urban food - food distribution. Eco development to support local producer start ups / innovation + entrepreneurial food production on start up grants i.e. urban farming. Too much focus on retail etc. / no focus on agribusiness.

A lot of ideas do not need a lot of funding because the programs are already there e.g. Stephanie Alexander kitchen garden program has had significant state government funding - look into that!

Small / micro business grants - no grants existing for micro food businesses. Absolutely no government support for artisan producers or business with small turnover.



INFORMATION PROVIDER

Community group + organisation register, connect groups together + providers with recipients online + in print. An intro for an area if you want to start a home garden - what you can and cannot do.

Community service information hub. Collate list + contacts for all groups concerned with food security + sustainability so that we stop duplicity each others effort + collaboration / cooperate. More transparency.

Funding streams need more promotion + visibility - make them more accessible + very public.

Small producer network for local food producers.

Promote activities run by community garden, permaculture guild etc. Champions of change highlight successes - case studies.

The best one is Facebook but what is the post Facebook. Education re: cooking / shipping / storage basic household skills.

Align communication strategies with service providers - champion local producers / businesses / communities groups.

Link with state government initiatives like love food hate waste.



LAND USE PLANNING

Protection of high value agricultural land for food production rather than housing developments. Stop rezoning, end the sprawl. Build neighbourhood food forests on public land where there are local groups committees to manage + support them.

Investigate what can be used to influence the variety of food business offerings.. Be mindful of social impacts of planning decisions around fast food outlets.

Council permits for buildings in community gardens is over managed - stop developers taking good food production land. Plan for population image - Landscape programs.

Nature strips used as low cost food production areas! Roundabouts - botanical gardens section. Restrictions on new fast food outlets - rewards + incentives for businesses making healthy choices.

Future land planning to include access to healthy eating in new facilities. More community gardens.

Rewrite current by-laws re animals / farm animals to allow people have them without permits. Require developers to go 'above + beyond' their compulsory developer contributions.

Land for community gardens edible gardens - nature strip gardens. Consider clusters (impact of) fast food outlets in lower socio -economic area. Discourage situations like fast food corner.

Like to see relevant activity re: verge planting to encourage community food sharing. Council could support soil testing so community can safely grow food at home / on nature strips. Map arsenic tests.





LEADERSHIP + ADVOCACY

Support and advocate for major community led infrastructure projects that add value to and fill voids in the current food ecosystem. Such as? Food hub. Ballarat wholefoods collective on large scale of local producers + fresh produce.

Lead by example. The council should represent the community they lead by doing all the things they want the community to do. Local produce at community event etc.

Reduce the number of multi national fast food outlets instead prioritising privately owned, healthy food outlets. Advocate for: Shift planning control to local government not state, so communities can have influence?

Advocate to State + National government re: land use planning for fast food outlets and housing developments. Regional leadership with neighbouring LGAs in food system strategy.

Lead the way in the local community in regard to healthy eating policies + providing a settings based approach to the issue i.e. healthy catering, traffic light system in sporting club canteens. Learning from other councils connecting + supporting similar initiatives.

Programs that will enhance economic circumstances of the regional communities to improve status of SEIFA index: Healthy eating choices / Exercise / Economic - improve household income - Visitor economy + it's contribution to local food producers. Advocate for programs to reduce food waste.

Advocacy + support for the Ballarat food hub + possible activities around it i.e. edible gardens, food education, facility + training.

Protect food producing land from being used for housing, through zoning etc. Make it easier for small, food producers to operate. Rate reductions for 'food security' registered groups.

Advocate + support initiatives around food literacy. Community ability to grow as well as shop, budget, cook + store food. Cooking skills are hugely lacking in our community e.g. The hidden orchard 'cook up' sessions. Focus of agri - business, small local producers, eco dev.



REGULATION

Sliding scale of food act registration fees for low volume / low risk food groups i.e. honey \$450 p/yr. Making food + label testing + compliance easier. Less samples required, more uniform testing - get rid of 6 months into registration.

Allow community to use nature strips for food production.

Regulation not to be used as a block for initiatives that support producers and the 'community to sell / provide healthy food.

Council could influence Bunnings etc. to offer healthy food choices on Saturday morning.

Allow more responsibility for individuals, relax regulations on kitchen where used for community purposes + meal prep for immediate consumption. Award + credit organisations + food outlets making healthy change in regards to healthy eating, sugary drinks, environment, food wastage, food security, fund raising. Lower regulation fees for only healthy options.

Not let regulation prohibit food being reused + to percent / reduce food insecurity and waste.

Develop local laws regarding disposal of food to reduce / repurpose waste. Household food waste collection.

Regulation to be developed in connection with community groups and the people they impact on. Not from someone who doesn't deal with the producers.



SERVICE PROVIDER

Access to kitchens for all. Providing broader community services like Open Table and SecondBite. Household food waste collection service.

Walk the talk re: bees as key food pollinators, demonstration hives on council property i.e.. Town hall, Art gallery, MADE (Eureka Centre), Her Maj etc.

Source food locally. Low packaging waste - use returnable crates / packaging.

What about food quality in nursing homes? Focus on local producers not just suppliers lower food miles + eco benefit for region.

Extend early learning food policies into primary school + secondary school where poor food choices increase hugely. Provide education in early learning primary + secondary schools on how to grow, shop, cook + store healthy meals.

Wider access to home meals programs.

Promote programs such as 'Get Grubby TV' in early learning centres to connect young children with gardens + food - go Costa!

No permits on nature strip food production. Nature strips to have fruit trees.

Neighbourhoods compost hubs managed by residents - encouraged.



WORKFORCE + ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Support local producers and food businesses. Preference to healthy choices. Provide information to staff about: nutrition / good choices for catering. Make opportunities to share / socialise around healthy food.

Have a council workplace community garden for council people to get involved. Central Highlands Water do.

Be the leader through action internally to externally influence other orgs. / groups to make healthy eating a priority for staff. The environment we live and work in and limiting or pending options + the influence on healthy status.

Sourcing local + healthy food for all council events + offices. Leading by example - zero waste! Fund small food producer extension officer - refer to AG VIC - DVP network - More business focus - Artisan + premium food production - Promotion!

Counter - act the concentration of fast food outlets in Sebas! Educate the community.

Implement healthy choices framework into all council facilities + influence sports clubs canteens.

Sustainable waste (food / other) processing strategy.

Less junk food / drinks or sporting facilities etc. Procurement policies requiring supporting new contractors (for any type of work e.g.. Building works) to have healthy eating / walk strategies for the businesses.

Give preference to local food / beverage producers not just suppliers i.e. local craft beer at functions vs crown larger etc. Have strict policy + enforcement to meet healthy choices guidelines in terms of food outlets + function catering (fruit vs scones!).



OUR INITIATIVES

Using the wider feedback participants worked in small teams to try and identify a number of priority considerations for the new strategy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Build community capacity (individual/ household + groups)

The intention of this initiative

Food literacy - start young. Practical. Food growing skills / cooking / processing. Community groups given \$, less regulatory 'blocks' (inc. schools). Collaboration, networking, partnerships, actively supported.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 There are big gaps in current community capacity.
- 2 Leveraging with community groups , schools etc. Massively increases impact of funds + programs.
- 3 Creates community ownership. This is great but linking what is already happening would be a good start.

A Flexi grant

The intention of this initiative

A funding pool for innovative projects or those that don't fit neatly into existing 'categories' - maybe online community voting part of selection process? Prioritise partnership - must align with food plan objective.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Some good ideas might not be funded otherwise.
 - 2 Encourages creative responses.
 - 3 Encourages collaboration + community ownership (espec if we do community voting). Good initiative like the community input.
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EDUCATION

Education for families to grow and cook natural food.

The intention of this initiative

Access to nutritional food (good medical and health outcomes). Education on planting + growing food. Cooking delicious + nutritious food . Engage CAFS, PINARC, SVDP, Uniting Care. Extend Stephanie Alexander program to community groups. How do we elevate the parents in here? Agree - young people have lost the art of preparing and cooking nutritious food - and to all schools.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Good medical outcomes.
 - 2 Instil confidence in people to grow + cook nutritious food - a sense of wellbeing, self esteem, fitness.
 - 3 Good economic outcomes - save money on food - save money on health care - reduce impact on environment. These programs already exist - we need to promote them.
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INFORMATION PROVIDER

How to stay informal.

The intention of this initiative

How best to facilitate / share / disseminate information all local food security activities / programs / opportunities and relevant organisations. Learn about great opportunities - how best utilise existing channels to do this and be socially inclusive. Community panel for this. Essential for a whole of community approach.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Lots of great initiatives already but better communication would provide greater reach for projects etc.
- 2 To prevent connectivity + cooperation between like minded groups existing residents + new residents.
- 3 Promote all relevant groups + activities. Remember to collaborate + communicate with others in the region. There are a lot of great initiatives + activities - how to disseminate that information is critical for success.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Sensible planning for community health.

The intention of this initiative

Is that if council renew / regulates land use with a view to enable households / communities to be more responsible or able to produce their own food. Council should be an enabler not a disabler e.g. nature strips.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Food security - those without regular access \$ for food have food available.
- 2 Community engagement - nature strips encourages food sharing.
- 3 Have productive use of green space . Mental health benefits - Physical health benefits.

FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE - ADVOCACY SUPPORT FOR BUILDING A STRONG LOCAL FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

Advocacy support for building a strong local food infrastructure.

The intention of this initiative

For council to lead the charge on capital intensive projects that fundamentally address gaps in the local food ecosystem e.g. food distribution bank - commercial kitchens e.g. local food production - edible landscapes.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 State and Federal government funding is required to achieve these goals therefore council needs to lead and advocate on community - partners behalf.
- 2 Council is integral part of strengthening the local food system. This increases profile support of the issue.
- 3 Better infrastructure will enable better connections between community groups increasing efficiency and be an appetiser to attract national partners.

REGULATION

Increasing community access to food.

The intention of this initiative

Allowing the entire community to access healthy food. Find a way of 'branding' local + healthy foods - a 'Ballarat grown / produced' sticker.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Fruit + Vegetable consumption is low in our community, risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity + cancer.
- 2 If health options are provided they are usually well received.

Addressing barriers to Food Act Registration requirements.

The intention of this initiative

Making it easier for small producers (farmer + value adding) to start and maintain their business viability safely. Agree and good for local economy. Love it!

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Encourages innovation and variety in small business.
- 2 Increase access and interest in local food + supporting local business.
- 3 Allowing community groups more opportunity.

FOOD WASTE SERVICE PROVIDER

Food waste to energy.

The intention of this initiative

Council is the principal provider in waste collaboration. Make productive waste of food waste products from a range of sources including household (FOGO collection - food + garden organisations) - Hospitals or other institutions - (aged care) - hospitality - council. Recognising circular nature of food system - from plant to growth to waste - good idea. Should include food scraps in green waste collection - local composting.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Landfill diversion of organic waste - industrial worm farms.
- 2 Job creation through a new service.
- 3 Reduce green house gas emissions through the creation of a new renewable energy



SERVICE PROVIDER

Food quality in aged care / hospitals.

The intention of this initiative

Hospitals aged care / nursing homes tend to produce large quantities of food waste. Understanding why that is the case is critical. Potential reasons are cost cutting in food quality / poor portion size choices / patients / residents do not like the food / poor purchasing practices in institution / poor storage.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Improved nutritional outcomes for hospital patients of aged care residents resulting in better health outcomes.
- 2 Reducing food waste + cost to the institution - reduced waste costs - reduced food costs.
- 3 Improved quality of life - institution reputation.

WORKFORCE + ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Councils internal + external influence on the community.

The intention of this initiative

Council to be a leader in sustainable and healthy + consistent food production supply and consumption - follow the traffic light system - no more than 20% red - at least 50% green. Make the new basketball stadium's canteen the gold star in providing healthy food.

Reasons why this is important

- 1 Council has influence as the owner of facilities.
- 2 Council is a role model / mentor to enhancing change.
- 3 Change has to start somewhere - council seen as a leader in the arena.



WE WISH, WE WONDER

At the end of our gathering participants shared some final reflections on the forthcoming strategy.



WE WISH

That more food producers were here. We had health foods for morning tea!

For overall community buy in. No more new fast food outlets in town. Strong evaluation framework around strategy so that we knew how much effect we are having collectively.

That today is taken seriously to have ongoing input into strategy. That there will be a whole community approach. To make a difference.

Resources follow to back up strategy. An achievable long term strategy - action orientated. Creating generated change in life style habits. Less disadvantaged households. Building community capacity around food.

For community ownership for this to be real - implementation supported, not just policy positions. 10year plan clear goals, annual consultation + fine tuning of goals.

Council supports strategy with lots \$\$\$\$. Engagement with lower socio economic groups. Action plans are realistic + sustainable. Buy in from across all council departments.



WE WONDER

About further community consultation. Where were the education reps. Parks Vic. DELWP. Indigenous groups. RDV.

How are timelines to be met? What efforts are being made to involve local producers? Hospital + aged care food waste as largest generators. Level of school / community involvement.

WE LIKE

At the end of our gathering participants shared some final reflections on how useful they found the gathering today.



WE LIKE

Aspiration to do something + make a difference. Similarity of thoughts + common themes e.g. urban food production. Diversity of people here today. Identified who else can be engaged in the conversation.

Range of groups + discussions / networking / facilitation - kept everyone moving + interested. Discussions + solutions + practical ideas.

Change!! Results!!! Consultation - kept it going - the integrated, holistic approach - more diverse people involved - farmers, wider network of stakeholders, neighbourhoods houses, homeless, CALD community, councils Pks + gardens / waste etc.

Brain dump posters. Different council areas to provide feedback. Changing group to share ideas. Respect + support of ideas.

The process has started. Recognising all parts of the food system. The venue. Lots of groups concerned about food security.

That the conversation has now started even if it is overdue. There were a range of groups in the room but lacked food producers.





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PLEASE NOTE: While every effort has been made to transcribe participants comments accurately a small number have not been included in this summary due to the legibility of the content. Please contact Keith Greaves at Keith@mosaiclab.com.au for any suggested additions.