MISSION

To catalyse meaningful and powerful connections to enable the emergence of a flourishing, healthy and democratic food system

Through the provision of food systems advice, research, events, network-building and consultancy services

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We concentrate our work on the following areas of expertise:

- **Community engagement and capacity building**—create networks and connect food system actors through dynamic events, resources, tools, forums and workshops

- **Leadership** – shape the food system conversation and knowledge base

- **Research, consultancy and education** – undertake and communicate food systems research and consultancy across Australia – e.g. Bendigo Local Food Economy pilot study; Role of agribusiness officers in local government
What do we mean by ‘food system’?

“The web of actors, processes and interactions involved in growing, processing, distributing, consuming and disposing of foods, from the provision of inputs and farmer training, to product packaging and manufacturing, to waste recycling. A holistic food systems lens is concerned with how these processes interact with one another, and with the environmental, social, political and economic context. The food systems lens also brings to light reinforcing and balancing feedback loops, tensions between the different components and flows of food systems, and interactions that are cyclical, multilayered and multi-scale. It is a way of thinking about the world that seeks to identify the linear and non-linear relationships between the different components of the system.”

LEADERSHIP AND NETWORK-BUILDING

- Facilitate regular meetings of the Local Government Urban Agriculture Network with staff from over 15 local councils.
- Worked with the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) to establish a Food Governance Taskforce that developed a position paper: The role of local government in economic development, health and wellbeing, and planning to support healthy and sustainable food systems.
- Designed and populated an Australian Food Systems Directory with more than 500 listings of organisations, research, policies, projects, events, infrastructure and people to make visible the food systems sector in Australia. 
  
www.localfoodloop.com/sustain
Urban and Regional Food Declaration: Vision

A food system that aspires to being:

• **Economically productive**: with multiple economic and employment benefits accruing to local residents and, in particular, with enhanced access to healthy and affordable food;

• **Ecologically sustainable**: laying the foundations for a transition to a low-carbon economy, and enhancing health and well-being;

• **Politically integrated**: at a policy and program level, with high levels of active engagement from food-system stakeholders and local residents; and

• **Culturally vibrant**: supporting and expanding a culture that appreciates diverse food traditions and the benefits of local, seasonal and healthy food more generally.
The Circles of Food approach

• Offers an integrated method for practically responding to complex issues of sustainability, resilience, adaptation, liveability and vibrancy

• Takes an urban or regional area, city, community or organization through the difficult process of responding to complex or seemingly intractable problems and challenges at the systemic level

• Acknowledges that it is imperative to understand factors beyond the individual and take into account the broader ecological, economic, political and cultural factors, including policies at global, regional national and local levels
Food Systems and the role of local government

• **Food Governance Taskforce** — multi-institutional network formed after the *Democratising Food Systems* workshop (Oct 2015)

• **Three working groups:** Health and Wellbeing, Planning, and Economic Development

• **Purpose:**
  1. To capture and disseminate existing best practice in Victoria and elsewhere as regards food system policies, strategies, research, programs and projects
  2. To support Councils and communities to embed food system principles and actions in key Council plans and strategies
  3. To support Councils and communities to identify key barriers and obstacles to food system change, and engage in collective advocacy to address those obstacles at the State level
Key drivers of change

Health and wellbeing:
“The current food system is based on an agricultural paradigm in which improved efficiencies and cheaper food for consumers can exacerbate the drivers of climate change, reduce employment opportunities and lead to dislocation and corrosion of social capital in rural areas. The agricultural paradigm promoted by federal and state governments undermines rural resilience and capacity and ensures that rural areas, particularly those highly dependent on farming, bear a disproportionate burden of this production system”

• Diet and food retail environment: the single greatest cause of preventable disease is now diet – costs as much as $130 bn / year – 8% of GDP. In some areas (eg Cardinia) ratio of unhealthy: healthy food outlets is 6:1. Limited access to fresh food and lack of skills in how to use it – low levels of food literacy

• Food security: As many as 2 mn Australians now food insecure – insufficient income / high costs of living the main cause. Melbourne needs 60% more food by 2050 but foodbowl shrinking rapidly with urban sprawl

• Social Inclusion: Food growing, preparation and sharing are all means to engage diverse groups who might experience social exclusion, which in itself is a social determinant of health
Food Governance Taskforce: Key recommendations

• *Diet and food retail environment* – conscious planning regulations to support healthy people, healthy environments and healthy local economies

• *Food security*: strong commitment to the human right to food for all people at all times

• *Social and cultural inclusion*: Long recognised as a social determinant of health, inclusion of linguistically and culturally diverse groups encourages economic entrepreneurship and civic participation in local governance and planning

• *The changing dynamics of food production*: tackling economic and social pressures on producers, to make farming viable and attract and retain new and young producers
Examples of leading practice

• **Vermont’s Farm to Plate** program (by Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund) – 20 years old: comprehensive (whole of state alignment)

• **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Gardens** – kitchen gardens in 1400 schools nationally; sensory food education delivered to tens of thousands of primary school children

• **Ontario Local Food Act 2013** (http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/localfood.htm) : $130 million investment in provincial (state) food economy

• **City of Melbourne / Darebin Council / City of Moreland** – Food Policy / Urban Food Production Strategy / Food Systems Strategy

• **Dandenong Council** is engaged with its ethnically diverse local community to plant edible food crops in Dandenong Park
Next Steps - Local Government

- **Policy**: Develop food systems policies / strategies
- **Funding**: Resource policy / strategy implementation with staff and funding for community-led initiatives
- **Land access**: Audit all public land and prioritise suitable sites for food production
- **Financing**: Create preferential rates for sustainable food production
- **Planning**: Support mixed-use neighbourhoods that provide easy access to a diverse range of healthy food from retail shops and urban agriculture
Council’s Role & Limitations

- Council has the most influence / impact through:
  - Community capacity and skills building
  - Building and Strengthening Partnerships
  - Leadership and advocacy
  - Planning Infrastructure and Regulation

- Key limitations include:
  - Inability to influence the location / type of food outlets
  - Lack of recognition of urban agriculture in State Planning Policy
Next steps - State Government, Policy

• Develop a comprehensive, integrated and harmonised food systems policy, acknowledging the multifunctionality of food and agricultural systems
• Create multi-stakeholder food policy council with cross-departmental, industry and community representation
• Consider ‘right to farm’ legislation
• Adopt strategies for rural, regional and peri-urban renewal (e.g. La Trobe Valley)
Next Steps – State Government, Planning

• Create hard legislative protections of high value farmland (e.g. Ontario Greenbelt)
• Amend the planning provisions to allow local governments to take health and environmental factors into account in granting approvals for fast food outlets
• Support access to land for young and new farmers e.g. through farmland trusts
• Recognise urban agriculture in the planning provisions
Next steps - State Government, Infrastructure

• Prioritise funding for food growing and preparation for schools in high-need areas
• Invest in infrastructure to deliver recycled water to peri-urban farmers, and set targets
• Invest in infrastructure for processing of organic food waste
Next steps – State Govt., Economic Development

• Establish procurement mechanisms to prioritise local food
• Support local and regional branding and marketing initiatives (e.g. Mornington Peninsula Produce)
• Support the development of regional food enterprise clusters, hubs and networks
• Apply lighter-touch regulatory frameworks for smaller-scale producers and processors
Next Steps – Federal Government, Health

- Introduce a sugar tax / related hypothecated health levy on unhealthy foods, and invest the funds into healthy food systems
- Set and fund food literacy targets and programs
- Develop a comprehensive national nutrition policy
- Curtail the freedom of fast food companies to advertise products to children
Next Steps – Federal Government, other

• Revise competition and consumer protection laws to address the dominance of the supermarket duopoly
• Develop and support practical agricultural skills at secondary and tertiary levels
Grassroots Food Policy Processes: Canada, Australia, ACT, United Kingdom
Cardinia Food Circles

2 year partnership with a 10 year vision

To establish, promote and expand a healthy, sustainable and fair food system for all shire residents

Context

- Range of significant social and health challenges: many linked to the food system
- Fast Food to Fresh Food Outlet Ratio = 6:1
- Financial stress means less $ available to purchase healthy food
- Long commutes to employment
- Urban growth eating up finite and valuable agricultural land
- Large environmental footprint of food and agricultural industries
Cardinia Food Circles

Vision for the next 10 years = Ambitious and Aspirational

- Reduce overweight and obesity rates by 30%
- Equalize the ratio of healthy food to fast food outlets to 1:1
- Reduce per capita visits to fast food outlets
- Increase the food literacy of Cardinia’s population by 80%
- Ensure 50% of the population has regular (weekly) access to fresh fruit and veg
- Increase local jobs and business opportunities in food and agriculture

A Collective Impact Approach

Established Partners

Backbone Organisation

Potential Partners
Cardinia Food Circles

Key Activities: The Next Two Years

- Establish a shared understanding of our local food system: Circles of Social Life methodology
- Establish a vibrant local food movement
- Diversifying food distribution and consumption: supporting and amplifying existing initiatives, seeding new ones
- Expand school-based food literacy initiatives
- Develop a community led food strategy: Kitchen Table Conversations to form a Cardinia People’s Food Plan
- Deliver local food events: Cardinia Food Summit, Film Screenings and Panel Discussions, Youth Led Food Events, Workshops
Community participatory food systems mapping: Koo Wee Rup, 19th April 2017
Community participatory food systems mapping: Koo Wee Rup, 19th April 2017

Image created by Kirsty Moegerlein: [www.kirstymoegerlein.com](http://www.kirstymoegerlein.com)
Cardinia Shire Food Systems Profile, April 2017

![Diagram showing the Cardinia Shire Food Systems Profile]

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Alignment with Council Plan:

• 2.4.2. Enhance **food literacy and security** within the community.
• 2017-18 **Business Plan Action**: Coordinate and implement the Food Circles collective impact project (establish a local food network)**
• 2018-19 **Business Plan Action**: Coordinate and implement the Food Circles collective impact project (develop a local food strategy)**
• 3.3.4. Promote practices that **result in the reduction per household of the amount of waste going to landfill, particularly food waste.**
• 3.3.9. **Manage agricultural land use** by supporting farmers to utilise sustainable farming.
• 3.5.4. Ensure the **planning of rural (green wedge) areas** protects and enhances important agricultural, environmental, natural resource, infrastructure and recreational values.
• 4.2.1. **Support our farmers and growing agricultural industry** in adapting to the changing economy and climate.
• 3.4.3. **Advocate for changes in the state planning scheme** which support development of local policies which reduce health-detracting environments (gaming, liquor, fast food).
• 4.2.2. Identify **innovative ways to value-add** to the region’s primary production and transportation.
• 4.2.4. Develop a **local food brand** for Cardinia Shire in partnership with the community.
• 4.4.4. Encourage the **procurement and consumption of local food.**
Food

By 2025, we expect to see:

4. An increase in consumption of nutritious food.

Strategies

4.1 Protect and utilise fertile land as a source of fresh food for current and future generations.

4.2 Grow a vibrant local food economy which supports growers and enables people to access nutritious food.

4.4 Enhance food knowledge, skills and culture within schools, workplaces, clubs and the wider community.

4.5 Divert food waste from landfill and reuse water to grow food.
### Moreland Food System Framework (MFSF)

#### Goals

**“Our goal is to achieve…”**

- A sustainable food system that contributes to a more resilient community and a healthier environment
- A just food system that ensures food is socially and economically accessible to everyone in the community
- A vibrant food system that protects and nurtures food culture, celebrates diversity and builds community

#### Outcomes

**(Measurable & observable - collectively, our vision)**

- Local food makes our economy stronger and our community more resilient
- We use sustainable food practices
- Our land and spaces are healthy & productive
- People are physically and mentally healthier
- Access to food is no longer an issue - we are more food secure
- Food literacy, knowledge and skills are valued, fostered and shared
- The community has the capacity to build a better food system

#### Council is actively promoting and enabling a better food system**

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Timeline

- Lots of work came before us
- Previous policies developed where centered around urban growing and food production
- Frustration as lack of political will saw these strategies not passed through council
- Cindy Tran conducts Food Security in Moreland Background Report 2016

Appendix 4 – How this Strategy was developed

The following is an overview of the steps involved in developing this Strategy and the stakeholders involved in developing it. Moreland City Council thanks all contributors for their time and expertise and looks forward to ongoing partnerships as the Strategy is implemented.

Timeline

2014 Moreland City Council drafts a Community Food Growing Policy with a focus on:
- home food growing within a resident’s property and on nature strips
- community food growing projects that encourage healthy eating, physical activity, develop new skills and provide opportunities for participation in community life
- supporting food growing initiatives in communal spaces on a case by case basis.

Dec 2014 Councillors consider the draft Policy and resolve to consult further with stakeholders to develop a broader Urban Agriculture and Food Production Strategy.

June 2015 A steering committee is formed to assist in developing the Urban Agriculture and Food Production Strategy, after an open invitation to the community from Council. The steering committee is comprised of more than 30 community members and advocates and staff of Moreland City Council, supported by a consultant. The committee:
- modifies the scope of the Urban Agriculture and Food Production Strategy
- identifies existing urban agriculture and food production activities in Moreland
- develops a vision for the future state of urban agriculture and food production in Moreland
- considers examples of initiatives, activities and programs that could enable the region to move from its current state to the desired future state.
Timeline

- engages other stakeholders outside the Steering Committee, both in Council and in the broader community, for their input.

The Steering Committee and consultant draft the Moreland Food System Framework, as the foundation of a broader strategy.

Oct 2015  A draft of the Moreland Food System Framework is noted by Councillors at a Council meeting.


Dec 2016  A decision is then made to develop a stand-alone Moreland Food System Strategy.

Apr 2017  The working group finalises a draft of the Moreland Food System Strategy.
Our key recommendations

1. A set of overarching principles

2. An increased focus on health, including focus on nutritious food (not just food)

3. Commitment to a participatory process ongoing development and implementation of the Food System Strategy, ensuring that the voices of marginalised and vulnerable population groups are included in such processes.

4. Commitment to targets and milestones for the progressive reduction and elimination of food insecurity in Moreland

5. A more comprehensive description of food insecurity

5. Appointment of a suitable person to oversee and coordinate implementation of the Strategy
Request for addition information

Request 1: Draft a concise description of food hubs – what they are; how they contribute to addressing food insecurity; example of a good model.

Request 2: Draft one or two paragraphs on how food charity/emergency relief alone does not solve food insecurity, for inclusion in the Strategy under the graphic on the three key components of enhancing food.

Request 3: Draft an example set of overarching principles about how Council and the community will work together/partner in delivering the Strategy and its vision.
What went to Council

- A Food Systems Strategy instead of a Urban Agriculture Strategy
- Nutritious food in stead of “good food”
- A feasibility study of a Community Food Hub in the first year
- Definition of a Community Food Hub, Nutritious Food, Food Insecurity
- Recognition that community growing and emergency food relief (although essential short term) do not address the root causes of food insecurity.
- Ongoing community consultation action thanks to sharing a PHN article published by Julia McCartan and Claire
Moreland City Council unanimously endorses the Food Systems Strategy and voted to resource it with an allocation of $320,000 dollars over three years.

Video: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B88BCCzgK9enQkxQU2NjM1IwTHc/view?usp=sharing