DEMOCRATISING FOOD SYSTEMS

Sustain: The Australian Food Network

in collaboration with
William Angliss Institute

and

The Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance

Monday 19TH October
Workshop Report

Prepared by

Dr Nick Rose, Executive Director, Sustain
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1. Executive Summary

Democratising Food Systems was a participatory one-day workshop held at the William Angliss Restaurant in Little Lonsdale St, Melbourne, on 19th October 2015. Organised in collaboration with William Angliss Institute and the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA), the intent of the workshop was to launch Sustain: The Australian Food Network and offer the opportunity to a diverse range of food system actors and stakeholders to meet and have structured conversations around some of the critical challenges facing Victoria’s, and Australia’s, food system. Details of Sustain and AFSA can be found in Appendix A.

Eighty participants attended: producers, social entrepreneurs, community food networkers, farmers’ market coordinators, not-for-profit managers, local government managers, local government agribusiness extension and rural business officers, dieticians and health professionals, representatives of philanthropic foundations, trade union organisers, writers, researchers, academics, and students, and chefs.

With contributions from four organisations, participants spent the day exploring four key wicked problems affecting the food system:

1. **Scarcity in a world of abundance**: Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
2. **Cheap food and labour exploitation**: National Union of Workers
3. **Land loss and urban sprawl**: Foodprint Melbourne researchers\(^1\)
4. **Inappropriate-scale regulation**: Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance

The workshop was very well received by participants, 36% of whom completed a post-workshop survey. More than 70% said the workshop either significantly (53%) or greatly (18%) opened up new ways of approaching and thinking about food systems issues. Participants came for exposure to new ideas and approaches, and they were not disappointed. They also came to meet and connect with other food system actors, and many commented that this was one of the key successes of the workshop: the diverse mix of individuals and organisations in the room, well beyond what has been the typical experience of previous food events.

Recommendations for next steps included the following:

- **More events** through the year, focused on particular issues and / or regions
- **Website resources** to outline key target objectives and outlines for Sustain
- The establishment of **working groups** to progress a change agenda
- Holding the **same or a similar event with collaborators in NSW**

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\(^1\) Foodprint Melbourne is a joint project led by the Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab (University of Melbourne) and Food Alliance (Deakin University) / Sustain; and funded by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation.
Outcomes

A key outcome of the day was the identification of the critically important roles supported by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) and the City of Whittlesea (CoW) in the form of a Rural Business Officer (MPSC, Gillian Stewart) and an Agribusiness Officer (City of Whittlesea, Annemaree Docking). Gillian and Annemaree shared their accumulated experience in these roles over the past few years, highlighting how effectively they had been able to build bridges between external stakeholders (producers) and internal stakeholders (planners, environmental health officers, food safety officers), beginning to transform what had previously been antagonistic relationships into constructive ones. Further, these roles demonstrated that both MPSC and CoW valued and supported their local producers, through (for example) the formation of the Small Rural Landholders network in Mornington Peninsula, and regular Agribusiness workshops and events in Whittlesea. Such initiatives have not only reached out to the producer community, but also built awareness and support for the local food system in both municipalities amongst the broader community.

Sustain is pleased to report that we are working with Gillian and Annemaree, as well as the Victorian Local Governance Association and the City of Greater Bendigo, to form a VLGA-led working group involving senior staff and Councillors from a number of local governments, with two aims:

- To raise awareness within councils of the importance of this Agribusiness Extension role
- To advocate across local government in Victoria for the creation of such roles in peri-urban / interface Councils, and in regional and rural Councils

The first meeting of this working group will take place early in 2016, and it is anticipated that it will meet on two-to-three occasions in order to map out an action pathway. This will likely include engagements with the State government over key issues such as definitions of ‘intensive agriculture’ in the State planning scheme and other threats to producer security, as well as the broader strategic question of protection of high-value farmland.
2. Introduction

As we said in the invitation to this workshop:

“Victoria’s food system is changing. The change agents are innovative, creative, passionate and committed producers, urban agriculturalists, restaurateurs, entrepreneurs, planners, researchers, activists, and writers. Design, policy and practice are moving towards a food system grounded in values of fairness, health, participatory democracy, dynamic regional economies, and long-term sustainability.”

These actors comprise the ‘pull’ element of food system change. The ‘push’ element comes in the form of multiple drivers of change: climate change, biodiversity loss, excessive dependence on chemical and fossil fuel inputs, a growing diet-related public health crisis, rising food insecurity for vulnerable populations, loss of farmland due to ongoing urban sprawl and pressures from the mining industry, an exodus of farmers from the land due to a lack of viability, and a cheap food system that depends in no small part on the exploitation of vulnerable workers on farms, in processing factories and further along the food chain.

Democratising Food Systems was conceived as a one-day, participatory event to highlight the need for deeper engagement by actors and stakeholders from across the food system in order to address the many critical issues and challenges that the system itself is facing. These challenges – both individually, and even more so when conceived at a ‘whole-of-system’ level – are quintessential ‘wicked problems’, not capable of easy resolution by any one actor or from within one perspective, but rather requiring co-operation and collaboration by many actors, from a diversity of perspectives, in a sustained effort to effect broader systemic change.

The workshop was designed with three goals:

- to expose participants to new ideas, new approaches and new research
- to engage participants in exploration and discussion of critical food system challenges, and

“It would be great to have some advocacy opportunities e.g. around the food bowl research, around land use advocating to state government to change this/provide solutions similar to that of the land use group, promote sustainable food opportunities, and engage your everyday consumer. Keep the momentum going!”

—Workshop participant
to provide participants with the opportunity to network and meet colleagues from across the system

William Angliss Restaurant was the selected venue for the event. William Angliss Institute (WAI) was an especially appropriate venue for this innovative event because it is both the new home of Sustain (formerly the Food Alliance) and offers Australia’s first Bachelor of Food Studies.

In particular, the in-kind contributions made by kitchen and events staff and students meant that participants were treated to high-quality catering prepared from local and ethically-sourced produce. Many participants remarked on the outstanding quality of the food compared to many other events they’d attended, with 96% of survey respondents indicating that the food highly exceeded or exceeded their expectations. A number commented that this kind of event, with such a high level of catering and support from events students, could really only have taken place at William Angliss.

The workshop program including lightning talks, a mini-scenarios workshop using the Circles of Social Life framework, the exploration of wicked problems using the Socratic Circles approach, a multi-stakeholder panel, and a Food Policy Council role play. The program can be found in Appendix B.

Over 93% of the participants who completed our survey said the program was ‘very well organised and engaging’ or ‘exceptionally well organised and engaging’.
3. Lightning Talks

Five lightning presentations were given to introduce the four food system wicked problems that participants had come to explore together, as well as one emerging food system solution: food hubs.

A. Cheap Food and Cheap Labour

Presented by Caterina Cinanni (NUW President), George Robertson (NUW Organiser), and Sherry Huang (NUW Organiser)

Workers employed on farms and in factories producing Australia’s fresh produce are working long, unfair and unsafe hours for very low pay

Many are paid less than the Award, which is the minimum pay and conditions by law in Australia, and are not receiving superannuation or penalty rates. Many are being forced to use accommodation and transport provided by their employer at exorbitant prices. Sexual harassment, bullying and abuse are rampant in the industry. Many workers are suffering repetitive strain and other injuries, due to excessively fast pace of work, and a lack of training and rotation.

![Exploitation in the Food System](image)

Figure 1: Exploitation in the Food System – National Union of Workers

*All of these factors have created an industry built on exploitation*

Australian communities cannot feel confident that the fresh food sold in their major supermarkets is produced ethically because workers in the industry are not earning a living wage and many are suffering serious labour rights abuses.
B. Food Insecurity: Scarcity Amidst Abundance

Presented by Chantelle Bazerghi, Foodbank Manager, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre; and Russell Shields, Food Justice Truck, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Australia produces enough food to feed over 60 million people annually, yet approximately two million Australians rely on emergency food relief to put food on the table for themselves and their families. Food security is commonly defined as a state in which “all people at all times have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” Food insecurity can occur at the individual, household, community or national level. Australia is a food secure nation; however, there are a range of individuals at increased risk of experiencing food insecurity such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, people who are unemployed, single-parent households, people experiencing homelessness, some culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, asylum seekers, people who are disabled, unwell or frail, etc.

There are many factors which determine the food security status of a nation, community, household or individual:

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**Figure 2: Determinants of Food Security - SecondBite**

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C. Inappropriate-scale regulation

Presented by Tammi Jonas, President, Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance; free-range pig farmer and butcher, Jonai Farms, Eganstown

Overly burdensome and expensive regulatory regimes designed for industrial agriculture are a serious threat to the growth of the fair food movement and the principles of food sovereignty.

Whether it’s taking away your right to consume raw milk, forcing a farm to stamp eggs for ‘better traceability’ when all sales are already direct from farmer to eater, or expensive quarterly audits and regular destruction of processed meat products for the growing number of small livestock producers who are processing on farm, the current food safety regulatory framework is failing Australians. What can be done? How can producers, chefs, local government authorities, lawyers, and fair food activists work together to achieve fair and consistent food safety regulation for the rapidly emerging alternative food system?

D. Urban Sprawl and Loss of Farmland: Planning and implications for future food security

Presented by Dr Rachel Carey, Foodprint Melbourne Research, Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab / Deakin University.

Melbourne’s foodbowl regions are at risk through ongoing suburban sprawl, posing a serious risk to our future food security.

Land use planning in Melbourne’s city fringe foodbowl is a classic wicked problem. Many of Victoria’s fresh vegetables and berries grow on the city fringe in areas now under threat from urban development. These foodbowl areas contain some of Melbourne’s best agricultural land, they’re relatively water secure and they’re important to a resilient and sustainable food supply for the city’s growing population. Yet these areas are often seen as housing estates in waiting, and state planning laws don’t prevent high quality farmland being rezoned for urban development. Farmers in these areas are also under pressure, and some want to leave the land. As the city grows, how can we ensure that we protect Melbourne’s foodbowl as a source of fresh, local and healthy food for current and future generations?

For the first results of the Foodprint Melbourne research, see the infographic on the following page.
Figure 3: Foodprint Melbourne research, October 2015
E. Food System Solution – Food Hub
Presented by Dr Jen Alden, Growing Change, Bendigo

Food Hubs are an emerging whole-of-system solution, in the form of a social enterprise, operated variously as a for-profit, not-for-profit, or co-operative business, that ‘coordinates some of the aspects of production, processing and marketing of food to meet demand for local, fresh, organic or other value-added products’ (Bendigo Food Hub Feasibility Study, 2015). They ‘aim to be economically self-sustaining enterprises that support the local food economy, facilitate collaboration between key stakeholders and community members, and thereby foster a more community-oriented food system (BFHFS). Over 200 Food Hubs now operate in the United States, and a number have emerged in Australia in the past few years, such as Food Connect in Brisbane, CERES Fair Food in Melbourne, and the South-East Food Hub in Dandenong. Bendigo is one of a number of local councils that have recently commissioned feasibility studies for local food hubs (others include Wangaratta and Wyndham). A number of options are available in Bendigo, with a significant opportunity in the form of a re-purposed industrial site close to the railway station and the town centre.
4. Circles of Food – Scenarios Mini-Workshop

Professor Paul James (Director of the Institute of Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney) provided an overview of the Circles of Social Life approach, which the Food Alliance and now Sustain have adapted, with the support of himself and colleagues at the ICS, into a ‘Circles of Food’ framework.⁶

The Circles of Social Life approach was developed by the UN Global Compact Cities Programme and Metropolis (World Association of Major Metropolises), integrating methods for practically responding to complex issues of sustainability, resilience, adaptation, liveability and vibrancy. The approach takes an urban or regional area, city, community or organization through the difficult process of responding to complex or seemingly intractable problems and challenges.

The Circles of Social Life framework offers a practical methodology to collaboratively investigate and address the totality of complex issues across a system and the interactions and tensions between them. This Circles framework builds upon practical work done by the UN Global Compact Cities Programme, Metropolis, World Vision and a number of cities around the world including Porto Alegre, Melbourne, San Francisco, Berlin and Milwaukee.⁷ It offers tools, in particular the ‘General Issue’ and ‘Critical Issue’ clarification processes, as well as a Food Systems profiling questionnaire to create a baseline assessment of current levels of food system sustainability (holistically conceived) in a particular locality or region.

Circles of Social Life treats all complex problems as necessarily affecting all domains of social life: economics, ecology, politics, and culture. This can be expressed in a visual figure that treats all domains as being interconnected through the centre of the circle (see City of Whittlesea example below).

The Circles approach provides a way of responding to a series of questions that are of fundamental importance to policy makers and professionals across all levels of government and society.

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⁶ See http://www.circlesoffood.org
⁷ See http://www.circlesofsustainability.org
Professor James shared with the room how the Food Alliance / Sustain had used the Circles approach with internal and external stakeholders at the City of Whittlesea, Yarra Ranges Shire Council, and the Grampians Food Alliance, to create food systems profiles in all those regions. The City of Whittlesea profile is reproduced below:

Figure 1: Food Systems Profile, City of Whittlesea – Sustain / ICS

The room then divided into two, applying the Circles approach to contemplation of two juxtaposed scenarios of the food system in 2035. Half the room considered a ‘business-as-usual’ scenario, in which all current trends continued and / or intensified; and half the room considered a ‘Fair Food future’ scenario, in which a more distributed food system that foregrounded health and wellbeing and long-term environmental sustainability, had come into being. Below we summarise the results – the feedback from all seven tables is set out in Appendix C.
A. Dystopia: Business as Usual

Certain themes emerged across the three tables that explored this scenario, namely:

- Uncontrolled corporate expansion
- Increasing inequality
- Increasing ecosystem degradation – biophysical extreme change
- Economic depression – leading to revolution

Mapped across the four domains of social life – politics, ecology, culture and economics – participants at the three tables identified some common likely trends. What is important to note – and this is a distinctive feature of this methodology – is that participants were able to draw connections between the various domains. For example, that as corporate concentration and ownership increases (an economic and political phenomenon) there is likely to be a corresponding loss of knowledge amongst farmers and the general population (a cultural phenomenon) as well as increasing levels of toxicity and pollution (an ecological phenomenon). Ultimately this speaks to the truth, as reflected in the Circles methodology, that all domains of social life are interconnected and interdependent.

**Politics:**

- Growth zones near cities allowed to expand continually
- Growing instances of food insecurity create increasing social inequity and unrest
- Farmers further marginalised from decision-making processes; decisions taken purely on economic criteria; and the regulatory burdens on small farmers increase
- Politicians are sponsored by ‘big food’
- There are stricter free trade agreements with less autonomy for local government
- Rate-capping is widely applied and the numbers of local government staff employed in food systems roles are reduced

**Ecology:**

- Less land is set aside for biodiversity; bees and animals die off; ecosystems are diminished; soil is less fertile; monoculture and industrial farming are the norm
- Climate change intensifies, with more drought; there is greater competition for access to water; and waterways are polluted
- The environment is bioengineered, with a clinical / scientific approach
- Toxicity is rampant through the food supply with negative public health impacts
- Food systems transport dependencies on roads and petrol-based vehicles, increasing greenhouse emissions
- Loss of farmland: bigger and more corporate farms, further from Melbourne
Culture:

- Access to culturally appropriate food reduces
- Life expectancy decreases
- Increased social isolation and atomisation leading to a diminished sense of community
- Corporate control and seed “optimisation” leads to less capacity and knowledge of growers; loss of skills and knowledge across many segments of society
- Diminished levels of mental and physical health leading to an increased health burden

Economics:

- The supermarket duopoly continues to expand; there are fewer independent retailers, with less choice than now
- Increasing power and viability of seed patenting companies (e.g. Monsanto)
- Foreign investment increases with profits not going back to local communities; increasing export of food
- Large farms increase and small farms decline; corporatisation of farms leads to more lower paid and lower quality contract work
- Public health costs increase, with a loss of productivity, leading to economic downturns and recessions
- Inequality, poverty and class divisions increase

B. Utopia: Fair Food Future

Meanwhile, the four tables of participants that discussed the utopia of the ‘Fair Food Future’ identified starkly different themes and trends:

- **Connectivity & Interconnectedness**: everyone is connected to food
- **Democracy**: distributed political and economic power
- **Participation and Regeneration**: Participatory culture, regenerative practices
- **Authentic sustainability**: Long-term thinking, empowered communities

Mapping these themes across the four domains of social life, we see the commonalities emerging as follows:

Politics:

- Farmers are politically empowered and involved in decision-making
- Local government incorporates food as core business
- Incentives are provided to encourage sustainable farming, fair access to food for all, secure access to land
The right to food for all is recognised and enforced
Policy is based on aspirational visions and consultation, and on long-term thinking
Governance structures like citizens juries proliferate that enable participatory and true democracy
Bottom-up grassroots activity drives political change

**Ecology:**
- Agro-ecological farming is the norm
- The food system generates no carbon emissions, and we mitigate climate change
- There is a greater focus on indigenous and native plants as food: they are more adaptable to a changing climate
- There is a focus on regenerating landscapes
- Eco-villages proliferate supporting regeneration

**Culture:**
- There is a cultural recognition that people and communities are drivers of change
- Increasing self-employment leads to people having greater control over their own lives
- There is more community connectedness, mobilisation and political activism
- Increase in backyard food growing changes values; Food everywhere is the norm
- People are far healthier and enjoying active lives; there is less need for healthcare
- There is no charitable food system: Food Banks have disappeared
- The culture of land regeneration is embodied in teaching and sharing knowledge and skills
- Focus on enhancing ecological vitality helps build community understanding and culture
- There is a greater appreciation of indigenous histories and knowledge of food
- There is a culture of sharing and understanding of the commons

**Economics:**
- The supermarket duopoly has ‘evaporated’; Market power is more evenly distributed
- There are no mega-farms, small-scale farms are the norm
- There is no food insecurity; Distributed networks mean good food is affordable for all
- We understand and internalise the full social and economic costs of the food system
- Productivity is measured in terms of health, not yield
- Eco-villages promote a shift to the sharing economy; with a focus on the home and community economy
- A choice of lifestyles and working patterns is enabled
- There is a focus on the earth, on regeneration of personal value and the management of the household (oikonomia)
Again, the linkages and synergies across the four domains are clearly visible. Structural and design changes like eco-villages are seen to promote and support cultural shifts towards greater community connectedness, re-valuing of the role of food and farmers in our society, the recovery of ways of knowing, and a shift towards economies of sharing, gift, community and collaboration. Participatory governance structures like citizens’ juries and stronger local governments support and enable these economic and cultural shifts, creating a dynamic of power and agency that reinforces the positive changes participants imagined and embeds them in self-reinforcing spirals. These transformed and transforming domains of politics, economics and culture themselves support and are supported by an ecology in which the dominant theme is regeneration of natural and human landscapes, soils, waterways and ecosystems.

The creative work of imagining both the dystopia of business-as-usual and the utopia of the Fair Food Future took no more than 30 minutes; yet even from this brief summary it can be seen how rich and significant the discussion was. This laid the foundations for the detailed discussion of the four wicked problems in the next session.
5. Wicked Problems – Socratic Circles

The group divided into four in order to explore four key wicked problems across the food system, namely:

- Cheap Food and Cheap Labour
- Food Insecurity: Scarcity Amidst Abundance
- Inappropriate-scale regulation and its impacts on small-scale producers
- Loss of fertile farmland through land-use change in foodbowl regions

The wicked problems were explored in a highly participatory fashion utilising the Socratic Circles methodology (see Appendix D). As the feedback revealed, participants Below we report a summary of the discussions and recommended key actions.

A. Cheap Food and Cheap Labour

Context / Framing

*Workers employed on farms and in factories producing Australia’s fresh produce are working long, unfair and unsafe hours for very low pay. They are not protected by insurance or regulations and are becoming invisible, without support systems.*

See above, Section 3.

Key words

- *Concentration* of corporate power
- *Transparency* – lacking across the system
- *Externalities* – unintended consequences
- *Exploitation* – of workers and farmers

Key actions

- Support measures for greater consumer education and empowerment, e.g. boycotts
- Big Food divestment movement – support long-term and ethical investments
- Support the development of a curriculum to encourage food education
- Support an increase in fair procurement standards and the exercise of institutional buying power
Harness the power of the internet and social media as a communication strategy
Establish micro-loans to support the development of alternative food economies

Socratic Circle Process

- Shareholder expectations of returns, and the increase in institutional shareholders, have intensified the dynamics of profit considerations driving the cheap food system
- Advertising is driving the mania around cheap food (e.g. ‘Down, down!’ campaigns)
- The power of the celebrity chef contrasts with the lack of power of the anonymous farmer
- We as consumers and citizens have a diluted relationship with our food system – people don’t know what they’re missing out in terms of fresh healthy food if they’ve never eaten it, so how would they choose to prioritise it over other costs of living?
- The system is rife with externalities: the unintended outcomes of an exploitative food system
- There is a general lack of responsibility taken for these outcomes
- Consumers have power if they organise and exercise it, e.g. boycotts
- There is a need to emphasise local and seasonal produce
- There is a need to explore diversified means of communication
- There needs to be greater regulation of responsibility – identify the gaps that currently exist and establish clear culpability for breaches of obligations and laws
- How can rural farm workers be less isolated and vulnerable?
- We need to pay attention to food insecurity in agricultural areas
- The grower community needs to acknowledge the impact on health of industrial agriculture

B. Food Insecurity: Scarcity Amidst Abundance

Context / Framing
Australia produces enough food to feed over 60 million people annually, yet approximately two million Australians rely on emergency food relief to put food on the table for themselves and their families. It was great to have such a broad range of participants across different sectors. This allowed me to think differently about a lot of issues - which is a crucial skill for tackling complex problems.

Key words
Access to nutritious food is recognised as a social determinant of health. It is also considered a basic human right. The impact of food insecurity is significant and affects an individual’s

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physical, mental and social wellbeing. Individuals affected by food insecurity are more likely to experience:

- **POOR GENERAL HEALTH** – children and adults who are food insecure are more likely to have poor health, increased visits to the Doctor and more days off school/work due to illness\textsuperscript{11}.
- **MALNUTRITION** - while this is not seen widely in the Australian context, there is an increased risk of the elderly becoming malnourished\textsuperscript{12}.
- **DIET RELATED CHRONIC DISEASES** – people experiencing food insecurity are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes\textsuperscript{13}.
- **OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY** - The risk of obesity is 20 to 40\% higher in women who are food insecure, increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer that are linked with obesity\textsuperscript{14}.

**Key actions**

- Establish clarity on the problem we are trying to solve – a clear definition of both the problem (food insecurity) and its solutions
- Develop strategies to communicate the problem and its solutions effectively to policy-makers
- Campaign for a Local Food Act
- Develop early and current food literacy and nutrition literacy programs
- Expose the issue through the voices of those experiencing it

**Socratic Circle Process**

- What are the economic impacts of food insecurity and how do we measure them?
- How do we coordinate food security programs that are successful, so that we are not re-creating the wheel?
- How do we measure food security programs?
- What role do people experiencing food insecurity play? How do they contribute to solutions? How can we / they share their stories
- The lack of advocacy training for health experts prevents effective lobbying for ongoing and proven-worth funding
- We need to move away from increasing acceptance that charities and NGOs are the agencies to deal with food insecurity, rather than government
- We need to move away from the acceptance that food isn’t wasted if it’s being rescued

\textsuperscript{13} Vozoris N, Tarasuk V. Household food insufficiency is associated with poorer health. J Nutr. 2003;133:120–6.
\textsuperscript{14} Burns C. A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia. Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition; Deakin University, 2004.
C. Inappropriate-scale regulation

Context / Framing
Overly burdensome and expensive regulatory regimes designed for industrial agriculture are a serious threat to the growth of the fair food movement and the principles of food sovereignty. The rapid change of regulations by governments shuts down small farms rapidly with no recourse or compensatory measures.
See above, Section 3.

Key words
- Real costs of current regime
- Risks – what is the true level of risk?
- Best practice – what does it consist of?

Key actions
- Analysis of the real costs of the current regulatory regime for public and producers / all taxpayers, and compare this with the stated intent of the regime
- Build consumer understanding of the current regime – effective awareness-raising and lobbying, with case studies
- Carry out a best practice audit and mapping of the national and international regulatory environment
- Analyse the wider implications of the interpretation of risk, identify blindspots, and social capital impacts e.g. aged care
- Explore regulator roles, identities, perceptions and realities – identify training needs and the industry culture

Socratic Circle Process
- Unclear and irrelevant regulations are a major issue for producers
- PrimeSafe should have an education department to help local producers comply with regulations, not just bully them with the regs.
- How do we determine the true costs to the taxpayer, the public and producers of the current regulatory regime?
- How do we analyse, understand and communicate the wider implications of risk in the food system?
- How do we help councils to understand and support local producers and markets? Need to engage with multiple council departments (across silos) in the pursuit of ‘protecting our local food system’
- How do we help producers understand the regulations they need to comply with?
- How do we effectively engage with regulators and policy-makers to achieve a culture change in favour of smaller-scale and regenerative producers? Form alliances to help target conversations with government and have a louder voice
D. Urban Sprawl and Loss of Farmland: Planning and implications for future food security

Context / Framing
Many of Victoria’s fresh vegetables and berries grow on the city fringe in areas now under threat from urban development - a classic food system wicked problem.
See above, Section 3.

Key Words / Ideas
- *Regenerative* rather than *sustainability*
- *Connectivity*: Between the food and land; between community and government; between policy makers and association
- *Re-value*: mapping land to value, supporting value with data and evidence; and community value (education)

Key actions / proposals
- Need to address food and housing affordability
- Planning schemes can provide a framework and can be integrated with other departments and levels of government
- Community needs to advocate into Council; and Councils need to advocate to State govt
- Use of data (quantitative and qualitative) to build a body of evidence to support change
- Need for clear criteria to differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ land
- Multi-generational farmers could be involved in farming mentor programs to mentor younger people

Socratic Circle Process
- How the problem is framed – seeing it as an opportunity not a drag e.g. local farms as a waste solution for composting. Seeing farmland as resource, not a drain
- Planners looking at the issue and setting targets e.g. 20% of the food should come from close to the city
- We have a need for shelter as well as food. Are we designing dwellings with food-growing built in?
- Looking at long term value – people that are healthier, happier and more connected
- Need to bring the community along with you – grassroots
- How do we affect that change in government policy? Educating planners – statutory and strategic planners about valuing land for food production in future
  - Bring an argument, weight of evidence and educate and bring your advocates with you – consumers
  - Peri-urban foodbowls are undervalued significantly if we rely on traditional sources
  - How do we equip grassroots organisations to collect the evidence?
- Link between land use and affordable housing is really important. Property developers will tell you they’re trying to address affordable housing. You can’t look at the issues in isolation.
- **How much land is needed per head for food? How many families need how much food?**
- Role of local/regional food policies is important for re-valorising food
6. Discussion Panel

Roles and challenges of governance in building a fair food system

The purpose of this panel was to consider, from a diversity of perspectives, governance challenges in building a fairer and more democratic food system. The panel consisted of the following individuals:

- Annemaree Docking, City of Whittlesea Local government and agribusiness
- Sylvia Collett, Bass Coast Farm
- Caterina Cinnani, President, National Union of Workers
- Liza Barbour, Convenor, Right to Food Coalition, Monash University
- Ange Barry, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Education
- Gillian Stewart, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Planning
- Miranda Sharp, Coordinator, Melbourne Farmers Markets

**Key themes** emerging from the discussion included the following:

- Food systems issues are complex and it is difficult to create holistic systems thinking
- The high level of frustration experienced by producers and small food businesses in dealing with local and state government compliance requirements
- The enabling role of local government as regards compliance with regulatory standards
- The embedded nature of super-exploitation in the dominant food system means that everyone in the corporate food chain has to continue to put pressure on those beneath them in order to stay in business
- The value of having a producer within councils to work with other producers, and educate them about compliance issues
- The unevenness of current regulatory and legislative frameworks as regards planning and food safety standards
- The lack of responsibility and accountability between farmers and work-supply contractors creates a major hazard for farm and food-system workers
- The double standards as regards enforcement of laws and regulations were highlighted. For instance, Caterina talked about how companies with workplace accidents involving death had not resulted in any prosecutors or penalties for the company, while Miranda mentioned significant barriers in getting farmers markets established
- The lack of regulation around the use of the term ‘farmers’ market’ creates a major risk for the integrity of the food system
- There is too much of a focus on food rescue rather than looking at causes of food insecurity; those experiencing food insecurity need to be heard
- The lack of discussion between state government departments is a barrier for organisations and councils trying to introduce complex solutions to food system issues
- The need for research into concentration across the food system, for example in relation to the purchasing of abattoirs
- Should we be framing food security as a ‘right to food’? Are we looking enough at structural issues?

What became clear during the discussion was the critically important role that the two Agribusiness Extension Officer positions created by the City of Whittlesea and Mornington Peninsula Shire Council play in acting as a key point of liaison between producers and planners in their respective councils. This will be discussed further in next steps, below.
7. Food Policy Council Role Play

Food Policy Councils are multi-stakeholder, participatory, transparent and democratic governance frameworks for building shared understanding of a local or regional food system, as well as identifying opportunities for strategic actions, projects and collaborations. Food Policy Councils have been in existence at various levels in North America for over thirty years, and have proven to be an effective means of achieving positive food systems change for the benefit of communities, low income and vulnerable groups, producers and local businesses.

The Toronto Food Policy Council, established in 1990, has five key action areas:

- Research, reports and publications
- Facilitation
- Partnerships
- Project implementation
- Communications, Capacity Building and Public Education

Its achievements include:

- Contributing to the development of the Toronto Food and Hunger Action Plan
- Leading the development of the Toronto Food Charter
- Contributing to the Toronto Official Plan
- Facilitating engagement with the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee, leading to agricultural land preservation and food-sensitive urban planning
- Economic Development
- Contributing to the Toronto Environmental Plan, including gaining support for urban agriculture and food waste recovery

The aim of this final session of the Democratising Food Systems workshop was to model a Food Policy Council via a role play. We constituted the inaugural meeting of the *Melbourne Metropolitan Food Policy Council*, whose members consisted of the following individuals:

- Jill Post, City of Melbourne, Chair
- Nic Gowans, Ballarat Producer
- Greg Robertson, Fair Food Campaign, National Union of Workers
- Anita Hopkins, Program Manager, Food Systems, Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation
- Simon Grigalius, former Chef, My Little Kitchen
- Rachel Carey, Research Fellow, Deakin University

The participants chose the focus of the first meeting of the *Melbourne Metropolitan Food Policy Council* (MMFPC) by vote (show of hands), choosing amongst the four wicked problems that were explored before lunch during the Socratic Circles. The choice of the majority was *food insecurity*. 
Highlights of discussion included the following:

- Representation – who’s not at this table?
- Members identified the need to get those people being represented (e.g. the food insecure, exploited labourers) to actively participate in the discussions so they can advocate for their own interests (cancer advocacy was offered as an example)
- The role that transparent food labelling could play to provide indications of provenance and production (energy/water use, food miles etc.)

A key action point was the need to actively recruit members of disadvantaged groups – those currently experiencing the greatest hardship in the food system – for the next meeting of the MMFPC. This provided a fitting conclusion for the day, with objective of a truly democratic food system being one that is participatory – one that is shaped by the people who are currently not benefiting from the existing system, to ensure that the emerging system is inclusive and addresses the needs of everyone in our community.
8. Next steps

The response of participants to this workshop was overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic. Participants enjoyed the day, the diversity of food system stakeholders represented, and the range of issues discussed. Participants also enjoyed the networking opportunities the event provided, and the exceptional quality of the catering which reflected the philosophy of the workshop.

In terms of next steps, building on the outcomes of the day and the recommendations of participants, there are a number of clear opportunities and needs that have emerged.

Networking / Working groups / focus groups

A significant motivation for those attending the event was to meet others working in both similar and different spaces in the food system, hear a diverse range of perspectives and establish contacts and relationships. A number of participants commented (see right) that a good way of building interest and momentum would be to support existing groups gathered around particular interests and / or support the formation of new focus groups.

Existing groups include the NUW’s Fair Food Campaign, the Right to Food Coalition’s work on food insecurity, AFSA’s Legal Defense Working Group (on regulations), Sustain’s Local Government Urban Agriculture Network (LGUAN), and Foodprint.
Melbourne’s Stakeholder Reference Group, which includes Mornington Peninsula, Whittlesea and a number of other local councils. Another existing group that was briefly mentioned during the workshop was the Australian Food Hubs Network, which was formed in 2011 to support the emergence and growth of the multi-functional Food Hub sector in Australia.

More events and information

There was strong support for more events and sharing of information, with the opportunity to go more in-depth on particular issues, and include a wider range of people, organisations and interests. There was also interest in adapting and replicating this work in NSW for food system stakeholders in Sydney.

Research

A number of research needs were identified during the course of the day, including the following:

- Map regulatory and auditing requirements for small-scale producers
- Map stakeholders across the food system and disseminate results
- Measure and document food security programs and initiatives
- Support and disseminate research ongoing – especially Foodprint Melbourne, food insecurity research
- Support new and emerging research – e.g. Food Hub feasibility studies a local food economy pilot, economic impacts of accredited farmers’ markets

Advocacy and collaborations

Those attending the day are motivated by securing change in the food system, especially for the benefit of the most disadvantaged. There was a recognition of the need to work together to achieve such change: for the benefit of vulnerable workers with the NUW’s Fair Food Campaign, for asylum seekers and the food insecure, for small-scale food producers seeking regulatory reform, and for long-term food security through protecting our foodbowl regions. This is the opportunity that a Food Policy Council, amongst other initiatives, represents.
APPENDIX A – ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

About Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Sustain: The Australian Food Network will be a meta-Network that articulates and amplifies the work of the growing number of local food networks in Victoria and nationally. Sustain will work alongside government, business and community stakeholders to be a national Food Network, supporting the transition to a food system that works for all Australians. Sustain continues the legacy of the VicHealth-funded Food Alliance, formerly based at Deakin University. Sustain is incorporating as a charitable Company limited by Guarantee, with the support of the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation and Arnold Bloch Leibler. It will be based at William Angliss Institute in the heart of Melbourne.

Mission

To work together with local governments, the public and community health sector, research institutions and other key food system stakeholders across the public, private and community sectors, to support the development of food systems that are fair, connected, healthy and sustainable.

Board of Sustain

The Board of Sustain contains representation from several leading food systems organisations, namely:

- Kelly Donati (Chair), Lecturer, William Angliss Institute; Board Member, Slow Food Melbourne
- Ange Barry (Treasurer), CEO, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation
- Dr Paul Whitelaw (Secretary), Director of Higher Education, William Angliss Institute
- Greg Jacobs, Team Leader, Health Department, City of Melbourne
- Miranda Sharp, Coordinator, Melbourne Farmers Markets
- Professor Paul James, Director, Institute of Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney

Executive Director

Dr Nick Rose has extensive policy, research and practical experience with food systems, food security and food sovereignty. A Churchill Fellow, he has extensively researched the potential of urban agriculture in the United States, Canada, Argentina and Australia to address food security, resilience and sustainability challenges. The editor of Fair Food: Stories from a Movement Changing the World, he is the co-founder and Vice-President of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance. He has worked in advisory and consultancy capacities with local governments in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia; and is currently teaching and researching food systems and food sovereignty at William Angliss Institute.

Benefits

Members of this Network will:

- Form part of a Food Systems Community of Practice, sharing lessons and learning from research, policy, and project work in facilitated and documented meetings
- Be linked to emerging Food Security and Fair Food and Law research collaborations
• Collaborate on shared advocacy agendas at the regional, state and national levels
• Be linked to leading affiliated national alliances and coalitions, such as the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance and the Right to Food Coalition
• Have supported access to students/interns as part of a dedicated community-engaged learning program with concrete research outcomes of benefit to network members and stakeholders
• Be named and have a profile on a dedicated Circles of Food website, showcasing policies, strategies, programs, initiatives and achievements
• Have discounted access to research and consultancy services, and attendance at food systems conferences and events organised by Sustain and our partners

About the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance

AFSA is a national alliance of farmers, food entrepreneurs, community gardeners, farmers market coordinators, journalists, researchers and local food advocates who share the vision of a fair food future for all Australians. AFSA is founded on the principles of food sovereignty – ’The right of peoples to nourishing and culturally appropriate food produced and distributed in ecologically sound and ethical ways, and their right to collectively determine their own food and agriculture systems.’

Founded in 2010, AFSA has provided national vision and leadership through collaboratively creating Australia’s first People’s Food Plan, in coordinating Australia’s first Fair Food Week and in creating a farmers’ chapter, Fair Food Farmers United. In 2015 AFSA launched Australia’s first Fair Food feature documentary, which tells the stories of Australian farmers, social entrepreneurs, and urban agriculturalists who are transforming Australia’s food system.

AFSA National Committee

Tammi Jonas, Jonai Farms, President
Dr Nick Rose, Sustain / William Angliss Institute, Vice-President
Chris Balazs, Sage Choice Beef, Secretary
Wendy Lehmann, Wyalong Farm Demonstration Centre, Treasurer
Dr Alana Mann, Sydney University, Communications Officer
Ben McMenamin, Memberships Officer
Michele Lally, Savannah Farm
Sophie Lamond, Youth Food Movement
Gavin Williams, Urban Agriculture Australia
## APPENDIX B - PROGRAM

### Democratising Food Systems – 19 October 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.30–9.00</td>
<td>Registration and coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.00–9.30 am</td>
<td>Welcome and Introduction to Sustain, Dr Nick Rose</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- William Angliss Institute, Dr Paul Whitelaw</td>
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<td>- Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance, Tammi Jonas</td>
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<td>- Food Alliance, Kathy McConnell</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30 –10.00 am</td>
<td>Lightening poster presentation: applied research, campaigns &amp; responses to complex problems</td>
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<td>- National Union of Workers: Fair Food campaign</td>
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<td>- Right to Food Coalition / Asylum Seeker Resources Centre: Food Justice Truck</td>
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<td>- Foodprint Melbourne: urban sprawl and the loss of prime farmland</td>
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<td>- Bendigo Food Hub Feasibility Study: role of food hubs in a fair food future</td>
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<td>- Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance: scale-appropriate regulation for a fair food future</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00–11.00am</td>
<td>Circles of Social Life workshop: tools for thinking through complex problems</td>
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<td>Professor Paul James, University of Western Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00–11.30am</td>
<td>Morning tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 am– 12.45pm</td>
<td>Wicked problems workshops: democratic approaches to exploring four real-world scenarios</td>
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<td>- Scarcity in a world of abundance</td>
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<td>- Cheap food and labour exploitation</td>
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<td>- Land loss and urban sprawl</td>
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<td>- Regulation across the food system</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.45 – 1.15 pm</td>
<td>Report back from workshops: summarising outcomes and developing a research agenda</td>
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<td>1.15–2.15pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>2.15–2.30 pm</td>
<td>Educating for fair food systems:</td>
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<td>WAI Bachelor of Food Studies / MA in Food Systems &amp; Gastronomy</td>
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<td>2.30 –3.30pm</td>
<td>Multi-sectoral panel discussion:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Roles and challenges of governance in building a fair food system</td>
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<td>With representation from local government, local producers, community health, food</td>
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<td>security, education and hospitality</td>
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<td>3.30–4.00pm</td>
<td>Afternoon tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.00– 4.10pm</td>
<td>Introduction to the Food Policy Councils, Dr Nick Rose</td>
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<td>4.10 – 5.10pm</td>
<td>Food Policy Council Role Play</td>
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<td>Identifying roles, responsibilities, action pathways &amp; a research agenda for a Food</td>
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<td>Policy Council</td>
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<td>5.15–5.30pm</td>
<td>Wrap up: opportunities for collaboration and priorities for research</td>
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<td>5.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Closure and thanks</td>
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<td>6.30</td>
<td>Chefs’ Collaborative Dinner</td>
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<td>Grossi Florentino Wynn Room, 80 Bourke Street, Melbourne</td>
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APPENDIX C – CIRCLES OF SOCIAL LIFE and SCENARIOS MINI-WORKSHOP

Circles of Social Life

The framework we base our consultation, analysis and recommendations on is the Circles of Social Life approach, developed by the UN Global Compact Cities Programme and Metropolis (World Association of Major Metropolises). This approach offers an integrated method for practically responding to complex issues of sustainability, resilience, adaptation, liveability and vibrancy. It takes an urban or regional area, city, community or organization through the difficult process of responding to complex or seemingly intractable problems and challenges.

The Circles of Social Life framework offers a practical methodology to collaboratively investigate and address the totality of complex issues across a system and the interactions and tensions between them. This Circles framework builds upon practical work done by the UN Global Compact Cities Programme, Metropolis, World Vision and a number of cities around the world including Porto Alegre, Melbourne, San Francisco, Berlin and Milwaukee.\(^\text{15}\) It offers tools to use and in particular we will consider and discuss with you the ‘General Issue’ clarification process and ‘Critical Issue’ clarification process as a basis upon which to plan and conduct the consultation workshop.

Circles of Social Life treats all complex problems as necessarily affecting all domains of social life: economics, ecology, politics, and culture. This can be expressed in a visual figure that treats all domains as being interconnected through the centre of the circle (see Figure 1 below).

\(^\text{15}\) See http://www.circlesofsustainability.org
Figure 1. Circles of Social Life Domains

CIRCLES of SOCIAL LIFE

DOMAINS OF THE SOCIAL

ECONOMICS
- Production & Resourcing
- Exchange & Transfer
- Accounting & Regulation
- Consumption & Use
- Labour & Welfare
- Technology & Infrastructure
- Wealth & Distribution

ECOLOGY
- Materials & Energy
- Water & Air
- Flora & Fauna
- Habitat & Settlements
- Built-form & Transport
- Embodiment & Sustenance
- Emission & Waste

POLITICS
- Organization & Governance
- Law & Justice
- Communication & Critique
- Representation & Negotiation
- Security & Accord
- Dialogue & Reconciliation
- Ethics & Accountability

CULTURE
- Identity & Engagement
- Creativity & Recreation
- Memory & Projection
- Belief & Meaning
- Gender & Generations
- Enquiry & Learning
- Wellbeing & Health
The *Circles* approach provides a way of responding to a series of questions that are of fundamental importance to policy makers and professionals across all levels of government and society.

**Firstly**, how can we understand and map the sustainability of the food systems within our cities, communities and organisations in all their complexity — economic, ecological, political and cultural?

**Secondly**, what are the central critical food system issues that relate to making the city or community more sustainable?

**Thirdly**, what should be measured and how? Instead of designating a pre-given set of food system indicators, the approach provides a process for deciding upon indicators and analysing the relationship between them. Thus it supports monitoring and evaluation and a reporting process.

**Fourthly**, how can a positive response be planned? The approach provides a series of pathways for achieving complex main objectives. It offers a deliberative process for negotiation over contested or contradictory critical objectives and multiple driving issues in relation to those main objectives.

The approach proceeds through layers of engagement and action research, as summarised in Figure 2. Here we describe the nature of the approach in briefest and most general terms.

**Figure 2. Circles of Social Life Process Pathway**

The *Circles* approach provides a way of achieving sustainability and resilience that combines qualitative with quantitative indicators. It sets up a conceptual and technology-supported framework for investigating problems faced by communities, and is intended to be applicable across the very different contexts of a neighbourhood, city or region.

It is sensitive to the need for negotiation from the local to the global. It takes the data seriously — both pre-existing data and data that may be generated through the process — but the data doesn’t drive the interpretation. Rather, the methodology allows for multiple feedback loops to be created from the data to the community, allowing the system to evolve in real-time.

The key to the whole approach is that it is community-engaged, responding to concrete community needs and priorities that the community itself has identified and prioritised. A food profile has been created (as presented throughout this document) by some Council staff and key stakeholders with plans to get broader input by more Council staff and community members.
A. Dystopia: Business as Usual

Table 1
Theme: *Uncontrolled corporate expansion, inequality and ecosystem degradation*

**Politically:**
- Growth zones near cities allowed to expand continually
- The regulatory burdens on small farmers increase
- Politicians are sponsored by ‘big food’
- There are stricter free trade agreements with less autonomy for local government
- Rate-capping is widely applied and the numbers of local government staff employed in food systems roles are reduced

**Economically:**
- The supermarket duopoly continues to expand beyond groceries into insurance, services, etc.
- The duopoly owns farms and shopping centres, leasing shops
- Foreign investment increases with profits not going back to local communities
- There are fewer independent retailers, with less choice than now
- Large farms increase and small farms decline
- Public health costs increase, with a loss of productivity, leading to economic downturns and recessions
- Inequality and class divisions increase

**Ecologically:**
- Less land is set aside for biodiversity; bees and animals die off; ecosystems are diminished
- There is a monocultural landscape and industrial farming is the norm
- Soil becomes less fertile; food is grown in laboratories
- Climate change intensifies and there is intensified competition for access to water; and waterways are polluted
- The environment is bioengineered, with a clinical / scientific approach
- Toxicity is rampant through the food supply with negative public health impacts

**Culturally and Socially:**
- Access to culturally appropriate food reduces
- Life expectancy decreases
- Social isolation increases
Table 2
Theme: *Biophysical extreme change and its effects on the food system*

**Politically:**
- Road dependencies of the food system means that food supply can be easily disrupted through shocks (e.g. cut in oil supply / road systems)
- Growing instances of food insecurity create increasing social inequity and unrest
- Fractured approach to food reduces access to real food for most people

**Economically:**
- Increasing power and viability of seed patenting companies (e.g. Monsanto)
- Adoption of unsustainable technologies across agriculture (urban / peri-urban / rural)

**Ecologically:**
- Increasing drought
- “Optimisation” of seeds leads to decreased resilience, less diversity of crops, less capacity and knowledge of growers
- Food systems transport dependencies on roads and petrol-based vehicles
- Food system continues to increase greenhouse gas emission through fossil-fuel dependency and oil-based transport
- Paradox of increasing poison as a trade-off for increasing food production

**Culturally and Socially:**
- Seed “optimisation” leads to less capacity and knowledge of growers
- Increased absurdity of ‘food porn’

Table 3
Theme: *Depression leading to Revolution*

**Politically:**
- Road dependencies of the food system means that food supply can be easily disrupted through shocks (e.g. cut in oil supply / road systems)
- Growing instances of food insecurity, even famine, create and intensify increasing social inequity, especially for vulnerable groups
- Fractured approach to food reduces access to real food for most people
- Farmers further marginalised from decision-making processes; decisions taken purely on economic criteria
Economically:

- Corporatisation of farms leads to more lower paid and lower quality contract work
- Increasing poverty and inequality
- Increasing export of food
- Declining standards of health leading to a rising health burden: hospital costs and need for health services increase

Ecologically:

- Loss of farmland: bigger farms, further from Melbourne
- Workers need to commute further
- Corporatisation of farms
- Food system continues to increase greenhouse gas emission through fossil-fuel dependency and oil-based transport
- Paradox of increasing poison as a trade-off for increasing food production

Culturally and Socially:

- Corporatisation of farms leads to lower levels of knowledge of farmers / workers
- Increasing social isolation and atomisation leading to a diminished sense of community
- Diminished levels of mental and physical health leading to an increased health burden
- Loss of skills and knowledge across many segments of society

B. Utopia: Fair Food Future

Table 1

Theme: Everyone is connected to food

Politically:

- Fair Food Farmers are in power, holding posts like Prime Minister / Cabinet Ministers
- Local government incorporates food as core business
- Incentives are provided to encourage sustainable farming, fair access to food for all, secure access to land
- The right to food for all is recognised and enforced

Economically:

- The supermarket duopoly has ‘evaporated’
- Market power is more evenly distributed
- There are no mega-farms, small-scale farms are the norm
- There is no food insecurity
Ecologically:

- Agro-ecological farming is the norm
- There are less ‘production’ animals and more habitats for wild and native animals
- The food system generates no carbon emissions
- A greater value is placed on fair food and farming

Culturally and Socially:

- People are far healthier and enjoying active lives; there is less need for healthcare
- Food everywhere is the norm
- There is no charitable food system: Food Banks have disappeared
- There is a thriving localised food system
- People are eating lower meat diets
- There is greater awareness of healthy food and cooking practices

Table 2

Theme: Distributed political and economic power

Politically:

- There is much more equal distribution of political power
- Local government incorporates food as core business
- Incentives are provided to encourage sustainable farming, fair access to food for all, secure access to land
- The right to food for all is recognised and enforced

Economically:

- We understand and internalise the full social and economic costs of the food system
- Distributed networks mean good food is affordable for all
- Productivity is measured in terms of health, not yield
- There is transparency throughout the supply chain

Ecologically:

- There is a greater focus on indigenous and native plants as food: they are more adaptable to a changing climate
- We change our habits in time to mitigate the effects of climate change
- A greater value is placed on fair food and farming

Culturally and Socially:

- The environment is prioritised in restaurant / chef / cookery training
- A food-growing culture is normal: in cities and in the country, with community gardens everywhere
There is a greater appreciation of indigenous histories and knowledge of food
There is a culture of sharing and understanding of the commons

Table 3
Theme: Participatory culture, regenerative practices

Politically:
- Policy is based on aspirational visions and consultation
- Governance structures like citizens juries proliferate that enable participatory and true democracy

Economically:
- Land reform is implemented and large-scale holdings are broken up
- Eco-villages promote a shift to the sharing economy
- A choice of lifestyles and working patterns is enabled
- The idea of the ‘commons’ becomes the new normal

Ecologically:
- There is a focus on regenerating landscapes
- Eco-villages proliferate supporting regeneration
- There are natural corridors created in urban design and planning

Culturally and Socially:
- The culture of land regeneration is embodied in teaching and sharing knowledge and skills
- Focus on enhancing ecological vitality helps build community understanding and culture
- There is a shift in attitudes towards farming in / near cities, e.g. people aren’t concerned about ‘smells’ and ‘noises’
- There is an appreciation of the beauty of agricultural landscapes
- There is a cultural and generational shift which promotes a range of choice of lifestyles

Table 4
Theme: Long-term thinking, empowered communities

Politically:
- There is a reduction of power of the major parties
- Local government has more power
- There is more community participation in governance frameworks
- Bottom-up grassroots activity drives political change
• Policy initiatives and planning are developed for the long term
• There are longer-term government forms
• Decision-making moves towards consensus models

Economically:

• More people are self-employed
• Mega-corporations are broken up: no more Monsanto
• A sharing economy becomes the new normal, with a focus on the home and community economy
• There is a focus on the earth, on regeneration of personal value and the management of the household (*oikonomia*)

Ecologically:

• There is a focus on regenerative agricultural practices
• Eco-villages proliferate supporting regeneration
• More food is grown in backyards

Culturally and Socially:

• There is a cultural recognition that people and communities are drivers of change
• Increasing self-employment leads to people having greater control over their own lives
• There is more community connectedness
• There is more community mobilisation and political activism
• Increase in backyard food growing changes the value set around food
APPENDIX D – SOCRATIC CIRCLES

What is a Socratic Circle?

A Socratic Circle is a group conversation that takes a democratic approach to sharing ideas, teasing out issues, engaging in spirited debate and building relationships. The process is designed to encourage equal contributions from participants across various sectors of the food system. The “web” diagram that emerges from the conversation documents the pattern and energy of the conversation. It also encourages participants to be aware of how much or little they are contributing to the discussion. Some general questions for consideration are:

a. What is the scope of the problem and underlying issues?
b. What do we know about the problem?
c. What are some different ways to approach the problem?
d. What are the gaps in knowledge?
e. What solutions are at hand, and who needs to be involved in these solutions?
f. How can they be engaged democratically in the process?

One person in the group (not the expert) will be nominated to document the key points from the discussion which will be shared with the broader group afterwards.

The text below shows in some depth the evolution of the discussion about land use change.

Socratic Circle process - Urban sprawl and loss of farmland

- Power relations and interests and who’s interests are dominating. We have an UGB that keeps being pushed out.
- People developing the housing are just developing it to sell.
- **Valuing the land – what’s the value of keeping a hectare for carrots versus putting houses on it. Need to gather the evidence.** Need diff types of evidence beyond the economic framework. Keeping land retained for food that’s close by
- It’s about creating other types of value in the community
- Would like to ditch the word ‘sustainability’ and move to regenerative models of practice in the way we grow and think and in the way we view our foodbowl. Renegeration is about fixing up the soil, the way we think – regenerating ourselves and our soil
- With urban ag you’re trying to get more vegetation and produce into urban spaces. Connecting urban ag to wider agriculture – to fringe farmers
- Disconnect between the community and their food supply – trendiness of urban ag is not filtering through to rural ag spaces. Ag is so focused on the promise of export, free trade and TPP agreements it completely debases the local food economy. We don’t value – how do we connect with the VFF, the NFF etc and to get them to see it as a turning point
- Ag economist – look at it as a per unit value, then the per hectare value of the land will be greater value. Need to value the land differently
- Land as the commons, ‘soldier settlement’ – there are young people who want to grow but don’t have the land
- Farmers are walking off the land
• Young people need to be able to work on a commercial farm to learn. Only a few farms to learn the skills, then you need to acquire the money to acquire the land – leaseholds for younger farmers
• Why isn’t the government supporting young people on to the land – young people need mentors and support
• Farmshare/landshare model – farmers give property to young entrepreneurs
• Need to educate people who are living in those areas about the value of local produce, rather than having that land turned over to housing

Bigger group discussion

• Been working with Hawkesbury Harvest – try to connect farmers and consumers – guy from DPI started it when he realised that there was no long term plan for the city’s foodbowl. It was all meant to go out west beyond the dividing ranges. The land was released
• Is an opportunity to address land and housing affordability together. Developers need to get with the program in terms of what is available on regenerative house design
• Developers are in there for the money – the planners need to say you can’t do that and food needs to be incorporated into the development
• Incorporating pressure points into state government frameworks. How do we incorporate into the SPPF, the MSS, the environment statements in local governments.
• How do we establish strategic support for food systems work?
• Need to integrate into the MSS, planning scheme, the health and well-being plan. The community needs to advocate to councilors
• Mornington Peninsula statement - Valuing and protecting agriculture in the landscape
• You cannot get around the zones, overlays, ag language is quite old in the planning scheme. Needs to be reviewed
• Create a sense of scarcity – not all land is good land.
• What is good land and bad land?
• Need to have an economic framework around productive land use

Wrap up at the end

• Concern about where our kids are going to live but not the same concern about where our food is going to come from. Need to create the impression of scarcity
• There is an idea of a lot of food – need to emphasise ‘quality’ food in terms of nutrient density – that is best grown in a small space
• You need efficient and small scale farming with efficient housing around that
• Should be talking about diverse ag land use. Need a diff language for each type of agriculture
• Imp of a regenerative agricultural approach with multiple types of farming – bring more types of farmers and producers into the conversation
• Educating the community about the value of keeping the land
  o Want to value the land for food production
  o That includes setting targets
  o Understanding demand
  o Advocating to government
• Thinking differently about how you get to solutions – using the right language to connect with where people are at and their goals e.g. if their goals are around housing, how do you frame the issue?