

# SUSTAIN: THE AUSTRALIAN FOOD NETWORK

## FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

### Summary

2015 has been an important developmental year for Sustain: The Australian Food Network. It has successfully completed the transition from the Food Alliance, based at Deakin University, to be based in the heart of Melbourne at the specialist foods institution, William Angliss Institute. With the support of the city law firm Arnold Bloch Leibler, it is also far advanced in the path of incorporation and towards the process of applying for full charitable status as a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee, with Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Highlights of the year include:

- The continued facilitation of the Local Government Urban Agriculture Network, with four quarterly meetings, the presentation of policy, program and research initiatives by staff from several Councils as well as community stakeholders; and the building of capacity and networks amongst participating staff from 20 local councils
- The launch of Sustain with a unique multi-stakeholder participatory food systems workshop, *Democratising Food Systems*, held on 19 October at William Angliss Institute
- The development of three municipal-level food system profiles at the City of Whittlesea, Yarra Ranges Shire Council and the Grampians Food Alliance
- The preparation and delivery of a Food Systems Background Report for the City of Whittlesea
- The conduct of a Food Hub feasibility study with the City of Greater Bendigo, and the commencement of Food Hub feasibility studies with the Rural City of Wangaratta and the City of Wyndham
- The commencement of a Food Systems Community and Stakeholder Engagement and Strategy Development with the City of Wyndham
- Visits to the Cook Shire in Far North Queensland and to the City of Albany in the Great Southern Region of Western Australia, to discuss opportunities for food systems programs and food hub enterprise development
- Meetings with urban agriculture organisations and enterprises in Perth and Canberra
- The completion of research projects by interns examining the development of an urban food production strategy at the City of Moreland and scoping the potential for a Fair Food Challenge campaign at higher education institutions in Australia, based on the US Real Food Challenge
- Commencement of research projects by interns examining the local food economy in Bendigo, the role of agribusiness officers in local government in Victoria; and scoping research for a thorough review of the state of urban agriculture policy and practice in Victoria, and a literature and practice review of Food Hubs in Australia

In summary, the work undertaken in 2015 has laid the foundations for an exciting program of food systems work with a strong focus on the areas of urban agriculture, food hubs, local food economy research and supporting policy and governance frameworks at the local and state government levels.



### **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. With the support of the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, *Sustain* continues the legacy of the VicHealth-funded *Food Alliance*, formerly based at Deakin University (see further below). *Sustain* is incorporating as a charitable Company limited by Guarantee, with the support of the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation and Arnold Bloch Leibler. It is based at William Angliss Institute (WAI) in the heart of Melbourne, and enjoys significant in-kind and institutional support from WAI. .

### **Mission**

To work together with 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.

### **What difference do we make?**

While many organisations exist that work on different elements of the food system (e.g. production, consumption, health, education) none work to build knowledge and capacity across the system as a whole; and support system-wide change. This is the unique role and significance of Sustain

### **Board of Sustain**

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

- Kelly Donati (Chair), Lecturer, William Angliss Institute (Board Member, Slow Food Melbourne; Board Member, Melbourne Farmers Markets)
- 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
- Kathy McConell, former coordinator of the Food Alliance

### **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 has worked in advisory and consultancy capacities with local governments in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. He is currently teaching and researching food systems at William Angliss Institute in the Australia-first Bachelor of Food Studies.

### **More information / Contact details**

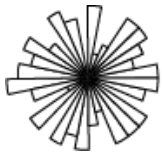
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## **Overview of Activities: 2015**

Sustain's work in 2015 has been organised as follows:

### **Supporting policy and practice development in Local Government**

#### ***Local Government Urban Agriculture Network (LGUAN)***

The LGUAN formed in late 2012 in order to support staff working in different departments in a number of Councils to share knowledge and experience with policy and program initiatives in areas such as guidelines for community gardens, edible planter boxes and edible verges. The Food Alliance assumed responsibility for the facilitation of this Network in August 2013, and since then its membership has expanded to more than 20 Councils, and the scope of its work has expanded from urban agriculture to local food and food system plans, strategies and policies. It continues to meet quarterly, with meetings hosted by different Councils on a rotating basis. The most recent was held at Yarra Ranges Shire Council, in the Dandenong Ranges outer eastern district of Melbourne (see Appendix 1).

The quarterly network meetings have provided an invaluable opportunity for staff to share research and project outcomes, discuss emerging issues and trends, learn from experiences across different local governments, and build their own networks. Key emerging challenges identified through the course of this year have been:

- How to work together effectively to secure the inclusion of urban agriculture within the Victorian State Planning Provisions, to create an enabling framework for the more rapid expansion and support of diverse forms of urban and peri-urban agriculture throughout Melbourne and in other regional centres
- How to engage effectively with key internal stakeholders – senior managers and Councillors – so that they are fully apprised of the relevance and importance of food systems issues, and how they impact on the realisation of core Council goals across economic development, health and well-being, environment and sustainability, and community strengthening

#### ***Food Systems Profiles / Critical Issue Identification / Data and Gap Analysis***

Sustain has worked with internal and external stakeholders at the City of Whittlesea, Yarra Ranges Shire Council, and the Grampians Food Alliance to conduct participatory action research leading to the creation of Food Systems profiles. This work has been carried out using the Circles of Social Life framework, which draws on the knowledge and expertise of local stakeholders from across the food system: producers, food processors and manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, planners, health and education professionals, environmental health officers, emergency food providers, and community representatives (see Appendix 2, Executive Summary and Food Systems Profile of the City of Whittlesea, and Appendix 3, report delivered to the Yarra Ranges Shire Council for details).

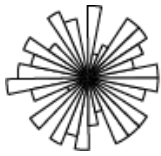
The process at both the City of Whittlesea and Yarra Ranges Shire Council has informed the development of Council-wide food policies, which are expected to be finalised later this year. The City of Whittlesea process was part of a larger project, to develop a Food Systems Background Report, which entailed a thorough analysis of existing food systems data held by the City of Whittlesea, to reveal existing data and knowledge gaps and how they could be addressed. This work, and the subsequent work at Yarra Ranges, also entailed working with stakeholders in identifying critical existing and emerging food systems issues, which then informed recommendations for key priority strategies and actions for the development of Council food policies.

### ***Cook Shire Food Sovereignty Pilot***

On 22-26 September Nick Rose travelled to Cook Shire in Far North Queensland, at the invitation of the Cook Shire Council and the Cape York NRM, and in the company of the Director of RegenAg, Kym Kruse, in order to meet with local stakeholders and explore the opportunity for a food sovereignty pilot for the region, to strengthen the local and regional food economy, and build greater levels of viability and resilience. It is expected that the Council and other stakeholders in the region will continue this work in 2016, in consultation with Sustain. The report and media release delivered to the Cook Shire and the Cape York NRM are attached in Appendix 4.

### ***Discussions with the VLGA and leading Councils***

Following initial meetings in September with the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November Sustain Executive Director Nick Rose and Chair Kelly Donati met with the President of the VLGA Cllr Sebastian Klein and CEO Andrew Hollows, together with Steve Abbott (Manager, Community Partnerships, City of Greater Bendigo), Annemaree Docking (Agribusiness Officer, City of Whittlesea) and Gillian Stewart (Rural Business Officer, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council), to explore the need and opportunity for working with local government in Victoria to strengthen governance frameworks in order to successfully and effectively integrate and implement food systems plans, policies and strategies across institutions. This meeting took after the *Democratising Food Systems* workshop (*see below*), at which the critical role played by Gillian and Annemaree in terms of providing an effective support and liaison between councils and producers was identified and highlighted. From the 18<sup>th</sup> November meeting Sustain will work with the VLGA as well as Gillian and Annemaree to form a working group comprised of senior representatives from a number of councils to explore options for the creation of these roles across all peri-urban, regional and rural councils.



## Food Hub Consultancy

Experience has clearly revealed that food systems in Australia are characterised by a series of ‘wicked problems’: multidimensional critical issues whose resolution requires the sustained and long-term engagement of diverse actors from diverse disciplinary and practical perspectives. Some of these wicked problems include: growing food insecurity amidst a surplus of food; an increasing burden of dietary-related ill-health; declining viability of farmers and as a consequence declining numbers of farmers, especially young farmers; a food system whose methods of production, distribution and consumption generate an unsustainably large environmental burden; and a cheap food system built in part on the exploitation of vulnerable people such as migrant workers and backpackers.

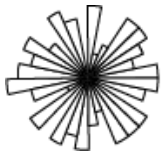
Multi-functional Food Hubs have emerged as one potential systemic solution that can begin to tackle a number of these wicked problems simultaneously: create a new market mechanism for farmers that returns greater value to them; make good food available to low income and vulnerable people; support local economic development by marketing local and regional produce to private businesses and public sector institutions; and generate decent paying jobs and training opportunities for local residents.

Sustain has been involved in three Food Hub consultancies in 2015:

- The Bendigo Food Hub feasibility study (May-June 2015), commissioned by the City of Bendigo, exploring the repurposing of a disused industrial building close to the Bendigo Railway station, working in partnership with a superannuation industry fund, Foodshare Bendigo, SecondBite Food Rescue. The report, which incorporated a high level economic and social impact assessment as well as financial modelling of the first stage of a proposed three-stage Food Hub model, is currently out for community consultation and is expected to be endorsed by Council before the end of 2015, with a likelihood of the Food Hub commencing operations within 12 months
- The Wangaratta Food Hub feasibility study (September 2015-March 2016), commissioned by the NorthEast Victoria Food for All Alliance with funding from the Rural City of Wangaratta (see Appendix 5). As with Bendigo, this study will involve extensive engagement with local stakeholders and key institutions
- Great Southern Food Hub stakeholder engagement (October 2015): at the invitation of Evelyn Lee (Community Food Events) and Libby Johnson (Convenor of the Great Southern has the Greatest Food Network), Nick Rose and Jen Alden (Growing Change) travelled to Albany for three days of meetings and discussions with representatives from several local councils as well as the Great Southern RDA and the State Department of Health, as well as community, business and producer members of the Food Hub Committee, to explore the need and opportunity for a Great Southern Food Hub. Outcomes included significant interest from Foodbank WA in terms of sharing infrastructure, equipment and logistics to support the Food Hub (see Appendix 7)



In October 2015 the City of Wyndham in Melbourne's outer west put out a tender for a Food Hub Feasibility Study and for a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy to inform that Study as well as the development of a Food Policy for the City of Wyndham. Sustain formed part of a consortium (including Growing Change and Innate Ecology) that submitted a tender for both projects. On 24 November we were informed that both tenders had been accepted, pending clarification of a few details.



## Research

Sustain (as the Food Alliance) has been involved in groundbreaking research over the past couple of years, namely:

- Creating a unique set of resources for several peri-urban local governments to highlight the key role these regions play in feeding Melbourne, through the crowd-funded [Know Your Foodbowl](#) research
- Partnering with the Victorian Ecolnnovation Lab and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation in [Foodprint Melbourne](#), an Australia-first piece of research that investigates where Melbourne's food currently comes from and the potential to source more of its food from within Victoria, and the economic benefits that would flow as a result (first results released in November 2015, with the final report due in November 2016)

Sustain has also worked with Masters and Honours students at the University of Melbourne and RMIT University, together with diverse local government, community health, producer, community groups and other food system stakeholders, on the following pieces of practically-oriented research:

- Investigating the development of an urban agriculture strategy in the City of Moreland – interviews with Council stakeholders as well as community health workers and representatives of community organisations. The aim of this research (which will be published shortly on the [Circles of Food](#) website) was to explore the expectations of different stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy, and to what extent those expectations were met as the process was implemented, in order to share lessons with other local governments about effective engagement strategies
- Investigating the feasibility of adapting the ['Real Food Calculator'](#) in the Australian context, in order to support the development of the ['Fair Food Challenge'](#) campaign initiated by the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance in collaboration with students at the University of Melbourne and RMIT University. The aim of the Fair Food Challenge is to work with Universities and other higher education institutions to source more local, sustainable and ethical produce, and make this produce more widely available to their student populations. This report, which included extensive interviews with the coordinators of the Real Food Challenge in the United States as well as the allied [Meal Exchange](#) campaign in Canada, and a focus group with food system stakeholders in Victoria, is currently being finalised and will be published on the Circles of Food website

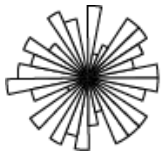
Currently Sustain is supervising a research project being undertaken by two Masters students at Melbourne University, which is a 'Local Food Economy Pilot study' for the City of Greater Bendigo. This research is being conducted in collaboration with the City of Greater Bendigo and members of the recently-formed Bendigo Regional Food Alliance. The aim of the research is to document the connections and economic benefits of local food exchanges in the Bendigo region, in order to make the case for greater support for and investment in local food economies.



The research will involve stakeholder interviews, focus groups, online surveys, and the use of social media to secure broad community interest and support. The results will be published by the end of May 2016 in a professionally-formatted report with infographics. We would like this pilot study to serve as a template that can be replicated in other regions of Victoria – and nationally – leading over time to the creation of a ‘State of Victoria’s Local Food Economy Report’, and similar reports for other States and territories.

Three further research projects we are currently scoping with another Masters student at Melbourne University are as follows:

- Building on the review of the development of a community food production strategy at the City of Moreland, the undertaking of a thorough review of the current state of urban agriculture policy and practice at the municipal level in Victoria. This research will be published and presented at an inaugural Urban Agriculture Conference, to be held in the third quarter of 2016
- Documenting the experience and contributions of Gillian Stewart and Annemaree Docking in their respective roles as Rural Business Officer (MPSC) and Agribusiness Officer (City of Whittlesea) to support the case for such roles to be created across peri-urban, regional and rural councils in Victoria
- a literature review and interviews to document the current state of the knowledge in Australia regarding Food Hubs, in order to build towards a National Food Hubs conference next year (see below).



## Events

On 19 October 2015, Sustain partnered with William Angliss Institute and the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance in a one-day workshop, 'Democratising Food Systems' – aimed at a broad cross-section of food system stakeholders. Eighty-five participants attended and a post-workshop survey has confirmed the value of the event. A key feature of the workshop was the use of the Socratic Circles method to explore, in a participatory way, four of the food system's 'wicked problems': Cheap Food and Cheap Labour; Food Insecurity amidst Abundance; Loss of Farmland and Urban Sprawl; and Inappropriate-scale regulation affecting the viability of small-scale producers.

As the Project Officer of the Victorian Farmers Market Association wrote to us shortly after the event:

*"I was really impressed by the simple effectiveness of the various methods used throughout the day to balance discussion, input and learning. The agenda allowed me to be fully emotionally present at all stages of the day."*

*"The Socratic Circles method was so effective at turning potential arguments (where every participant had to win everyone else over) into a critical thinking conversation. There was space to challenge the status quo and expand the breadth of the issue. I really enjoyed that aspect."*

*"On Monday I ended the day with more energy and motivation than I started with. Furthermore, I was able to see immediately on my return to work how important it was to pass on the issues and opportunities that had been raised throughout the Democratising Food Systems event."*

Other comments included:

*"[I attended] as a networking opportunity. [It was] very useful."*

*"I attended as a work opportunity. My expectations were exceeded."*

*"Yes [my expectations were met]. It allowed for different people to come together who work or have an interest in such a vast array of areas and share ideas."*

*"[I came out of] personal and professional interest in food systems issues. [The workshop] raised many interesting issues and was a good networking tool."*

*"I am interested to see the progress, enthusiasm and engagement around these issues in Victoria and am keen to see the same develop in NSW."*

*"More events throughout the year would be great!"*

*"I would like ongoing networking of some sort."*

*“I would like to see a chance to instigate small working groups based on region or specialised interest.”*

*“I think it would be great to have some advocacy opportunities, e.g. around the foodbowl research, around land use advocating to state government to change this / provide solutions similar to that [proposed] by the land use group, to promote sustainable food opportunities, and engage your everyday consumer. Keep the momentum going!”*

Potential events planned for 2016 include:

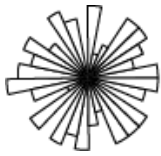
- A NSW version of *Democratising Food Systems*
- A National Food Hubs Conference with at least one international speaker (Canada / US), to review existing practice around Australia, learn from best practice overseas, engage with local and state politicians about the opportunities, and establish a platform to support the expansion of this sector in Australia

A further outcome of the DSF workshop has been the initiation of a collaboration with the Victorian Local Governance Association to establish a working group to prioritise the creation of Agribusiness Extension Officer-type roles across local government in peri-urban, regional and rural councils. This working group will target senior staff and Councillors in a number of Councils that have already adopted food policies and strategies. The first meeting will be scheduled for late January 2016.

## Public Speaking

Sustain has been involved in numerous public speaking engagements during 2015, including the following:

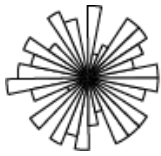
- February – September 2015: More than 20 appearances across Victoria and NSW by Nick Rose at community settings with a combined audience of 1500, to introduce the *Fair Food* documentary and facilitate discussions following the screenings.
- 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015: Keynote presentation at the Local Food Forum hosted by the City of Wodonga (NorthEast Victoria)
- 27<sup>th</sup> August: Nick Rose presented as part of a panel on ‘Food Production is a Social Justice Issue’ at the annual National Community Legal Centres conference in Melbourne
- 26<sup>th</sup> August and 11<sup>th</sup> September: Nick Rose presented at the Melbourne Writers Festival and Avid Reader in Brisbane to promote the launch of the [Fair Food anthology](#)
- 10<sup>th</sup> September: Nick Rose presented on the work of Sustain to an audience of local government and community stakeholders as a keynote presenter at the MAV’s Future of Local Food Forum at Treasury Theatre - <http://www.mav.asn.au/events/Pages/future-of-local-food-10092015.aspx>
- 12-13<sup>th</sup> September: Various presentations throughout the Real Food Festival at Maleny, Sunshine Coast, attended by 5,000 people
- 30<sup>th</sup> September: Nick Rose attended and spoke alongside ACT MLA and Minister for Regional Development Shane Rattenbury, as well as a local producer and restaurateur, on a proposed community-led Food Plan for the ACT and Capital Region
- 4<sup>th</sup> October: Nick Rose was a keynote speaker at the inaugural Albany Food 4 Thought Festival, with 1000 in attendance
- 6<sup>th</sup> October: Nick Rose met and spoke with the CEO of Margaret River Shire Council and with local producers, business people, developers and academics about the work of Sustain and Food Hubs
- 7<sup>th</sup> October: Nick Rose spoke at Perth City Farm and in North Perth on matters concerning food systems, food hubs, sustainability, economic development and the role of local government
- 24<sup>th</sup> November: Nick Rose (in his capacity as Vice-President of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance) will present on a panel at the Australian National University alongside several others as part of the release of the findings of the Foodprint and SUSTAIN ARC linkage research projects: <http://regnet.anu.edu.au/news-events/events/6203/creating-healthy-and-sustainable-food-system-australia>
- 25<sup>th</sup> November: Nick Rose will present to stakeholders in Wangaratta about the opportunities and benefits of a multi-functional Food Hub



### **Next steps: 2016 and beyond**

Sustain is currently reviewing its strategic and operational plans for 2016 and the next five years. While these discussions are progressing, it is likely that our focus and timelines will include the following:

- Continued facilitation of the LGUAN and support for the recognition of urban and peri-urban agriculture in Victoria and nationally (2016-2020)
- Continued participatory action research with internal and external stakeholders in various municipalities to build shared understandings of local food systems and create Food System profiles
- A research, policy and practice focus on Food Hubs, to drive forward the expansion of this emerging sector across Victoria and nationally (2016-2018), with a focal point being an inaugural National Food Hubs conference in 2016
- Working with the VLGA, and state and local governments, to build capacity amongst local government leaders for strengthening governance mechanisms to support food systems work (2016-2020)
- Continued research to document the economic and social benefits of local food economies in Victoria and beyond (2016-2020)



## About the Food Alliance-Sustain

The Food Alliance commenced in 2009, as a VicHealth-funded research team based in the Faculty of Health at Deakin University. Its purpose was to build on the achievements of the [Food for All Food Security project](#) (2005-2010). Over several years the Food Alliance has worked with diverse stakeholders to build the knowledge and evidence base of the Melbourne and Victorian Food Systems, and identify opportunities for strategic engagements and advocacy.

Achievements include:

- Creating a strong and expanding alliance of Victorian food system stakeholders across community, producers, local and state government, health workers and food businesses
- Significantly influencing *Plan Melbourne*, the new Metropolitan Planning Strategy for Melbourne. For the first time, the proposed plan includes objectives related to increasing Melbourne's capacity for food production and protecting prime farmland, as a result of the Food Alliance's extensive advocacy on the issue and its related research program
- Influencing the development of the *National Food Plan*, especially as regards the explicit integration of support for community food initiatives such as farmers' markets
- Significantly influencing the Healthy Food Connect program within the Victorian Government's Healthy Together Victoria initiative, via our food systems approach
- Shaping the development of the City of Melbourne's Food Policy, *Food City* as an integrated approach to promoting a healthy, sustainable and fair food system
- Creating a unique set of resources for several peri-urban local governments to highlight the key role these regions play in feeding Melbourne, through the crowd-funded [Know Your Foodbowl](#) research
- Partnering with the Victorian EcoInnovation Lab and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation in [Foodprint Melbourne](#), an Australia-first piece of research that investigates where Melbourne's food currently comes from and the potential to source more of its food from within Victoria, and the economic benefits that would flow as a result

After five years, the Food Alliance is moving out of Deakin in Burwood, and physically relocating to the William Angliss Institute in Melbourne's CBD. Institutionally, the Food Alliance is also embarking on a process of incorporation as a new not-for-profit entity, to be named *Sustain: The Australian Food Network*, reflecting this new stage of its life. *Sustain* will function as a 'Food Network of Food Networks': a meta-Network that articulates and amplifies the work of the growing number of local food networks that have emerged and are emerging around the country. *Sustain* will work alongside government, business and community stakeholders to establish a truly National Food Network, taking into account and learning from the well-established models of the Food Policy Councils in North America<sup>1</sup> and the Sustainable Food Cities Network in the United Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Its core activities will revolve around supporting local governments and other public sector institutions to develop and implement food policies, plans

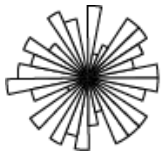
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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Mark Winne's paper on ['Ontario: the case for a Provincial Food Policy Council'](#) (February, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/>.



and strategies; facilitate community-engaged research placements with graduate and post-graduate students in member institutions, to help them document their food-related policy and programme work; generate Food System profiles for local councils and other institutions, to help establish baselines and benchmarking; build and expand communities of practice in all dimensions of food systems, urban agriculture in particular; and organize and coordinate events at local and regional level, to enable the sharing of research, practice and policy. For more details about *Sustain* and membership, please contact us.



## APPENDIX 1

# FOOD SYSTEMS BACKGROUND REPORT: CITY OF WHITTLESEA

## 1. Executive Summary

The evidence concerning the relationship between a good food system and good living is overwhelming. As the present Report demonstrates, this has a direct bearing on the City of Whittlesea and the way of life of its citizens.

This Report explores the systemic influences on the food system in Whittlesea. It aims to uncover the contextual reasons why many Whittlesea residents are not eating well. In applying a systems-lens to the question of food, the Report has revealed a myriad of factors at the local, national and global levels — and across the domains of economic, ecological, political, and cultural practice — that influence what ends up on the plate.

The City of Whittlesea is experiencing rapid and significant processes of change. Despite seemingly intractable challenges, there are wonderful opportunities in the municipality to build upon its considerable strengths. Whittlesea could become an exemplary municipality in the way it approaches its food system.

Hence our overall recommendation:

*That the City of Whittlesea, recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of its food system, name itself as a 'National Food Hub' with all that entails — that is, by putting food at the centre of its policies and strategies and projecting this focus to the people of Whittlesea and to the rest of Australia.*

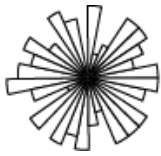
This is not to suggest that the City of Whittlesea does not have significant challenges. But such a naming would signal the fact that Whittlesea is prioritizing the question of food in its policy-making and sustainable future — economically, ecologically, politically and culturally.

**Economically**, food is an integral part of a balanced production and exchange system. Growing, processing, and providing food can generate sustainable employment. The City of Whittlesea has a dynamic and expanding food-processing sector. However, there remain other economic areas that need focussed attention in the municipality. Common to many cities in Australia and across the world, inequities in access to good food are associated with basic problems in the local community. Setting up or supporting exemplary small-to-medium food enterprises is one way amongst many of responding to this issue.

Economic recommendations include the following:

*The City of Whittlesea should continue to explore all potential financing mechanisms to secure the implementation of their proposed initiatives. The Peri-Urban Demonstration Farm, the Growling Frog Community Orchard Project provides an example.*





**Ecologically**, living in a sustainable environment that enables availability and access to nutritious food has a direct relationship to better health outcomes. Adequate fruit-and-vegetable consumption, for example, can decrease the risk of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. Yet most Australians, including over 95 per cent of people within City of Whittlesea, do not consume adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables. Growing food locally can, for example, contribute to changing this problem.

Ecological recommendations include the following:

The City of Whittlesea should ensure that as much retreated wastewater from retreatment plants is retained for local agricultural uses, rather than most of it being transferred out of the municipality.

**Politically**, the City of Whittlesea has taken the laudable step to develop a food strategy that attends to the whole food system. The Healthy Together Whittlesea team and other Council employees are acutely aware of the critical issues that affect a vibrant food system. They are clear about what the Council can directly change, what it can influence, and what is beyond its jurisdiction. The City of Whittlesea could thus take a local, statewide and national lead in this area. That is, Whittlesea could become a city that consciously treats food as a central part of its social life. In political terms, this means building questions of the vitality of the food system into the centre of its policy-making.

Political recommendations include the following:

The City of Whittlesea should ensure, in all forthcoming revisions of its major plans and policies, that the objectives agreed for the Local Food System Strategy are integrated fully so that conflicts and contradictions between other Council policies and the Local Food System Strategy are progressively reduced.

**Culturally**, the people of Whittlesea already take food seriously. This provides a strong basis for taking action. Even though this cultural strength does not yet translate into more than an emergent and inchoate civic (political) engagement with food issues in the local area, the signs are promising.

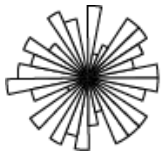
Cultural recommendations include the following:

The City of Whittlesea should continue to offer community and cultural events that showcase and celebrate the diversity of local food traditions and cultures across the municipality, to raise awareness of and build a culture in support of the local food system; and of local, seasonal, healthy eating. For example, the City could designate a week each year as a 'Local Food Harvest Festival' and this could be linked to naming Whittlesea as a National Food Hub.

Findings from this background Report are intended to inform Council of the activities, strategies and policy changes. Whittlesea has the opportunity to create increasingly supportive environments to ensure that 'healthy food choices become the easier choices' within a rapidly changing municipality — particularly if it took the bold step of identifying the City of Whittlesea as a 'National Food Hub'.

Kathy McConell, Nick Rose and Paul James, May 2015

*Figure 1. A Profile of the Food System of the City of Whittlesea*



2015

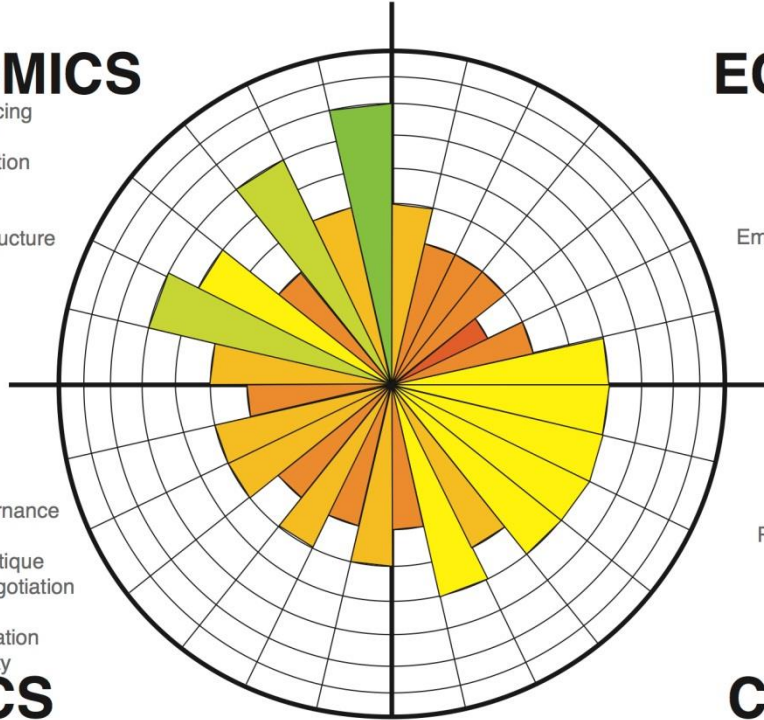
# WHITTLESEA

## 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

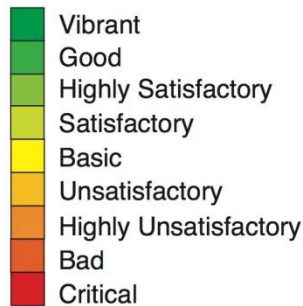


Organization & Governance  
Law & Justice  
Communication & Critique  
Representation & Negotiation  
Security & Accord  
Dialogue & Reconciliation  
Ethics & Accountability

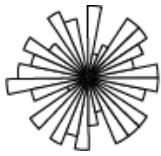
## POLITICS

Engagement & Identity  
Performance & Creativity  
Memory & Projection  
Belief & Meaning  
Gender & Generations  
Enquiry & Learning  
Wellbeing & Health

## CULTURE



# CIRCLES OF FOOD



**SUSTAIN** THE AUSTRALIAN  
FOOD NETWORK

Appendix 2

# DEMOCRATISING FOOD SYSTEMS

**Sustain: The Australian Food Network**

in collaboration with  
**William Angliss Institute**

and

**The Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance**

**Monday 19<sup>TH</sup> October**  
**Workshop Report**

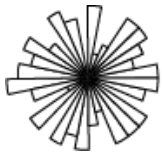
Prepared by

Dr Nick Rose, Executive Director, Sustain



Specialist centre  
for foods, tourism,  
hospitality & events





## Acknowledgements

Sustain wishes to acknowledge the following organisations and individuals whose various contributions made this workshop possible:

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City of Whittlesea, Annemaree Docking

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Melbourne Farmers Markets, Miranda Sharp

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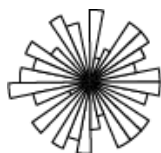
Right to Food Coalition, Liza Barbour (Monash University)

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, Ange Barry

Sustain, Kathy McConell

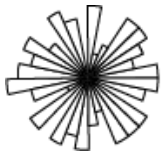
Victorian Farmers Markets Association, Kate Archdeacon

And a special acknowledgement and thanks to the staff and students of William Angliss Institute, without whom the event would not have been possible.



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# SUSTAIN THE AUSTRALIAN FOOD NETWORK

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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 19<sup>th</sup> 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*<sup>3</sup>
4. **Inappropriate-scale regulation:** *Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance*

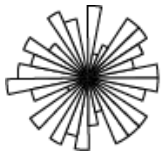
The workshop was very well received by participants, 36% of whom completed a post-workshop survey. More than 70% said the workshop either significantly (53%) or greatly (18%) opened up new ways of approaching and thinking about food systems issues. Participants came for exposure to new ideas and approaches, 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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<sup>3</sup> 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

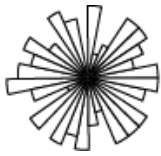
A key outcome of the day was the identification of the critically important roles supported by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) and the City of Whittlesea (CoW) in the form of a Rural Business Officer (MPSC, Gillian Stewart) and an Agribusiness Officer (City of Whittlesea, Annemaree Docking). 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.”*

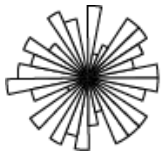
These actors comprise the ‘pull’ element of food system change. The ‘push’ element comes in the form of multiple drivers of change: climate change, biodiversity loss, excessive dependence on chemical and fossil fuel inputs, a growing diet-related public health crisis, rising food insecurity for vulnerable 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.

*“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

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



- 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.

*"It's great to see event organisers walking the talk, using local and ethically produced food. Having WAI students run the catering was a great initiative too."*

*"I really liked the opportunity to sit down and enjoy the food. Also to know where it had been sourced."*

*"The use of local produce and students was an outstanding decision, again unlike most conferences"*

*"The event management and quality catering provided by WA students was impressive. Such a great outcome for attendees and the*

*"The flow of events was very logical, and activities were run by very experienced and engaging facilitators"*

*"[The program] was good at engaging input and comment from the participants. I also like how it was willing to trial different formats"*

*"The format was refreshingly different from other conferences"*

*"This has been one of the few workshops where lots of different players are in the room. This tend to be the same few people and this doesn't help with problem solving!"*

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.



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<sup>4</sup>.

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”<sup>5</sup>. 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.<sup>6</sup>.

There are many factors which determine the food security status of a nation, community, household or individual<sup>7</sup>:



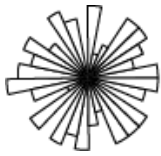
Figure 2: Determinants of Food Security - SecondBite

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.foodbank.org.au/about-us/faqs/>

<sup>5</sup> FAO. Declaration of the world summit on food security. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations; 2009. Available from: [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/Docs/Final\\_Declaration/WSFS09\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/Docs/Final_Declaration/WSFS09_Declaration.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Booth S, Smith, A. Food security and poverty in Australia-challenges for dietitians. Australian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2001;58:3

<sup>7</sup> Rychetnik, Webb, Story and Katz (2003) Food Security Options Paper, NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition (adapted from a model by McComb, Webb and Marks 2000)



### 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.

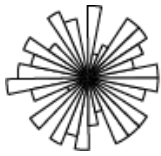


Figure 3: Foodprint Melbourne research, October 2015



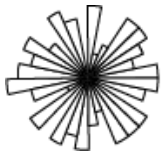
[ecoinnovationlab.com/project\\_content/foodprint-melbourne](http://ecoinnovationlab.com/project_content/foodprint-melbourne)



## **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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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).

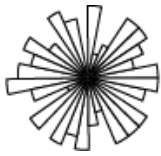
The Circles approach provides a way of responding to a series of questions that are of fundamental importance to policy makers and professionals across all levels of government and society.

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.circlesoffood.org>

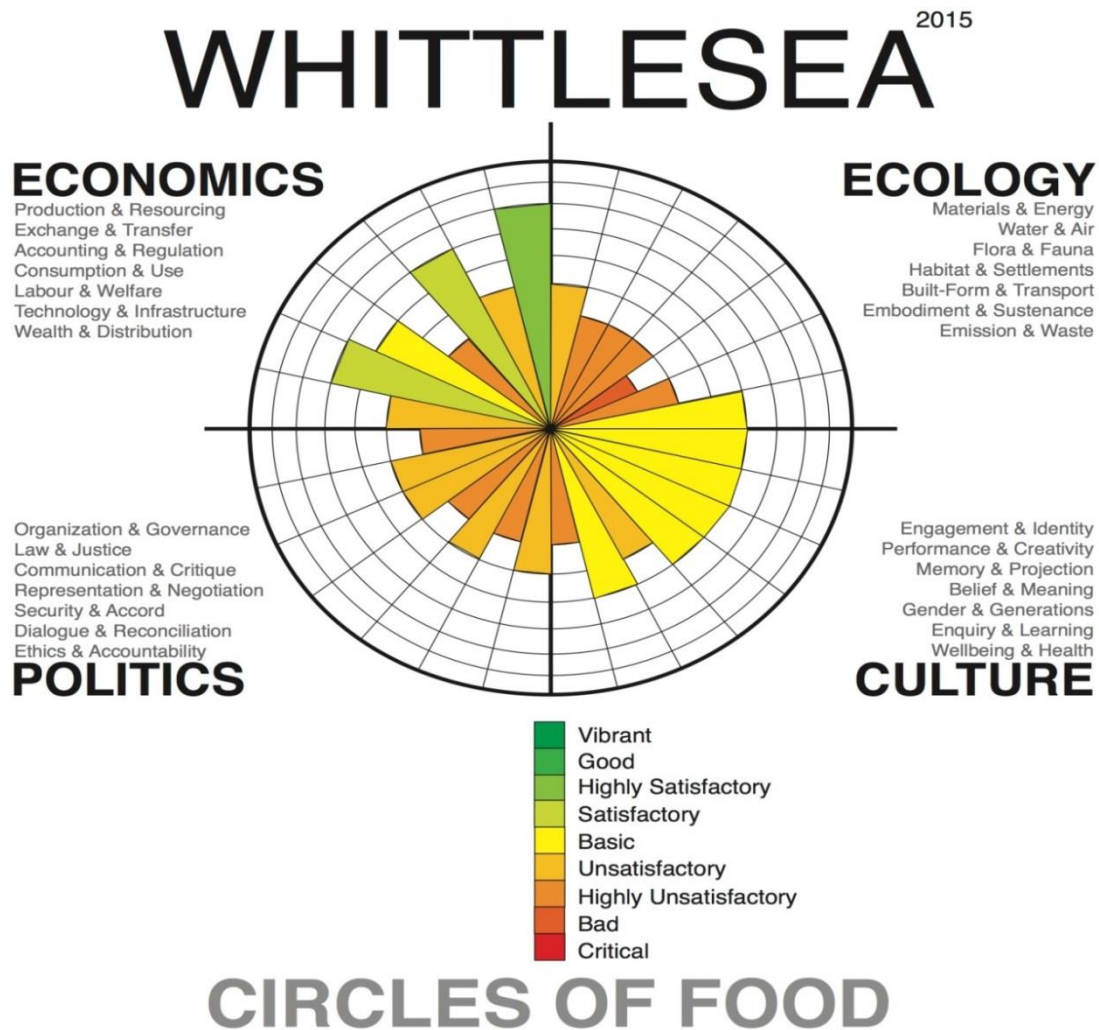
<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.circlesofsustainability.org>





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

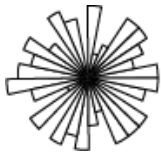
Meanwhile, the four tables of participants that discussed the utopia of the ‘Fair Food Future’ identified starkly different themes and trends:

- **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

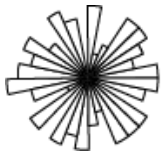
## **Culture:**

- 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



# SUSTAIN THE AUSTRALIAN FOOD NETWORK

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

*I enjoyed the Socratic Circles exercise - very informative*

*I had my thinking constructively challenged. The activities provided scope for incorporating that new thinking into practice.*

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.*

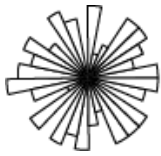
See above, Section 3.

#### 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<sup>10</sup>.

See above, Section 3.

### Key words

Access to nutritious food is recognised as a social determinant of health<sup>11</sup>. It is also considered a basic human right<sup>12</sup>. The impact of food insecurity is significant and affects an individual's physical, mental and social wellbeing. Individuals affected by food insecurity are more likely to experience:

*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.*

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.foodbank.org.au/about-us/faqs/>

<sup>11</sup> Wilkinson R, Marmot M. Social determinants of health: The solid facts. 2nd ed. Denmark: World Health Organization; 2003. Available from: [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/98438/e81384.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/98438/e81384.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> United Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights New York, NY: United Nations; 1948 [cited 2015 Aug 30]. Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

- **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<sup>13</sup>.
- **MALNUTRITION** - while this is not seen widely in the Australian context, there is an increased risk of the elderly becoming malnourished<sup>14</sup>.
- **DIET RELATED CHRONIC DISEASES** – people experiencing food insecurity are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes<sup>15</sup>.
- **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<sup>16</sup>.

### 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

## 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**

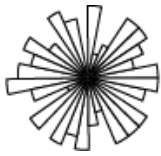
<sup>13</sup> Ramsey R. Food insecurity among Australian children: Potential determinants, health and developmental consequences. J Child Health Care. 2011;15.

<sup>14</sup> Lee J, Frongillo E. Nutritional and health consequences are associated with food insecurity among U.S. elderly persons. J Nutr. 2001;131:1503–9.

<sup>15</sup> Vozoris N, Tarasuk V. Household food insufficiency is associated with poorer health. J Nutr. 2003;133:120–6.

<sup>16</sup> 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.





**rapid change of regulations by governments shuts down small farms rapidly with no recourse or compensatory measures.**

See above, Section 3.

### Key words

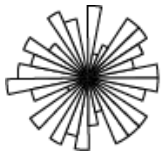
- *Real costs* of current regime
- *Risks* – what is the true level of risk?
- *Best practice* – what does it consist of?

### 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 associations
- *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-valuing 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

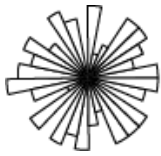
Its achievements include:

- 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

*It's great to see event organisers walking the talk, using local and ethically produced food. Having WAI students run the catering was a great initiative too.*

*[The food] was more than I expected - I think it is very well thought of - it demonstrates very well your ethos.*

*I really liked the opportunity to sit down and enjoy the food. Also to know where it had been sourced*

*The use of local produce and students was an outstanding decision, again unlike most conferences*

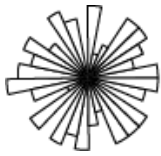
*The event management and quality catering provided by WA students was impressive. Such a great outcome for attendees and the students.*

*A chance to instigate / investigate small working groups based on region or specialised interest.*

*More opportunities for networking & interactive discussion ... maybe focus groups*

*Perhaps working groups? ... It would be great if groups were formed on the basis of interests and people can work together from their different leverage points in the food system to advocate for change*

*I had quite specific areas of interest, not quite able to focus on them, although really good to have other issues brought forward for me*



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

*Annual event please. Newsletter - say four times a year. Other meetings as required*

*Having more events like this on a regular basis would be fantastic - and perhaps multiple workshops each with an agenda around one particular area of focus would be a great way to allow more time to really get stuck into problem-solving and next steps*

*I think future events should be more focused on one aspect of the food system and include people who are critical in that aspect but aren't necessarily engaged with doing it sustainably. ie. it would be good to hear from the mainstream sector, rather than 'converts' preaching to each other. I would like to hear other sides of the argument.*

*More events throughout the year would be great!*

## 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 McMenemy, Memberships Officer

Michele Lally, Savannah Farm

Sophie Lamond, Youth Food Movement

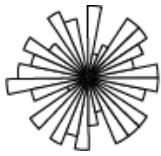
Gavin Williams, Urban Agriculture Australia



## APPENDIX B - PROGRAM

### Democratising Food Systems – 19 October 2015

8.30–9.00	<b>Registration and coffee</b>
	<b>Welcome and Introduction to Sustain, Dr Nick Rose</b>
9.00–9.30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• William Angliss Institute, Dr Paul Whitelaw</li> <li>• Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance, Tammi Jonas</li> <li>• Food Alliance, Kathy McConell</li> </ul>
	<b>Lightening poster presentation: applied research, campaigns &amp; responses to complex problems</b>
9.30 –10.00 am	<p><i>National Union of Workers</i>: Fair Food campaign  <i>Right to Food Coalition / Asylum Seeker Resources Centre</i>: Food Justice Truck  <i>Foodprint Melbourne</i>: urban sprawl and the loss of prime farmland  <i>Bendigo Food Hub Feasibility Study</i>: role of food hubs in a fair food future  <i>Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance</i>: scale-appropriate regulation for a fair food future</p>
10.00–11.00am	<b>Circles of Social Life workshop: tools for thinking through complex problems</b> Professor Paul James, University of Western Sydney
11.00-11.30am	<b>Morning tea</b>
	<b>Wicked problems workshops: democratic approaches to exploring four real-world scenarios</b>
11.30 am–12.45pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scarcity in a world of abundance</li> <li>• Cheap food and labour exploitation</li> <li>• Land loss and urban sprawl</li> <li>• Regulation across the food system</li> </ul>
12.45 – 1.15 pm	<b>Report back from workshops: summarising outcomes and developing a research agenda</b>
1.15–2.15 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
	<b>Educating for fair food systems:</b>
2.15–2.30 pm	<b>WAI Bachelor of Food Studies / MA in Food Systems &amp; Gastronomy</b>
	<b>Multi-sectoral panel discussion:</b>
2.30 –3.30pm	<b>Roles and challenges of governance in building a fair food system</b> With representation from local government, local producers, community health, food security, education and hospitality
3.30–4.00pm	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
4.00– 4.10pm	<b>Introduction to the Food Policy Councils, Dr Nick Rose</b>
	<b>Food Policy Council Role Play</b>
4.10 – 5.10pm	Identifying roles, responsibilities, action pathways & a research agenda for a Food Policy Council
5.15–5.30pm	<b>Wrap up: opportunities for collaboration and priorities for research</b>
5.30 p.m.	<b>Closure and thanks</b>
6.30	<b>Chefs' Collaborative Dinner</b> Grossi Florentino Wynn Room, 80 Bourke Street, Melbourne



## 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.<sup>17</sup> 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).

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<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.circlesofsustainability.org>

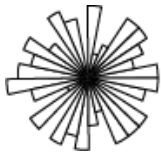
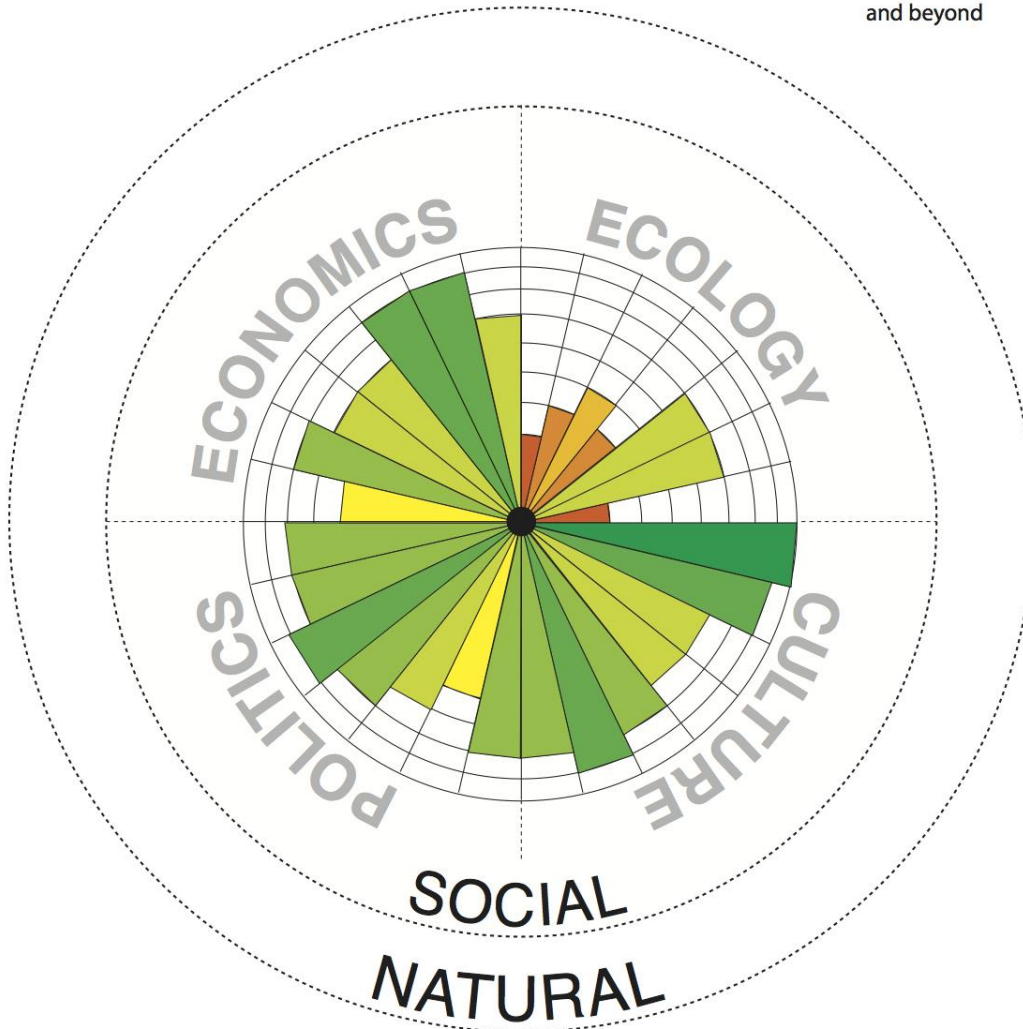


Figure 1. Circles of Social Life Domains

# CIRCLES of SOCIAL LIFE

and beyond



## DOMAINS OF THE SOCIAL

### ECONOMICS

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

### POLITICS

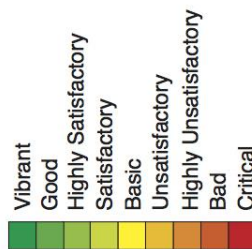
Organization & Governance  
Law & Justice  
Communication & Critique  
Representation & Negotiation  
Security & Accord  
Dialogue & Reconciliation  
Ethics & Accountability

### ECOLOGY

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

### 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.

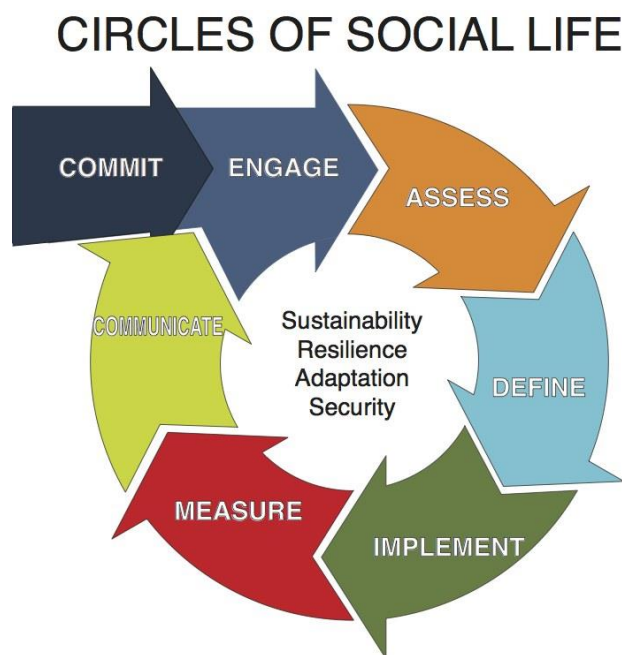
The approach proceeds through layers of engagement and action research, as summarised in Figure 2. Here we describe the nature of the approach in briefest and most general terms.

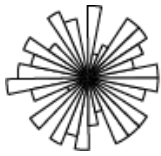
**Figure 2. Circles of Social Life Process Pathway**

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:

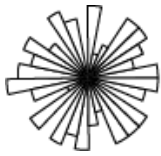
- Less land is set aside for biodiversity; bees and animals die off; ecosystems are diminished
- There is a monocultural landscape and industrial farming is the norm
- Soil becomes less fertile; food is grown in laboratories
- Climate change intensifies and there is intensified competition for access 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

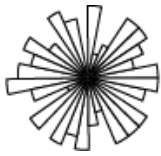
**Economically:**

- 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

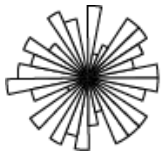
#### **Ecologically:**

- 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

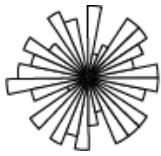
**Table 4**

**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:**



# SUSTAIN THE AUSTRALIAN FOOD NETWORK

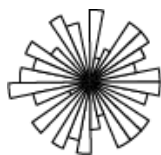
- More people are self-employed
- Mega-corporations are broken up: no more Monsanto
- A sharing economy becomes the new normal, with a focus on the home and community economy
- There is a focus on the earth, on regeneration of personal value and the management of the household (*oikonomia*)

## **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:

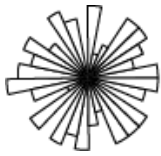
- a. What is the scope of the problem and underlying issues?
- b. What do we know about the problem?
- c. What are some different ways to approach the problem?
- d. What are the gaps in knowledge?
- e. What solutions are at hand, and who needs to be involved in these solutions?
- f. How can they be engaged 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
  - Want to value the land for food production
  - That includes setting targets
  - Understanding demand
  - 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?