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- MEDIA INFORMATION -

Community Food Hub to be launched in Alphington

A Community Food Hub will be established in Alphington, after the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation recently awarded the project one of its prestigious Innovation Grants.

An initiative of Sustain: The Australian Food Network and Melbourne Farmers Markets (MFM), supported by the City of Darebin, Melbourne Polytechnic, STREAT and many others, the Alphington Food Hub will be a place for everyone to create and connect to a healthy and flourishing local food system. Individuals and groups will be able to learn new food skills as well as to grow, share, buy, cook and make healthy, fair food.

The Food Hub will also be an important place for small-to-mid sized producers to connect with larger markets to increase their viability, in the face of continued downwards pressure on prices from the supermarket duopoly and the centralised wholesalers. The presence of Melbourne Polytechnic will provide training and employment opportunities for marginalised young and culturally diverse individuals.

'We want to see a more equitable, sustainable, diversified and therefore resilient local food system,' says Dr Nick Rose, Executive Director of Sustain, the anchor organisation in this collective impact project. 'The Alphington Food Hub will support the goal of everyone, regardless of their status or background, to have dignified access to good food at all times. The hub will help our local food system become less wasteful and less vulnerable to climate change, thereby strengthening local food security', Dr Rose adds.

'We are excited to be adding new layers to our existing market framework, building the opportunities for direct connection between urban communities, the hospitality sector and Victorian farmers', says Miranda Sharp, Managing Director of MFM. With its move to the Alphington site managed by Melbourne Innovation Centre, MFM will play the central role in developing the hub's commercial operations. It will join existing urban agriculture and food enterprises Farmwall and Lifecykel in what is an emerging good food cluster.

Features of the Alphington Food Hub will include an accredited weekly farmers market, commercial kitchen, co-working offices, farmers' depot, distribution network, above-ground urban agriculture growing space, and a workshop and events space. The Food Hub will be established at Melbourne Innovation Centre, directly opposite Alphington train station, and is expected to commence operations in April 2018.

- Ends -

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