



Challenges, opportunities and actions discussion paper



LOCAL FOOD PROGRAM 2018-2021

Increasing the production and consumption of locally grown food through a sustainable food system

A Council and community partnership



INTRODUCTION

It's time to tuck in to the Local Food Program. From community gardens and innovative food businesses, to regenerative farming and good retail – our community has shown that local and sustainable food is important in Surf Coast Shire.

This program highlights what Council and our community are doing already, and identifies challenges and opportunities for our local food system.

Our community will be at the core of a three year plan that outlines actions we can take to put ourselves in a healthy position for the future – through a sustainable local food system that is supported and celebrated.

“Food permeates all aspects of local government and to effectively support a thriving food system is fundamental to supporting a thriving community.”

Food Systems and the role of Local Government.
Victorian Local Government Association, 2017, p14.

LOCAL FOOD VISION

Local food vision for the Surf Coast Shire

A region where food is safe, healthy, nutritious and accessible to everyone, and natural resources are managed in a way that restores ecosystem functions to support current and future human needs.

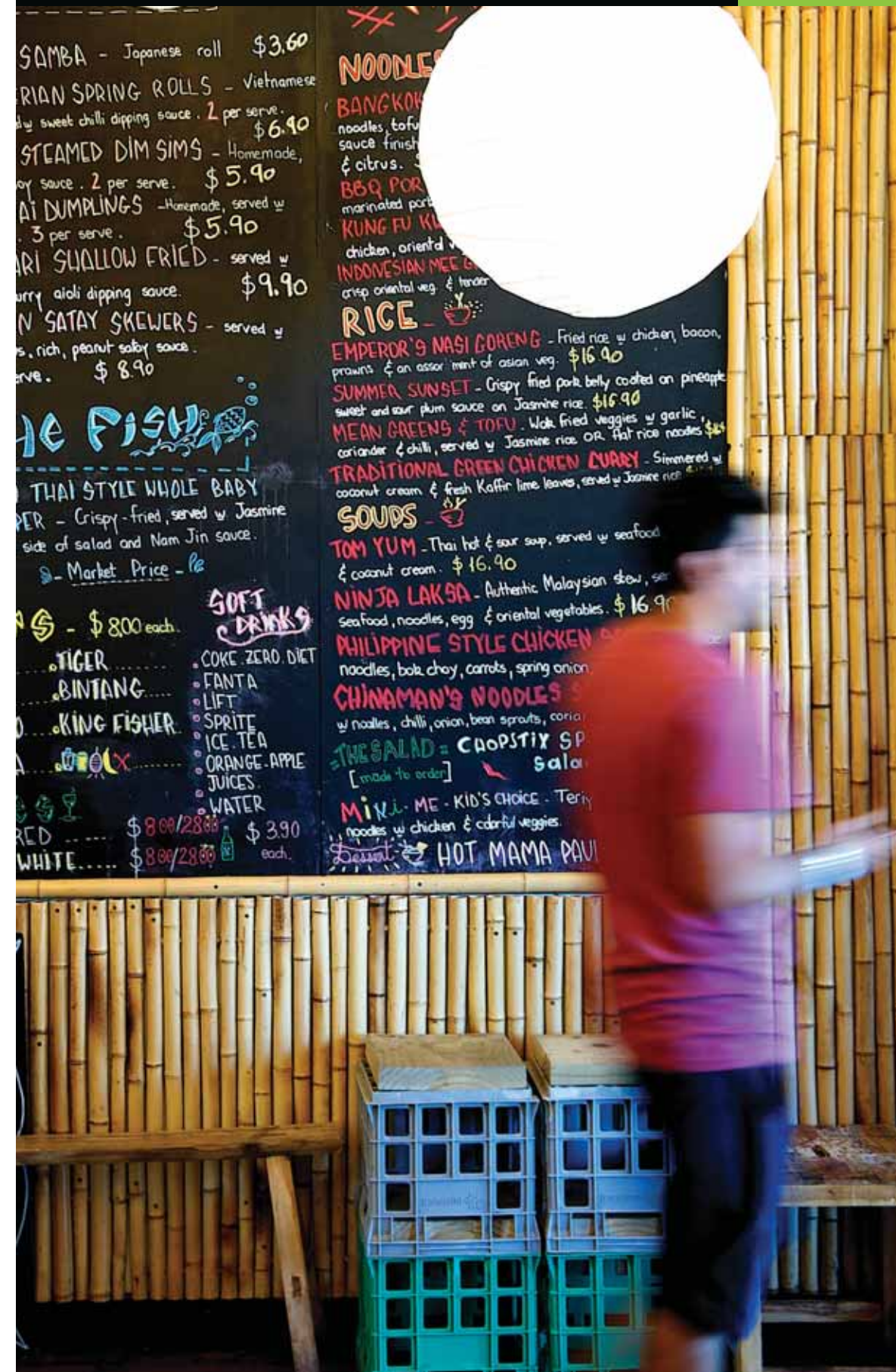
Council's Environment and Rural Advisory Panel, 2015

What will this look like in our community and region?

- Our food system protects and enhances the natural environment.
- People are connected with where their food comes from and are equipped to make good food choices.
- Residents have opportunities to produce food in their home and/or community.
- Local growers, producers, distributors, sellers and consumers contribute to and benefit from a well-connected and sustainable local food economy.
- Food production and access in the shire is resilient and well positioned for the future.
- The Surf Coast Shire has a reputation for its sustainable, innovative and connected food system, and diversity of high quality food products and experiences.

Local foods are grown, produced and/or processed near to where they are consumed, for example, within a distance of 50kms.

A local food system aims to create a more direct link between producers and consumers, through stages of production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and waste management.



THE LAY OF THE LAND

Our location is part of our story

From the coast to the hinterland, Surf Coast Shire has many assets that support our local food system.



NATURAL ASSETS INCLUDING CLEAN AIR, FERTILE SOILS, OUR CLIMATE AND HEALTHY NATIVE VEGETATION ALL SUPPORT THE PRODUCTION OF SAFE AND HEALTHY FOOD.



THE SURF COAST HINTERLAND IS THE PRIMARY FOOD PRODUCTION AREA IN THE SHIRE, WITH APPROXIMATELY 100,000 HECTARES OF PRODUCTIVE LAND, EQUAL TO ABOUT 65% OF THE SHIRE FOOTPRINT.



ACROSS THE SHIRE, FOOD PRODUCTION AND POINTS OF SALE INCLUDE LARGE FARMS, MARKET GARDENS, PERI URBAN AND HOBBY FARMS, FARM GATE SALES, WINERIES, CAFES AND RESTAURANTS, FARMERS MARKETS, RETAILERS AND EXPORTERS.



PROXIMITY AND ACCESS TO THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD AND LARGE CENTRES INCLUDING GEELONG, MELBOURNE AND BALLARAT.



SURROUNDING SHIRES ARE ALSO VALUED FOR THEIR FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTION.



A COMMON STORY IN OUR LOCAL FOOD LANDSCAPE IS OF FOOD PRODUCTION BEGINNING AS AN INTEREST OR PASSION, AND GROWING INTO A BUSINESS FROM THERE – CONTRIBUTING TO THE VARIED NATURE OF OUR LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY.

A long connection

From getting hands dirty growing food, to enjoying local produce in local cafes, to earning a living from food production and related industries – our community is well connected to local food.



The traditional custodians of our area, the Wadawurrung people, were highly skilled at collecting, cultivating, hunting and trapping a wide range of native plants and animals for food, some of which continues today. Local bush foods include yam tubers, grains, berries, eels, fish, abalone, crayfish and mammals.



When European settlers came to the area in the mid-1830s they introduced cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry and rabbits, along with a range of grains, vegetables and fruit trees. Local manufacturing facilities were set up, including abattoirs, small goods processing and flour mills in Winchelsea.



Commercial food production in the shire has diversified to include foods such as goat's cheese, truffles, berries, duck, pork, ostrich, ancient grains and heirloom vegetable produce. Many businesses, from the hinterland to the coast, love to use and sell locally grown and made foods.



Our resident community has a strong interest in growing foods in their homes and community settings, including home gardens, schools, early childhood settings and community gardens.

“Local food is more than a community-based gardening trend. It is fast becoming a powerful economic force that can attract tourism to the region, increase competitiveness of regional businesses, strengthen communities within Surf Coast Shire and contribute to environmental and land health outcomes”.

P. O’Callaghan, Deliberate Impact Consulting, 2015

Our community's connection to local food

A large portion of our community is passionate about local and sustainable food, and are leading the way – finding innovative ways to produce and promote our local bounty. These are just some examples:

Claire Glenda

Food security <https://youtu.be/AfHTRax1DSM>



Hayden Findlay

The Grass Farmer https://youtu.be/7QOy0R_M-fk



Tony Martin

Nurturing soil health in food production <https://youtu.be/5t5Qp98wd-k>



Eat Local Month brings together community members and organisations to share local food experiences

www.eatlocalmonth.com.au



The Otway Harvest Trail celebrates hinterland foods

www.otwayharvesttrail.org.au



Community gardens thrive in Torquay, Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Lorne and Winchelsea

www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au



Children love their Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Gardens at Torquay College, Anglesea Primary School and Deans Marsh Primary School

www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au



Council partnered with the Australian Marine Conservation Society to pilot The Good Fish Project with local cafes and restaurants

www.goodfishproject.com.au

A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM IN THE SURF COAST SHIRE

LOCAL FOOD VISION

THE LAY OF THE LAND

PRODUCTION

PROCESSING

DISTRIBUTION

ACCESS AND
CONSUMPTION

WASTE
MANAGEMENT

BE INVOLVED

INFLUENCES
AND REFERENCES

Some roles Council plays in local food

Council Purpose: *To help our community and environment to thrive.*

Council Vision: *An engaged, innovative and sustainable community.*



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A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM IN SURF COAST SHIRE

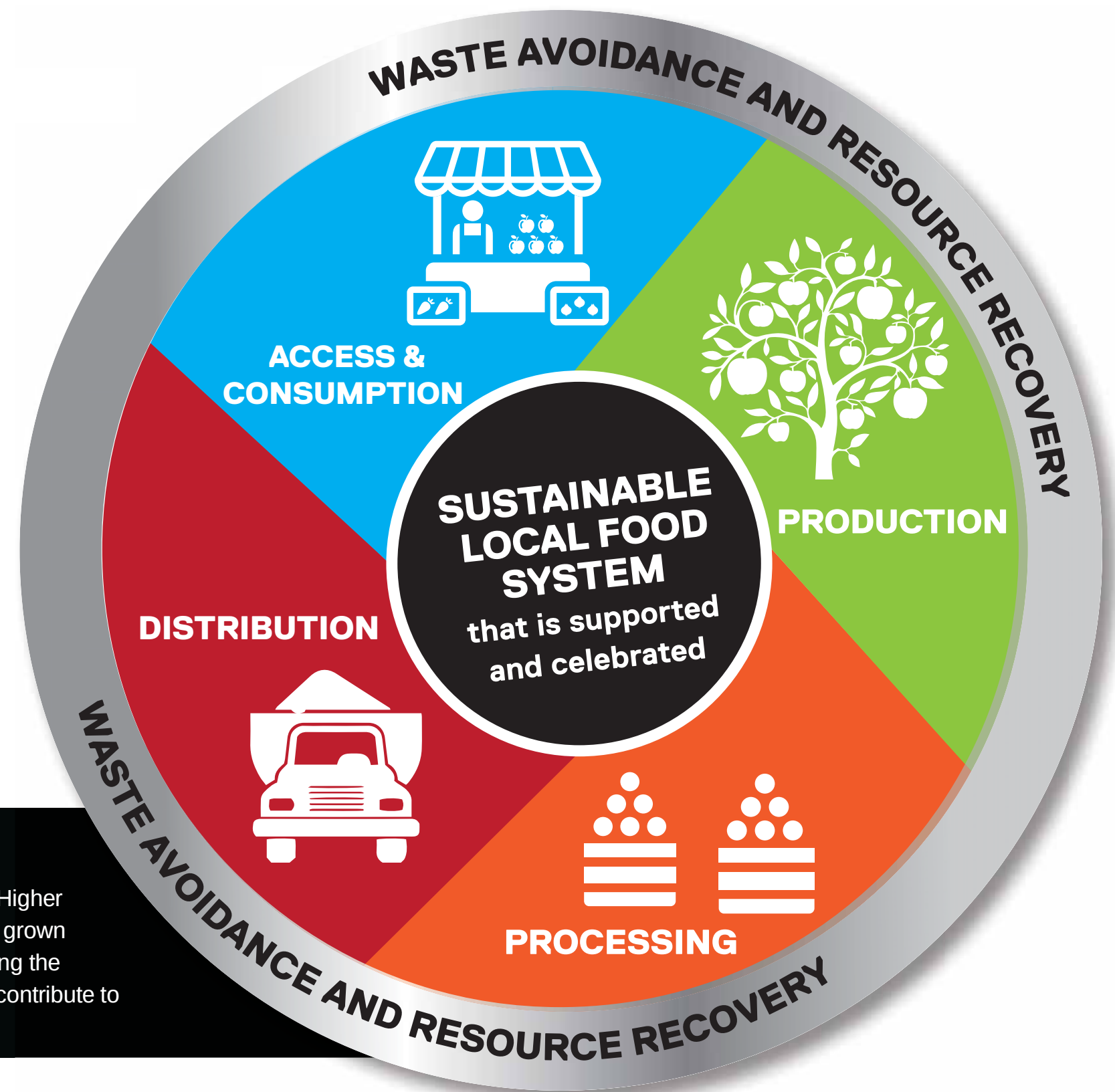
Our Local Food Program is based on a sustainable food system that:

- Protects or enhances the environmental values we depend on for growing food.
- Is fair and economically viable for growers, makers, sellers and consumers.
- Has positive impacts on the local community.
- Keeps environmental, economic and social aspects in balance.

Following is a snapshot of challenges and opportunities across our local food system. Each aspect takes into account **our community** and **our local food economy**. The aim is for Council to work with our community to support and enhance the future of food in Surf Coast Shire.

Food and climate change

Looking at our entire food system provides an opportunity to prepare for a changing climate. Higher temperatures and lower rainfall will affect local food production, including which crops can be grown locally. Reducing emissions associated with food production, processing and storage, including the distance food is transported, has the potential to slow climate change. Taking action now will contribute to a resilient food system and community in the future.





PRODUCTION: *Our growers and makers*

OUR COMMUNITY

Many members of our community grow food. Food is grown in individual homes, schools, early childhood settings, workplaces, community gardens and some other public spaces.

Some known challenges for food production

- Many things can deter people from growing food at home – including a lack of time, interest or skill; cost; household pets and housing circumstances.
- Elderly residents can find growing food difficult because of health or physical limitations.
- Growing fruit or vegetables in public spaces can be a challenge due to factors such as maintenance, pest control and impact on others including potential slip hazards.
- The success of food growing programs in educational settings can be impacted by teachers' workloads, budgets and reliance on volunteers. They have been generally found to be more successful where horticultural expertise is available to support them.
- The above difficulties can also present challenges for growing food in other community settings such as aged care facilities and work places.

Some opportunities for increasing food production

- Greater access to information about growing food.
- Work on increasing membership of community gardens.
- Where appropriate include provisions for growing food when planning public open space and residential developments.
- Develop partnerships that can support the growing of food – through the use of skilled volunteers for example.
- Increase participation in food growing at local kindergartens, schools and other institutions.
- People with a disability and those experiencing social disadvantage could be supported to build new skills through growing food.
- Identify opportunities for local food growers to share knowledge and build skills within the broader community.



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OUR FOOD ECONOMY

Beef cattle, sheep and grains are the predominant food types produced in Surf Coast Shire. Also occurring in the shire are market gardens, berry farms, orchards, vineyards, hobby farms, chemical free/organic producers, free range eggs, honey, nuts, bread, tea, truffles, garlic, olives, duck, pork, ancient grains and heirloom vegetables. Wineries and breweries also contribute to our local food economy.

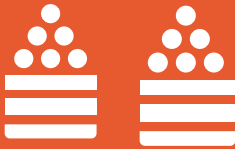
Some known challenges for local food production

- Changing environmental factors including weather and water supply.
- Increasing cost of production – while the cost of production is relatively stable, input costs are rising.
- Soil acidity is increasing in some areas.
- Soil loss through erosion, soil structure decline and reducing fertility.
- The various economic challenges of operating a food or agri-business – large or small.
- Lack of consumer awareness of product availability.
- Availability and cost of land suitable for farming.
- Ageing population of farmers.
- Lack of opportunity for new and younger farmers to be involved in agribusiness or food production.
- A trend towards a reduction in size of local farms.
- The fact many farms are family owned and managed can limit employment opportunities and long term business continuity.
- Demand for residential housing can compete with the need for productive agricultural land for food production.
- Some aspects of food production (and associated activities) can impact upon neighbouring properties and cause land use conflicts.
- Restrictions associated with the planning scheme which can limit diversity of on-farm activities.
- Registration and compliance with food safety standards can create administrative burdens on small business owners and serve as a barrier to start-ups.
- Few local food producers have a direct supply arrangement with retailers or consumers of their product.
- Some local food businesses are operating without a sustainable (economically viable) business case.

Some opportunities for increasing local food production

- Research the local/regional implications of climate change.
- Grow species and crops suited to the projected future climate and land use.
- Adopt food production methods that have fewer environmental impacts.
- Adopt precision agriculture technologies for more efficient use of water and nutrients.
- Capitalise on the market for chemical free/organic/biodynamic foods and low food miles.
- Upskill food producers in areas such as business planning and management, regenerative agriculture, innovation and technology.
- Encourage businesses to provide feedback on the Victorian Government’s Small Business Regulation Review.
- Amend/advocate for appropriate changes to the planning scheme to support contemporary food production needs.
- Investigate farming and land use models that support energetic and new hobby/small (peri-urban) farmers.
- Utilise productive land for creating a green wedge in and around townships where appropriate.
- Identify ways to increase local employment in food production.
- Identify ways to enhance social inclusion and skill building.
- Improve efficiency in food processing and distribution to help cut costs and increase consumption.
- Find uses for food waste that provide added value such as on-site composting or use in new products.
- Incorporate local food production into high quality regional tourism experiences.
- Investigate opportunities for the production and sale of indigenous bush foods that are suited to local conditions.





PROCESSING: *The production line*



OUR COMMUNITY

Preparing food to eat at home includes rinsing fresh vegetables picked from a home garden, cooking a meal or preserving foods to enjoy later on.

Some known challenges for food processing	Some opportunities for food processing
• Some people don't have the opportunity, skill or motivation to make healthy meals or snacks. • For some there are more immediate priorities (housing, family, bills) that can take precedence over preparing meals from fresh local ingredients. • Australians discard up to 20% of the food they purchase rather than consuming it before it goes bad.	• Support community members who struggle to access fresh food and prepare fresh, healthy meals. • Provide information on how to make the most of seasonal foods including advice on healthy recipes, eating in season and preserving excess foods.



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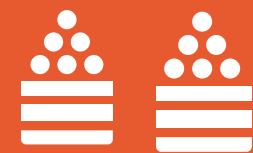
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OUR FOOD ECONOMY

Commercial food processing involves preparing raw ingredients for consumption. This can include washing fresh produce, cooking or pickling foods, preparing meat products, pasteurizing dairy and other products, fermentation, milling grains, packing fruits/vegetables for transport and packaging foods. It can also include value-adding by taking primary produce and processing it to create a new, higher value product.

Some known challenges for local food production

- Many of our farms produce relatively small (and seasonal) amounts of product.
- Existing facilities don't adequately support small batch processing.
- High utility and water costs are a barrier to local food processing (and production).
- There is a general lack of connection between small scale primary producers and processors.
- Current planning and other regulations prohibit some types of on-farm processing.
- Food processing in Surf Coast Shire is on a small scale compared to established markets such as the Yarra Valley in Victoria and Onkaparinga in South Australia.
- Recruiting a new workforce can be difficult given the relatively low wages in food processing.
- The distance between local producers and major markets often makes it more economical to process foods in industrial areas outside the shire.
- The cost of specialised food processing equipment can be prohibitive for small producers.
- Food processing generally requires large amounts of energy and resources, including electricity, plastic and other packaging.
- Neighbouring properties can be impacted by food processing and waste management – by noise, odour or dust for example.
- Good food is being wasted or under-utilised – due to consumer preferences for produce of a particular size/ shape or wastage created in turning fresh produce into other food products for example.
- Some local businesses and industries lack access to a skills base that would enable value-adding in food production and the food chain.

Some opportunities for increasing local food production

- Advocate for changes to regulations that are prohibitive to small and medium food businesses while maintaining health and safety requirements.
- Identify opportunities for food producers to combine processing locally.
- Establish local /regional small batch processing (and distribution) facilities.
- Assess the adequacy of appropriately zoned land for food production and processing in the shire.
- Use technology and innovation to reduce waste and other impacts and improve efficiency in processing and packaging foods.
- Explore the viability of increased use of renewable energy to reduce running costs of food businesses and food processing.
- Identify ways to reduce the waste of good food during processing.
- Identify ways to increase employment in local food processing.
- Identify ways to support local food producers to turn raw foods into higher value produce (cheese or smallgoods for example).





DISTRIBUTION: *Getting food from paddock to plate*

OUR COMMUNITY

Sharing foods – such as home grown, fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables – between friends, neighbours and colleagues is a way individuals distribute food in our community.

Some known challenges for local food distribution

- Changes to lifestyles have diminished social connectedness meaning some neighbours no longer know each other. Neighbourhood sharing of food and knowledge is therefore reduced.
- Some rural areas receive only limited deliveries of fresh food.
- Regulations restricting commercial trade of home grown produce prevent some home producers from selling excess food or starting a small business.

Some opportunities for local food distribution

- Identify ways to increase the regular, affordable supply of fresh, local foods to communities where this may be currently lacking.
- Increase awareness in communities of events and other opportunities for sharing local food with others.
- Explore the use of food box services and neighbourhood produce swaps to increase sharing of excess food within local communities.
- Identify ways to support home based food producers to distribute their products.



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OUR FOOD ECONOMY

Distribution refers to the transporting of food from where it is produced or processed to where it will be consumed or used – by individuals, food retailers, restaurants, markets and wholesalers. This can include road, rail, air and sea and appropriate storage facilities along the journey.

Some known challenges for local food distribution

- Distribution of local food is often inefficient. Many local growers send fresh produce to Melbourne based markets. Local food retailers in turn source their products from these Melbourne markets for sale back in the shire.
- Small to medium scale producers tend to have multiple distribution channels which can be inefficient.
- There is a lack of central infrastructure in the shire or region to distribute local foods.
- Limited phone and internet coverage in some rural areas means many food producers are not well connected to retailers and consumers.
- Small batch production of local foods can present challenges for local food retailers, cafes and restaurants who depend on security of supply.

Some opportunities for local food distribution

- Reduce the length of supply chains to increase efficiency, increase consumer access to local foods and reduce food miles. For example:
- Better connect local producers with local food retailers and hospitality businesses.
 - Better coordinate the collection and delivery of local foods within the shire.
 - Explore the use of central distribution hubs within the shire or region to improve storage and distribution of local food.
 - Increase opportunities for cooperative selling, distribution and promotion within the local food industry.
- Other
- Increase the use of sustainable transport.
 - Identify ways to increase employment in local food distribution.





ACCESS & CONSUMPTION: *Love eating local*

OUR COMMUNITY

Many people benefit from the health, social and educational value gained from growing, eating, sourcing, cooking and preparing quality local foods. As consumers we can also enjoy learning the stories and passions of the people producing local food, and we play a role in driving demand for local foods.

Some known challenges for access to and consumption of local foods

Food security – the stable supply of food and individuals’ access to it.
For example:

- Some areas in our shire have a slightly higher percentage of residents who may struggle to afford safe, healthy foods compared with the state measure.
- Affordability of fresh foods available locally can be a challenge for some.
- Climate change and degradation of soil, air and water may compromise local production of food to meet future needs.
- Food production in the shire may decrease if local farms cannot remain economically viable.

Other

- Some locally grown fresh produce is sold to Melbourne markets rather than direct to local retailers.
- Local, seasonal produce often has a narrow harvest window, which can be seen as an inconvenience in some households.
- Due to the small batch/artisan nature of many locally produced foods, they may not be available in the regular places where people shop.
- Some people tend to purchase more processed or pre-prepared foods and less fresh ingredients due to a lack of time, interest or skill in preparing meals themselves.
- Higher costs of producing, processing and distributing some local foods may be passed on to the consumer.
- Throwing out fresh foods that are purchased but not consumed leads to wasted money and resources, and places pressure on waste management systems.

Some opportunities for increasing access to and consumption of local foods

- Further empower community members to grow their own food in homes, schools and other community spaces (as noted under Production).
- Encourage and promote community events that educate about local and healthy food consumption.
- Develop and promote materials such as websites, apps, brochures, databases and fact sheets that make it simple to find and access local foods.
- Increase digital coverage, particularly in the hinterland, to enable broad use of internet-based communication channels.
- Increase the amount of affordable local foods available to consumers through local outlets including markets, supermarkets and other retailers.
- Improve the efficiency of food production, processing and distribution to reduce the cost to the consumer.
- Adopt practices that will improve the resilience of our local food system.
- Investigate opportunities to increase knowledge, access and consumption of local indigenous bush foods.
- Promote and draw on the learnings from current of Give Where You Live food security research for the Geelong area.



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OUR FOOD ECONOMY

The Surf Coast Shire has a diverse range of places where locally grown food can be bought and consumed, including cafes, restaurants, wineries, accommodation, greengrocers and other local retailers, markets, events, farm gate sales and harvest trails.

Some known challenges for access to and consumption of local foods	Some opportunities for increasing access to and consumption of local foods
- Regulations, including planning zones that effect on-farm sales. - Consumer behaviour compounded by lack of broad access to local foods in major local retail outlets. - Security of supply – retailers, cafes and restaurants require consistency of quality and quantity. - Limited internet access in some rural areas limits their connectivity with retailers and other consumers. - While many locally produced foods are recognised for their quality, the Surf Coast Shire is not generally well known for its produce. - The hinterland has a large proportion of our food producers but it isn't well linked to the Great Ocean Road as a visitor destination. - The seasonal nature of tourism (high summer visitation, low winter visitation) causes fluctuations in engagement, consumption and demand for local foods. - Poor road infrastructure, such as corrugated gravel roads, can reduce the quality of fresh foods.	- Provide information about the value and availability of our local and seasonal foods. - Enhance the current outlets for local food sales, including farmers markets, harvest trails, farm gate sales, food aggregators and retailers. - Increase the amount of locally grown foods used in the local hospitality industry. - Capitalise on the trend of consumer interest in local food. - Increase growers' understanding of the needs of retailers and restaurants. - Develop branding for our local food industry. - Increase Surf Coast Shire's reputation as a food destination – from the coast to the hinterland. - Better link with neighbouring local government areas to market local food products. - Find opportunities to cross promote local food alongside other regional tourism attributes and leverage off events that are held in local townships. - Better link the local food industry with the regional hospitality and tourism industry. - Improve transport access to local food growing areas. - Increase opportunities for consumers to connect with local food production, such as 'pick your own' venues. - Provide better access to good food that would otherwise go to waste in stages of production or processing.



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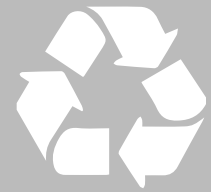
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WASTE AVOIDANCE & RESOURCE RECOVERY *Love food, hate waste*

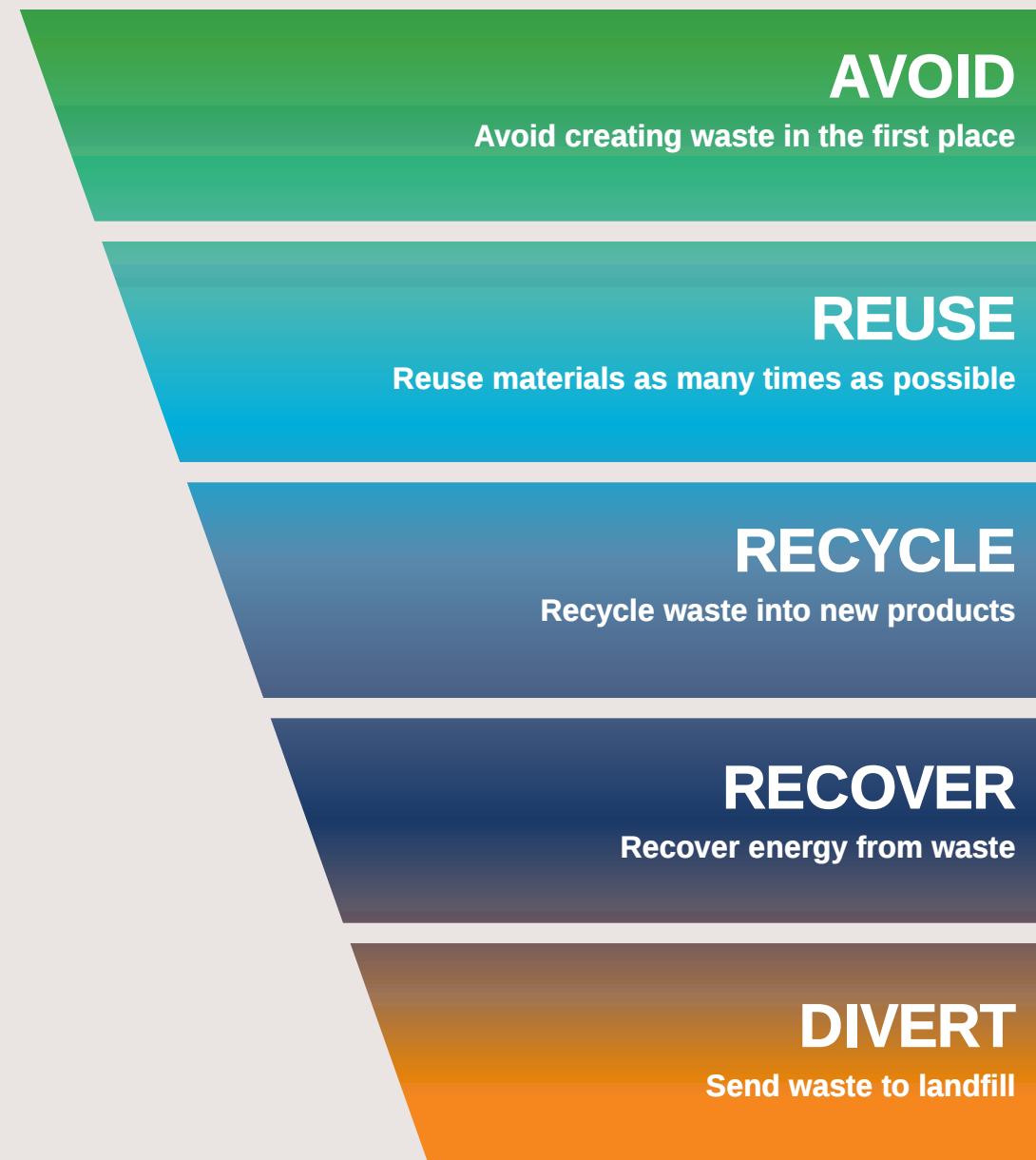
In community, business and agricultural contexts, avoiding and managing waste is important throughout the cycle of food production, processing, distribution, access and consumption.

Keeping food-related waste out of landfill is a priority, by first reducing the waste created in the food system, and considering all of the ways to put 'waste' to better use.

Most preferred
Highest
environmental value



Least preferred
Lowest
environmental value



Some examples:



Don't let great taste go to waste in your home!



Redistribute excess fresh food through community food programs.



Nutrients in kitchen food scraps can be turned into compost or fed to worms, then used to maintain productive soils.

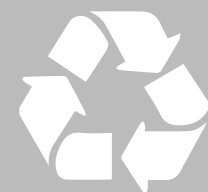


Commercial scale organic waste recovery utilises the embodied energy in food waste.



Food and other organic waste creates additional methane in landfill – so this should be the last resort!





WASTE AVOIDANCE & RESOURCE RECOVERY *Love food, hate waste*

OUR COMMUNITY

Some known challenges for waste avoidance and resource recovery	Some opportunities for waste avoidance and resource recovery
• High rates of domestic food wastage nationally. • Pressure on local facilities to manage organic wastes - contributing to the total waste volume in the shire. • Currently no shire-wide method for collecting and processing domestic food waste into a useful product such as compost. • A significant amount of organic food waste is currently collected in kerbside collection and sent to landfill. • Organic waste creates additional methane in landfill facilities. Methane is a strong greenhouse gas, 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide. • Food packaging, including plastics, tin and paper products create a huge volume of waste, can have negative impacts on the environment and visual amenity in the community and is often under-valued as a resource.	• Increase awareness of the cost and impact of domestic food waste, with the intention of changing behaviour to reduce food wastage. • Increase awareness and uptake of (individual or shared) worm farms or compost bins in residential and community settings. • Better utilise the knowledge and skill base of community gardens and schools for example, as demonstration sites for organic waste recycling. • Investigate, trial and implement a residential food organics collection system in Surf Coast Shire (Council Plan, 16f). • Work with the community to reduce general waste from food packaging and increase recycling – by promoting use of reusable shopping bags and containers and encouraging more food production in home and community settings to avoid packaging altogether.



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OUR FOOD ECONOMY

Some known challenges for waste avoidance and resource recovery

- Food packaging must meet health, safety and food preservation standards.
- Large amounts of plastic and other packaging materials are used throughout the food system, much of which is not reused or recovered.
- There is a lack of knowledge about food packaging options that have lower environmental impacts.
- Alternative food packaging can be more expensive.
- Organic wastes are under-utilised as resources. More fruit and vegetables could be sold as 'seconds' and scraps from processing can be turned into compost.
- Currently no shire-wide method for collecting and processing food waste.
- Limited access to alternative waste management facilities – either on-site or in the shire.
- Managing large volumes of waste water generated by primary food production and some processing.

Some opportunities for waste avoidance and resource recovery

- Inform producers and consumers about alternative food packaging methods and materials.
- Work with business clusters or industries to identify ways to reduce or eliminate large waste streams.
- Expand on the success of current local businesses, projects and initiatives to further reduce waste through initiatives such as on-farm composting, waste water management and organic waste management in cafes.
- Investigate options to improve local food redistribution channels, including how to divert good food to those in need.
- Investigate opportunities to utilise or develop commercial organic waste recycling methods/facilities.



Photo provided by The Farmer's Place, Freshwater Creek

BE INVOLVED

Involve yourself in the local food scene

JOIN A COMMUNITY GARDEN

[Danawa Community Garden](#)

Spring Creek Reserve, Torquay

[Anglesea Community Garden](#)

5 McMillan Street, Anglesea

[Community Garden 3231](#)

2 Fraser Drive, Aireys Inlet

[Gracedale Community Garden](#)

16 Mountjoy Parade, Lorne

[Winchelsea Community Garden](#)

51 Hesse Street, Winchelsea

Torquay Community Men's Shed and Surf Coast Secondary College also have gardens.

BUY OR SELL PRODUCE AT A FARMERS MARKET

[Torquay Farmers Market](#)

Every Saturday

[The Farmer's Place Farmers Market](#)

Last Sunday of every month

[Winchelsea Growers and Makers Market](#)

First Sunday of the month

AT HOME

Love food and hate waste in your home

[Visit the Love Food Hate Waste website.](#)

Thinking about starting a local food business?

[Visit Surf Coast Shire Council's website.](#)

AT SCHOOL

Find resources for school/early years edible gardens

[Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation.](#)

IN THE COMMUNITY

Get involved in a [Community Kitchen](#) (Torquay)

Contact Christine or Fiona at Spring Creek Community House on phone 5261 2583.

Got the skills to teach others about an aspect of growing or making food?

Contact your local community garden or Community House.

Could a grant help get your idea off the ground for a community food initiative?

[Surf Coast Shire Community and Events Grants.](#)

IN BUSINESS

Find out whether installing solar could benefit your food business

For free advice contact independent energy experts, [Positive Charge.](#)

What roles can Council play in helping our community and environment to thrive – through our local food program?

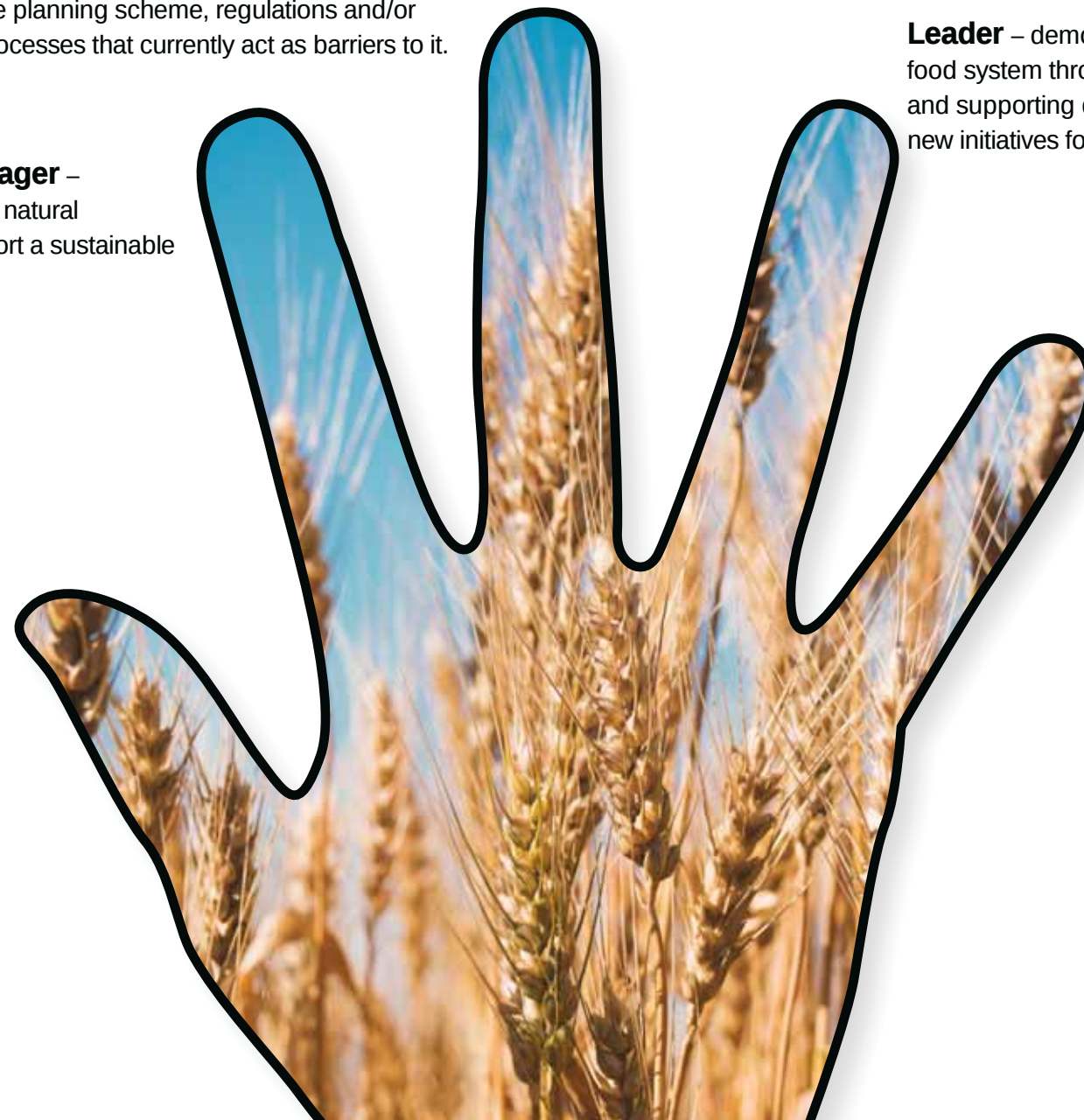
Advocate – raising the profile of our local food system, and leading change in the planning scheme, regulations and/or processes that currently act as barriers to it.

Planner/regulator/manager – managing infrastructure and natural resources in ways that support a sustainable local food system.

Partner/Facilitator – making connections between Council services, community groups/ organisations, local businesses, government agencies, education institutions, funding streams and training opportunities for example.

Leader – demonstrating support for our local food system through Council's operations, and supporting demonstration projects and new initiatives for example.

Educator – helping people make good choices when producing and consuming food, and promoting the value of our local foods, for example, through events, case studies, workshops, programs, research, information resources, smartphone/ tablet apps, grant/funding opportunities, promotion and marketing.



Action planning

A detailed Action Plan outlining specific programs, projects and events for Council to implement with community will be developed following community consultation on this Local Food Program discussion paper.

The following are some proposed actions for Council to take. The community consultation process will help inform additional actions where Council can work alongside the community to achieve more in supporting and celebrating our local food system.

Action	Outcome
Become a signatory to the Urban and Regional Food Declaration by Sustain: the Australian Food Network	Council joins other Councils and organisations to declare its commitment to local food, ecosystem preservation and food security.
Implement a Sustainable Food Procurement Policy for Council	A large proportion of food/catering purchased by Council will be locally grown or produced.
Support community gardens to thrive	Community gardens are supported to maintain their facilities, enhance their memberships, host events and provide opportunities for people to learn from others about growing and preparing food.
Enhance food growing programs in Council-managed kindergartens	Children (and their families) who attend these kindergartens have access to fresh, local foods.
Develop and maintain strategic partnerships to enhance local and sustainable food production, access and consumption	Council officers play a role in linking members of the public with agencies/ organisations, e.g. for the purpose of advocacy, access to grants and training, etc.
Encourage and embed events that promote the profile of local foods into the Surf Coast Shire annual calendar	Community members and visitors can learn more about our local foods through a range of attractive events including markets and festivals.
Improve the accessibility/public interface of information related to producing and accessing/consuming local foods	Members of the public can easily find information that supports increased production and consumption of locally grown foods, e.g. on Surf Coast Shire website and social media.
Implement Council's Hinterland Futures Strategy	Act on findings and recommendations (e.g. in relation to planning, zoning and/ or regulations related to our local food industry), and work to remove barriers to better enable appropriate food production in the shire.
Continue to maintain vegetable and herb garden beds in the staff outdoor lunch area, and manage internal food waste using composts and worm farms at the Civic Offices	Council staff can plant and eat foods grown in the staff outdoor lunch area. Food scraps are turned into worm castings and compost on-site, which are used to nourish the gardens.

INFLUENCES AND REFERENCES

Our Local Food Program draws upon local, regional and national influences including:

LOCAL

Council

- *Council Plan 2017-2021* (incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- *Towards Environmental Leadership*
- *Open Space Strategy 2016-2025*
- *Edible Landscapes Initiatives* (2014)
- *Hinterland Futures Strategy* (due for release in 2018)
- One Planet Living gap analysis for Surf Coast Shire (2017)
- Environment and Rural Advisory Panel workshops in 2015, and workshop combined with the Tourism Reference Group in 2016
- Work undertaken by consultants in local food in 2015 and 2017

Community

- Local growers, farmers, producers, rural land owners, businesses, retailers, market organisers, community gardens, food trails, community groups, education settings, Landcare groups, etc.

Council's ***Hinterland Futures Strategy*** (Council Plan, h21) will complement the Local Food Program by providing detail about things that influence and impact upon primary food production in the shire's hinterland. This includes land use planning and regulations.

REGIONAL

Surf Coast Shire Council is an active participant in G21 pillars and an advocate for G21 initiatives, including:

- *Sustainable Agribusiness Strategy* for the G21 Region 2017-2022
- G21 Agribusiness Forum > Innovation Roadmap
- *G21 Healthy Eating and Active Living* priorities
- Regional Food System Alliance

Other agencies, organisations and networks

- [Climate Resilient Communities of the Barwon South West](#)
- [Climate-Ready Victoria](#) – Barwon South West fact sheet, State Government of Victoria (2015)
- [Climate Change Implications and the Corangamite Soil Health Strategy \(2008\)](#)
- [Corangamite Catchment Management Authority](#) > National Landcare Program
- [Barwon Water](#)
- [Barwon South West Waste and Resource Recovery Group](#)
- [Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils](#) (of which Surf Coast Shire Council is a member)
- [Give Where You Live Foundation](#), Geelong
- **G21** municipalities: Colac Otway, Golden Plains, City of Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast.

STATE AND NATIONAL

- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Regulators, e.g. for agricultural, health and food industries
- *Food Systems and the role of Local Government*, Victorian Local Government Association, 2017
- *Food and Fibre Sector Strategy*, State Government of Victoria, 2016
- *Victoria's Climate Change Framework*, State Government of Victoria, 2016
- *Feeding a hungry nation: Climate change, food and farming in Australia*, Climate Council, 2015

Note: There are currently no national directions related to food production since the Australian Government's National Food Plan: Our food future (2013) was abolished by the federal coalition government in 2014.