

THE PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN

a common-sense approach
to a tasty, resilient and
fair food system for
all Australians



POLICY DIRECTIONS

AUGUST 2013



Our food system is broken.

People are hungry in the outer suburbs at the same time that supermarkets are throwing away food.

Farmers are leaving the land in increasing numbers.

Food is full of additives that are making us sick.

We, the Australian Food sovereignty Alliance, are a national coalition of people and organisations working for a fairer food system better suited to a democracy.

We've come up with a plan for a better food system – it's called the People's Food Plan.



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[australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/put link here](http://australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/put)

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The Peoples' Food Plan — our process

BETWEEN SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER 2012, over 600 people took part in 40 public forums organised by the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance across Australia.

Our aim: to discuss a vision for a common-sense, fair, resilient and sustainable Peoples' Food Plan for Australia.

These were democratic conversations — everyone had speaking rights and everyone's opinion and experience was valued. Out of this came a Working Paper for a People's Food Plan (download from our website: www.australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org.au) that reflected the conversations around a fair food system for all. This was intended as a preliminary document, a work in progress.

We launched the People's Food Plan process in September 2012 because we believed that the federal government's proposed National Food Plan marginalises the many thousands who make up an emergent, fair food movement in Australia.

As the AFSA forums have shown, there is a strong desire for a fair and diverse food system, one that deals effectively and democratically with the serious problems this country is facing, problems that range from soil erosion to the obesity crisis, foreign control of our seeds and farmlands to people not getting a regular supply of nourishing food for their families.

The ideas and views that were shared in the public forums both confirmed the existence of a large and growing constituency for change in food and farming in Australia and laid the foundations of a vision of transformation and pathways to achieve it.

1. The Peoples' Food Plan: a recipe for our times

WITHOUT A HEALTHY POPULACE, personal and national development is limited and the cost of health rises even higher. The simplest, cheapest and most enjoyable way to improve community and personal health is through the food we eat.

Our food future is the focus of the Peoples' Food Plan. The Plan was developed by the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA) to offer a better food future for our nation and makes constructive proposals to improve the federal government's National Food Plan released in May 2013. That plan has some good ideas but remains tied to past economic ideologies rather than looking to new options.

...the Peoples' Food Plan...

Australia's first crowdsourced
policy directions document

In contrast, the Peoples' Food Plan, Australia's first crowdsourced policy directions document, has been produced by adopting the ideas offered by participants in the AFSA's participatory assemblies that were held around the country in 2012. The

assemblies drew upon the principle of participatory democracy to devise the Plan because AFSA believes that it offered the best opportunity to hear the range of ideas and opinions and to hear about the smaller scale initiatives being taken to invent an innovative and diverse food system for Australians.

Based on the principles of caring for all Australians and sustaining our natural and urban environments as productive, regenerative systems, our Peoples' Food Plan brings together the aspirations of those interested in creating something new, something that is built on the insights, knowledge and innovations of Australian food buyers, farmers, food processors, small to medium scale food business and the social enterprises populating Australia's burgeoning and creative community food production and distribution sector.

You will find our Peoples' Food Plan to be based on a number of principles that we believe are necessary to take our nation into a future of food security and food abundance, a future that provides our people with sovereignty over healthy choice regarding the food we eat. These, we believe, are fitting principles for a nation with a democratic tradition that we would build upon and expand to create both security and opportunity for our people.



The principles behind the Peoples' Food Plan

1

A good diet or all: Access to nutritious food is the civil right of all Australians and of guest peoples living in our country.

2

Taking responsibility: Australia's food system should care for people's nutritional health with quality product, sustain the productive capacity of farmland and natural environments and be accessible to all in price and distribution.

3

Sovereignty over our food choices: Freedom to choose the food we eat, produced and processed in ways we prefer to support and distributed by means that are socially and economically fair contributes to our food sovereignty.

4

Maintain farmer choice: Farmers enjoy the freedom to choose and adopt agricultural production methods providing they cause no long term damage to agricultural, natural and urban environments or negatively affect the cropping systems and market opportunity of other farmers.

5

Build regional food economies: To improve regional food security and market opportunity, food industry, government and communities develop the production, processing and diversified distribution channels for the foods and agricultural products that can be produced and marketed in a region.

6

Create opportunity for smaller food business: A national legal framework is needed to prevent market domination and the development of quasi-monopoly food and grocery businesses. This will open market opportunity for small to medium size food businesses and expand the retail and dietary choice of Australians.

7

Assess new technology: New agricultural and food processing technologies only be released when developed to a condition in which they pose no risk to farming systems or to eaters. In some cases new technologies may hold significant potential for damage to existing farming systems and it may be wise to invoke the Precautionary Principle until they have been developed to a state in which the risk is eliminated. With other technologies, adopting the Proactivity Principle would allow engagement with new technology so as to improve it or lead to the decision to withdraw it from use. Technologies should meet the authentic needs of farmers and eaters.

8

Proactive local and state government: Local and other government adopt policy, planning regulation and practice that creates opportunity for local and regional food-based initiatives and that removes red tape that is a barrier to responsible small food business and community food enterprise.

2. A recipe for healthy eating

TO ENJOY good health, not only must food be of good nutritional quality, it must also be affordable and accessible. This is not how things are at present:

- obesity risk is almost twice as high for people on low incomes compared to people on high incomes in Australia
- a healthy diet of fresh foods costs about 28 percent of a low income but only six to nine percent of a high income; the situation is worse for people reliant on welfare
- in remote and rural communities, fresh food prices are up to 45 percent higher due to transport costs, and housing and cooking facilities are often inadequate
- despite assurances that Australia is food secure, studies consistently show that around five percent of people have run out of money to buy food in the previous 12 months, rising to 20 percent of those on low-incomes
- around two-thirds of Australia's adult population and about one quarter of Australian children are overweight or obese, resulting in chronic health issues such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes and reduced quality of life
- less than one in ten of us eat the recommended daily amount of fruit and vegetables and we don't actually grow enough to meet that requirement
- Australians presently waste 361 kilograms of food per person per year, or approximately 936 kilograms per household per year which makes up 35 percent of Australia's municipal waste stream of 4.45 million tonnes (commercial food waste makes up an estimated 21 percent of the waste stream).



Creative solutions for a fair and health food system for Australia

The Peoples' Food Plan proposes that federal food policy:

Launch a national food literacy program concurrent with the Peoples' Food Plan to increase understand of food issues and to support **a new vision for Australia's food system**

Improve access to fresh, local food through **simplifying the startup process for community food systems** that supplement food purchases

Encourage the production, processing and supply of food as free from chemical residues as possible and monitor the food supply for the presence of contaminants

Make fresh food available to all by **prioritising access** to it over energy-dense, nutrient-poor junk foods and by appropriate labeling of food

Support with financial, research, planning and infrastructure the regional production and distribution of foods to increase food access and security of supply and build viable regional economies

Create the economic and planning environment to **diversify and increase the number** of small, independent stores and grocers, farmers' markets, food cooperatives and food box schemes

Adopt local government policy and plans to enable the edible landscaping of parks and streets and the sharing of produce from backyard, community and school gardens to increase the availability of seasonal and locally grown produce and the community-building potential of these practices

Improve the chemical residue monitoring of foods so as to provide public assurance of a safe food supply and establish as a public and industry reference a **national food contaminants register** for genetically modified food and chemical/ pharmaceutical residues

Fund research to identify hidden health risks associated with the regular intake of fresh and processed foods produced within and imported into Australia and into the health consequences of eating processed foods; increase investment in research into the impact of food choices on physical and psychological health and on environmental and farmland sustainability

Regulate the promotion of junk foods to reduce the rising incidence of diabetes and obesity-related diseases and save the country tens of billions in associated healthcare costs

Link diet directly to school education by enabling all interested schools to have a vegetable patch linked to the curriculum (for studies in science, language, nutrition, arts etc) and serving as an outdoor classroom; a kitchen (perhaps part of the outdoor classroom) for food preparation and communal eating; paid staff to support a food literacy program.

Introduce industry and government incentives to **reduce the current volume of food waste** with a national program similar to the NSW government Love Food/Hate Waste campaign

Research the benefits of gardening for rehabilitation, rural community issues such as the suicide of farmers and resilience of the food system in the face of climate change.

Reform the food procurement practices of institutions such as hospitals, schools, aged services and local government to improve community health and increase market access on fair terms for local producers.

3. Seeding a sustainable farming future

THE CHANGES in landuse that came with the European settlement of Australia and the adoption of industrial models of agriculture have caused the loss of native grassland, woodland and forest and left us with the world's most rapid rate of mammal extinction, estimated at 40 percent.

The spread of low-density urbanisation, especially since the 1950s, has converted productive, urban fringe farmland with good agricultural soils into unproductive, car-reliant suburbs.

A viable farming future for both urban fringe market gardeners and orchardists as well as larger scale, rural farmers and graziers is vital to the food security of our growing cities, to authentic food choice and to the rural economics that support regional centres.

Farming facts

- our farmers use only a little over 60 percent of Australia's landmass for farming; livestock grazing in arid and semi-arid regions, much of which are unsuitable for other forms of agriculture, accounts for 56 percent of this area
- Australia's farming future depends on adaptation to changing circumstances because, according to some projections, the production of wheat, beef, dairy and sugar may decline by as much as 80 percent by 2050 when the combined effects of climate change, reduced water availability, soil erosion, soil salinisation and acidification are taken into account; soil salinity is expected to nearly treble from current levels to affect 17 million hectares by 2050
- we currently produce enough food to feed 60 million people, but, as a nation, we are also locked into intensive, industrial-style, specialised commodity production that is reliant on exports even as the free trade model makes us increasingly import-dependent in many basic food groups.

Along with land management challenges, our farmers are faced with their own:

- changing global, political and economic conditions have locked many farmers into a production treadmill requiring ever-increasing volumes of agricultural inputs
- prices paid to farmers for their products are in decline, affecting the viability of farming generally and that of farming families in particular
- the typical response to the cost-price squeeze – the difference in what it costs a farmer to produce goods and the price the farmer receives for them – has been to scale up, borrow money to purchase new equipment and land and increase inputs in order to increase yields; consequently, the rate of fertiliser use has risen seven-fold in the past few decades
- for Australian broadacre and dairy farms, average farm debt has risen by more than 250 percent to over \$500,000 per farm over the two decades since 1990-91
- high levels of farm debt carry a social toll, with the rate of suicide and depression among farmers more than double the national average.
- all of these influences make the farming life unattractive to young people and the result is that nearly a quarter of Australian farmers are over 65, compared to three percent of the workforce
- unlike European and American farmers, Australian farmers are not subsidised for the goods they produce and those selling into export markets compete with subsidising countries and those with lower labour costs.

As farmers struggle to make ends meet and many leave the land, we have to ask ourselves:

- who will do the work of growing and raising our nation's food?
- are we happy to off-shore this vital work to growers in other countries ?
- and how can we produce our food without further damage to our soils, waterways and ecosystems?

Creative solutions for a fair and viable farming system for Australia

The Peoples' Food Plan proposes that federal food policy include:

Incentives for farmers to adopt an agro-ecological approach to farming (also known as regenerative or sustainable farming) that takes a region and site-specific understanding of farms and their bioregions to choose agricultural practices suited to particular conditions

Reduce levels of average farm debt and increase average net farm income to sidestep the get-big or get-out approach through which we lose thousands of farmers every year, and, with them a vast store of accumulated knowledge and experience

Devise innovative ways that allow farmers to stay on the land other than the cliched response of opening export markets

Investing in local and regional food system infrastructure such as appropriate-scale abattoirs and regional dairy processing facilities

Resourcing the expansion of authentic farmers' markets characterised by direct sales by farmers rather than resellers, community-supported agriculture systems and other forms of direct marketing

Adopt food procurement standards that prioritise local and ethical sourcing for public sector institutions and private contractors financed by public funds

Support research programs that document the social, environmental and economic benefits of local and regional food economies

Set a target to **increase the number of farmers under 35** from its current (2011) level of 13 percent to 25 percent by 2020 and **form a national taskforce** with a strong level of farmer (and particularly young farmer) participation and leadership to develop an action plan to achieve the 25 percent target

Resource pilot mentoring and traineeship programs to support existing farmers to take on new, and especially young, farmers

Introduce zero interest loans for new, especially younger, farmers to acquire land and equipment that is paid back after the farms are established and are returning a good income

Increase the \$1.5 million Community Food Initiatives fund announced in the federal government's May 2013 National Food Plan by 5 percent year-on-year funding increases for urban agriculture from the \$1.5 million 2013 baseline, rising to \$15 million per annum by 2030; eliminate the requirement for matching monetary funds and include voluntary labour and services as matching fund-equivalents

Restore government-funded extension services that support farmers to innovate and adapt, and restore funding to the CSIRO to research agroecological approaches to food production; research, development and extension should be returned to 5 percent of the gross value of agricultural production (a level last seen in the 1970s) from the current 3 percent today

Apply the Precautionary Principle to genetically modified organisms to address the potential risks and adverse impacts of genetically modified foods and feed and the level of uncertainty about the technology and the haste of its rollout.

4. Planning for fair food systems

ONCE A PROUD Australian sector with domain over rural lands and employing thousands, farming today has shrunk as a contributor to the national economy thanks to cheap imports. Now, the rural farmlands themselves face competition from urbanisation, industrialisation, nature reservation and mining. Farming as a contributor to the national economy and as a livelihood and career has been devalued.

The side-effects of this devaluation, along with the decline in food security and sovereignty, includes:

- some of our best farmland close to our cities, which enjoys access to reliable water supplies, is rapidly being lost to low-density urban sprawl; low density urban development in our towns and cities gives rise to 'food deserts' – areas where fast-food and liquor outlets greatly outnumber fresh food retailers and where those same retailers are inaccessible except by private car; food deserts are implicated in worsening Australia's obesity pandemic
- land elsewhere is lost as the mining industry expands
- over the past quarter century 89 million hectares of farmland, that's 400 hectares every hour, has been lost to agriculture
- the spread of big-box shopping centres and malls is another sign of the excessive corporate concentration and control of our food supply that encourages private vehicle use and traffic congestion, that alters the design and culture of our suburbs and that takes trade from small to medium size food business located away from those centres; the decline in diversity in our retail landscapes due to the spread of big-box shopping malls threatens local and regional jobs and businesses
- the dominance of the supermarket duopoly leads to the decline of smaller, independent food retailers like bakeries and greengrocers and to allegations of unfair treatment of Australian farmers and food processors.



Creative ideas for a better planning system that includes food production

Assess and map high-quality farmland

Prime urban fringe farmland is a vital strategic resource, well beyond any short term financial profit that can be realised through its sale as real estate; good arable land, wherever it is, should be protected from coal-seam gas and other forms of mining.

To protect urban fringe farmland, the livelihoods of farmers and food processors and the security of the urban food supply, the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance proposes that the federal government require state governments to:

- complete a land capability assessment of urban fringe lands around larger cities and regional centres to identify and protect prime agricultural land for farming in perpetuity and to allocate marginal agricultural land for urban growth, nature reservation, recreational and other uses as appropriate
- integrate food system thinking into urban planning frameworks, policies and implementation
- support urban agriculture and community food production through infrastructure development and other means.
- adopt an immediate moratorium on the sale of prime agricultural land and encourage planners to design medium density dwellings in towns and cities to reduce the expansion of the suburbs on to urban fringe farmland.
- adopt an immediate moratorium on the expansion of coal-seam gas drilling on farmland.

Integrate agriculture and food systems into urban planning

- integrate food, farming, health and sustainability into planning frameworks
- local and state government adopt the *Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design* principles devised by the Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab at Melbourne University (<http://www.ecoinnovationlab.com/research/food-sensitive-planning-and-urban-design/417-food-sensitive-planning-and-urban-design-fspud-report-released>) and utilise the recommendations of this study as the basis for their work
- extend and improve existing local government food security and urban agriculture policy directed to supporting, first of all, Australian rural producers and processors, especially those within the same region in which the policy operates
- support and adapt regional food plans towards the broad needs of developing regional food economies, rather than narrowly focusing on economics and the needs of agri-business.

Planning is at the heart of sustainable, fair and resilient food systems yet there are very few planning frameworks in Australia that directly integrate food, health and well-being. It is time to change that.

Adopt a regional planning approach

Adopt a bioregional approach to food and landuse planning as the basis of regional food systems and for other landuses that are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

A bioregional basis for regional planning is based on geographic features such as catchments and uplands which are treated as single, integrated planning units even where they cross state borders.

5. Cities feeding themselves

IT FEEDS MORE THAN 800 million people worldwide. Its low barriers to entry contribute to the incomes of its practitioners. It stimulates small business start-ups. It supports the food sovereignty and food security of its practitioners. It puts to productive use underutilised land in cities. It offers opportunities for productive employment in both the formal and informal economies. It is practiced, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN, by between one-quarter and two-thirds of urban and suburban households and is often the part-time occupation of women who combine food production with childcare and other household responsibilities. It increases both the food availability and the incomes of low-income farming households.

It is urban agriculture.

Most of these benefits are the values of urban agriculture in lesser developed countries, but what about Australia?

Australia's urban agriculture

Urban agriculture has a long history in this country within both the formal and informal economies. Urban fringe market gardens, poultry farms and orchards have long fed our cities and continue to do so. As our cities have expanded the farms have followed the urban fringe, occupying the land between the suburbs and the open countryside.

The market gardening and urban fringe poultry and orcharding industries make up the farming enterprises of the formal urban farming economy – those that are carried out as a livelihood, that employ people and that produce the foods marketed to city people.

But Australia has another type of urban agriculture. It is poorly documented and poorly measured and its full extent can only be guessed at. It is a traditional Australian urban practice and it played a role in feeding people and earning smaller amounts of



income for families during the great depression of the 1930s. During World War Two this other urban agriculture, the urban agriculture of the informal economy, received federal government encouragement through the Gardens for Victory program that boosted Australia's food self-reliance through home food production. That's a valuable example to draw on for any future threat to our food supply and it should be counted as a potential strategic practice in Australia's national security.

While home food gardening has been a longtime practice in our cities it was popularised and boosted into the modern era with the arrival of the organic gardening movement in the late 1960s and, later, through the Permaculture design system. By the start of the current century the practice had been joined by the growing of food on public, school and church land in the form of community gardening, still an expanding practice.

Community support evident for urban agriculture

Strong support was evident during the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance's public forums, that canvassed community needs, to include in the Peoples' Food Plan greater emphasis on urban agriculture in building fair and resilient food systems in Australia.

- participants spoke of a 'diversified urban ecology in the cities'
- of how 'vacant land should be prioritised for food production'
- of the need to 'cut the red tape' when it comes to enabling community food initiatives
- the need to 'integrate food growing into new public housing and high density developments'.



More than growing

Our urban agriculture is part of a broader, formal urban food system that, through its farming, food processing and distribution channels employs tens of thousands of Australians in feeding the people of our towns and cities.

...the Australian Food

Sovereignty Alliance proposes that all levels of Australian government collaborate to establish the starting conditions of a viable and fair food system to support population growth in our towns and cities...

Now, there is crossover between the formal, income generating food system and the informal. This has come about as the demand for clean, fresh and safe food has grown in proportion to a loss of confidence in the conventional approach to food production and marketing and the rise of food fears about what has been done to the food we eat. This crossover takes the form of community supported agriculture, food co-ops, farmers' markets and a range of direct marketing schemes. These are small, often not-for-profit service businesses with social goals.

The community-based food sector itself is a mashup of different food initiatives such as weekly food box schemes, online and offline food swaps, food buyers' groups and other schemes most of which are run as services to members rather than to make a profit. In this, too, we can include the variable volumes of food grown in community and home gardens and the eggs produced by chooks in these enterprises.

Creative solutions for a fair and diverse urban food system

As part of the proposed federal government adoption of the Peoples' Food Plan to diversify and improve the National Food Plan, the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance proposes that all levels of Australian government collaborate to establish the starting conditions of a viable and fair food system to support population growth in our towns and cities.

Creative solutions for a fair and diverse urban food system

1

Local and state government adopt the **Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design principles** devised by the Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab at Melbourne University (<http://www.ecoinnovationlab.com/research/food-sensitive-planning-and-urban-design/417-food-sensitive-planning-and-urban-design-fspud-report-released>).

2

To underwrite urban food security and the livelihoods of urban fringe market gardeners, orchardists and people employed in food processing and elsewhere in the urban food sector, state governments **commission land capability assessments** of the urban fringe regions of our cities and major regional centres.

This would identify two land capabilities:

- land of prime agricultural value
- land of marginal agricultural value.

That of prime value would then be protected for farming in perpetuity by state planning laws. Marginal land might accommodate particular forms of farming, such as livestock or tree cropping, and some of it could go to urban development or be reserved as natural systems.

3

State and local government make available at low cost facilities for the establishment of **urban food hubs**. Food hubs are enterprises where food produced in the region may be purchased, where small scale food processing of regionally produced food may take place, out of which community food systems such as community supported agriculture schemes and food co-ops might operate and where people would come for food education, such as learn-to-cook courses, food preserving workshops and the like. The purpose of the food hubs would be to create an authentic culture around regional food, to provide economic opportunity for farmers, processors, sellers and food educators and to provide quality regional produce for urban eaters.

4

Local and state government **hold a red tape reduction party** to remove legislative or regulatory barriers to communities gathered around food to undertake socially responsible initiatives that create opportunity and conviviality in our cities.

This would include the growing of food, including on public land where appropriate, and the selling and exchange of small volumes of produce. These initiatives are examples of tactical urbanism that contribute to a sustainable urbanism, to food secure cities in which people enjoy sovereignty over their food supply.

5

The federal government broadens and puts additional funds into the **community grants section** of the National Food Plan to benefit a wider range of community food initiatives, drops the requirement for matching funds and counts voluntary contribution as the equivalent of matching funds.

6

The Australian Bureau of Statistics, in the next national census, include questions to ascertain the **scale, value and components of the informal community food system** of our towns and cities so as to provide a picture of the practice nationwide for use in the development of supporting legislation and urban planning.

Progress through targets

We propose the following targets that communities and local governments adopt to encourage the growth of the urban agriculture and a diverse community food movement as components of food secure cities:

- by 2018, increase by 25 percent the number of households with access to suitable land growing and raising their own food
- all residents to have access to free non-hybrid seeds paid for by their rates
- set aside a percentage of land with adequate sun access and uncontaminated soil in new private dwellings for food production
- where possible, every urban area has at least 1m² of productive food space per person
- create a challenge to design modular, low-capital-cost hydroponic and aquaponic food producing systems for commercial and non-commercial food production on suitable surfaces such as carparks, paved areas, suitable rooftops and walls so as to create opportunity for small-scale, specialist food producers, community food production and to contribute to food secure cities.

Strong support was evident during the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance's public forums, that canvassed community needs, to include in the Peoples' Food Plan greater emphasis on urban agriculture in building fair and resilient food systems in Australia.



6. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

SECURING A HEALTHY FUTURE based on a diverse and good diet for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people requires two things as starting points:

- acknowledgement that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) have their own needs in regard to food sovereignty and that this is often linked to traditional food systems
- taking a whole systems approach to ATSI food sovereignty by integrating food choices with public health.

With an occupation record on the Australian continent traceable to around 60,000 years ago, and like First Peoples around the world, ATSI continues to experience diminished control over land, water and food resources due to dispossession and continuing marginalisation.

Food sovereignty has been taken away from Aboriginal people over the last 230 years and this has much to do with the loss of the national estate available to them as well as to the adoption of European foods. Now, the rights to land and food sovereignty for indigenous peoples are on the agenda of the fair food movement, here and globally.

Now, the rights to land and food sovereignty for indigenous peoples are on the agenda of the fair food movement, here and globally...

A smaller portion of the indigenous population occupy settlements in remote areas and, to varying extents, have access to traditional hunting and food gathering practices. However, most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live today in urban environments. This brings overlap with the food security and dietary needs of other Australians.

The food sovereignty of Aborigines living on traditional lands and making use of traditional food practices is adversely affected by a number of changes to our landscapes:

- the loss of biodiversity within the Australian biota which affects the distribution and availability of animals for hunting and plants for gathering
- the effects of the first wave of colonisation that brought government policies restricting ATSI people to small areas of land or to missions which they were not permitted to leave
- the second wave of colonisation, a feature of which was the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal children removed from their families to live on missions, severed their connections to land and family; this made difficult any return to country of origin because, often, those removed didn't know where they came from and because they are reluctant to return due to the trauma associated with their removal
- the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 and some state legislation, such as the Territories Management Act in Western Australia, does confer traditional hunting and gathering rights, however the enjoyment of such rights is not universal across the country.

Creative solutions for indigenous people's food sovereignty

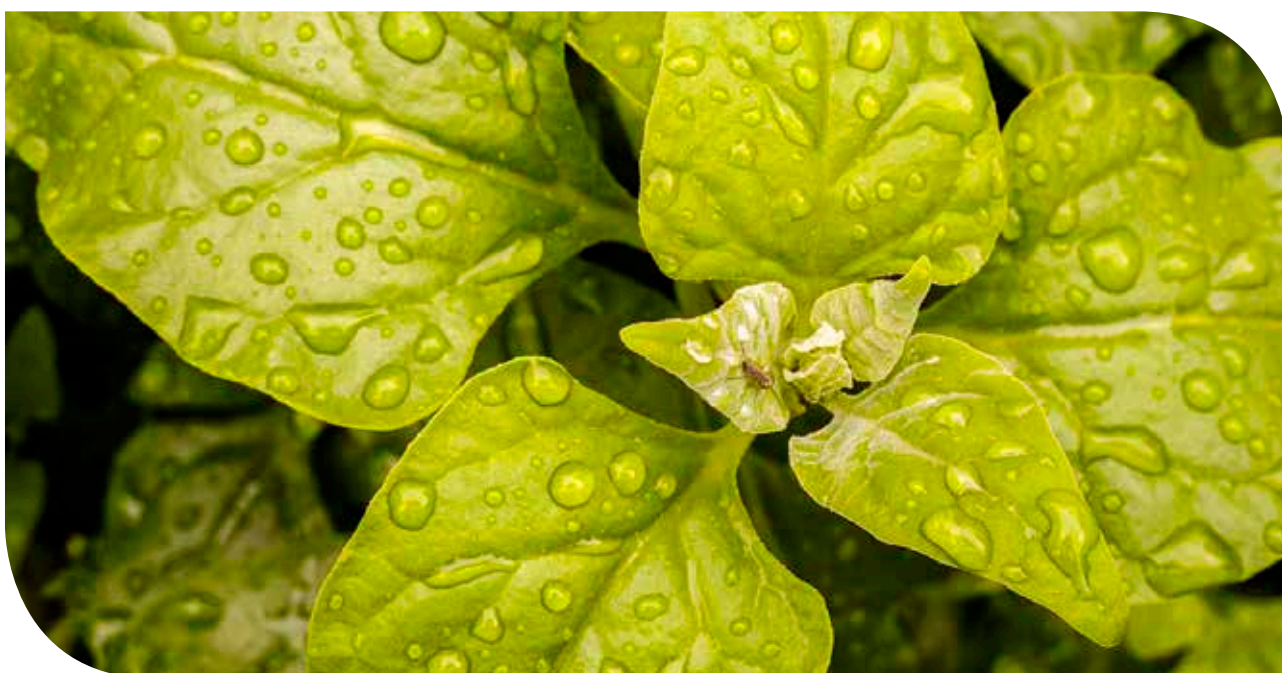
Facilitate return-to-country

- where possible and desired, support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to return to homelands and outstations where they would be free to adopt traditional hunting and gathering practices; this would support ATSI health and well-being; research shows that indigenous Australians living and working on their traditional homelands are significantly less likely to develop diabetes and chronic kidney and heart disease.

Reform food availability on ATSI settlements

In regional and remote areas of Australia food is trucked and flown in from interstate markets and sold via retail outlets at unaffordable prices.

- design and implement a cohesive and well-resourced program of food planning and education including the development of remote indigenous gardens to reduce reliance on costly foods from distant locations; this would form part of a shift towards greater self-reliance and away from the present extreme dependence on food transported over long distances
- put indigenous people at the centre of decision making to develop a grassroots approach to food production and security; there are allegations that government policy makers and some non-government organisations continually put up models based on 'white fella' thinking that is inappropriate to indigenous needs and preferences.



7. Fairness for the world's small farmers

THE IDEA OF FAIR FOOD for Australian producers and eaters forms a model for the economic, health and social wellbeing of smaller farmers worldwide.

The 500 million small farms of the global South, the lesser developed countries of the world, feed an estimated two billion people and create more jobs and income for rural communities than large-scale industrialised agriculture. Yet, paradoxically, the majority of hungry and malnourished people in the world are actually food producers.

This is due to the deep-rooted inequalities between small-scale and larger, often corporate-owned or controlled farms and access to and control over productive resources such as land, seeds, water, technology, credit and markets. These inequalities are often overlaid with long-standing cultural traditions that discriminate against women, which means that women and children are over-represented amongst the world's 900 million malnourished people.

These small-scale producers are the constituency of La Via Campesina and other small farmer and rural worker movements across the world. La Via

Campesina says that small farmers both cool the planet through their adoption of agroecological practices based on regenerating the soil and sequestering carbon, and feed the world because agroecology involves polyculture farming that brings a much greater and more diverse total farm yield per hectare than monocultural, large farming (farming that grow only a single crop, and sometimes only a single variety of that crop species).

An additional burden on the world's small growers is the global land-grab that in 2008-9 alone is estimated to have taken 80 million hectares in large-scale leases or purchases for commodity production compared to an average of four million hectares per year for the previous forty years.

Land-grab contracts are implicated in:

- failure to include in negotiations or gain the consent of the small-scale producers whose land is affected
- in many documented cases harassment, violence and even assassination of small-scale producers who resist being dispossessed of their lands.



Creative solutions to assist small scale farmers in lesser developed countries

Small-scale family farms create more jobs, produce more food per hectare and represent a more sustainable and equitable form of rural development than large-scale industrial monocultures producing bulk commodities for the globalised food market.

Therefore, the Peoples' Food Plan proposes the restructure of Australia's international development assistance programs so that they support small-scale producers around the world, especially women, and include building resilience in the face of external shocks.

Other proposals:

- design agricultural aid programs to build the capacity of small-scale producers to increase their resilience to climate change and food price spikes
- introduce a moratorium on the global land-grab and the adoption of mandatory and enforceable standards governing large-scale acquisitions of farmland for commodity crops across the world.
- work with the FAO and international assistance programs to encourage the introduction of local equality of access to, and control over, resources that potentially would take around 150 million people out of their current state of food insecurity, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO).
- the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance supports the call of La Via Campesina and many others for an immediate halt to coercive and often violent land grabs
 - we support the right of rural communities to reject land acquisitions unless they are fully consulted and give their prior, fully-informed consent.



8. Replace ‘free’ trade with fair trade

THE FAIR TRADE MOVEMENT was created to bring economic benefit to agricultural producers and processors in lesser developed countries. Now, the idea is being extended to include fair trade for Australian farmers.

Fair trade for Australian farmers, food processors and small to medium size retailers entails the building of regional food economies by producing what can be grown in regions for sale there and using surplus productivity for the export market. Implicated in this, however, are international trade agreements.

What do we want? Free or fair trade?

‘Free’ trade agreements are so-called because they are supposed to facilitate the ‘free’ movement of goods and services across borders. Australia is currently party to six free trade agreements (FTAs) and is in the process of negotiating a further nine.

It is claimed that these agreements deliver prosperity for all, however the record shows something quite different – that their main benefit is to large corporations.

This shouldn’t surprise anyone because it is these corporations that have shaped the free trade agenda from its beginnings with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in the 1990s and that have driven it forward via bilateral and regional negotiations after the WTO process stalled in the wake of popular opposition in the early 2000s.

Here’s the impact on these so-called free trade agreements:

- fruit growers are leaving hundreds of tonnes of good produce to rot or dump it in landfill, while others are ripping out dozens of hectares

of established, healthy orchards, all thanks to imports dumped on the Australian market

- household Australian brands like Rosella and SPC Ardmona are disappearing because the processors cannot compete with cheaper imported produce.

Growcom, the peak body for the horticultural industry in Queensland, estimates that the combined effects of this pretend free trade combined with climate change will result in a near 50 percent reduction in our fruit and vegetable production over the next few decades.

- consumers may, in the short term, enjoy the benefits of cheaper food imports – and supermarkets certainly enjoy high profit margins via their booming private label product range; at the same time that this reduces product choice it can displace Australian-grown and processed foods in favour of imported products – this is at the cost of our medium and long-term food sovereignty
- the negotiations are not public; they are part of the cult of secrecy that government and big corporations surround themselves with; conducted in near-secrecy behind closed doors out of the view of the public, civil society groups and the media that are excluded on pretence of ‘commercial sensitivity’, this is a profoundly undemocratic practice unacceptable in a democratic society, especially given the far-reaching and permanent impacts these agreements achieve.

That FTAs work to the benefit of most farmers is a myth promoted by governments and big corporate agribusiness. It’s no wonder Australian growers are leaving the land at steady rate. This situation is catastrophic for our future food security and our food sovereignty. It is time for reform and for a fair trading system.

Creative ideas to reform a broken international system

Conduct a full and independent review of all FTAs

Australia became a net importer of fruits, vegetables and nuts in 2003-4 and our import dependence in horticultural products is rising fast.

- the time for an independent review of the FTAs and of all their impacts – social, environmental and economic – has come and Australians must have the opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations of any enquiry.

Government participates only in transparent and open trade negotiations

The Australian public must have full access to all negotiating documents, including the texts of proposed treaties, as soon as they become available.

- the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance demands an end to these clandestine negotiations and the government's cult of secrecy that only confirms that governments and corporations have matters to hide, of which they are ashamed and therefore cannot be trusted to act in the authentic national interest.

Support for fair, transparent and co-operative trade

Food sovereignty doesn't mean the abandonment of trade and the pursuit of total, absolute food self-sufficiency.

Enjoying the foods from other countries and cultures is one of life's pleasures and enriches us all. But trade should be conducted on the basis of some fundamental principles that genuinely work to the universal benefit – collaboration, transparency, respect for human and labour rights and ecosystem integrity. Trade – in other words – that is fair.

Reject the worst aspects of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA)

With the WTO permanently stalled, the 12-party TPPA talks involving the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan are said to constitute the 'architecture of trade relationships for the 21st century'.

From what has emerged via leaked drafts, this 'architecture' is a charter of rights for big corporations to override legitimate government regulation that safeguards health, environmental and safety policies. The TPPA grants corporations the power to sue governments in a wide range of cases if they believe their commercial interests have been adversely affected by domestic legislation.

We, the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance, seriously and firmly propose that the Australian government:

- rejects proposals for single foreign investor rights to sue governments for damages over health, environmental, food labeling or other public interest legislation
- rejects proposals for increased patent rights on medicines which would delay the availability of cheaper generic medicines
- rejects proposals which would limit the capacity of Australian governments to regulate the labelling of food for health and environmental reasons, including the labelling of genetically engineered food
- rejects proposals which would permit the patenting of life forms, plants or traditional indigenous knowledge
- rejects proposals which would restrict the ability of the Australian government to regulate for local content in government purchasing or for labour rights and environmental standards to be applied to government purchasing
- rejects proposals which would restrict the ability of the Australian government to regulate for Australian content in audiovisual media
- supports workers' rights and environmental standards
- releases the text of the TPPA for proper and informed public and parliamentary discussion and approval before it is signed by Cabinet and open negotiations to public scrutiny.

9. A new role for local government

Local government is the level of government closest to the day-to-day lives of citizens

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAN BECOME a creative influence on the development of food secure towns, cities and regions and on the food sovereignty of citizens because it:

- manages public lands and the uses to which they are put
- has planning power over developments of different types and their design and inclusions
- influences the keeping of small urban livestock in home gardens
- has control over drainage and, thus, over a usually-underutilised water resource
- often makes available small grants that can serve as start-up or maintenance capital for community food systems
- has the capacity to make its premises available free or for an affordable charge for events such as community food group meetings, workshops, community food box systems and food swaps.

The attitude of local government to community and social enterprise initiative in developing food systems has ranged from obstructionism, through ignorance and on to eager facilitation. The Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance proposes that the latter attitude is more appropriate to modern community needs and citizen enterprise, to the security of the regional food supply and to the sovereignty of citizen's food choices.

Supporting tactical urbanism to build a sustainable urbanism

Local government can have a positive influence on community food systems, which are just one form of what planners and placemakers call 'tactical urbanism', the smaller, local initiatives that, combined, move a city towards sustainable forms of urbanism and that create cities of opportunity.

When we consider urban food systems, particularly those of the informal community-based sector, tactical urbanism includes the diverse initiatives that meet some local need:

- at the **production end** of the urban food supply chain, they might include community food gardens, city farms (really, in Australia, food and skills education centres), community managed footpath gardens including fruit and nut trees on footpaths, in public parks and as street trees, community orchards, aquaponic installations (a combined vegetable and table fish technology using a hydroponic growing medium) and community kitchens.
- within the **food processing** part of the urban food supply chain they include community education, usually by community organisations, in food processing technology such as food preserving, bottling, drying and fermentation and the production of soft cheeses
- at the **distribution end** of the urban food supply chain, community food systems include social and community enterprise such as food co-operatives, community supported agriculture schemes, organic food buyers groups, various permutations of the weekly food box model, organic home delivery and the growing number of food swaps around Australia.

These are examples of tactical urbanism – small, local food initiatives that, taken together, make a contribution to sustainable urbanism. These are initiatives that local government can take a leading hand in making happen.

Creative solutions for local government

An affirmative initiative available to local government is adoption of a food procurement policy favouring regionally produced foods and locally owned food business, where available. This would be for foods for consumption at council events and in council-assisted institutions.

The purpose of adopting a food procurement policy is to build components of the regional food system within the local government area, the geographic focus of local governments whose wellbeing councils supposedly work towards.

A second worthwhile initiative is to educate planning and community development staff on the economic, employment, livelihood, environmental and social values of regional food systems.

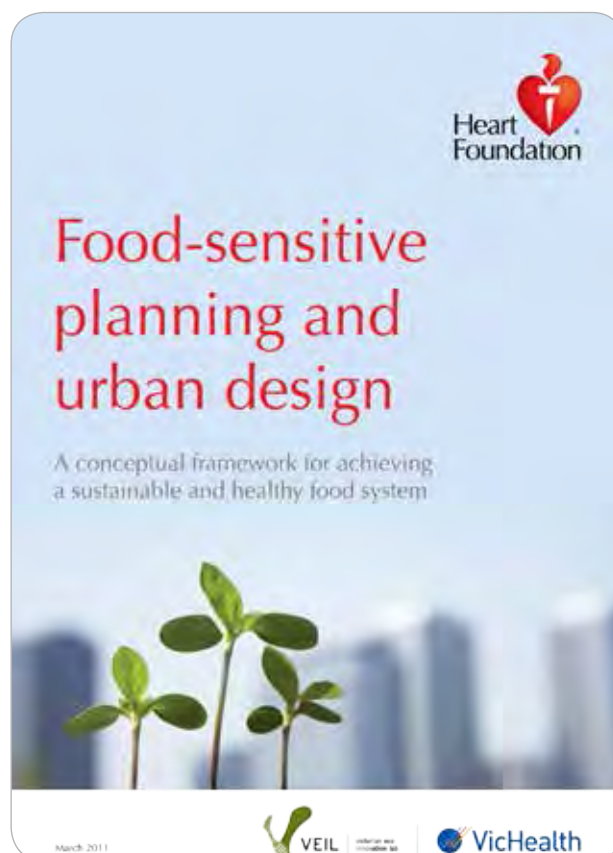
Further beneficial initiatives

First, local government adopts the Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design (FSPUD) principles produced by the Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab at Melbourne University as a framework for supporting community and small to medium business food-related initiatives that benefit citizens.

With the FSPUD principles as a guide, local government:

- reframes its role in regard to food initiatives in its local government area as being that of a platform consisting of policy, practice and attitude upon which communities, social enterprise and small to medium, locally-owned, for-profit business creates their own applications
- engages in red-tape-reduction to remove policy, regulations, attitudinal and other barriers to responsible, socially beneficial food-related initiatives on lands and in areas under local government administration
- adopts enabling policy on community food initiatives characterised by minimum red tape and simple useability; the main local government concerns regarding use of public land and facilities for community food systems are public safety, continued public access to an area, aesthetics (messy installations generate complaints to councils although a sense of aesthetics is a somewhat subjective, individual matter) and links between the community food system and local government city plans and strategies

- adopt a policy on solar access for households growing some of their own food and for community gardens; this would aim to reduce overshadowing by new or extended buildings and by unpruned council trees
- make available (as is already done by some councils) small grants as startup and maintenance capital for community food initiatives
- adopt policy, plans and practice for the multiple-use of public land
- identify and map public land suitable for community gardens and similar citizen enterprises
- make available public land for low-risk events such as community food swaps, and cover such events organised by community groups through council's existing public liability insurance for public land.



10. The need for food democracy

“Transform participation from a blind supermarket transaction to educated choice and action – re-build connections between people and food / food production”.

PFP participant, Bendigo

WE CAN BE passive consumers in the food system or we can be active participants. Being an active participant means growing some of what you eat in your kitchen or community garden or making thoughtful food choices in what you buy. Either way, you're part of democratising the food system.

Participants in the People's Food Plan public forums spoke of a crisis in participation in the food system. This happens through:

- farmers lacking a voice and power in the key decisions that affect their livelihoods
- food processors being undermined by cheaper imports and the supermarket's house brands, much of which is food imported rather than Australian produce
- eaters being denied full information about food purchases through comprehensive and honest food labelling.

These are some of the symptoms of a broken food system in which the important decisions are made by or in the interests of a few powerful vested interests. This is a food system that is oligarchic, not democratic, but what we really need is a democratic food system.

Barriers to a fair and democratic food system, barriers that are in dire need of removal, include:

- fractured government thinking and responsibilities – a government structure in which responsibility for food, agriculture and land use is scattered across multiple departments and industry tiers that work against an integrated approach to creating a fair, productive and democratic food system
- corporations such as big food retail chains that directly influence the livelihoods of farmers through their systems of private standards for home brand products and fresh fruit and vegetables
- parts of the food system that have been subject to deregulation in favour of the so-called 'invisible hand of the market' have been placed at the mercy of big business.

Thoughtful re-regulation and restructuring responsibility for food in government will remedy this governmental and industrial bipolar disorder, this split personality around our food system, and better safeguard the interests of smaller-scale producers, food processors, retailers and eaters.

Good ideas for a better food future:

- introduce participatory democracy in key decisions affecting our food and farming systems
- enable community self-organisation to put them in greater control of their own destinies
- institute nationwide farmer and community forums around the priorities for the future of our food and farming systems.

Creative ideas for a democratic food system

Authentic participatory democracy

Disillusioned by the federal government's top-down and tightly-controlled National Food Plan consultation rounds, people want to engage in genuine democratic processes such as face-to-face conversations so that decision makers can learn first hand about how food issues affect people in their day to day lives.

- the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance proposes that the principles of participatory democracy underpin all government decision-making around food and farming, beginning with the formation of food system coalitions and food business and community networks.

Do it yourself food

The fair food movement in Australia is full of people who are tired of waiting for government to act or business to change and who are getting on with doing what they can to change the direction of the food system.

- for some, this means turning backyard lawn monocultures into biodiverse food production systems – effectively transforming themselves from consumers to producers; starting community gardens and spontaneous, pop-up or guerrilla gardens and food swap meets

- the work of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance falls into the do-it-yourself basket; in the absence of courageous and visionary political leadership, the Alliance is acting to achieve what we can within the constraints of citizen volunteerism and resource limitations.

Establish farmer and community forums

The agenda of the federal government and the peak farmers' organisation, the National Farmers Federation, for the future of Australian agriculture is very clear: scale up production and open up new export markets through the Trans Pacific Partnership and other free trade agreements. But not all farmers are engaged in exporting and many can now see all too clearly the dark side of trade liberalisation as their domestic markets are undercut by cheap imports.

As part of building a national vision and strategy for a fair and sustainable food system there is a critical need for a more inclusive and rounded conversation about the future of food and farming in this country... a conversation that doesn't begin and end with the assumption that the only viable future for our food system is scaling up production and pushing our farmers and our land harder... a conversation that includes indigenous Australians, immigrants, health and education professionals alongside producers and industry.

This is the opportunity that the Peoples' Food Plan process offers. It is the path to a diverse, tasty and fair food system. Join us in making it so.



11. Our food future

WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE, skills and experience to build a food system in Australia that is diverse, fair, socially and economically innovative, that regenerates the land, that improves the security of the nation's food supply and, at the same time, caters to the food sovereignty of farmers and eaters.

This is best done through the cooperation of the three sectors that make up modern Australia: communities, business including social enterprise, and government.

In working towards a food future that is characterised not only by resilience to unexpected fluctuations in food supply and changing climatic conditions but also by a goal of abundance sufficient to support a growing population living mainly in big cities and regional centres, the sectors adopt the different but overlapping roles that follow.

Securing Australia's farming future

- to make the farming life accessible to younger people seeking a rural livelihood, introduce a **scheme of no-interest loans**, similar to tertiary education loans, for land purchase and farm infrastructure set-up that new farmers start to repay after they reach a level of income sufficient to support their enterprise and family
- develop **regional food economies** and the employment, economic, food security and cultural opportunities they offer by adopting policy, providing infrastructure, encouraging the development of markets and education to encourage the regional production, processing and distribution of foods capable of being produced in a region rather than replacing them with imports; encourage the production of what can be produced regionally and import the rest.
- consult with educational, academic and community sources to learn how enrollment in **tertiary agricultural courses** could be boosted.



Reforming our food system

Government initiatives...

Government recognises the formal and informal community food system as part of Australia's farming mix by **including representative** organisations, advocates and innovators in deliberations leading to decision making

Through policy, funding and the participation of non-government entities, **government sets the legislative and policy framework** that enables business, social enterprise and communities to take initiatives that improve the quality, access to an adequate diet and the creation of opportunity within the national food system, and ensures food buyers have the freedom of choice in the types of food they want as befitting a fair market system; in other words, government, through policy and incentives, becomes the platform on which citizens, social enterprise and small to medium food business develops food-related applications

The Australian Bureau of Statistics include **questions in the next national census** that will identify the scale, content, estimated economic value and needs of the informal food economy such as home and community food production and distribution; the information harvested would create a database to inform decisions, policy and urban planning at all levels of government

To increase urban food security and the viability of small farmer livelihoods and resource security, state governments **conduct a land capability assessment of urban fringe lands** to ascertain prime and marginal agricultural land; prime agricultural land would be legislated for farming in perpetuity while marginal land could be retained for appropriate types of farming, urban development, nature conservation or other landuse

Require local and state government to **remove policy, planning or other instruments restricting the responsible advancement of the informal food economy** and that of the small to medium food sector business, including social enterprise, and that restrict communities taking safe, environmentally and socially responsible initiatives in regional and local food production and distribution

Remove restrictive government policies and practices that favour monopolistic companies and that inhibit free choice in food selection, such as the federal Basics Card that can be used only in certain stores

Federal government require state governments to **simplify, reduce red tape and streamline the process of setting up cooperatives and social enterprise** so that entrepreneurs in the small business and community sectors with access to only low amounts of capital can work together to establish enterprises and create livelihoods based on the products of regional food system

Provide training, assistance and build on existing experience to enable innovators in the small to medium business and social sector to **establish an innovative start-up culture** around the production, processing and distribution of food as well as education about the values of fresh, regionally-produced food; a goal would be to diversify Australia's food system and attract people to create livelihoods in it

Federal government **adopts policies that encourage the production of essential foods in Australia** rather than relying on imports, so as to bolster the resilience of Australia's food supply in case of food unavailability in exporting countries and to underwrite Australia's national security

Government appoints a supermarket ombudsman with appropriate legal authority to adjudicate unfair, anti-competitive, monopolistic and other unsavory practices by the supermarket industry.

Business initiatives...

Business – for-profit, not-for-profit and business with primarily social goals (social enterprise) – sets up **an innovative food system start-up culture** and operates in a way that seeks solutions to challenges in food access

Business **adopt a code of practice** around the truthful marketing of food products so as to improve public perceptions about the ethics of the sector.

Community initiatives...

Communities gathered around food take **self-help, educational and cultural initiatives** to improve local food supply, distribution and education.

Community organisations work both alone and with cooperative local government to **educate the public** about the nutritional health, regional food security, cultural and other values of regionally-produced, wholesome food

Through existing networking organisations **share knowledge** of community food systems, their start-up and management

develop models and structures to **expand existing mutual-assistance programs** for the construction and maintenance of food-producing home and community gardens, such as the PermaBlitz initiative.

THE PEOPLE'S
FOOD PLAN
Attachments

Attachment 1: Our policy proposals

Peoples' Food Plan proposals

THIS ATTACHMENT lists proposals for goals, targets and actions that were mentioned by participants in the various forums. For ease of reference, we have indicated to which tier(s) of government each proposal corresponds.

As discussed in the Peoples' Food Plan Working Paper, the assignment of governmental responsibility is intended to serve as a guide and organising tool for food groups, farmers and entrepreneurs around the country.

Inspiring initiatives and projects are already underway around the country and overseas, and, at the same time, supportive and coherent government policy at all levels would amplify the beneficial impacts of local and regional food systems. This has been the case in the United States where years of funding and support for local food systems by the US Department of Agriculture has seen an explosion of farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture initiatives, farm-to-school programs, food hubs, food literacy initiatives and more.

While this attachment is for the members of the Australian fair food movement who created it through their participation in the Peoples' Food Plan forums, we also commend it to policy-makers and planners who are looking for innovative and successful ways to tackle systemic issues across the food system.

Goals / targets

PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN CHAPTER	CONTENT OF PROPOSAL	TIER(S) OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE
Aboriginal food sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable Aboriginal communities full access to their traditional hunting and fishing grounds, and fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices, to address the crisis in Aboriginal health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal / State / Territory
Sustainable Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia to produce enough fruit and vegetables to meet the national requirements for a healthy diet for all Create a new Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, to provide research, development and extension services to farmers transitioning to lower-input systems Reduce levels of waste across the food system, from 40% to 20% within 10 years Ban GM crops and foods; protect organic and biodynamic farms from GM contamination; and ensure labelling of all foods made using GM technology Diversified urban ecology / food production to be supported in the towns and cities Support ongoing organic / chemical-free certification, offering greater financial incentives for organic and lower-input agriculture Stabilise and increase Australia's bee populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Federal Federal / State / Local Federal / State State / Local Federal / State Federal / State / Local

PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN CHAPTER	CONTENT OF PROPOSAL	TIER(S) OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a national legislative framework for planning for food and agriculture, so as to create more uniform 'food-sensitive' state laws Develop an accounting system capable of assessing the true cost of lost arable lands from resource extraction, and creative ways of preventing these costs A requirement that miners rehabilitate their sites to a state capable of producing food at the same level prior to the mining operation Conduct urban fringe land capability assessments so as to preserve quality city fringe agricultural land Introduce a zero-interest loans system for infrastructure set-up to encourage young people to adopt a farming life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal / State Federal / State Federal / State State Federal
Fair Food Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish grants and loans programs for local and regional food systems Establish a supermarket ombudsman with strong enforcement powers as a first step to tackle abuse of market power by the supermarket duopoly against suppliers Reform competition law and policy to tackle the negative impacts of the supermarket duopoly A national, comprehensive labelling system, including GM, nanotechnology, sustainable fisheries, food irradiation, palm oil, and other social and environmental standards Adopt local and ethical food procurement policies, with specific targets, e.g. double the % of locally-sourced foods within five years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal / State Federal Federal Federal Federal / State / Local
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a national food literacy program, to be included in all schools by 2020; educating children and families about healthy and sustainable farming, and good nutrition Establish and implement effective measures to tackle the obesity pandemic, including restricting and / or prohibiting junk food advertising aimed at children, and consideration of a junk food tax Create large food labels with the traffic light system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal / State Federal Federal
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a pilot Food Policy Council in every Australian State Establish pilot community land trusts as a model of participatory governance for sustainable food production Develop a National Climate Change and Resilience Plan, broken down to bioregional actions and support, linked to food security / sovereignty, and incorporating soil health and water usage Establish and pilot programs to encourage young people to enter farming and food production Establish a National Food Commissioner, reporting to the Prime Minister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal / State / Local Federal / State / Local Federal / State / Local Federal
Fair trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a Senate Inquiry of the impacts of all free trade agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal

Actions

PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN CHAPTER	CONTENT OF PROPOSAL	TIER(S) OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE
Aboriginal food sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove restrictions on the right of Aboriginal peoples to access and use their traditional hunting and fishing grounds Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to establish and maintain edible food gardens and trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal / State / Territory / Local
Sustainable Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislate for biodiversity – and value it Recognise the diversity of natural resources and their potential uses on title deeds Facilitate a country-city exchange program to increase awareness of food production and farming culture Design and implement programs to return food waste to the soil, through the whole supply chain Allow and implement a 100% capture and reprocessing of human waste as a food system input, at both home-scale and large farm-scale, and use the waste within the region Fund a national education program to promote gardening and urban food production, and its health and community benefits Establish Council seed depots Provide incentives to transform lawns into food production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal State Federal / State / Local State / Local State / Local Federal / State Local Federal / State / Local
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and map all prime agricultural land across all Australian states and territories All Councils to adopt food policies and (for towns/ cities) urban agriculture policies, using the Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design principles as a guide An immediate moratorium on the sale of prime agricultural land An immediate moratorium on the expansion of the coal-seam gas industry, and other forms of mining, on quality agricultural land Every Council to allocate community spaces for farmers' markets to encourage local and seasonal eating Review and if necessary change laws regarding the keeping of livestock on suburban land to encourage more independent food production Develop incentives to encourage the sustainable use of arable land, e.g. rates discounts Civic planners to reserve communal spaces for food growing and communal use, to support food security and affordability for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal / State / Local Local Federal / State Federal / State Local State / Local State / Local State / Local
Fair Food Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate the pricing and nutrition strategies of large supermarkets and food companies Permanent farmers' markets to be piloted at selected sites around the country Create an interactive online map of all existing and emerging elements of local food economies around the country Pilot multi-functional food hubs to be established at various sites around the country Encourage and support ethical investments in food social enterprises Make local food more visible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Federal / State / Local Federal / State / Local Federal / State / Local Federal / State / Local Local

PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN CHAPTER	CONTENT OF PROPOSAL	TIER(S) OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research and monitor the health impacts of chemicals in and on food, creating a national, widely-publicised register ■ Design and implement a high-profile public education campaign for healthy eating ■ Work with schools and other publicly-funded institutions (e.g. childcare, aged care, universities) to provide healthier food choices, supported by local and ethical food procurement policies ■ Introduce plain packaging for junk food ■ Subsidise healthy food for remote communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Federal / State ■ Federal / State / Local ■ Federal / State / Local ■ Federal ■ Federal / State / Territory
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ State and Local governments to facilitate food system stakeholder roundtables as first step towards food policy coalitions / councils ■ Establish state, local and regional farmers' forums to enable farmers to discuss their issues, concerns and priorities ■ Establish a national healthy food index to provide transparent and clear information for eaters ■ Create local and regional information centres for everything related to food, from plough to plate - online and available from libraries and Council offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ State / Local ■ State / Local ■ Federal ■ Federal / State / Local
Fair trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Submit the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement to a fully transparent and independent impact assessment; and put its adoption to a referendum-style national vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Federal

Attachment 2: A comparison

A comparison table of the National Food Plan vs Peoples' Food Plan

APPROACH / ATTITUDE / PRINCIPLE	NATIONAL FOOD PLAN	PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN
Time-frame	20 years	100+ years
Main stakeholders	'The food industry', especially corporate agri-business elites and major retailers – National Food Policy Advisory Working Group	Ordinary folk
Consultation process	Top-down, questions pre-determined, key issues (e.g. free trade, commodity focus) not up for discussion, lack of transparency, lack of public engagement	Bottom-up, community-led; all questions open, process open-ended, starting in August 2012, finishing date not determined
Understanding of functioning of current food system	'Stable, secure', efficient, productive, high quality – all is good	<p>System highly dysfunctional – 70% or more of family farms dependent on off-farm income</p> <p>Over 75% of Australians overweight / obese by 2025</p> <p>Over 90% reduction in irrigated agriculture in Murray-Darling Food Bowl because of climate change</p> <p>Over 23% of GHG emissions come from the food system</p> <p>Land and water systems severely degraded</p> <p>High dependence on oil – 10 calories of oil to produce 1 calorie of food</p> <p>System not sustainable, fair or resilient</p>
Scope of change required	Incremental, piecemeal reform	Transformational, root & branch reform
Vision	'Sustainable, globally competitive, resilient food supply, supporting access to nutritious and affordable food'	A food system that delivers fairness for family farmers and food system workers; health and well-being for all Australians, irrespective of income or other status; and which sustains and restores to health and fertility soils, waterways and ecosystems
Key objectives	<p>Ramp up commodity production of grains, livestock and dairy to 'seize market opportunities in Asia'</p> <p>Bring in foreign investment and ownership of Australian land and agricultural to boost exports (p 128, 187)</p>	Re-orient the food system so the over-riding objectives are human health and well-being, dignified livelihoods for food producers and food system workers, thriving local and regional economies, and ecosystem integrity
Understanding of 'sustainability'	Narrow and economic: "Australia's food businesses have opportunities over the long term, arising from global trends and Australia's comparative advantages" (p48)	Holistic, systemic and integrated: A sustainable food system is one which can continue to reproduce itself over the long-term, fulfilling its basic objectives of feeding us well, providing dignified livelihoods for farmers and food system workers, and caring for the soil and living ecosystems.
Attitude towards Australia's food security, sustainable production and distribution systems	<p>Australia is food secure because it exports two-thirds of what it produces, food system is stable and high-quality</p> <p>Climate change acknowledged as a risk, but assumption is that 'innovation' and technology will deal with it, i.e. neither climate change nor any other risks (e.g. peak oil, peak phosphorous) demand a shift to more sustainable agricultural systems</p> <p>Australia assumed to be energy-secure (p70)</p>	<p>Food insecurity is widespread amongst vulnerable and low-income groups in Australia</p> <p>Over 90% of Australians don't eat recommended intake of veg, and the country doesn't produce enough greens / orange veg</p> <p>Impacts of climate change and peak oil, plus highly centralised and long-distance food distribution system, means that there are serious risks and vulnerabilities; hence there is an urgent need for transition to sustainable agricultural systems</p>

APPROACH / ATTITUDE / PRINCIPLE	NATIONAL FOOD PLAN	PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN
Time-frame	20 years	100+ years
Attitude to family farmers	No vision for family farmers – their numbers will continue to decline and they will be replaced by corporate farming models (p 159)	Thriving family farms are at the centre of thriving rural communities, and have a vital role to play in the transition to a sustainable, fair and resilient food future
Attitude to the market	<p>Market-led approach is the best, no or minimal intervention required, either as regards land management and use, or as regards food product development and marketing (p 133)</p> <p>Govt does not propose a shift to sustainable production systems (p201), even though it favours the national application of genetically modified organisms</p>	<p>Market-led approach has demonstrably failed in terms of healthy food for all, sustainably produced, and providing dignified livelihoods for producers and workers</p> <p>Intervention is necessary – to protect prime farmland, to ensure the right to farm for family farmers, to ensure diversity in the retail sector, to encourage sustainable farm practices, to control the junk and fast food industries</p>
Approach to tackling obesity pandemic	<p>Obesity individualised, seen as issue of 'poor food choices'</p> <p>Business-as-usual, reliance on food industry self-regulation, educating consumers about health choices – a failed strategy</p> <p>No new proposals to reduce prevalence of obesity</p> <p>No recognition of the need for a fundamental shift to a healthy and sustainable diet</p>	<p>Obesity is a structural issue, its roots lie in power of food companies to shape food choices – 'the obesogenic environment' - & structural subsidies to the junk food industry</p> <p>Experience elsewhere (e.g. Scandinavia) shows that regulation and intervention is required, including strict controls on advertising to children, and implementation of a sugar / fat tax</p> <p>National Preventative Health Taskforce (2009) recommended these measures as a matter of urgency</p> <p>Must be coupled with comprehensive and national food and nutrition literacy education</p>
Attitude to GM and new technologies	Enthusiastic – develop national strategy for its consistent application, to overcome moratoria in some states, and low consumer acceptance (p153-4)	GM is fundamentally about corporate profit and creating further dependencies for farmers. It has failed to deliver on its promises of increased yields, and has instead delivered super-pests and super-weeds
Approach to food governance and leadership	<p>Decision-making powers reserved to DAFF, with proposed advisory Ministerial Food Forum, Stakeholder Committee on Food and Australian Food Council to 'facilitate dialogue between stakeholders' (p 53)</p> <p>Likely outcome is that the voice of agri-business and food retailers will dominate the Stakeholder Forum and marginalise those of other stakeholders (Food Alliance brief, p5-6)</p>	<p>Key principles for food governance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ people and community centred ■ food as a human right ■ promoting wellness and strengthening resilience <p>Food policy at the Federal level should be led by the Department of Health, not DAFF, and with a National Food Council that accords equal participation and real decision-making powers to the community, health, environment, family farming, consumer and diverse food business sectors, as it does to corporate agri-business and large retail</p> <p>The work of the NFC should be informed by a diversity of local and regional Food Policy Councils with multi-stakeholder representation, facilitated by local government and accountable to their local communities</p>

Attachment 3: National Food Plan

What's missing from the National Food Plan?

- **Any acknowledgement that the industrialised food system is socially and environmentally destructive, and that a paradigm shift based on a new set of values and principles is required.**
 - no target is set or proposed for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that the food system generates
 - no target is set or proposed for reducing its fossil-fuel intensity, nor for transitioning as a matter of urgency to more sustainable agricultural systems.
- **Any real recognition of the thriving fair food movement in Australia.**
 - Permaculture and Transition Town initiatives are not mentioned
 - local food networks and economies are not mentioned
 - urban agriculture is not mentioned
 - innovative farm practices such as pasture cropping and no-till are not mentioned
 - social enterprise gets one mention in a brief paragraph about the Tasmanian Government's Food for All strategy
 - community gardens and backyard gardens are mentioned once, in relation to possible ways to support food security in remote indigenous communities – but the green paper says that the 'cost-effectiveness [of these initiatives] are yet to be been demonstrated' (p 87)
 - farmers' markets do get some recognition, but only in the context of 'changing consumer demand' (p 114).

- **Any recognition that the profit interests of corporations do not inevitably equate to the well-being of people, and the integrity of ecosystems.**
 - the National Food Plan is guided throughout by the assumption that the market knows best and will look after us all; the idea that the market may be responsible for the fact that, as one permaculturalist put it, the 'globalised industrial food system is the most destructive force on the planet', cannot be contemplated within the government's worldview as set out in this Plan.

'National Food Plan' is actually a misnomer as, in reality, it is an 'Industry Food Plan'. The Plan began life at the urging of big business whose interests have guided and shaped its formation. We can now see the result.

The idea that this is a plan for all Australians is disingenuous. It isn't – it's a plan to meet the needs and priorities of agribusiness and large retailers.

Food isn't an optional extra in life. In a very material, as well as spiritual sense, what we eat is who we are. That's why food is far too important to be left to impersonal market forces which are fundamentally not concerned with human or ecosystem well-being.

It's time for all of us to take responsibility for our food system, to exercise our democratic rights as citizens, and to participate in working out, together, what sort of food system we want. That's what the People's Food Plan is about. Why not join us in reforming Australia's food sector and truly making it one that serves the people.

For more information

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Attachment 4: Australia's agriculture

THE PRODUCTIVITY OF Australia's soils and the farmers that depend on them is influenced by:

Climatic factors

- A generally well-watered coastal strip and a declining availability of rainfall west of the Great Dividing Range and towards the interior of the continent
- We use only a little over 60 percent of the Australian landmass for farming, with livestock grazing in arid and semi-arid regions accounting for 430 million hectares or 56 percent of this area
- The unknown is how climate change will affect agriculture, with the possibility of increasingly dry conditions in some regions and increased rainfall and flooding in others; there is also a possibility of more severe weather events damaging crops.

Water

- Water for farming is available as rainfall or is pumped from underground aquifers such as the Great Artesian Basin
- Agriculture uses around 70 percent of the nation's fresh water supply with grain production and pasture using the greatest volume and with rice the thirstiest crop per hectare of irrigated land followed by grapes and fruit, with cotton using the least water per hectare of irrigated area.

Soil quality

- Most of Australia's soils are generally low quality, necessitating the use of fertilisers irrespective of whether that farming uses conventional or organic management
- Phosphate is a key plant nutrient and Australia imports its supply; global production of phosphate may peak in the 2040s, after which supply will decline and costs rise.

Farming trends

Interacting with the availability of natural resources are demographic, social and economic trends on the farm:

- Farms are becoming larger and fewer, with the number declining by a quarter in the 20 years prior to 2004 and a smaller number of larger farms now producing a large portion of Australia's agricultural output
- Australia's agriculture and the wellbeing of many farmers, agricultural workers and farm suppliers is export dependent, with around two-thirds of national agricultural production exported, tripling the value of exports since the 1970s
- At the same time the contribution of agriculture to GDP has declined from around 14 percent in the 1960s to between four and six percent at the present time
- Employment opportunities in farming halved from the 1960s to around four percent of the national workforce by 2004; wages for farm workers are low in comparison to other occupations
- Around 45 percent of farm families now rely on off-farm employment to maintain the family's economic viability
- The average age of Australia's farmers is greater than 55 years, raising the question of what happens to their farmland when they retire; a large area of land is expected to become available in the near future
- Enrolment in university agricultural studies is in decline because the profession is no longer seen as viable or attractive; this, combined with the expected retirement of older farmers, could result in a knowledge gap in Australian farming. (above information: Productivity Commission 2005, Trends in Australian Agriculture, Research Paper, Canberra).

Distributing our food

The issue of duopoly control

When it comes to the distribution of fresh and processed food in Australia through retailers and other means, the nation's grocery industry is dominated by the two big supermarket chains, Coles and Woolworths – what is known as the 'duopoly'; the dominance of these corporations makes Australia's grocery industry one of the most concentrated in the world.

- Coles and Woolworths have around 80 percent share of the market, up from about 47.5 per cent in 1995 according to the Australian Food and Grocery Council
- IGA follows with 14.4 percent share of supermarket retail, ALDI has an estimated five percent and Costco's share is estimated at less than two percent.

According to the Australian Food and Grocery Council, the duopoly controls:

- 50 percent of fresh food sales (fruit and vegetables), egg and meat
 - 60 percent of Australia's dairy market
 - 60 percent of Australia's delicatessen goods market
- (reported in Australian Food and Grocery Council 2020: INDUSTRY AT A CROSSROADS, based on figures sourced from Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Inquiry into the competitiveness of retail prices for standard groceries, July 2008).

The Council's report, 2020: INDUSTRY AT A CROSSROADS, puts it this way:

"The Australian retail market is amongst the most concentrated in the world. Consequently, Coles and Woolworths, as the market leaders, have significant influence when dealing with suppliers and in controlling access to the consumer. A combination of major retailers' private label strategies, intense price discounting in certain core product categories and competition for shelf space have placed pressure on food and grocery manufacturers' margins."

The influence of the duopoly's purchasing practices has led to:

- allegations of undue influence, threats to the viability of food producers' livelihoods through the supermarket's aggressive discounting practices and through replacing Australian farm products with imported goods and food waste
- the demand for fruit that is not undersized and for cosmetically perfect fruit and vegetables has led to the waste of product with blemishes that do not affect nutritional value
- allegations of bullying tactics that led in 2013 to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) announcing an enquiry into supermarket bullying of suppliers; the Consumers' Federation of Australia responded by saying that: "The issue is serious, but the ACCC investigation only treats the symptom and diverts attention away from the real cause of the problem: supermarket power... it would be much better to spend time and money on creating alternative ways in which the eaters and producers of food can connect with each other outside of the major supermarket chains" (<http://consumersfederation.org.au/acccs-inquiry-into-supermarket-bullying-misses-the-real-issue-of-duopoly-power/>).

Health

It is not only the commercial practices of the supermarket and food industry in general that is under criticism:

- the nutritional quality of processed foods, including fast foods with their high loads of fats and sugars contribute to Australia's epidemic of obesity and diabetes
- governments have shown their disregard for children's health by their failure to regulate the advertising of unhealthy foods during children's television hours.

Access

According to the Australian Institute of Family Studies, around five percent of Australians are food insecure. That is, they may not eat regular meals sufficient to maintain nutritional health sufficient to support an active lifestyle.

The groups most vulnerable to an insecure food supply include unemployed people, single parent households, low-income earners, rental households, young people, indigenous (Burns, 2004).

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/pubs/sheets/ps/ps9.html>

