



ACT Region People's Food Plan Working Paper #1 May 2016

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Executive Summary

The ACT Region is home to a wide range of producers, consumers and retailers passionate about doing food differently. A range of roundtables and public events in the past five years have brought together numerous stakeholders seeking an alternative way for our region to feed itself.

This movement of food system participants is united by a concern with an industrial food system developed over the past century which has increased the amount of food produced, but failed to successfully feed the hungry, sustain the environment upon which it depends, or to empower people to eat good, fresh, healthy food.

The ACT region's food system participants are also united by similar visions of an alternative shaped by the needs of people, and the environment that sustains them, rather than international drivers over which the people who eat food have no control.

These concerns and visions reflect a global movement for change, that many term food sovereignty. Exciting examples of solutions can be found across the world such as innovative, environmentally-friendly food production, or holistic food education, or community based food retailing. The ACT region showcases many exciting initiatives that could be part of this movement for a genuine alternative: a food system that supports the needs and health of people and the environment.

This ACT Region's People's Food Plan arose from conversations across dinner tables, round tables, desks and podiums in the ACT region. Different people have connected with one another, sharing ideas and starting projects across the region. A need emerged for the ACT region's food community to draw many strands of their work together and strengthen a system for food sovereignty. As producers, food advocates and small businesses are spending their time and energy out doing it, there is little time and capacity to document their stories and knowledge. The ACT Region People's Food Plan seeks to capture this conversation in a working document that can be a basis for work to strengthen food sovereignty in the region.

The ACT Region People's Food Plan lays out aims and principles to understand what so many passionate food advocates are trying to achieve. It outlines the case for action, listing a range of serious problems with the current food system. It then outlines the potential benefits of a strong, sustainable local food system if we choose to act. Finally it lays out recommendations for action, organised under seven major areas of the food system.

The ACT Region People's Food Plan does not definitively capture all ideas and potential actions. On the contrary, it is a working document to capture a new, challenging and critical conversation for the ACT region community. It aims to become a practical document that a range of actors can refer to, debate, and draw inspiration from. Most importantly, it aims to stimulate action to get on with the important task of strengthening the impressive regional food system that can bring food sovereignty much closer to the people of our region.

1) List of Recommended actions

Section	Recommendation
1 Governance	<p>1 Establish an ACT Region Food Council</p> <p>2 Develop connections with Indigenous networks across the ACR, for meaningful engagement to learn about and include important food and land management knowledge in food system activities.</p> <p>3 Engage the Local Governments of the ACR and the NSW State Government proposing their participation in developing a regional food plan.</p> <p>4 Formalise administrative arrangements establishing a cross-agency food section within ACT public service.</p> <p>5 Set an ACT target for an appropriate target of local food consumption by the end of 2016. For example, 30% of food consumption to be sourced from ACT Region by 2030.</p> <p>6 ACT Government food contracts and/or functions required use a percentage target of regional produce.</p>
2 Research	<p>7 Undertake benchmark analysis of food production and consumption patterns in the ACT and region including data snapshot of our food system.</p> <p>8 Undertake research project on past local or regional food policies and projects to inform the ACT Region's plan.</p> <p>9 Analyse what the barriers are to regional production and identify what can be done to remove them.</p> <p>10 Undertake an assessment into the risks of our current food system and a cost/benefit analysis.</p>
3 Managing the Environment	<p>11 Ensure local / regional food production regenerates the natural environment.</p> <p>12 Ensure management practices for food production in the ACT region are balanced with biodiversity conservation values.</p> <p>13 Divert all garden and food waste from landfill to compost, and make it available to food producers for no/low cost.</p> <p>14 Develop closed loop human waste systems to maximise nutrient retrieval from human waste.</p> <p>15 Reduce food waste by charging outlets a food waste charge.</p> <p>16 Change 'use by' labeling to 'best before' in all possible cases to reduce good food being thrown away.</p>
4 Education and Marketing	<p>17 Analyse food education available and develop a plan to roll out new education projects and programs.</p> <p>18 Create a strong ACT Region food brand that can be easily recognised by consumers.</p> <p>19 Establish a consumer education program about fair, sustainable local food.</p>

	<p>20 A food "champions" program to work in ACT and regional schools (Primary and Secondary) to help set up kitchen gardens, canteen menus and programs for students to learn how to grow and use their own fresh produce. Integrate food literacy into national curriculum.</p> <p>21 Screen 'Fair Food' documentary in all schools in the ACT region.</p> <p>22 A food waste community education program in line with waste policies that provide the infrastructure and services people use in a closed loop system.</p> <p>23 Support 'farmer incubators' and other programs to educate and support existing and new producers.</p> <p>24 Gaps analysis of retail markets for sustainable, local food, and development of educational program for retailers.</p>
5 Planning and Regulation	<p>25 Appropriate land tenure, and zoning/ planning layer across NSW state and local government zoning systems, and within ACT Territory Plan, to adequately support a range of agricultural activities.</p> <p>26 Identify unleased public land that could be used for community gardens and / orchards. Create a register of such land and call for expressions of interest to manage this land.</p> <p>27 Legislate to eliminate food waste at supermarkets.</p> <p>28 Require specific labelling of food miles, carbon footprint, and food origin.</p> <p>29 Identify and remove regulatory barriers to local food production.</p>
6 Infrastructure	<p>30 Assist local producers to aggregate key infrastructure and services</p> <p>31 Regional food hubs for producers to sell, and process their food for value-added products in their area.</p> <p>32 Local meat-processing options to ensure more humane meat, reduce food miles and support regional meat producers.</p> <p>33 Promote online food connector websites.</p> <p>34 ACT Region specific online database 'hub'</p> <p>35 Support Encourage the growth of Farmers Markets & regional food retailers that represent a truly local, sustainable supply of food.</p>
7 Food access: affordability, equity	<p>36 Develop a local food guide that clearly outlines to consumers where to get affordable, local and sustainably produced food.</p> <p>37 Promote locally and community owned food retailers, kitchens and restaurants.</p> <p>38 Expand community garden programs in suburbs, towns, schools and institutions.</p>

2) Introduction

In 2015, the Conservation Council circulated a discussion paper for public comment to progress discussions in the ACT and region community about local food¹.

The Conservation Council's first draft discussion paper related to key events building the ACT region local food system:

- ACT Capital Region Farmers Markets established in 2004, and by 2015 hits 6,000 shoppers weekly.
- The 'Time To Talk' public consultation on Canberra's future in 2011 identified food as an issue for residents. A draft planning strategy paper acknowledged strategic land use planning is important for ensuring productive agricultural land is preserved and used for food production².
- Establishment of the Canberra City Farm in April 2012, following community scoping meetings with existing food related interest groups and individuals.
- South East Food Project releases its Action Plan in May 2012 with a range of projects drawn from a discussion paper process for 7 shires in South East NSW³.
- Preliminary study of issues for the ACT Government around food in the ACT completed by University of Canberra and Australian National University. Makes recommendations for action to progress work of food security⁴.
- Minister Shane Rattenbury convenes roundtable of food community in May, 2014
- Launch of Lyneham Commons Food Forest August 2015 (an outcome from the Food Roundtable and other food community efforts)
- EATology food public forum, with Minister Rattenbury and key stakeholder panel discussing whether the ACT needs a food policy

Submissions to the Conservation Council paper, and ongoing public discussion, highlighted the need for an ACT Region People's Food Plan.

An ACT Region People's Food Plan will be a guide along a process to move from an unsustainable food system towards a sustainable one. Similar to food plans adopted by other regions and nations, this food plan echoes the aim of the National People's Food Plan by the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance:

A plan is like a road-map. It describes pathways as to how we go from one place to another. Ideally it provides some signposts along the way, to show we're going in the right direction, how far we've travelled, and how far we've still to go. The...Plan aims to be part of the road-map that helps us get from an unfair and vulnerable food system, to one that is fair and resilient. The table below shows why we have to make this transition⁵.

EXISTING FOOD SYSTEM		EMERGING FOOD SYSTEM
Prioritises mass production and corporate profits	→	Prioritises health and ecosystem integrity
Entrenches urban / rural divide, because neither farmers nor urban agriculture is valued	→	Reconnects country and city, farmers and urban agriculture are valued
Founded on access to cheap fossil fuels, and as a result is highly polluting and highly vulnerable	→	Sustainable agriculture methods reduce dependence on fossil fuels, build lasting soil fertility and a resilient food system
Power and ownership is concentrated in the major food system sectors	→	Power is decentralised, ownership is diffused, the system is distributive
Food pricing and marketing is divorced from health and well-being	→	Food pricing and marketing prioritises health choices
Food issues carved up into separate government departments and jurisdictions	→	Food solutions come from collaborative partnerships within and among governments, farmers, food businesses and communities

Table 1: Transition from the existing food system to an emerging food system. Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance: the people's food plan working paper February 2013.

3) Aim

To promote a resilient ACT Region food system addressing both food security and food sovereignty. Specifically to:

- strengthen and ensure diversity within a local, fair, sustainable food economy to protect the community against potential shocks to the system (for example, fuel or water shortages),
- ensure consumers have access to food supplies which are adequate, sustainably and fairly produced, accessible, affordable, nutritionally balanced and tasty,
- ensure the food we produce and consume improves our environment, regenerates our natural resource base and promotes sustainable and fair food practices along with well-being, and;
- promote a thriving and resilient food economy from production to distribution and purchase through to reducing and recycling food waste and supporting sustainable businesses and enterprises across the region.

4) Principles

The principles to reach the aims of a resilient, fair and healthy food system are:

- empower producers to grow and provide food, for fair and sustainable returns, to drive a resilient food system.
- empower consumers to understand the food system and make informed choices that drive a fairer food system.
- ensure all people have access to affordable, fairly produced, nutritionally balanced and tasty food.
- empower communities to be the main driver of the food system, including opportunities for decision-making and governance.
- regenerate natural systems on which our food depends by using approaches that regenerate our environment during the production, distribution of food, and following the consumption of food through processing food waste.
- use adaptive management by taking actions that are supported by research, and learning from our activities.
- give power to communities rather than international companies to assist closing the loop between producer and consumer, agricultural inputs and food waste, and increase community participation and ownership.

This Plan recommends specific actions that reflect these principles.

5) Audience

The ACT region food system includes a range of actors all of whom play a critical role. This People's Food Plan addresses the following major audiences and how they might be involved:

- community organisations such as food advocacy or interest groups
- producers such as farmers, urban gardeners, food product makers
- consumers who purchase and eat food
- businesses including food distributors, market operators, and food outlets
- governments at local, regional, state and national scales
- institutions that provide education, health care, research and other functions.

6) Definitions

This People's Food Plan deals with a range of ideas and assumptions about food. These definitions provide some guidance about how terms are used in this Plan.

Australian Capital Region (ACR): the ACT and 17 local Government areas surrounding it. See map in Figure 1.

Australian Capital Territory (ACT): one of two territories of the Federal Government in Australia, as opposed to States, the Australian Capital Territory is a jurisdiction of self-government mainly for the city of Canberra. However the Territory is subject to Federal control.

Council of Australian Governments (COAG): a body representing all Australian State and Territory governments to discuss issues of relevance to these jurisdictions.

Fair, local, sustainable food: this food plan aims for a food system that provides a range of benefits to people and the environment. Food should be fair, providing fair prices for producers and consumers and access for all people to adequate nutrition. Food should be sustainably produced, so that its production and consumption does not degrade the natural environment. Food that is produced and eaten within a close geographical area, rather than exported far distances, helps to ensure that food is fair and sustainable. This plan aims to achieve these benefits by striking the best balance between values. We acknowledge the complexity of food systems calls for flexibility in what we prioritise as good food.

Farmer Incubator: the idea of 'incubating' farmers arose to address barriers for new farmers getting started, including access to land, capital, and credit, and opportunities to learn and develop skills in farm business planning.

Food Desert: poor urban areas, where residents cannot buy [or have adequate access to] affordable, healthy food⁶

Food Literacy: the scaffolding that empowers individuals, households, communities or nations to protect diet quality through change and strengthen dietary resilience over time. It is a collection of inter-related knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet needs and determine intake⁷.

Food Producers: refers to people, organisations and businesses that grow food, or make food products (for example both olive growers, and olive oil makers).

Food Retailers: refers to people, organisations and businesses that distribute food, including outlets, markets, as well as cafes and restaurants.

Food Security: access to adequate food to ensure health and nutrition for people. Food security is described as relying on four pillars: access, availability, food quality, stability⁸.

Food Sovereignty: the right of all peoples to healthy, tasty and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generations.

Food System: the production (growing, bottling, making), distribution (transport, sale), consumption (purchase, eating) and waste processes (composting, land fill) of food.

Food Economy: used similarly to food system, the process of provision of food resources in society.

LGA: Local government area

NSW DPI: New South Wales Department of Primary Industries

RDA: Regional Development Area

Resilience: The resilience of a system refers to how effectively it can respond to shock and adapt to change while still continuing to provide its function, in this case food.

7) Why do we need an ACT Region People's Food Plan?

Adequate, sustainable food supply is a key consideration for society given the current industrialised food system faces the risk of unviability over the medium and long term. Up to 1.2 million Australians don't have access to safe, affordable and nutritious food. There is a growing movement calling for society to recognize access to food as a human right⁹. The serious risks of food inaccessibility are due to a variety of factors including:

- resource depletion (such as oil and phosphorous);
- land degradation from past and current land management;
- inappropriate nutrition evidenced by the obesity epidemic with around 70% of Australian adults overweight or obese;
- starvation and food insecure citizens –the most vulnerable and food insecure citizens in the ACT are often low income earners, recipients of government benefits, renters, homeless, unemployed, elderly, part of single parent households, disabled or Indigenous;
- lack of 'food literacy' within population is increasingly important public health issue;
- issues of access and equity including:
 - implications for consumers and producers from the distribution duopoly of Woolworths and Coles,
 - lack of access to healthy food in 'food deserts,'
 - lack of culturally appropriate foods,
 - patenting of genetic material presenting significant equity issues when ownership of natural life gives power to corporations to dictate use of natural resources.
- rising grocery costs due to:
 - international market conditions
 - declining average yields and rising input costs (e.g. petroleum, phosphorous).

Addressing these factors has encouraged many to look at alternative sources of production and consumption of food.

The ideas of food sovereignty and sustainable, fair food systems have arisen as alternative frameworks to provide adequate nutrition to the world's population while avoiding the risks of the current industrial food system.

Food Sovereignty is about the right of all peoples to healthy, tasty and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generations.¹⁰

Using a food sovereignty lens to approach food systems helps all actors shift their approach, priorities and actions to shape more resilient food systems.

Food Sovereignty approaches have developed partly through awareness of Indigenous and traditional food knowledge and practices. Many Indigenous food practices have been affected as the industrial food system has developed. Rich and relevant Indigenous food knowledge is a valuable element of Food Sovereignty¹¹.

Food plans have been an important tool in many communities across the world to bring a food sovereignty approach to their local food system. ACT Region People's Food plan is a first step to support the growth of local (ACT) and regional (Australian Capital Region - ACR) food economies, to encourage a more multifaceted system in terms of production, distribution, consumption and waste. It can support removal of institutional and legal barriers that currently restrict the growth of the local food economy. For example, urban planning and zoning restrict a range of food systems being developed in urban areas. The ACT Region People's Food plan will empower actors in the food system like food producers and consumers to have control and agency to help build a fair, sustainable food system.

*Food has to be tasty **and** nutritious, or no point in eating...what has also recently come into perspective is that it shouldn't poison us, i.e. latest reports on E.coli on Nannas berries (certainly not from our Nannas, and we would know who grew them) salmonella from lettuces, etc.*

It's our sovereign right to have access to good, clean, healthy food, even if we have to grow it ourselves!

Janet Jeffs: chef, grower, eater

8) What is our region?

For the purposes of this paper the ACT region is defined as the Australian Capital Region (ACR). This includes the ACT and the following 17 Council areas

- Palerang
- Queanbeyan
- Boorowa
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Harden
- Upper Lachlan Shire
- Yass Valley
- Young
- Bega Valley
- Eurobodalla
- Bombala
- Cooma-Monaro
- Snowy River
- Cootamundra
- Gundagai
- Tumut Shire
- Tumbarumba

These Council areas are in the following Regional Development Australia areas:

- Southern Inland
- South Coast
- Murray

Refer to map in figure 1.

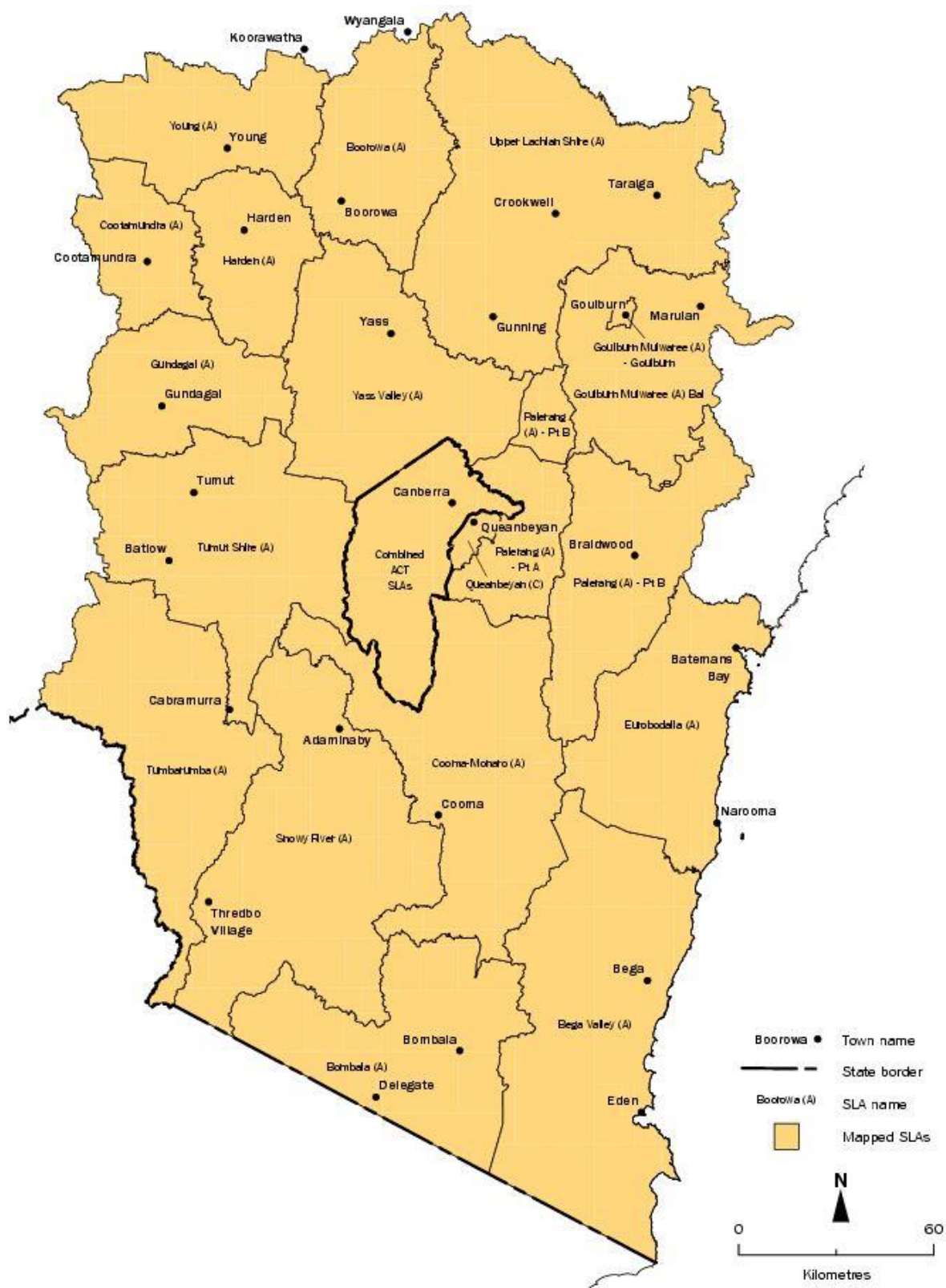


Figure 1 Map of the Australian Capital Region. ABS Website 2016

9) Benefits of an ACT Region People's Food Plan

An ACT Region People's Food Plan could assist with delivery of a range of outcomes including:

- 1) **Health Outcomes:** Studies have shown that engagement in the creation of one's own food results in an increase in consumption of fresh produce in terms of volume, frequency and variety.¹² Additionally, by improving the producer-consumer relationship, direct interaction can maximise interest in increased consumption of fruit and vegetables.¹³ Engaging in the creation of food provides exercise and mental health benefits, as it increases self-esteem by productivity, can improve social skills and is a positive use of leisure time.¹⁴ These factors relating to social interaction and practical skill building are especially useful for the development of children, and school produce growing programs have been widely supported (for example, by the *National Food Plan White Paper 2012* of the previous federal Government). These points indicate just some health benefits of supporting the local food economy, by creating opportunities to grow one's own and/or buying locally (for example). Urban agriculture contributes to the wellbeing of individuals and neighbourhoods in a variety of ways, thus enhancing community health.¹⁵
- 2) **Employment Opportunities:** The encouragement of a local food system would create a range of business and employment opportunities to the ACT and its region. Given that smaller scale farming is generally unsuitable for highly mechanised production, human labour is necessary and thus results in job creation.¹⁶ The same is true for smaller distributors and food product makers, as large supermarket chains are estimated to destroy three jobs for every two they create.¹⁷
- 3) **Increased Tourism:** The ACT Region already benefits from the wine tourism industry, and various local handmade and food markets which contribute to the weekends of Canberrans and tourists alike. The addition of a thriving local food economy and the way it could change the geography of the city would be economically and socially positive. A strong local food economy contributes to a sense of authenticity that represents the sense of place and culture.¹⁸
- 4) **Assistance in meeting other Government goals:** The growth of the local food economy can contribute to achieving the goals of the *ACT Food and Nutrition Strategic Framework 2012-2018*, and the current target to be carbon neutral by 2060.
- 5) **Community Well-being:** In many places, an appropriate way to revitalise a community is by developing a local food economy.¹⁹ Not only can resilient food systems deliver healthier, environmentally sustainable and more nutritious food, but have been shown to contribute positively to the development of a socially inclusive local community.²⁰
- 6) **Community Engagement:** enhanced understanding of our food system and food choices.

10) ACT Region People's Food Actions

The plan sets out seven action areas and 37 specific actions. The plan doesn't include all potential actions that could lead to a more resilient food system for the ACT Region, but lays out a suite of pathways to make improvements.

Each section relates to a guiding principle of this food plan, outlines a specific purpose, and lists relevant actors who could enact actions. Appendix 1 recommends existing actors to be engaged in the area due to their previous experience.

1) Governance and Policy

Principles this area relates to:

- empower producers to grow and provide food, for fair and sustainable returns, to drive a resilient food system.
- empower consumers to understand the food system and make informed choices that drive a fairer food system.
- empower communities to be the main driver of the food system, including opportunities for decision making and governance.
- use adaptive management by taking actions that are supported by research, and learning from our activities.
- give power to communities rather than international companies to assist closing the loop between producer and consumer, agricultural inputs and food waste, and increase community participation and ownership.

Purpose: To establish a deliberate, clear structure and appropriate roles to achieve the aims of the ACT Region People's Food Plan.

Actors:

Local and sustainable food advocacy groups

Individuals as volunteers, experts with personal experience who wish to participate in progressing local and sustainable food

ACT Government as foundation funder of community food initiatives

All regional Government as supporting body to community-driven activities

Action 1: An ACT Region Food Council

Thriving sustainable local food systems are driven by community, business and Government. Food Councils are a successful model used in regional jurisdictions with strong regional food economies²¹. Independent Food Councils of local experts produce food policy directives to advise Government, business and community actors. Successful examples include the Toronto Food Policy Council²² that has directed regional Government food policy for ten years; Toronto is now recognised as a regional food policy leader²³.

The ACT Region should establish an independent Food Council to drive awareness, engagement, policy and action implementation with various stakeholders. The Food Council must be funded to support dedicated local food experts to meet regularly, to identify potential policies and local food projects to support the growth of local food and to consider food security and sovereignty issues. Initial tasks of an ACT Region Food Council can include progressing many actions in the ACT Region People's Food Plan, facilitating research projects to gain a more accurate snapshot of the region's food system and needs, and facilitating a discussion about local, sustainable food labelling at farmers markets in the region.

A range of dedicated food related organisations, already participating in food events such as Ministerial roundtables, are an excellent community with which to initiate this process

<i>Recommendation 1. Establish an ACT Region Food Council.</i>

Action 2: Engagement with Indigenous stakeholders in the ACR

Indigenous current and traditional knowledge and practices of landscape and environmental management as well as food production are an important element of strengthening the region's food system. Such knowledge and approaches can challenge current thinking in food systems and land management, and provide valuable alternatives.

The ACT Region Food Council should engage with Indigenous stakeholders and encourage meaningful Indigenous participation in all relevant food activities. A range of official organisations, as well as individual, family and spiritual connections to the ACR should be recognised and explored as the Food Council and other food actors develop food actions and policies.

Recommendation 2. Develop connections with Indigenous networks across the ACR, for meaningful engagement to learn about and include important food and land management knowledge in food system activities.

Action 3: Regional engagement in the Australian Capital Region

The ACT alone cannot deliver all of its food needs and so the ACT Region must be engaged across local government jurisdictions and a range of communities and geography if a People's Food Plan progressing more sustainable, local food is to be successful. Regional local governments can take a lead role, recognizing the benefits that accrue to local communities of a thriving food economy. Regional and state Governments should also play a role advocating for regional food rights in relation to national and international policy settings, for example the impacts of free trade agreements on promotion of local businesses.

The ACT Region Food Council should engage the Local Governments of the Australian Capital Region as well as the NSW State Government, inviting them to participate in developing a regional food agenda. This People's Food Plan can form the basis of the discussion.

Recommendation 3. Engage the Local Governments of the ACR and the NSW State Government proposing their participation in developing a regional food plan.

Action 4: Administrative arrangements for food in the ACT Government

The ACT Government has achieved some positive progress on local food, though the limited scope of change, and the ad hoc approach inhibits effective change for a more sustainable food system. To effectively manage the development of a sustainable, secure local food system; the ACT Government requires adequate resourcing and staff responsible for the area.

Currently the ACT Minister for Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) holds responsibilities for agriculture, for example representing the ACT on Council of Australian Governments meetings. The Minister for Planning and Land Management handles a range of matters influencing food matters, for example zoning. The Minister for TAMS should take a lead role working with the Planning and Chief Minister to drive the implementation of this action.

Recommendation 4. Formalise administrative arrangements establishing a cross-agency food section within ACT public service.

Action 5: An ACT local food consumption target

The ACT Government, though only one government actor in the ACR, can be an important driver of change. As Canberra provides the main market for food consumption in the ACR,

the ACT Government can use a number of important policy mechanisms to drive positive change. Government policy is often successful when guided by a clear target. For example, ACT Government emissions reduction policy has benefitted from a clear, time-bound target of 40% emissions reduction by 2020 measured from a baseline year of 1990.

ACT Government food system policy could benefit from a clear, time-bound target. Such a target could be a percentage of ACT food consumed to be sustainable, fair, tasty and local. Setting such a target would require the ACT Government to better understand the local food system, conduct analysis and research as appropriate. For elements that are difficult to measure with hard data, clear principles could be used. (For example, setting a hard boundary of 150 km from Canberra to describe local food might be less useful than setting a principle that food transport is minimized.) Such a policy would then require adequate policy activities, and resourcing. This People's Food Plan can provide a range of ideas.

The ACT Government should be responsible for setting the target. Food stakeholders such as community food advocacy organisations will be essential to engage the public, producers and suppliers to support Government work, participate in consultation and provide advice.

Recommendation 5. Set an ACT target for an appropriate target of local food consumption by the end of 2016. For example, 30% of food consumption to be sourced from ACT Region by 2030.

Action 6: Stimulate local, sustainable food system with Government procurement

The ACT Government can play a transformative role stimulating the local food economy with a purchasing policy for Government institutions (hospitals, correctional facilities), Government catering and other Government food contracts, as enacted in many jurisdictions²⁴. An appropriate target could be 40% of food purchased to be sourced from sustainable, fair, local sources. International or national trade settings may challenge such a policy, the ACT Government should reject agreements that inhibit the region's ability to secure a safer food system.

To analyse the feasibility of such a measure, the Government could invite a consortium of ACT Region food producers to drive a supply proposal. The ACT Food Council could play a facilitative role for this process. Business representative bodies could promote the policy to ACT and region businesses. Community food advocacy organisations should engage and educate the community on the benefits of such a policy.

Recommendation 6. ACT Government food contracts and/or functions required use a percentage target of regional produce.

2) Research

Principles this area relates to:

- empower communities to be the main driver of the food system, including opportunities for decision-making and governance.
- regenerate natural systems on which our food depends by using approaches that regenerate our environment during the production, distribution of food, and following the consumption of food through processing food waste.
- use adaptive management by taking actions that are supported by research, and learning from our activities.

Purpose: To identify where we are at now, and new ideas we need to factor into our understanding of our food system, as well as where we want to go. Research should gather evidence of size of the risks, opportunities & other views from across the world.

Actors:

Local and sustainable food advocacy groups

Food producers, retailers, consumers

ACT Region Food Council (See Governance section) to act as facilitator for research projects

ACT Government, NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), ACR Local

Governments, Regional Development Australia (RDA) as foundation funder for research

All regional Government as supporting body to community-driven activities

Educational and research institutions such as Australian National University (ANU), University of Canberra (UC), Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), Australian Catholic University (ACU), other Universities with relevant research experience.

Action 7: Benchmark analysis of ACT Region food system

Key basic knowledge is required to further inform understanding of regional food consumption and for the development of the ACT and region food system. The only piece of recent research available on the ACT region food system is the 2012 *Food in the ACT* preliminary study²⁵. The study identified a range of knowledge gaps that further research could usefully address. A benchmark analysis working from the 2012 research recommendations, could include collection and analysis of data on:

- percentage of food currently consumed in ACT region which is regionally sourced
- what types of food are regionally consumed?
- who consumes regional produce – households, restaurants, institutions?
- who has access to local, sustainable food and how do they access it?
- Is there regional produce that doesn't have a local market?
- What is the environmental impact of food production in the region?
- What food production is currently happening sustainably for the region?
- What land is available for production in the ACT region and what is the capacity of the land to support sustainable production (a map would be a useful outcome)?
- Economic benefits of exchanges in the local food economy

The ACT Food Council (see Governance section) could facilitate a research process managing funding and guiding research institutions.

Recommendation 7. Undertake benchmark analysis of food production and consumption patterns in the ACT and region including data snapshot of our food system.

Action 8: Review local food policies

The ACT Region can better inform its food policies and activities learning from experiences of other jurisdictions. A research project to review work already done in the ACT (such as the 2012 *Food in the ACT* study²⁶) overseas and across Australia on local and regional food policies could identify similarities, differences and opportunities for an ACT and region policy.

Recommendation 8. Undertake research project on past local or regional food policies and projects to inform the ACT Region's plan.

Action 9: Analyse existing barriers to a stronger local food system

To achieve a local, sustainable food system, we need a good understanding of current barriers to positive change. A strong analysis of changes that need to be made, such as changes to farming practices and where food is sourced as well as barriers inhibiting actors, such as regulation, economic settings or lack of education will enable stakeholders in all sectors to better identify useful interventions to make. Include analysis of producer needs, and actions to best support growth of producers (e.g. farmer training or better transport for food, fair price for food so not squeezed by supermarkets). Include analysis of what constitutes sustainable production and what doesn't, and how to transition unsustainable production to sustainable. Explore options to increase local food production sustainably through innovative agricultural approaches such as aquaponics, fish farming and hydroponics that offer very high yields for minimal land and water requirements.

Recommendation 9. Analyse what the barriers are to local production and identify what can be done to remove them.

Action 10: Risk analysis of current food system

Understanding the risks inherent in the current food system clarifies why investment in a transformation of the food system is necessary. A wide range of research identifies risks to food supply from national and international food disruptions (for an array of reasons). We need to clarify which risks apply to the ACT Region. A Cost/Benefit analysis laying out the risks of unsustainable food practices against the costs of taking action to improve food sustainability through our local food system would be of use. This analysis should include exploring the precautionary principle in food policy, requiring actors in the food system to consider what harm current food practices are costing the community, and testing new food approaches by this standard.

Recommendation 10. Undertake an assessment into the risks of our current food system and a cost/benefit analysis.

3) Managing the Environment

Principles this area relates to:

- empower producers to grow and provide food, for fair and sustainable returns, to drive a resilient food system.
- regenerate natural systems on which our food depends by using approaches that regenerate our environment during the production, distribution of food, and following the consumption of food through processing food waste.
- use adaptive management by taking actions that are supported by research, and learning from our activities.
- give power to communities rather than international companies to assist closing the loop between producer and consumer, agricultural inputs and food waste, and increase community participation and ownership.

Purpose: To enable ACT food production, distribution and consumption to regenerate our environment. Limit our contribution to global environmental pollution or resource scarcity problems and provide food that is fairly produced, accessible, affordable, nutritionally balanced and tasty

Actors:

Local regional food producers

Local and sustainable food advocacy groups

Individuals as volunteers, experts with personal experience who wish to participate in progressing local and sustainable food

ACT Government as foundation funder of community food initiatives

All regional Government as supporting body to community-driven activities

Action 11: Sustainable agricultural practices that regenerate the natural Environment

Agricultural production is able to support and regenerate the natural environment, as opposed to industrial agricultural practices dominating the current food system. The ACT Region must ensure any increase in local / regional food production is environmentally sustainable, by using soil regeneration principles which increase biodiversity, water retention and reduce chemical residues²⁷. Producers should where possible use mixed farming instead of monoculture to manage soils and promote regenerative agriculture.

Producers are the key stakeholders that must adopt a regenerative approach and support their peers to achieve regenerative agricultural approaches. (For example, the SCPA organics model demonstrates an active cultural change process for ACT region producers.²⁸)

Producers operate within a structure of regulations and market culture that can be influenced by Government. ACT, local ACR Councils and NSW Government can support policies, education programs and where necessary regulation to deliver regenerative agriculture in the region.

Finally, community food advocacy groups can engage the community through outreach and education to build public awareness and support. It is important that voters and shoppers to support food produced from a regenerative approach to agriculture. The ACT Region Food Council and food advocacy groups can engage producers and consumers to drive demand for regenerative agriculture.

<p><i>Recommendation 11. Ensure local / regional food production regenerates the natural environment.</i></p>
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Action 12: Biodiversity conservation

For an ACT Region food system to achieve sustainability, conserving and increasing biodiversity should be a key outcome. The ACT Region landscape should be managed balancing all human system needs, while experiencing increasing biodiversity, healthy native ecosystems, and good water quality. Major industrial infrastructure for the food system such as dams should be avoided, and management practices for water retention used instead.

Producers are key stakeholders, and education on biodiversity and conservation is essential. Producers can integrate biodiversity aims into their management plans, and support peers to do the same. Producers operate within a structure of regulations and market culture that can be influenced by Government. ACT, local ACR Councils and NSW Government can support policies, education programs and where necessary regulation to deliver biodiversity outcomes in the region. Community food advocacy groups can engage the community through outreach and education to build public awareness and support.

Recommendation 12. Ensure management practices for food production in the ACT region are balanced with biodiversity conservation values.

Action 13: Closed loop organic waste

A sustainable food system utilizes waste as nutrient, and closed loop waste systems maximise nutrient retrieval from garden and food waste. All garden and food waste should be diverted from landfill and used sustainably including making compost available to producers at no / low cost to ensure local nutrients are recycled. Governments, with businesses and community, can review past attempts at garden and food waste collection systems to learn what models will best work for the ACT region.

All levels of Government can influence the waste system: ACT, local ACR councils and NSW Government should support policies, education programs and where necessary regulation to deliver closed loop waste for the regional food system. Producers can seek out local food and green waste fertilisers, and community food advocacy actors can educate and engage the public in how to participate in a close loop organic waste system.

The ACT Food Council and relevant food advocacy groups can engage and educate businesses and the customers who frequent them about food waste charges and the benefits of such a measure. Businesses must liaise with Governments about best practice to implement. Business and other representative bodies could engage with members they represent to encourage participation.

Recommendation 13. Divert all garden and food waste from landfill to compost, and make it available to food producers for no/low cost.

Action 14: Closed loop human waste

Human waste is a readily available resource for food production and has been used in agriculture throughout history. With appropriate management it is a safer, cheaper option than industrial farming inputs. To support a viable regional food system, human waste should be used to recycle nutrient for food production. Successful human waste composting systems can be reviewed to develop pilot programs that can then be scaled up. As the ACT Government has already approved the private use of human waste recycling²⁹, the ACT is a prime location to develop a model to roll out in the region.

The ACT Region Food Council could drive an initial review of successful programs, utilizing research institutions such as universities with relevant experience and expertise. The ACT Government could jointly fund a review, with support from NSW and local governments in the ACR. Producers could participate in pilot schemes, and potentially co-fund through purchasing organic fertilisers from the scheme. Community food advocacy organisations can participate in pilot schemes, and raise community awareness through engagement and education campaigns. Canberra City Farm is a potential hub for a pilot scheme.

Recommendation 14. Develop closed loop human waste systems to maximise nutrient retrieval from human waste.

Action 15: Food waste charge

Reducing food waste and redirecting it into composting systems is key to closed-loop nutrient cycles for a sustainable regional food system. Charging outlets a food waste fee is a strong disincentive that helps reduce waste. Revenue from such a charge could support food recovery charities (for example the Oz Harvest yellow van program³⁰).

The ACT Government could trial a food waste charge and develop a model to other local governments across the ACR, and the NSW Government.

The ACT Food Council and relevant food advocacy groups can engage and educate businesses and the customers who frequent them about food waste charges and the benefits of such a measure. Businesses must liaise with Governments about best practice to implement regulation. Business and other representative bodies could engage with members they represent to encourage participation.

Note that this action links with Section 5: Regulation of the ACT Region People's Food Plan.

Recommendation 15. Reduce food waste by charging outlets a food waste charge.

Action 16: Change 'use by' labelling to 'best before'

Food labelling to indicate the perishable life of a product is important, however the current model of a 'use by' date can encourage unnecessary food waste. The practice should be reviewed, with the principle of encouraging personal responsibility to understand when food is no longer edible. In all possible cases, 'use by' should be changed to 'best before.' Governments are the key stakeholder responsible for health concerns and food regulation.

The ACT and NSW Governments, as well as local Councils in the ACR should drive a review and advocate at the Federal level if required.

The ACT Food Council could work with food advocacy groups in the region to conduct widespread education and awareness raising campaigns to bring the public along. Businesses must liaise with Governments about best practice to implement regulation. Business and other representative bodies to engage with members they represent to encourage participation.

Recommendation 16. Change 'use by' labeling to 'best before' in all possible cases to reduce good food being thrown away.

4) Education and Marketing

Principles this area relates to:

- empower producers to grow and provide food, for fair and sustainable returns, to drive a resilient food system.
- empower consumers to understand the food system and make informed choices that drive a fairer food system.
- ensure all people have access to affordable, fairly produced, nutritionally balanced and tasty food.
- empower communities to be the main driver of the food system, including opportunities for decision-making and governance.

- regenerate natural systems on which our food depends by using approaches that regenerate our environment during the production, distribution of food, and following the consumption of food through processing food waste.
- use adaptive management by taking actions that are supported by research, and learning from our activities.
- give power to communities rather than international companies to assist closing the loop between producer and consumer, agricultural inputs and food waste, and increase community participation and ownership.

Purpose: To drive demand and supply for local, fair and sustainable food in the ACT region through awareness raising and education. This includes ensuring the community is aware of what local, fair, and sustainable food is.

Actors:

Food education organisations

Educational institutions – primary schools, high schools, CIT, Universities

Local and sustainable food advocacy groups

ACT Government as enabler of programs through policy, program funding grants

All regional Governments as enabler of programs through policy, program funding grants

Action 17: Review food education system

Education is a critical component of local, sustainable food systems. Food literacy is a critical skill for individuals and must underpin our economies and policies.³¹ There is a range of educational approaches to increase food literacy, with adult to school age programs, and formal and informal education approaches. To support a sustainable local food system, we need an analysis of current food literacy education, and a plan to fill gaps and promote strong food literacy.

The ACT Food Council could facilitate research reviewing food literacy education in the region that would best be delivered by independent research experts. The ACT, NSW and regional governments could fund the analysis. A food literacy education plan could then be made available to all relevant governments, as well as education providers, community food advocacy groups and other actors to implement.

Recommendation 17. Analyse food education available and develop a plan to roll out new education projects and programs.

Action 18: A strong local food brand for the region

Information must be freely available to enable people to participate in a sustainable local food system. The industrial food model does not make comprehensive information about food production and origin easily, consistently accessible to consumers. A strong ACT Region food brand would remedy this problem.

The Southern Harvest local food brand is an example to review and potentially extend. The ACT Food Council could facilitate a review of the brand and development of a marketing strategy to promote it throughout the region. Brand Canberra (the ACT Government brand), local businesses and industry would benefit from the process and could fund the review and marketing plan, with Business representative groups coordinating. NSW and regional Councils could provide some additional funds.

Recommendation 18. Create a strong ACT Region food brand that can be easily recognised by consumers.

Action 19: Individual consumer food education

Consumer information should be readily available in a range of formats to support a successful sustainable local food system. A consumer education program, based on the findings of the education review (Recommendation 16), with a range of resources would deliver this in the ACT Region:

- website that connects local food initiatives (community events, organisations, businesses and so on) for easier access to information. Review existing food websites like Open Food network. Review and potentially support Southern Harvest to develop their current website hub
- urban food hubs where people can get information and advice about growing and preparing their own tasty and nutritious food, and where local food events can be held
- awards for local food productions to raise awareness and profile of local producers, educators, etc.
- promotion of regional food suppliers from the ACR
- implement marketing plan to promote this suite of resources throughout the ACT region.
- Programs that educate consumers about eating in season, food-preserving skills.
- Celebrations of local food and food literacy, for example harvest festivals, food champions at high profile events, and competitions that award local food actors.

The ACT Food Council could facilitate the development of a consumer education program. Organisations including Southern Harvest, Canberra City Farm would be important stakeholders. ACT, NSW and regional local Governments can fund programs through schools and TAFEs. Provide relevant project grant funding to community and business to provide broader community education.

Educational businesses could roll out financially sustainable food education programs, while community development organisations could roll out programs for disadvantaged communities. Food advocacy and education groups are well placed to run programs for the general community.

Recommendation 19. Establish a consumer education program about fair, sustainable local food.

Action 20: Focus on schools for food literacy

All people are entitled to learn food literacy, and the education system should deliver it. Innovative school education programs that engage students are ideal. Based on the findings of the education review (Recommendation 16), a project like a team of "champions" could roll out programs. The "Champions" could be recognised and effective food spokespeople who would work in ACT and regional schools (Primary and Secondary) to help set up kitchen gardens, canteen menus and programs for students to learn how to grow and use their own fresh produce. These programs require significant time commitment and longevity, and must engage teachers, support staff and parents at the school to be successful. To succeed, the scale of the program must be matched to available resources. Opportunities to share resourcing should be emphasised, for example linking local community organisations or existing community gardens with schools as 'knowledge neighbours'.

The ACT Food Council could facilitate a school champions program, with funding from the ACT, NSW and regional governments. Schools are essential stakeholders rolling out programs, and the Federal curriculum is a key part of promoting food literacy in ACT region schools. Food literacy should be integrated into the national curriculum as it is a core skill, and because placing additional extra-curricular activities on schools would be an extra pressure and be less likely to succeed. In the community, food advocacy and education organisations could liaise with food literacy teachers and facilitators, and provide community support for example volunteers to drive care of school or community gardens.

Recommendation 20. A food "champions" program to work in ACT and regional schools (Primary and Secondary) to help set up kitchen gardens, canteen menus and programs for students to learn how to grow and use their own fresh produce. Integrate food literacy into national curriculum.

Action 21: Fair Food documentary screenings

Film is a powerful tool to educate and inspire large audiences. The documentary *Fair Food* is a great Australian educational tool. A simple action to improve food literacy is a screening for all educational institutions.

The ACT Food Council could provide the documentary to all schools, while Educational Institutions can drive fitting *Fair Food* into curriculums. The ACT, NSW and regional local governments can support Fair Food in curriculums.

Recommendation 21. Screen 'Fair Food' documentary in all schools in the ACT region.

Action 22: Food waste community education

Educational is critical for individuals to participate in closed loop waste systems, to understand what food waste is and how to ensure it is recycled. A food waste community education program is critical, based on the findings of the education review (Recommendation 16). The program should be in line with waste policies that provide the infrastructure and services for people to use such as green waste bins. Both residential and commercial waste programs should be considered.

ACT Government and local Councils in the ACR should develop and drive waste policy and implementation that includes a strong community education program. Environment and food advocacy community groups are well placed to provide cost-effective implementation to run waste education.

Recommendation 22. A food waste community education program in line with waste policies that provide the infrastructure and services people use in a closed loop system.

Action 23: Farmer education and support

Education for producers is a critical component of developing sustainable, local food systems. Farmer education has been supported by Government Primary Industry bodies and research institutions for decades, as new techniques and ideas are critical to successful agriculture. Producers need ongoing training to understand how to deliver regenerative agriculture and supply a sustainable local food system.

New food producers face multiple barriers to entering the food production industry, and require further support. 'Farmer incubators' and other programs to educate and support producers include:

- On-farm internships for real world training
- Supporting new farmers with skills and commitment to access land for production. Consider existing land-access programs and develop programs to trial in the ACT region.
- Regional governments to explore barriers to establishment for new sustainable farmers specifically capital requirements. Develop programs removing barriers to trial in ACT region.
- Kitchen incubators that provide kitchen space and services for new food product makers. A shared space reduces risks and capital outlay when food producer makers start up. They are also provided will support from experienced food product makers to assist them gain the knowledge, experience and clarity on what is needed to run a sustainable food business, including marketing, social media, branding, packaging, food safety, identifying markets, connecting with local food producers and promoting environmental sustainability.
- Create farm safety nets for local producers e.g. Whole of farm insurance over single crop insurance, credit and financing mechanisms to support farmers selling through local systems to expand and diversify their business.³²

A range of further support for farmers and food producers could be explored³³. Educational programs could be delivered by existing educational organisations such as the Canberra City Farm, while existing food producers could run internships. Landcare and NSW DPI have experience in this sort of program and could support internships. The ACT, NSW and local governments to fund programs, as well as provide zoning and other support for land access. Business representative bodies could leverage private sector funding to support skilling up and innovation in the region.

Recommendation 23. Support 'farmer incubators' and other programs to educate and support existing and new producers.

Action 24: Education for food retailers to fill gaps in the supply of sustainable local food

Suppliers are a critical part of the food system, and like other stakeholders require support and education to play their role effectively. An analysis of current retail markets for sustainable and local food would be useful to identify gaps to better supply across the ACT Region. The analysis should undertake consultation with food retailers (restaurants, cafes, supermarkets) to assess the challenges of supply and demand to improve purchasing from local producers. Education programs can then be developed to support retailers, shop stockists and other business owners who can distribute local, sustainable food would increase the potential supply available in the region.

The ACT Region Food Council could facilitate analysis of retail environment and gaps, possible in partnership with industry representative groups. Business representative groups could engage interested, innovative businesses to develop resources to train business in local, sustainable food systems. These groups could identify relevant potential participants and promote training directly.

Recommendation 24. Gaps analysis of retail markets for sustainable, local food, and development of educational program for retailers.

5) Planning and Regulation

Principles this area relates to:

- empower producers to grow and provide food, for fair and sustainable returns, to drive a resilient food system.
- empower consumers to understand the food system and make informed choices that drive a fairer food system.
- ensure all people have access to affordable, fairly produced, nutritionally balanced and tasty food
- empower communities to be the main driver of the food system, including opportunities for decision-making and governance
- regenerate natural systems on which our food depends by using approaches that regenerate our environment during the production, distribution of food, and following the consumption of food through processing food waste
- give power to communities rather than international companies to assist closing the loop between producer and consumer, agricultural inputs and food waste, and increase community participation and ownership.

Purpose: To have Governments playing a supporting role to foster local, sustainable and fair food supply and consumption by removing barriers and providing programs that enable food actors to deliver.

Actors:

All regional governments responsible for food regulation

Federal Government – Departments of Health and Agriculture, Consumer affairs and Trade where departmental work affects food policy and regulation

Action 25: Land tenure and zoning/ planning layer within ACT Territory plan and NSW jurisdictions

Zoning to protect and promote arable land is critical to support a thriving local food system, as is appropriate tenure for landholders to invest and undertake stewardship on land.

Governments must understand the range of agricultural activity that can be undertaken at a range of scales. For example, Governments should zone to enable appropriate types of agricultural intensity in urban areas where some current definitions strike a range of potential agricultural activities from taking place.

In NSW, State and local governments can prioritise protection and promotion of agricultural land across the planning hierarchy.

Though the ACT must recognise its place in the local region to meet its food needs, the ACT itself has a range of land available for food production. Arable land is a precious resource and should be recognised and protected in urban planning. To achieve this, the ACT Government can create a zoning/ planning layer within ACT Territory Plan for “urban agriculture” for both intensive agriculture and community use. This should ensure existing agricultural assets such as the Pialligo Orchards and the Majura Valley are maintained and protected. Landholders should be consulted on tenure arrangements for agricultural land and the barriers this poses to sustainable food production. Appropriate tenure changes should then be integrated into planning and land management. The ACT’s planning model could be offered to the NSW Government and regional councils.

Producers and food advocacy organisations in the ACT should participate in the ACT Government process to provide advice on the best approach, and the ACT Food Council would be a good facilitator for the process.

Recommendation 25. Appropriate land tenure, and zoning/ planning layer across NSW state and local government zoning systems, and within ACT Territory Plan to adequately support a range of agricultural activities.

Action 26: Promote the use of unleased public land for growing food

The ACT Government currently holds much unleased public land that could be used for community gardens, orchards and other local food programs. The Government has an opportunity to stimulate innovation through actively seeking proposals for agricultural use of unleased land. The Government could create a register of such land and call for expressions of interest to manage this land (Maps created in initial research, covered in Section 2 of this People's Food Plan, could assist). This register and expressions process could be offered as a model to be tried in NSW and local council areas in the ACR.

The ACT Government must drive this action, however the ACT Food Council could facilitate engagement with local food advocacy groups, emerging food producers, property and development businesses in the process. To roll this process out in the greater ACR, the NSW State and Local Governments, through Regional Development Australia, could identify public land that could be used for community gardens and / orchards (ABARES may assist).

Recommendation 26. Identify unleased public land that could be used for community gardens and / orchards. Create a register of such land and call for expressions of interest to manage this land.

Action 27: Eliminate food waste from supermarkets

Supermarkets are a key part of the industrial food system, and food waste from supermarkets is a large problem as well as underutilized resource. France passed a law in May 2015, banning supermarkets from throwing food waste into garbage, instead requiring food to be donated to charity or processed for animal feed³⁴. Similar regulation could be adopted by the ACT and NSW Governments, and supported by regional councils. Food packaging, especially plastics, has a large environmental impact. Reducing food packaging waste is another benefit.

Business groups such as representative bodies would be essential stakeholders to provide advice on best practice implementation of such a regulation. Business and industry bodies could encourage members to participate in Government processes to identify best transition to no-waste model. Community and public engagement and awareness raising would be important, with food advocacy organisations well placed to roll out programs.

Recommendation 27. Legislate to eliminate food waste at supermarkets.

Action 28: Accurate labelling for sustainable, local food

As consumer information is a critical part of sustainable, local food systems, adequate food labelling should be required. Information that could be made available to consumers includes food miles, carbon footprint, and specific place of origin. The ACT Food Council could

facilitate an analysis of existing food labelling businesses, identify strengths and weaknesses and develop recommendations to trial at all food retailers. This analysis should include Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS).

Business and industry bodies could encourage members to participate in Government processes to identify best transition to the new food-labelling model. Community and public engagement and awareness-raising would be important, with food advocacy organisations well placed to roll out programs.

Consumer affairs statutory bodies should contribute to labelling guidelines.

Recommendation 28. Require specific labelling of food miles, carbon footprint, and food origin.

Action 29: Tackle regulatory barriers to local food production

Food regulation is often skewed to promote the industrial food model, and fails to understand and address the experience of sustainable local food producers. In some communities, new legislation that fosters local food systems has been proposed as a model³⁵. Remove regulatory barriers to local food production such as:

- Water pricing for agricultural use in urban-area production enterprises
- Reform abattoir regulations to enable meat processing to occur on farm at mobile abattoirs or at small local facilities
- Enabling composting toilets in urban residences, commercial properties.

All regional Governments are key stakeholders to drive this process, the NSW and ACT Governments, and Federal Government where national health and food safety regulations are affected. The ACT Food Council could facilitate producers keen to innovate to engage with Governments to ensure best possible transition towards the regulatory solution. Community advocacy organisations can engage the community on each regulatory change and encourage participation in Government processes of consultation.

Recommendation 29. Identify and remove regulatory barriers to local food production.

6) Infrastructure

Principles this area relates to:

- empower producers to grow and provide food, for fair and sustainable returns, to drive a resilient food system.
- empower consumers to understand the food system and make informed choices that drive a fairer food system.
- ensure all people have access to affordable, fairly produced, nutritionally balanced and tasty food.
- empower communities to be the main driver of the food system, including opportunities for decision-making and governance.
- give power to communities rather than international companies to assist closing the loop between producer and consumer, agricultural inputs and food waste, and increase community participation and ownership.

Purpose: To empower the growth of the regional food economy, producers and other independent actors. The food system should always adopt opportunities for shared facilities where possible to support economies of scale.

Actors:

All regional governments responsible for food regulation and enabling programs like grants
Federal Government – Departments of Health and Agriculture, Consumer affairs and Trade
where departmental work affects food policy and regulation

Producers

Food consumers/ purchasers

Food retailers

Research institutions such as Universities where there is relevant experience

Action 30: Aggregate key food production infrastructure

To tackle the industrial food system's infrastructure, local producers should be supported to aggregate key functions. This includes infrastructure such as:

- storage food depots located at key regional centres
- transport from regions into centres
- food processing facilities

The ACT Region Food Council could facilitate discussions with producers and other actors to define the best-aggregated infrastructure or service options in the Region. The Canberra City Farm could explore opportunities for some infrastructure such as food processing. Community gardens such as SAGE in Moruya could consider hosting some infrastructure. Community food advocacy groups could assist on funding models such as crowdfunding, grants and cooperative ownership.

Recommendation 30. Assist local producers to aggregate key infrastructure and services

Action 31: A regional food hub

A key piece of infrastructure for regional producer communities is regional food hubs where producers can sell, and process their food for value-added products. Producers and food product makers alike can use a food hub space, building connections between like-minded food producers and supporting innovation in products. A single hub in a particular area can benefit a large number of producers.

The ACT Region Food Council could facilitate discussions with producers and other actors defining options for food hub options across the ACT Region. The Canberra City Farm is a prime location to explore the potential to be food hub in the ACT. Businesses and producers could work with community food advocacy groups on funding models such as crowdfunding, grants and cooperative ownership.

Recommendation 31. Regional food hubs for producers to sell, and process their food for value-added products in their area.

Action 32: A local abattoir

A sustainable local food system could include free-range meat as a protein that can be produced with lower environmental impacts than industrial approaches such as feed lots. The lack of local meat processing opportunities adds significant food miles and resource intensity to local meat. Local abattoir options could ensure more humane animal processing, reduce transport and support regional meat producers.

The ACT Food Council could facilitate an analysis process with producers and businesses of which meat-processing options would work best in the region, from local abattoirs to mobile abattoirs. Governments will be key stakeholders to ensure regulation supports local meat processing.

Businesses, producers and food advocacy community groups can pursue funding options such as shared investment and cooperative ownership.

Recommendation 32. Local meat processing options to ensure more humane meat, reduce food miles and support regional meat producers.

Action 33: Online food connection technology

Innovative 'share economy' websites and online forums offer a new way to connect sustainable, local food producers with retailers and consumers. Online food connection websites can also assist home gardeners and food producers to offer excess produce for exchange. The Open Food Network & Food Connect are strong examples (see Appendix 1 for details).

The ACT Region Food Council could facilitate an investigation of existing online food connection technology, and analyse if they are currently successfully connecting producers and consumers in the ACT region. If not, the ACT Region Food Council could explore options for promoting online connector technology. Community Food advocacy organisations could engage members and the public in the project, participate in launching new sites or promoting existing sites.

Recommendation 33. Promote online food connector websites.

Action 34: ACT Region specific online hub for food producers and retailers

A specific single online hub that lists producers and retailers provides a publicly available resource. The ACT Food Council could investigate current available websites and databases that collate all ACT region sustainable local food suppliers and retailers. If needed, it could create a database of local food retailers available to all local producers, and local food suppliers available to consumers. Southern Harvest is a key food advocacy organization that may have started a successful online list of producers.

Recommendation 34. ACT Region specific online database 'hub'

Action 35: Foster new regional food retailers and farmers markets

Farmers markets and alternative food retailers like farmers market outlets, are a successful retail model for sustainable, local food systems. Existing farmers markets across the ACR are some of the most successful in Australia. However reliable and convenient access to food suppliers is an important enabler for consumers to choose sustainable, local food. Farmers Markets and other retailers of local, sustainable food, should be supported to grow, open longer and set up in more locations. Such retailers must also provide a reliable system for ensuring they provide local, sustainable food to the consumer.

The ACT Food Council could support a Farmers Market and local food retailers plan, and work with operators and regulators to develop clear guidelines about market content or labelling system to ensure consumers know that food is actually local, sustainable and fair.

Consumer affairs statutory bodies could be involved in developing Farmers Market guidelines.

Recommendation 35. Encourage the growth of Farmers Markets & regional food retailers that represent a truly local, sustainable supply of food.

7) Food access: affordability, equity

Principles this area relates to:

- empower producers to grow and provide food, for fair and sustainable returns, to drive a resilient food system.
- empower consumers to understand the food system and make informed choices that drive a fairer food system.
- ensure all people have access to affordable, fairly produced, nutritionally balanced and tasty food.
- empower communities to be the main driver of the food system, including opportunities for decision-making and governance.
- give power to communities rather than international companies to assist closing the loop between producer and consumer, agricultural inputs and food waste, and increase community participation and ownership.

Purpose: To make available to the entire community affordable, fairly produced, nutritionally balanced and tasty food.

Actors:

All regional governments
Food consumers/ purchasers
Food advocacy community organisations
Community Development organisations

Action 36: Local food guide

Information provision is a key enabler to access to affordable, sustainable and local food for all people. A local food guide could be developed by the ACT Food Council and provided to new and existing residents. The Guide should answer questions people have about barriers such as transport, packing and carrying purchases, prices. The project could start in ACT and be used as model in other jurisdictions across the ACR.

Recommendation 36. Develop a local food guide that clearly outlines to consumers where to get affordable, local and sustainably produced food.

Action 37: Locally and community owned food institutions

Community owned food shops, kitchens and restaurants could provide access to affordable, sustainable local food. The ACT Food Council can explore the potential for new food cooperatives and community kitchens to provide more affordable local, sustainable food options, and create opportunities for social engagement through cooking classes and food preparation. Community development organisations could participate in the project to provide key information about the needs of disadvantaged people, who might be the target audience. Food advocacy groups can participate and provide information about best ways to access affordable food to the community.

Recommendation 37. Promote locally and community owned food retailers, kitchens and restaurants.

Action 38: Community gardens

Community gardens have successfully made gardening available to communities across the world. Community garden programs should be extended for suburbs, towns, schools and institutions such as aged care facilities. Community gardens can be established in the ACT, but education and community engagement are required to stimulate active communities to drive new projects. Training and support should be provided for all community gardens to educate individuals how to grow, harvest and prepare food.

The ACT Region Food Council can promote opportunities for new community garden programs to governments and institutions, while Government should fund community garden projects, inclusive of outreach and education, in priority areas. Community development organisations could provide key information about the needs of disadvantaged people, and support garden projects. Food advocacy groups could participate in community garden establishment, and run training programs, encouraging volunteers to help run them.

Recommendation 38. Expand community garden programs in suburbs, towns, schools and institutions.

11) Stakeholder list

A wide range of active food system stakeholders in the ACT Region is already active on issues raised in this plan. Please use this table to identify opportunities to share information and engage with existing stakeholders on progressing actions in this plan to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'.

Name	Stakeholder type	Action(s)	Details	Contact site
Conservation Council ACT Region	Peak Environment organisation of ACT Region	ALL	Facilitated development ACT Region People's Food Plan	Conservationcouncil.org.au
Southern Harvest	ACT Region food advocacy organisation	ALL	Key People: Penny Kothe, Sam Hawker (Farmers Markets contact), Ellyn Bicknell. Documents: South East Food Plan ³⁶ Past events: 'Food Hub' events 2014-2015	southernharvest.net.au/
Urban Agriculture Australia	ACT food advocacy organisation: Canberra City Farm	ALL	Collaboration of 20+ local food groups, see list: urbanagriculture.org.au/about/collaborators/	urbanagriculture.org.au/canberra-city-farm/
Canberra City Farm	ACT Food advocacy and education	ALL		
Lyneham Commons	ACT food advocacy: community orchard	ALL	Key People: Will Mudford	lynehamcommons.wordpress.com/
Canberra	ACT food advocacy:	ALL	Key People: member	cogs.asn.au/

Organic Growers Society	runs local community gardens		Keith Colls – gardening educator, Walter Steensby	
Slow Food Canberra	ACT food advocacy: promotes local sustainable food	ALL		slowfoodcanberra.com/
Ozharvest ACT	ACT food rescue	15, 16, 17-24, 25-29, 36-38	Run 'yellow van' that rescues food that would otherwise go to waste to donate	
Timo Bures	ACT Individual Food Advocate	7-10	Local restaurant owner and Chef, passionate about local food system	
Phillip & Donna O'Brien	ACT Region producers and advocates	1, 30, 31, 35	Made submission to food discussion paper	
SAGE Community Garden Moruya	South Coast community garden and food advocacy	1, 3, 4, 6, 28, 29, 30-35, 36-38	Run education, support new farmer interns and local farmers market stalls.	sageproject.org.au/
SCPA – South East Producers Association	Producer Association	1, 3, 5, 6, 11-16, 17 – 24, 30-35, 36-38	Producer advocacy, education, organic certification	scpa.org.au/
Permaculture eXchange	Sustainable food growing education organisation	17-24	Runs courses in ACT region for different scales of food production	permacultureexchange.org.au/
Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance	National food advocacy, authors: People's Food Plan	1, 3, 5, 6, 7-10, 11-16, 17 – 24, 36-38	Key people: Emma Pocock Canberra region advocate for sustainable local food, researcher	australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/
Open Food Network	Online hub connecting food producers and consumers	33 – 34		Openfoodnetwork.org
3000 Acres	Online hub connecting vacant land and food growers	23, 26, 33-34		3000acres.org
Climate Action Canberra	ACT Climate change action advocacy	1, 5, 11	Submission to Conservation Council local food discussion paper 2015	climateactioncanberra.org/
SEE-Change (Social, Economic, Environment Change)	Community action organisation	1, 4, 5, 6, 11 – 16, 30-35, 36-38	Supports suburb groups across Canberra to create social change for society, economy and environment to be sustainable	see-change.org.au/
Canberra Environment Centre	Canberra environment education	ALL		ecoaction.com.au/

Landcare (ACT and Region branches)	Conservation, biodiversity, community volunteering	5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 23, 25, 26		landcareact.org.au/
Canberra Sustainable House	Showcase house for sustainable design	14		canberrassustainablehouse.com.au/
Communities@work	Community development ACT	17-24, 25-29, 36-38		
Caroola Farm	ACT Region Producer	ALL	Key people: Penny Kothe	caroolafarm.com.au/
Mulloon Creek	ACT Region Producer	1, 3, 5, 6, 7-10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 – 24, 36-38		mullooncreeknaturalfarms.com.au/
Gleann Na Meala	ACT Region Producer	1, 3, 5, 6, 7-10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 – 24, 36-38	Key people: Ben Pentony	facebook.com/Gleann-na-Meala-220428324656996/
Brightside Produce	ACT Region Producer	1, 3, 5, 6, 7-10, 11, 12-16, 17 – 24, 36-38	Key people: Emily Kobier	brightsideproduce.com.au
Food Co-op Shop Canberra	ACT food coop business	ALL	Made submission to food discussion paper 2015	foodco-opshop.com.au/
My Farm Shop	ACT Region sustainable food retailer	ALL	Key Person: Danny O'Brien, Director	myfarmshop.com.au/
Braidwood Provisions Deli	ACT Region sustainable food retailer	ALL	Key People: Colin McLean	
Canberra Business Chamber	ACT business advocacy, industry representation	1-6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-38	Supports interests of Canberra businesses. Convenes a Sustainability Taskforce	canberrabusiness.com/
Brand Canberra	ACT Government Canberra promotional campaign	18		
Mornington peninsula produce	VIC regional food brand	18	Example of regional food branding	mpproduce.com.au/
Farm Endorsement Ecological Development (FEED)	Participatory Guarantee System in the Byron Shire	28	Example of local labelling with participatory approach	futurefeeders.org/feed.html
Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden	National food education program for schools	17, 20, 21, 22	Program that starts a school garden and kitchen to educate students on whole food	List of participating ACT schools: kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/content/kitchen-

program			cycle	garden-community
Food Revolution Canberra	International day to raise awareness of healthy food	ALL	Ellyn Bicknell is ACT Food Revolution Ambassador	Facebook page: facebook.com/ACTFoodRev/?fref=nf
Biologic Agfood	Farming systems agronomy	ALL	Key Person: Maartin Stapper	drmaartenstapper.com.au/
Australian National University	Research institution	7-10, 17-24	See research into ACR 'food flows,' Human Ecology, Agroecology and Biodiversity. Key People: Academics including Robert Dyball, David Dumaresq, Sue Ogilvy. Interns and volunteers with Conservation Council ³⁷ including: Eleanor Robson, Brittany Dahl, Sandesh Silpakar	anu.edu.au/
University of Canberra	Research institution	7-10, 17-24	See UC research into ACT community gardens and school food projects. Key people: Prof Barbara Norman, Dr Bethaney Turner, Dr David Pearson	canberra.edu.au/
Australian Defence Force Academy	Research institution	7-10, 17-24		unsw.adfa.edu.au/unsw-adfa
Charles Sturt University	Research institution	7-10, 17-24		csu.edu.au/
Australian Bureau of Agricultural & Resource Economics & Sciences (ABARES)	Federal Government Research Institution	7-10		agriculture.gov.au/abares
Research Data Services International food and health flagship (RDSI)	Research institution	7-10		rds.edu.au/food-and-health-flagship
CSIRO	Research institution	7-10	Key people: Academic Michael Dunlop	www.csiro.au/
Regional Development Australia (RDA)	Federal Government Initiative to support regional areas	1, 3, 7-10, 25-29	Key people: Ann Moroney CEO Barossa area Key Section: Southern Inland region. Provides support for relevant initiatives like Southern Harvest.	rda.gov.au/

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)	NSW Government Department	7-10	Provides support to Primary Industries, development and research	dpi.nsw.gov.au/
Shane Rattenbury, fmr ACT Minister for Territory and Municipal Services	Past Minister responsible for agriculture and food issues in ACT	7-10, 25-29	Convened community roundtable with range of stakeholders 2014. Supported development of some local and sustainable food measures such as verge gardening, Canberra City Farm lease	greens.org.au/act/shane-rattenbury
Northern Territory Government Department of Resources	NT Government Department responsible for seafood regulation	28	Introduced seafood origin labelling requirements in 2008	nt.gov.au/d/Content/File/p/Fish_Rep/FR101_FSR.pdf#search=%22seafood%22
Australian Government Department of Education & Training	Department responsible for national curriculum	20		education.gov.au/

¹ Conservation Council Discussion Paper 2015: conservationcouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/20150323-Food-Discussion-Paper.pdf

² ACT Government Planning – Draft planning strategy- background paper 5: food: planning.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/25678/Planning_Background05_Food.pdf

³ South East Food Project 2012 Food Plan: southeastfood.com.au/editorfiles/file/South%20East%20Food/SE%20Food%20Plan%20FINAL.pdf

⁴ ANU and UC project by Dr Robert Dyball, Dr Bethany Turner and Dr David Pearson *Food in the ACT* [planning.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/34112/20130304_Food in the ACT - study by UC and Fenner School.pdf](http://planning.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/34112/20130304_Food_in_the_ACT_study_by_UC_and_Fenner_School.pdf)

⁵ Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (2013) *The people's food plan – working paper February 2013*, p72 australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/AFSA_PFP_WorkingPaper-FINAL-15-Feb-2013.pdf

⁶ Cummins and Macintyre (2002) Food deserts—evidence and assumption in health policy making. *BMJ* 325, 436–438.

⁷ Vidgen and Gallegos (2014) "Defining Food Literacy and Its Components," *Appetite* 76: 50-59 blogs.deakin.edu.au/apfnc/wp-content/uploads/sites/119/2015/06/Vidgen_2014_food-literacy-Appetite.pdf

⁸ CIRAD research: cirad.fr/en/research-operations/research-topics/food-security/what-s-cirad-doing

⁹ For more information see the Human Right To Food Coalition in Australia righttofoodcoalition.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/human-right-to-food-position-statement-170416.pdf and the International Food and Agriculture Organisation's Human Right to Adequate Food: fao.org/righttofood/right-to-food-home/en/

¹⁰ From the Declaration of Nyeleni 2007, viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/food-sovereignty-and-trade-mainmenu-38/262-declaration-of-nyl

¹¹ For example the Declaration of Atitlan, Guatemala, from the *Indigenous People's Consultation on the Right to Food*, 2002

- ¹² Wise, *Grow Your Own*, 14
- ¹³ Bellows, Brown & Smith, "Health Benefits of Urban Agriculture," 4
- ¹⁴ *ibid*, 7
- ¹⁵ *ibid*
- ¹⁶ Norberg-Hodge Merrifield, & Gorelick, "Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness," 67
- ¹⁷ *ibid*
- ¹⁸ Sims, "Food, Place and Authenticity: Local Food and the Tourism Experience"
- ¹⁹ Feenstra, "Local Food Systems and Sustainable Communities," 28
- ²⁰ Beilin & Hunter, "Co-constructing the Sustainable City: How Indicators Help us "Grow" More than just food in Community Gardens," 523
- ²¹ For more information on Food Policy Councils/ Associations see interview with Steve Cohen from Office of Sustainability, Portland, Oregon, USA. Cooking up a Story (February 22, 2007) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3foJblzhqI>
- ²² Toronto Food Policy Council [ONLINE] tfpc.to/about
- ²³ For more information, see Blay-Palmer (2010) 'The Canadian Pioneer: The Genesis of Urban Food Policy in Toronto' in *International Planning Studies*. 14:4 pages 401-416.
- ²⁴ For example, in January 2016, French Upper Chamber of Parliament passed law requiring Government institutions to source 40% of their food from ecologically sustainable, in season, local sources. Media coverage, and links to the French law, at: foodtank.com/news/2016/01/new-law-could-change-frances-food-system-for-the-better
- ²⁵ ANU and UC project by Dr Robert Dyball, Dr Bethany Turner and Dr David Pearson *Food in the ACT* [planning.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/34112/20130304 - Food in the ACT - study by UC and Fenner School.pdf](http://planning.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/34112/20130304_Food_in_the_ACT_study_by_UC_and_Fenner_School.pdf)
- ²⁶ *Ibid*.
- ²⁷ For examples, see Healthy Soils Australia plan 'Cooling Our Climate': healthysoilsaustralia.org/CoolingourClimate.html
- ²⁸ See the SCPA Organics model available online: organics.scpa.org.au/
- ²⁹ See the ACT Guidelines for waterless composting toilets, 2005: health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/Fact%20sheets/Approval%20of%20Waterless%20Composting%20Toilets%20in%20Domestic%20Premises%20information%20sheet.pdf
- ³⁰ See the Oz Harvest website: ozharvest.org/what-we-do/
- ³¹ See Australian Food Sovereignty People's Food Plan Working Paper for further information: australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/AFSA_PFP_WorkingPaper-FINAL-15-Feb-2013.pdf
- ³² See AFSA People's Food Plan Page 54: australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/AFSA_PFP_WorkingPaper-FINAL-15-Feb-2013.pdf
- ³³ See for example the Tweed Sustainable Agriculture Discussion paper for some examples. tweed.nsw.gov.au/Download.aspx?Path=~/Documents/Environment/Agriculture/TSC01626_Discussion_Paper_Sustainable_Agriculture_Strategy.pdf
- ³⁴ See media coverage of the new law online: theguardian.com/world/2015/may/22/france-to-force-big-supermarkets-to-give-away-unsold-food-to-charity
- ³⁵ See for example the Ontario Local Food Act model bill by the Canadian Environmental Law Association: cela.ca/sites/cela.ca/files/891ModelLocalFoodBill_0.pdf
- ³⁶ See the South East Food Plan 2012 online: southeastfood.com.au/
- ³⁷ See student reports relating to food conservationcouncil.org.au/publications/students-and-interns/