

Our Local Food System

City of Marion Report

11 November 2021



Kaurna Acknowledgement

The City of Marion acknowledge the Kaurna nation and its people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land in the area known as the City of Marion and pays its respects to Elder's past, present and emerging.

This project is led by the following organisations:



Project Background

In 2020, an emerging group called the *Food Systems Network* were successful in obtaining a grant from the Local Government Association's Research and Development Scheme for the project '**Local Government: Enabling Resilient Food Systems in South Australia**'.

The project aims to engage local government, communities, and stakeholders to build the resilience of local food systems in the face of climate change risks.

A consultancy team, *Ethical Fields* in association with *Sustain* and *Collaborative Futures*, were successful in their tender to work with us on the project.

One of the key goals is to offer a guide for local governments to understand their role in enabling local food systems. All the resources that are developed will contribute to building the capacity of local government staff, elected members, and communities to value local food systems, remove barriers and support climate-resilient initiatives.

To develop this guide, and to help each Council with future strategy, local workshops were organised to invite people to join us to explore what a healthy and sustainable food system looks like. How can it drive climate change action? How can it support local jobs? How can it reduce food waste? And how can it connect us as diverse communities?



What is a local food system?

A local food system is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of an area. It incorporates everything that gets our food from paddock to plate.

Figure 1 shows the components of a food system, highlighted in the *Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020-2030*.



Local Context

The City of Marion (CoM) is a metropolitan council located in Adelaide's south-western suburbs, about 10km from the Adelaide CBD. We are predominantly a residential area, with some commercial, industrial, and rural areas. The city encompasses a total land area of about 55 square kilometres, including significant conservation areas, recreation parks, rivers, and coastline.

Our Council comprises of around 94,879 people (ABS, 2020), spread across 26 suburbs.

In 2020, the total value of agricultural output in the CoM was around \$21 million. However, the total value of manufacturing output was \$1,152,381 million and retail \$358,692 million, showing that the CoM is involved in the food system more around food processing, packaging, distribution, and retail, than in the growing food space. So, although most of the food isn't grown locally, there is a lot of food being processed and sold locally.

Globally there has been significant change with social and political disruption and conflict, trade disputes and escalation of the climate and environmental crises. There are many issues and concerns within our community that remain unresolved and require significantly more attention and effort, including:

- The changing climate and environmental pressures
- Increasing waste including a high percentage of food waste
- Social inclusion and access to affordable, nutritious food for some in the community
- The rising cost of living.

Many of these issues impact and are impacted by the food system. Further, climate shocks and stressors such as bushfires and COVID-19 have shown us the need to strengthen the resilience of our local food system and reduce dependence on more distant sources of food and ensuring access to affordable, nutritious food for all.

Food Waste

Most Adelaide councils now provide food waste recycling, but participation / diversion could always be improved in the CoM. Food waste makes up about 35% of the waste in red bins and therefore remains a large opportunity to reduce waste landfill through diversion to the organics stream for recycling. All food scraps, cooked and raw can be collected by our free kitchen caddy and placed in the green organics bin along with garden clippings (and more, see image below).



Food Security & Health

Climate shocks and stressors such as bushfires and COVID-19 have shown us the need to strengthen the resilience of our local food system and reduce dependence on more distant sources of food and ensuring access to affordable, nutritious food for all.

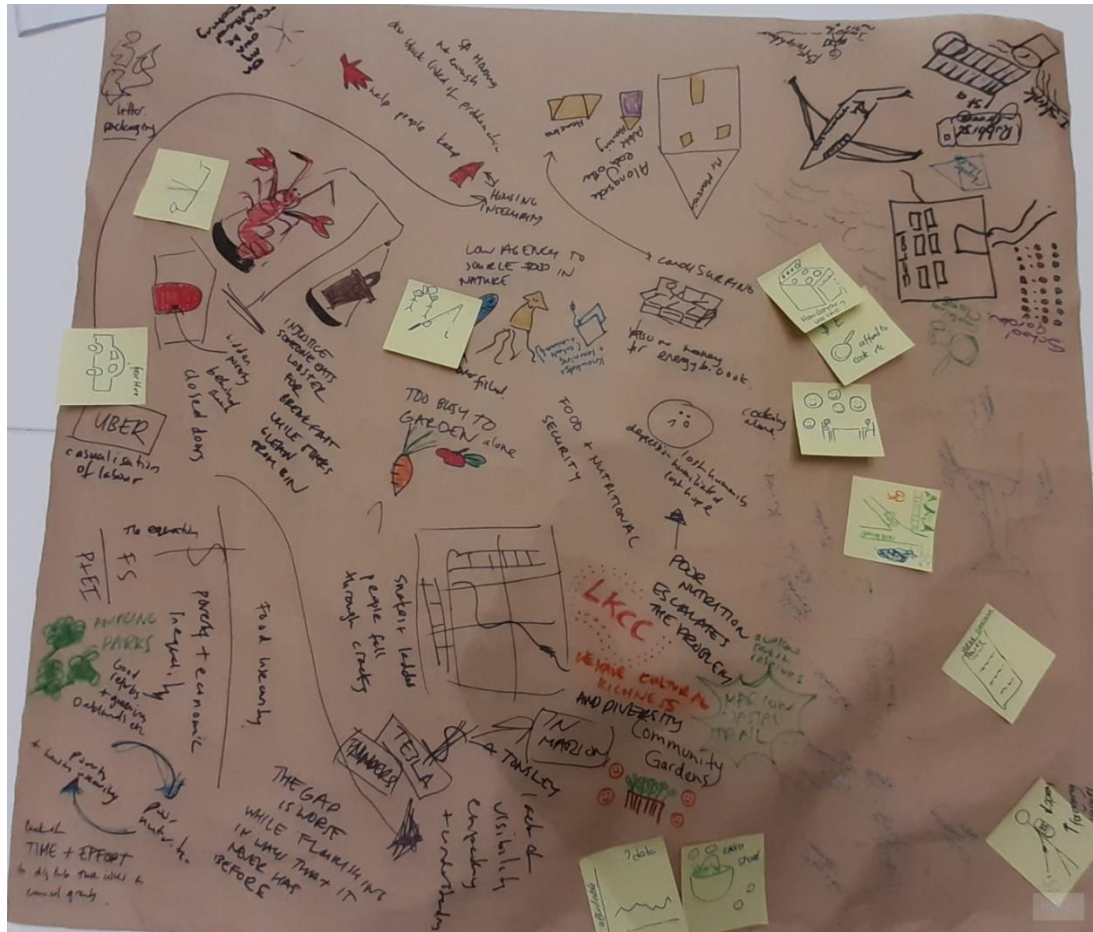
The proportion of food insecure Australians seeking food relief at least once a week throughout COVID-19 has more than doubled since the previous year from 15% to 31% (Foodbank Hunger Report, 2020). Three in ten Australians experiencing food security had not gone hungry before the pandemic.

In 2017-18 according to the ABS, almost half (48.2%) of South Australian adults (18 years and over) met the Australian Dietary Guidelines for recommended daily serves of fruit (two or more serves), whilst around one in fifteen (6.7%) met the guidelines for daily serves of vegetables (5 serves). Whilst children aged 2-17 years had 70.5% met the guidelines for fruit, but only 3.7% met the guidelines for vegetables. In 2018, according to PHIDU, 66.3% of the adult population are either overweight (37.8%), or obese (28.5%), with 26.1% (PHIDU, 2018) of children are overweight (17.2%), or obese (8.9%).

These are all reasons why this conversation is so important and timely.

Rich Picture

Rich picture mapping is a creative way to explore and define a situation or place through diagrams, drawings, and simple text to create a mental model. Along with the Causal Mapping activity, the rich picture was all about the different factors that influence nutrition and food security in CoM.



Text and key messages from the rich picture activity are listed below.

Factors that influence nutrition and food security in CoM:

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homelessness - Couch surfing - Housing insecurity – not enough housing for need in the community - Mansions next to public housing, next to homelessness in the CoM community – the gap is getting worse
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of knowledge of what to do with food - Skills to cook the food
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of more school gardens - Cooking classes
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depression and mental health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor nutrition escalates the issue - Injustice of food access – some enjoy lobster, whilst others eat from the bin - Extra food to be shared - Community gardens
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hidden poverty - Poverty and economic inequality - People are falling through the cracks
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casualisation of jobs

Horizon Scan

The group did a horizon scan which is a technique which focuses on what impacts may influence nutrition and food security in not only South Australia, but Australia and the world. The session highlighted social, technological, environmental, economical and political issues / things that are on the horizon with regards to nutrition and food security.



Factors that influence nutrition and food security:

	The World	Australia	South Australia
Social	Global Inequality Entrepreneurs in plant-based food Everyone's responsibility (relative) Individualist rather than communal benefit SDG#2 Zero hunger??? xxx from corp -> individuals climate change	Lack of public awareness about food system Less connection F2F Increasing inequality in many social systems Growing inequality. Unfair society. Public support for action on climate change Greater awareness of where food comes from - ethical Community food responses(?) Covid care fatigue Education inequality around food + food skills	Cost of living increasing (housing/food etc) -> flow on affects Smaller city who you know Community supported agriculture More humane farming practices Strong xxx towards local Shifting blame from the corporations to the consumer. Carbon food print was a BP xxx
Tech	Meat replacement How food is processed Development of plant-based proteins Europe using waste as source of energy	Farmers low carbon food xxx production Resource management Agri investment New seed varieties for changing climates	Agro entrepreneur in Adelaide Uni Investment hubs SA govt 76million Ag-tech start-ups New tech for wine industry resilience -Farm management software -xxx small farm equipment and genomes Stone & Chalk investment hub New tech supporting farm efficiency Uncle Toby's new bread - fiber, reduced waste, better crop
Environment	Urban gardens ^ eg. Farmers friend Regen farming eg. Ellen McArthur Foundation Weather pattern change Farmer's friend urban farming Polarized community Loss of fish 2050 SDG#11 SDG#12	Climate change. Heat drought. Extreme weather Loss of top soil Legumes an unwillingness to sacrifice short term profits for long term environmental benefits societal	Active local communities Shrinking xxx land State food waste strategy Kitchen caddies
Economy	New economy models Food price volatility Prices due to weather Economy/ xxx rules world	Export vs Import Cost of local vs imported food	Investment in local food by state Food festivals
Politics	Protectionism/ tribalism/ national interests first Global action on climate change Reactive not proactive	xxx corporate industrial food system Govt makes \$ out of fast food Corporate greed inhibiting policy	Apetite to look environmental among some politicians and how xxx it Lack of serious inviro action/policy etc ->flow n to food Virtue xxx policy. Seen as xxx which do little. Plastic straws!

Back casting – what actions could we take?

Back casting is the process of working backwards from the future to reach your identified desirable outcome rather than forwards from the future. When working from the present, people can be blinded by their present difficulties and limitations. However, working backwards from the future produces a huge spectrum of options people had not previously thought about.

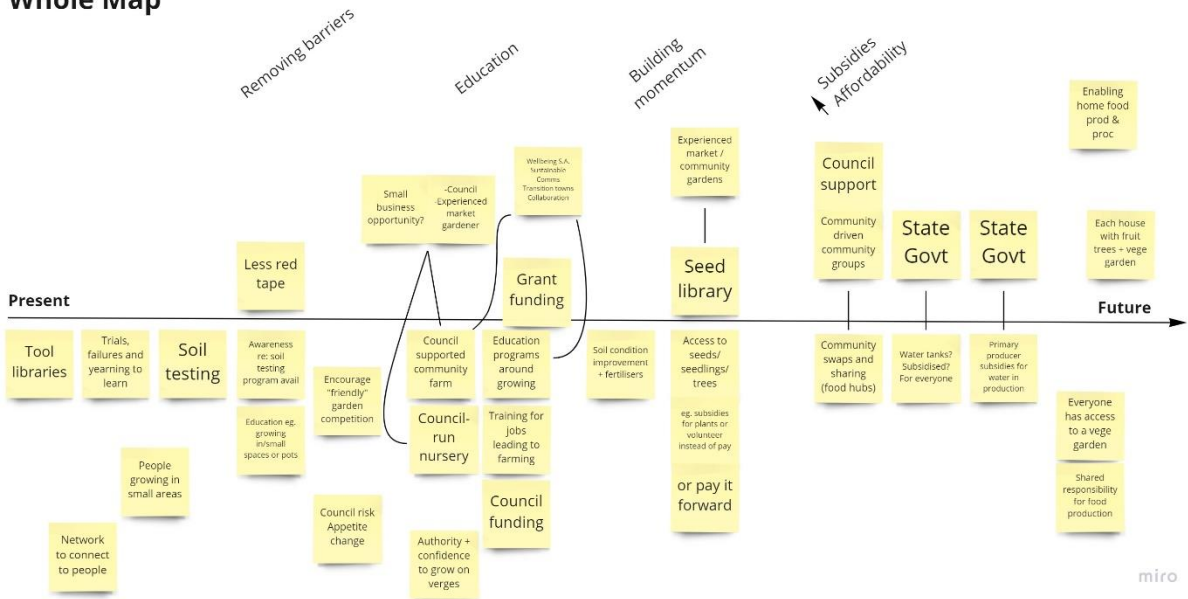
Three of the themes from the visioning exercise were used as the topics for back-casting with the results set in the diagrams below.

1. Food Justice / Equity
2. Food conviviality and sharing knowledgeable resources
3. Edible Public Landscapes

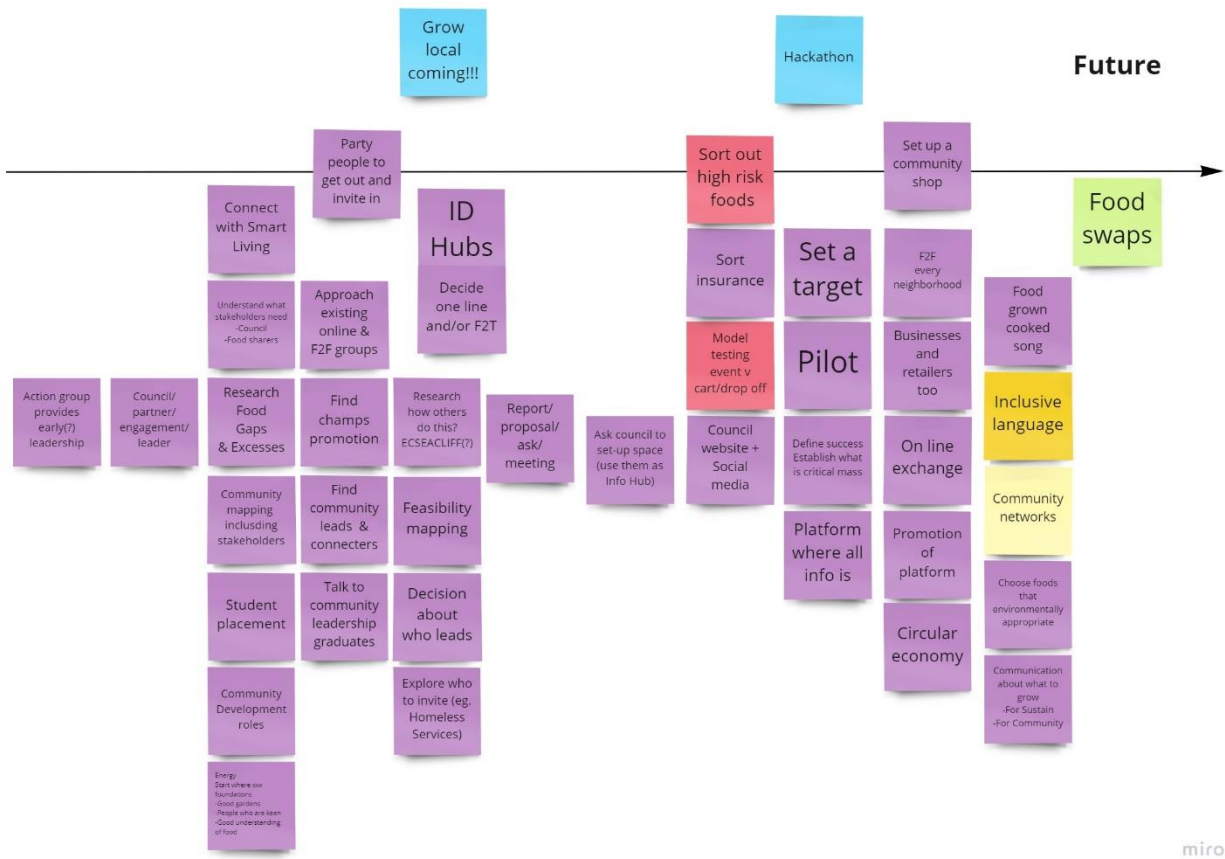
The below figures are the back-casting discussions that were had on the day, relating to the different topics.

Food Justice / Equity

Whole Map

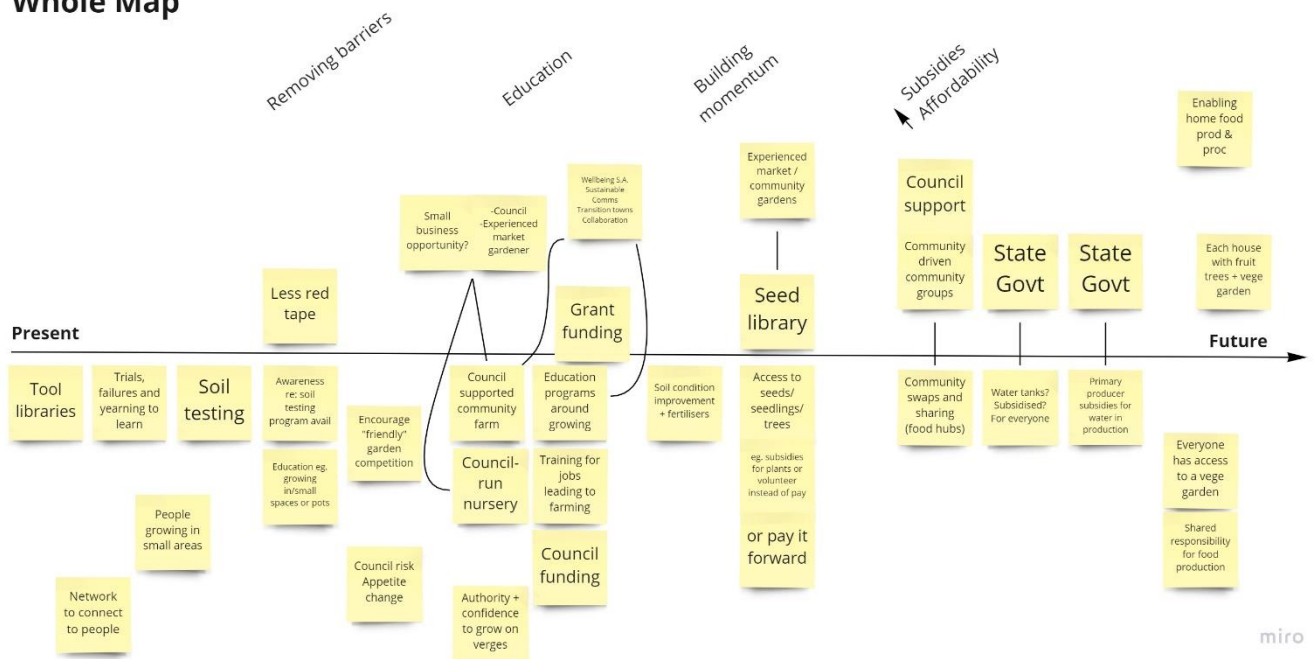


Food Conviviality / Sharing Resources



Edible Public Landscapes

Whole Map



Summary of workshop outcomes

Roles and Responsibilities

It was clear from the workshop that there is a role for everyone to play in building a healthy and sustainable food system in the CoM; from individuals as consumers, home gardeners, urban farmers, as community group members to special interest groups, emergency relief organisations, food sector businesses and advocacy groups, education institutions and Council.

Council role

Whilst there is much to do to support local food systems, there are several existing policies and actions of Council that already support the type of local food system that was envisaged through this workshop.

These include:

- Supporting the growth and development of new and existing community gardens and developing a set of guidelines to guide the work in this space.
- Community Gardens Policy
- Running the *Food Matters* workshop series to raise awareness of our local food system issues to generate community action around building a resilient local food system
- Verge Development Guidelines
- CoM are planting over 3,900 street trees and 2,000 reserve trees, each year over the next five years, so that by 2040 our tree canopy will increase by 20%
- Introduction of new free kitchen caddies to residents for food scraps, to reduce food waste in red bins
- Home composting rebate scheme

- *Grow It Local* is soon to launch to connect CoM residents to grow and / or support local growers, and to also promote local food swaps
- At the conclusion of this project, a guide will be developed to support Local Government to understand their role in enabling local food systems.

Individual and Community Role

Individuals can become food citizens where they consciously make decisions about what and where they eat and become active in food system activities.

Community groups and organisations can help to create resilient local food systems by undertaking or getting more involved in food system activities such as community gardens, cooking programs, food education and other opportunities mentioned in our key vision themes.

There are already many projects and actions that occur throughout the area that align with the visions, themes and actions discussed at the workshop. A key next step is to begin to raise awareness of these projects through mapping and the collation of this information. This will be an opportunity to take stock, celebrate the existing work and further identify potential opportunities to strengthen the local food system.

Next steps

The *Our Local Food Systems* workshop series was designed as a first step to better understand the local food system, to start the process of mapping our food systems and to begin to develop potential strategies, actions and communities of interest that can help realise the vision of a more sustainable, resilient, and health-supporting food system. The conversation therefore has only just begun, and the steering group will be working through potential further collaboration, new partnerships and learning through the end of 2021 and into 2022. Workshop participants will be notified of future developments and ways to participate and contribute further.

Contact information

For more information about this report, our work in environmental sustainability or future work in this space, please visit www.marion.sa.gov.au or contact the below CoM staff members:

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Appendix 1

Vision theme	Key points:
Food Justice 45 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared food cooperatives • Accessible food for all • Excess food to go to disadvantaged • Local food farm jobs • Food as currency
Housing & Land Use / Planning 28 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit trees along roads • More solar usage, rainwater tanks, rooftop gardens • Green walls / vertical gardens • Shared communal areas in community • Food being grown in public spaces
Food Conviviality & Sharing Knowledgeable Resources 26 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce swaps • Shared food, shared knowledge • Community gardens • Local food / farmers markets • Seasonal planting • Connected communities and events
Education 24 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills on how to grow own food is commonplace • Increased food literacy • Education to be conducted in local schools • Understanding of food system and impacts • Increase cooking skills
Edible Public Landscapes 23 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community gardens • Cafés use / grow local food • More public spaces with edible plants • More edible verges, front and backyards • Food grown and eaten locally • Improved tree coverage
Climate Action 21 votes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council leadership around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing food waste - Reducing packaging - Low carbon footprint - Food system literacy - Encouraging plant diets - More frequent green waste collection - Support for organic businesses • Less use of chemicals • Chemical free growing / farms • Garbage education

Shared Spaces / Streetscapes

19 votes

- Fruit trees and vegetables planted on verges
- More trees
- Less cars, more bikes and shared use spaces

Labelling and Food

Provenance – 3 votes

- Businesses using local food
- More food provenance
- More publicly accessible urban farms