



CITY OF  
**BALLARAT** 

# **GOOD FOOD FOR ALL**

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Food Strategy 2019-2022

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## Introduction

Food is an essential and enjoyable part of daily life. We look forward to sharing meals, celebrating occasions, trying new flavours and remembering key moments with food. Food has a significant influence on our physical and mental health, is a major feature of socialising and offers key economic opportunities.

Local government is one of many influencers on the food system. Food systems include all aspects of producing, transporting, processing, retailing and consuming food, plus disposing of food and packaging waste. The food system influences our food choices - where we buy food, how we consume food and what we consume.

Today's dominant food system is urbanised, globally connected and creates multiple challenges for society. Key features of this dominant food system include year-round access to seasonal foods which are transported large distances, purchasing from a small number of large retailers and buying more processed foods with less nutritional value. This system, which forms a disconnect to our local producers, also makes it easy for people to consume foods without developing skills to grow and prepare foods.

This City of Ballarat Food Strategy has been developed in the context of state, regional and local government plan priorities, following consideration of local data and consultation with community and stakeholders over the past 12 months. It outlines the City of Ballarat's role in the local food system and the actions council will take over the next four years to begin to address these challenges.

## Challenges created...

The food system is creating many difficult challenges for our health and for the environment:

**Physical and mental health** – Today's food system makes it easier for people to make poor food choices, choosing food which is low in nutrients but high in energy. Easy access to low nutrient foods is driving the local obesity epidemic and associated chronic diseases, and high rates of dental health issues. Over 61% of Ballarat adults and 27% of children are now either overweight or obese<sup>1</sup>, and dental caries are the most common but potentially avoidable reason for a child to access health services<sup>2</sup>. Recent research has also shown clear linkages between a poor diet low in fresh foods, and a higher incidence of depression, across all age groups<sup>3</sup>.

**Reduced food security** – The right to adequate food is an international human right and yet many people in Ballarat are experiencing reduced food security. Food security has been defined as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. At a minimum this would include having acceptable, nutritionally adequate and safe foods available and the ability to acquire food in socially acceptable ways without resorting to emergency food supplies or coping strategies<sup>4</sup>. In Ballarat, a recent analysis of welfare agencies showed at least 12% of our population were food insecure and had accessed emergency food relief at least once in the past 12 months<sup>5</sup>. When people do not have enough food, it affects all aspects of daily life and can severely restrict economic, social and educational participation in the community. Food insecurity can have short and long-term detrimental effects upon children who have poorer education and health outcomes and are more prone to obesity and chronic diseases<sup>6</sup>.

**Food literacy** – As communities become more urbanised and globally connected, we have also lost connection with where and how our food is grown, the seasonality of foods, and the skills required to grow, harvest, store and prepare healthy foods. As growing and cooking skills are lost, people are buying more pre-prepared meals and snacks, which tend to be higher in energy and lower in nutrients than meals prepared at home. The average annual spend on food eaten outside the home is estimated at nearly \$4,900 per household, and while food marketers have noticed a big trend in the past year (14%) towards healthy eating preferences in food retail<sup>7</sup>, research shows 58% of the food budget is currently being spent on junk (high energy but low nutrient) foods<sup>8</sup>.

**Food and resource waste** – If food is thrown into the rubbish bin and goes to landfill, it releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas. When food is wasted, it also wastes the resources used to grow, harvest, transport, store and process the food. Generally, a third of household rubbish bins are made up of wasted food, estimated at \$2,136 per household per year<sup>9</sup>. As processed foods take up a large proportion of the diet, the packaging of these foods also contributes substantially to household waste.

**Environmental impact** – The current typical Australian diet, which is high in processed and non-local foods and includes high intakes of red meat, is not only unhealthy, it is also environmentally unsustainable<sup>10</sup>. Australia's ecological footprint is three times the world average and food production accounts for around 30% of this footprint<sup>11</sup>. Recent economic analysis shows if communities continue to follow the current unhealthy diet, increasing water deficits, land degradation and no reduction in greenhouse gas emissions will threaten Australia's food security and increase reliance on imported foods<sup>12</sup>.



## Role of local government

The Victorian Local Government Act 1989 requires councils to provide the best outcomes for the community, while having regards to the long-term cumulative effects of decisions. The City of Ballarat recognises that local government is ideally placed to contribute to locally relevant, integrated and long-lasting strategies to strengthen the local food system and to increase access to healthy food in our community.

Local government can positively influence the food system, particularly in the following areas:

**Public spaces and facilities** – ensure healthy food and drink options are available for staff, visitors and in public spaces and facilities managed by local government

**Regulation and planning** – support local food production through the local planning scheme and assist food businesses with regulatory compliance

**Waste education and recycling** – educate the community to avoid, reduce and recycle waste

**Community development** – support community groups and organisations to increase community capacity and individual skills to grow and prepare foods

**Facilitate partnerships** – develop strong relationships with key stakeholders, organisations and government to strengthen the local food system

**Data and evidence** – gather information to support decision-making on the local food system and associated challenges

**Education and information** – provide information and support development of skills through communication tools and educators

**Service delivery** – contracted services to support eligible clients with a nutritious home delivered meal.



## Role of individuals, community groups and other organisations

Individuals and organisations can influence and strengthen the immediate food system and how it impacts locally. Daily choices and decisions of many individuals, and people making decisions within organisations, workplaces, educational settings and sports clubs, can bring about change at the local level, and address the challenges of the current food system.

A key action which individuals and community groups can take to help create a resilient local food system is to undertake various forms of urban agriculture such as school gardens, community gardens and backyard vegetable gardens.

Participating in school and community gardens teach young people about local and healthy food, develop skills in gardening and food literacy and contribute to positive physical and mental health.

There are numerous projects being delivered across the city where the key issues of food security, healthy eating and sustainable food production are actively being addressed. A key part of this strategy is to raise awareness of these projects, so community members can become more involved in food projects in their local area and take a proactive approach to strengthen the local food system.



A selection of local projects which support a resilient local food system are:

### Education

**Stephanie Alexander's Kitchen** Garden Programs – currently operating in 16 local primary schools and one early learning centre | **Get Grubby** program in early learning centres | **Food is Free** Green Space runs gardening workshops for children | **Ballarat Permaculture Guild** workshops

### Promoting healthy food and drinks

**Ballarat Community Health** supporting schools, early learning centres and workplaces to become accredited as healthy eating settings through the Achievement Program | **YMCA** 'no red drinks' policy at their facilities | **Ballarat Health Services** offering Healthy Choices at food outlets

### Improving food security

**SecondBite** – administered by Ballarat Community Health, collecting surplus food from local supermarkets and redistributing to local schools and food relief agencies | **Food Access Network** – group of local food relief agencies which work collaboratively, share information and resources and advocate for greater food access and food security in the Ballarat region | **Ballarat Foundation** has food security as a key priority area and raises funds through Feed Ballarat campaign | **Foodbank** has secured Victorian Government funding of \$5m to build a warehouse and support local emergency food relief agencies | School breakfast programs





### **Sustainable food production**

Community gardens in Ballarat East, YMCA Delacombe, Buninyong, Learmonth and Ballarat North Neighbourhood House | **Food is Free** Green Space | Backyard vegetable gardens | School vegetable gardens

### **Reducing food waste**

**Hidden Orchard** harvest fruit from backyards or public areas and share with owners, pickers and local charities | **ShareWaste.com** – online platform linking people who want to get rid of waste sustainably with others who have a compost heap | **Grampians Central West Waste Resource and Recovery Group** – run sustainability programs through schools (Resource Smart Schools)

### **Developing a local food culture**

**Plate Up Ballarat** – month long celebration of local food supporting local producers through cafes and restaurants | **Eat Drink West** – central source for Western Victorian food information | **Central Highlands Regional Food Hub** – new regional project situated in Daylesford and supported by surrounding councils

### **Alternative markets**

**Brown Hill Market** | **Ballarat Farmers Market** – Lake Wendouree | **Bridge Mall Farmers Market** | **Ballarat Local Produce Swap** | **Ballarat Wholefoods Collective** | **Buninyong Community Collective**



## Community consultation

The key issues raised by stakeholders and the community on what actions the City of Ballarat should take to strengthen the food system focus on:

### **Reducing food waste:**

*“Provide resources to support the use of worm farms, composting and backyard chooks, connect people to sites where they can take their waste – what a lovely way to connect neighbours and look after our environment at the same time.”*

### **Supporting education:**

*“Support relevant community organisations to provide education programs, classes or demonstrations of just how easy and rewarding it is to grow food.”*

### **Leadership and advocacy:**

*“Advocacy and support for the Ballarat food hub and associated activities such as cooking education and training.”*

### **Supporting local producers:**

*“Connect producers with community, develop council-led healthy local food initiatives like discounts for residents at pick-up points or local producer food boxes for delivery.”*



**Creating healthy council facilities:**

*“Ensure all council run facilities adhere to a healthy food and drink policy for food procurement, provision and promotion.”*

**Developing local events:**

*“More food-oriented festivals funded by council supporting local producers to celebrate their wares.”*

**Healthier options at food businesses:**

*“Encourage businesses to offer healthy options for kids’ meals – other than just chicken nuggets and chips – perhaps a Ballarat Healthy Dining campaign?”*

**Edible plants in public spaces:**

*“Encourage and provide food-producing plants in public areas – fruit trees in parks, nature strips, front verge gardens.”*



**Vision:**  
**All community members have access to and celebrate a vibrant, nutritious and sustainable food system.**

To achieve this vision, the City of Ballarat will work with community and partner organisations to undertake advocacy and action which support the following priorities:

- **Increase access to and promotion of safe and nutritious food**
- **Support a sustainable local food system**
- **Celebrate a vibrant, inclusive food culture**

Local governments are required under the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act to **protect** public health, **prevent** disease and illness, **promote** conditions in which people can be healthy and **reduce health and wellbeing inequalities**. Taking lead from these directives, considering the community feedback, the local health and wellbeing status and the context of state government priorities, the City of Ballarat has developed a series of achievable actions given the resources and timeframe available.

# Priority 1: Increase access to and promotion of safe and nutritious food

## Key aims for this priority are to:

- Encourage greater consumption of healthy food and drinks
- Improve community knowledge and skills to grow and prepare healthy meals
- Support community food system programs

## Actions

### Short-medium term

- 1.1 Develop procedures which ensure council-managed facilities and workplaces follow Healthy Choices guidelines
- 1.2 Develop a healthy catering guide based on Healthy Choices guidelines which supports local food businesses
- 1.3 Develop a strategy which encourages sports clubs using council facilities to follow Healthy Choices guidelines
- 1.4 Investigate the feasibility of a program which encourages local food providers to offer healthy children's menu options
- 1.5 Support local schools and early learning centres to deliver programs which improve skills to grow and prepare healthy foods
- 1.6 Support local community groups and organisations to deliver programs and information which improve food literacy skills
- 1.7 Create and promote a list of local community kitchens and public barbecues
- 1.8 Increase the number of water drinking taps in public spaces

### Ongoing

- 1.9 Support a regional approach to healthy eating by participating in the Central Highlands Prevention Network
- 1.10 Advocate for increased food security through support of projects and actions undertaken by the Food Access Network and community groups, including initiatives funded through council's grant programs
- 1.11 Undertake and support research into local food system issues
- 1.12 Support businesses and community groups to comply with Victorian Government food safety regulations
- 1.13 Be responsive to clients' needs for provision of a nutritious, appropriate meal within the home for eligible clients within an active service model
- 1.14 Provide weekly support of local emergency food relief agencies with main meals, which are excess to the delivered meal service and promote existing food relief services to the community

## Strategic Linkages

Council Plan 2017-21, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21

## Priority 2: Support a sustainable local food system

### Key aims for this priority are to:

**Reduce food and packaging waste**

**Support local food production and sales**

**Manage the use of agricultural land to support agriculture and food security**

### Actions

#### Short-medium term

- 2.1 Register for the Compost Revolution program and promote the composting and worm farm products available
- 2.2 Promote local shared composting sites through online platforms such as ShareWaste
- 2.3 Encourage use of current promotional platforms to raise the profile of local producers
- 2.4 Support alternative retail opportunities for local producers including farmers markets and farm gate sales
- 2.5 Trial planting of food trees in public reserves as outlined in the Urban Forest Action Plan

#### Ongoing

- 2.6 Support the Grampians Central West Waste Resource and Recovery Group with educational programs and advocacy around reducing waste
- 2.7 Support community groups to deliver gardening and composting workshops through the Community Impact Grants program
- 2.8 Support planting of edible gardens in public areas through the Nature Strip Policy and guidelines
- 2.9 Review the Ballarat Rural Land Use strategy to ensure it continues to appropriately manage agricultural land in alignment with future values and aspirations for the agricultural sector, and to ensure resilience in the context of climate change projections
- 2.10 Collaborate with surrounding local government authorities to support industry development of a coordinated local food supply chain
- 2.11 Engage with Rural Councils Victoria and other key stakeholders to identify state wide opportunities for better managing the rural interface area and protecting agricultural land from encroachment
- 2.12 Consider 'Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design' recommendations when undertaking strategic planning projects and reviewing the local planning scheme

### Strategic Linkages

Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy 2019-22, Urban Forest Action Plan, Economic Program 2015-19, Ballarat Strategy, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21



## Priority 3: Celebrate a vibrant, inclusive food culture

**Key aim for this priority is to:**

**Encourage a healthy and inclusive food culture which supports and promotes local producers and strengthens community connections**

### **Actions**

#### **Short-medium term**

- 3.1 Support inclusive community events which focus on celebrating nutritious and local foods
- 3.2 Provide opportunity for local producers to promote products at City of Ballarat events and festivals
- 3.3 Increase the range of healthy eating options at City of Ballarat-run and supported events

#### **Ongoing**

- 3.4 Encourage celebration and knowledge of Indigenous and culturally diverse foods through community events
- 3.5 Promote tourism opportunities and projects which feature local food producers

### **Strategic Linkages**

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21, Intercultural City Strategic Plan 2017-21

## Monitoring impacts and outcomes of actions...

Short-term outcomes	Data source	Baseline measure	Target (by 2022)
Workplace healthy food and drink procedures developed	Engaged Communities	Currently no procedures regarding workplace food and drinks	Procedures in place and being implemented by end 2019
Catering guide produced	Engaged Communities	Currently no catering procedures or guidelines	Catering guide produced and being implemented by end 2019
An increase in the number of households purchasing products each year through Compost Revolution	Compost Revolution	27 orders	250
Increase in local sites registered on ShareWaste platform	Online data	28 sites	50 sites
Medium-term outcomes			
An increase in the number of food system projects supported each year through the Community Impact Grants program	Engaged Communities	2	6
An increase in the number of schools and Early Learning Centres using vegetable gardening as part of the learning program	Engaged Communities	16 schools 1 ELC	20 schools
A decrease in the proportion of people accessing emergency food relief	Food Access Network	12%	8%
Long-term outcomes			10-year target
A decrease in the proportion of adults who are overweight and obese	VPHS* 2014	60.5%	57%
A decrease in the proportion of young people who are overweight or obese	VCAMS* 2014	26.7%	24%
A decrease in the proportion of adults who consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily	VPHS 2014	13%	10%
A decrease in the proportion of adults consuming take-away meals or snacks between 1 and 3 times per week	VPHS 2014	11.9%	10%
An increase in the proportion of adults consuming 3-4 serves of vegetables per day	VPHS 2014	31%	37%
An increase in the proportion of young people consuming the minimum daily recommended serve of fruits and vegetables	VCAMS 2016	3.2%	5%
An increase in the proportion of children consuming the minimum daily recommended serve of fruits and vegetables	VCAMS 2014	6%	8%
An increase in the diversion rate of recyclables and organics from kerbside rubbish	Sustainability Victoria	46%	70%

\*VPHS – Victorian Population Health Survey \* VCAMS – Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System





## Consultation process

The consultation process for the Food Strategy has extended over a six-month period, with approximately 325 people either providing feedback, having input into development of the draft or accessing relevant documents.

Date (2018)	Event	Notes
1 June	Facilitated workshop for City of Ballarat staff	15 attended
29 June	Facilitated workshop for health and community organisations	Document of responses available 30 attended
10-16 September	Public display - Ballarat Library	Document of information displayed available
17 September	Public display - Miners Rest PS – library outreach	
18 September	Public display – Lucas Community Hub	
18 September	Information available – Warrenheip Memorial Hall	
19 September	Public display – Learmonth Bowling Club	
20 September	Public display – Eureka Centre	
20 September	Public display – BCH, Sebastopol	
21 September	Information available – Delacombe library outreach	
22 September	Information available - Buninyong library outreach	
12 Nov–10 December	Online survey through City of Ballarat website	Document of responses available 26 responses, 69 downloads, 154 unique visits
16 May-16 June 2019	Draft strategy available for feedback	4 responses, 77 downloads, 126 unique visits

## Context

This strategy has been developed in the context of global, national, state, regional and local plans which have prioritised similar challenges.

Global	<p><b>UN Sustainable development goal 2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p><b>UN Sustainable development goal 12:</b> Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p> <p><b>WHO: Healthy Cities Program</b></p>
National	<p><b>Eat for Health: Australian Dietary Guidelines:</b> Outlining types and amounts of foods, food groups and dietary patterns for good health</p> <p><b>Food Regulation Secretariat:</b> A key priority is to support public health objectives to reduce chronic disease related to overweight and obesity, with activities focused on labelling schemes. Also reducing foodborne illness and maintaining a robust food regulation system</p> <p><b>COAG Health Council:</b> Ministers committed to actions that limit the impact of unhealthy food and drinks on children</p> <p><b>National Food Waste Strategy:</b> Aiming to halve Australia's food waste by 2030</p> <p><b>Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper:</b> Vision is to build a more profitable, more resilient and more sustainable agriculture sector to help drive a stronger Australian economy</p>
State	<p><b>Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19:</b> Healthy Eating and Active Living is a key priority outlining the importance of consuming healthy, sustainable and safe food and supporting healthy food choices, with an associated Outcomes Framework providing targets for monitoring and reporting</p> <p><b>VicHealth:</b> Healthy Eating Strategy 2017-19: Priority is for more people to choose water and healthier eating options</p> <p><b>Healthy Choices:</b> Food and drink classification guidelines for hospitals and health services, workplaces, sports centres and parks</p> <p><b>Agriculture Victoria Strategy 2017-27:</b> Relevant priority areas include climate change, capability and regulation</p> <p><b>Artisanal Sector Program:</b> \$2m initiative to help grow Victoria's high value food and agricultural offerings</p> <p><b>Food Source Victoria:</b> Objective is to build stronger agri-businesses and regional communities</p> <p><b>Food and Fibre Sector Strategy 2016-25:</b> Supporting Regional Partnerships, growth in food and wine tourism, reducing regulatory burden</p> <p>State government commitment of <b>\$5m to Foodbank</b> to build a warehouse in Ballarat for emergency food storage and distribution</p> <p><b>Peri-urban strategic agricultural land:</b> DELWP are currently consulting with community on criteria to determine what is strategic agricultural land in Melbourne's peri-urban areas, which includes the potato farming areas in the south-eastern part of the Ballarat LGA</p>
Regional	<p><b>Central Highlands Regional Partnership:</b> Preventative Health has been identified as a key priority with \$500K being allocated in 2018-19 for a regional obesity prevention project, Prevention Lab. Other relevant state-funded projects include \$50K toward developing a hub for premium produce in the region (based at Hepburn)</p>
Local Government	<p><b>Council Plan 2017-21:</b> Relevant to themes of Liveability, Sustainability and Prosperity</p> <p>Ballarat Strategy, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21, Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy 2019-22, Urban Forest Action Plan, Economic Program 2015-19, Intercultural City Strategic Plan 2017-21, Social Policy Position Statement: Access to Safe, Affordable and Nutritious Food</p> <p>The City of Ballarat is a signatory to the <b>Urban and Regional Food Declaration</b>, which has a vision of a sustainable, healthy and fair food system</p>

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