Project Evaluation

Local government: Enabling resilient food systems in South Australia

Evaluation conducted by

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on behalf of the consultant team

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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a process and summative evaluation conducted on behalf of the project team, by Sustain: The Australian Food Network. The aims of *Enabling resilient food systems in South Australia* were to:

- build local food systems literacy and advocacy within government and communities
- identify the local food system vision and principles of communities
- enable governments and communities to take coherent actions towards their visions

The key deliverable of the project was to develop a guide to help local governments:

- understand, advocate for and foster local food systems
- identify and prioritise the best ways to invest and promote local food system initiatives
- develop and embed relevant food systems policy and planning as part of governments' response to climate change risks

The evaluation found that the project substantially achieved these aims, and either brought food systems onto the agenda of participating local governments, and / or built momentum for cross-departmental action on food systems within the participating councils. The project cultivated strong partnerships between the six local council partners, Green Adelaide and the Heart Foundation, and enabled new relationships to develop across stakeholders.

Key insights revealed by the evaluation included:

- **Local government has a key role to play** in developing a proactive response to supporting sustainable and resilient food systems.
- **Communication about food systems is important**. Talking about food systems enables learning and opportunities to connect within councils and communities.
- **Translating systems language takes time and skill** to make it bite-sized and useful to wider, diverse audiences.
- **Communicating up to leadership early is important** for generating leadership buy-in and more opportunities to align the work with current activities and opportunities.
- It would be **useful to have an idea of how you want to use the information** from the workshop, prior to delivering the workshop.
- **Persistence, small steps and having a consistent open-door policy pays off.**

Key challenges identified by the evaluation included:

- **Adequate staff capacity is vital**. Food systems work is complex and relationship-dependent. Therefore ensuring that one or more staff members are resourced to build it into their work plans is essential to maintain continuity and achieve impact and results
- The need to build and maintain momentum. There was a perception amongst some community members that the excitement and energy generated by project workshops may be lost if follow up activities and engagements don't take place
- **Support from council leadership for food systems work is critical**, in order to create and maintain a mandate so that this work is prioritised within local government

Summary of Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed to build on the project achievements:

1. Staff capacity and Council commitment

Food systems work is complex and time-consuming. Staff need to be adequately resourced and supported to undertake it effectively. Ideally, each Council should have a dedicated, full-time food systems staff role to lead this work; and that person should be fully supported by Council leadership.

2. Community engagement

Build momentum and interest amongst community members and organisations and create multiple and diverse opportunities for meaningful participation in local food systems work.

2a. Monthly / quarterly e-news / similar about local / regional food systems / food security events / initiatives - ideally some in-person events if possible.
2b. Help form a local food systems / food security network, if one doesn't already exist.

3. Capacity building / food systems literacy

Support the development of food systems literacy amongst individual staff within different council teams; and build collective capacity through establishing and resourcing communities of practice within and across councils.

3a. Each participating staff member create an action plan about progressing food systems work within their own organisation / community for the next 12-24 months.
3b. Participating staff to share their respective work plans with each other and provide supportive and constructive feedback.
3c. Build communities of practice within local governments, so that food systems work doesn't sit with just one person and become siloed / marginalised

4. Coordination / Food systems governance

Build coherence across the food system at the city, regional and state level through a structured and supported governance and coordination mechanism.

4a. Build on existing networks, such as The Food System Network, to establish a city-wide and / or state-wide food systems community of practice and peer-to-peer learning network.

5. Policy / Strategy development

Embed an iterative process of long-term food systems change through the development, implementation and monitoring of food systems strategies and action plans.

5a. Embed food systems work within councils and across communities by the participatory development of local food system strategies.
5b. Embed food systems work across State government with a state-wide food systems and food security strategy.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluators, consulting team and the Steering Group committee iteratively developed the evaluation framework at the start of the project. The framework was based on the key project deliverables, agreed project values and an objective to evaluate both the outcomes of the project and the process itself (i.e. combined process and summative evaluation). The project focused on six outcome areas, articulated at the project development stage. The evaluation has included an additional outcome area to cover valuable general reflections on the entirety of the project.

Data was collected progressively over the life of the project. Steering group reflections were captured throughout the project and steering group members were surveyed following workshops and at the end of the project. Workshop participants provided feedback via an online questionnaire immediately following workshops and a small focus group session was held with two participants from one Local Government Area (LGA). The project was iterative in design and the final two outcomes exceeded the evaluation timeframe. As such, some planned data collection was not completed as it was deemed unnecessary or not within the project scope for the time period.

The following tables provide a summary of the evaluation methodology. Refer to *Appendix A* for the original project evaluation framework.

Key Deliverables	Improved stakeholder food literacy / (*questionnaire as a baseline data*) Local food system maps for 2-3 locations Development of vision and principles for each mapped area Development of coherent actions & priorities Development of guides and tools for local governments
Key Values	Inclusive / participatory / community empowerment Equitable / dignity Transparent / accountable
Evaluation objective	**The evaluation is about both what the project has achieved** (i.e. maps, visions, priorities, tools, etc) **and the process itself** (strengths, weaknesses, etc for future projects).
Key outcomes sought by the project	1. Increased food systems literacy 2. Local food system visions and principles developed 3. Coherent collective actions and priorities identified and outlined 4. Local governments advocating and investing in local food systems 5. New local governments using the project approach themselves 6. Local governments embedding food systems policy and planning
Key data collected	● Reflections and learnings throughout steering group meetings and immediately following workshops ● Log of participants attending workshops ● Questionnaire of workshop participants ● Focus group with a small number of workshop participants ● In-depth post-workshop interviews with three key council leads ● Final in-depth questionnaire completed by steering group member ● Reflections from consultant team

Evaluation findings

Key project deliverables

- Improved stakeholder food literacy / (*questionnaire as a baseline data*) Achieved
- Local food system maps for 2-3 locations Achieved in 4 locations
- Development of vision and principles for each mapped area Achieved
- Development of coherent actions and priorities – Achieved to varying extents in 3 LGAs
- Development of guides and tools for local governments Achieved

Key Outcomes

1. General Reflections

All key steering group members were "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with the project. The project largely achieved its project outcomes and either brought food systems onto the local council agenda or built momentum for cross-departmental action on food systems within four LGAs. It also cultivated strong partnerships between six local council partners, Green Adelaide and the Heart Foundation and enabled new relationships to develop across stakeholders. The project has facilitated ongoing ripple effects on the local food systems by leveraging existing networks, such as the Food System Network facilitated by Green Adelaide, to extend conversations about local and state government's role in enabling resilient food systems.

The following three key project success factors were identified from the data collected:

1) **Powerful collaboration across local councils**. Over the 18-month period of the project, the Steering Group developed into a community of practice where the group worked collaboratively to address challenges, support each other and share the workload. This developed a shared sense of ownership over the project. Members of the group brought skills and experience from different government departments and levels of government. This collaboration is important for successful local government action on food systems because the work is cross-disciplinary, and to be effective, cannot sit siloed in one department.
2) **A strong backbone role to support the project team and well-aligned consultants are critical**. Well-aligned and skilled consultants helped to drive and push priorities. Green Adelaide, supported by one council lead, played a leadership role by investing consistent time and headspace at critical times. This has enabled the project to keep growing outside of the grant scope.
3) **Developing food system literacy is context-dependent**. The workshops were effective in developing food systems literacy because they brought together people with insights, experiences and perspectives about the specific local food system. This insight was supported by overwhelming feedback from the workshop participants who identified that hearing from and talking to other people in the workshop helped develop their food system literacy. The contextual nature of food systems is also important when considering what stakeholder groups are critical for workshops.

The steering group identified the following key lessons from the project:

- **Local government has a key role to play** in developing a proactive response to supporting sustainable and resilient food systems. It is important to uncover the links between the food system and the local government, to clearly identify how local governments can support resilient local food systems.
- **Communication about food systems is important**. Talking about food systems enables learning and opportunities to connect.
- **Translating systems language takes time and skill** to make it bite-sized and useful to wider, diverse audiences.
- **Communicating up to leadership early is important** for generating leadership buy-in and more opportunities to align the work with current activities and opportunities.
- It would be **useful to have an idea of how you want to use the information** from the workshop, prior to delivering the workshop.
- **Persistence, small steps and having a consistent open-door policy pays off**.

Case Study - Alexandrina Council: Kylie Markow's reflections

What has your council/organisation achieved as a result of this project?

- "Generated valuable feedback from our food system stakeholders to inform our council's planning and the work of our staff and opportunities to support/involve our community in undertaking food system action.
- Generated new connections and strengthened existing connections between food system stakeholders in our community (e.g. a group of farmers/landholders who met at the workshop planned to continue meeting together at each other's properties), between council and other food system stakeholders (a connection with a local food organisation has yielded the opportunity to work together to support a regional food festival and connect community groups in to hold activities alongside local food producers/retailers), and internally between council departments whose work areas influence our food system (e.g. Economic Development and Strategic Planning departments held an Agribusiness Innovation Conversation and results were used to further inform the vision and actions). Sharing food system contacts across departments where relevant, for example, linking our Economic Development team with a local value-add producer looking to map the economic impact of sourcing her ingredients locally and demonstrate to other businesses that this is achievable.
- Greater awareness internally about the food system and how a resilient food system has flow on effects for climate change mitigation, jobs and business, food security and health and wellbeing.
- Now have access to a toolkit of resources that we can use to support our work in the food systems space
- Strengthened connections with other participating councils and organisations – in particular those in the steering group. This has resulted in opportunities to learn from each other and continue to work together on supporting resilient food systems.
- Professional development for participating staff – I have learnt so much from being involved, about food systems, communication, community engagement, leadership, advocacy, problem-solving and adaptation, etc."

2. Increased Food Systems Literacy

Advised time frame	Advised KPIs (application)	Evaluation of the process	Evaluation of outcome
Apr 2021 - Oct 2021	# of local government stakeholders engaged # of food system actors/stakeholders engaged # stakeholders reporting an increase in their knowledge of food systems	How did food systems literacy increase? What were the critical success factors that enabled food systems literacy to increase? What are the barriers and obstacles to increasing food systems literacy? How can they / how were they addressed?	How many people experienced an improvement in food systems literacy and to what extent?

The reach of the project extended to over 170 stakeholders across local government, state government and food systems actors from four LGAs. The project engaged approximately 170 food system stakeholders across the four workshops. 16 local government stakeholders were directly engaged with the workshops including 3 Councillors. Attendees represented a diverse background of knowledge and experience including the food relief sector, local farmers and producers, retailers, developers, council officers and planners, councillors, educators, disability, social work, waste recovery, sustainability consulting, first nations, and the media. Over one-third of attendees identified as community members in the respective councils. 74% of survey respondents experienced a moderate to significant increase in their understanding of the food system (refer to full survey result in *Appendix B*). This translates to approximately 120 attendees.

The project extended food systems literacy beyond workshop participants and influenced council staff and elected members. This was achieved through internal conversations about the findings in the workshop reports prepared for leadership and elected members and opportunities to share the project via the Food Systems Network, SA Urban Food Network and Green Adelaide.

All council leads experienced a moderate to substantial increase in food system literacy. The steering group members emphasised the importance of governance group meetings and learning from the community about the complexity of the food system and what influences resilience. During the project, the steering group cultivated a supportive open environment that enabled the group to develop food systems literacy through discussions with other group members and developing common language around food systems. The consultants were identified as key enablers because their professional backgrounds aligned well with the project. The consultants shared their knowledge and helped build the capacity of the group members through training sessions and assigning tasks or activities to the group to address challenges or prepare for workshops (i.e. developing communication narratives or instructions for complicated workshop activities). Steering group members also developed their food systems literacy through attending other food systems events, engaging with research, learning from interstate examples and discussions with colleagues.

The four workshops brought together diverse groups of passionate food system stakeholders. Both steering group members and participants reported an energy and buzz in the workshops

and there was a high level of engagement and interaction during all the workshops. The majority of participants surveyed identified that talking to other participants and hearing about local insights, knowledge and perspectives was a key reason for an improvement in their food systems literacy. Participants also identified the following workshop elements that helped develop their food systems literacy (in order of frequency from participant feedback):

- **Systems mapping** encouraged participants to think about the interconnections within their local food system and enabled deep exploration of issues. Causal mapping helped broaden participants' knowledge of the wider food system. Drawing new connections of how something related to the food systems and how there are lots of different ways to get to a desired future vision supported and enriched the systems-learning journey that the project enabled.
- **"Speed dating" to get to know other participants** and learn about local initiatives was highly valued.
- **First Nations engagement** and learning from a local First Nations elder about their connection to Country and how consumption of food was sustainably managed.
- **Backcasting activity** - provoked good discussion points

At the same time, the backcasting and causal mapping activities were difficult for some people because they required participants to think in different and unfamiliar ways. The project enabled the group to refine the workshop instructions and experiment with the activity. For example, in the last workshop, the participants were able to choose which activity they wanted to participate in and this helped overcome some of the complexity of the workshop activities.

3. Local food system visions and principles developed

Advised time frame	Advised KPIs (application)	Evaluation of the process	Evaluation of outcome
May 2021 – Oct 2021	# of stakeholders engaged in creating the vision and principles # stakeholders using their vision to build the capacity of their organisations and networks to act coherently.	This links back to the values & key principles shaping the process. Did the process align with the values? For example, if inclusion and diversity is important, we would measure the diversity of voices/input into the plan. This might also include feedback from the participants about their experience in the process and how they feel about what was achieved.	Development and agreement on shared vision and principles. Are stakeholders happy with the output?

Each of the four councils developed a vision in the workshop (refer to *Appendix C* for visual representation of the vision in three council areas) where all present stakeholders could participate by "voting" on themes most important to them. 96% of the participants surveyed indicated that the vision captured their aspirations to some extent (refer to *Appendix B* for results by council area). Steering group members felt positive about the vision created in their workshop, but some Council Leads felt overwhelmed to develop priorities or wanted to validate the vision with triangulation from more stakeholders.

Strengths of the project, in developing a community vision for the food system, included:

- **The visioning activity was easy to follow**, interactive and an effective way to feed the community vision into the council.
- **The iterative nature of workshops** enabled steering group members to reflect on "what voices" were missing and make efforts to extend invitations to certain people or groups for future workshops. Participants who missed previous workshops had the opportunity to come to later workshops.
- **The use of a live visual artist** was identified as a powerful way to represent the vision as it was developed and contributed to a sense of ownership of the vision (refer to *Appendix C*)
- **The design of the visioning activity** enabled all stakeholders at the workshops equal opportunity to contribute. 76% of participants surveyed felt very safe and comfortable to speak and participate in the workshop; and the remaining 24% felt somewhat safe and comfortable (refer to *Appendix B* for results by council area).

A key challenge, voiced by several participants, was whether the workshops truly captured a representative community food system vision because key stakeholders were potentially missing from the workshop. Stakeholders identified as missing at multiple workshops included: big supermarket retailers, processors, distributors, First Nations voices, cultural diversity and young people. Both steering group members and some participants raised missing stakeholders as a concern when developing the vision and priorities.

The steering group identified the following challenges in engaging certain stakeholders:

- **Timing of the workshop was a barrier** for some participants
- **Not being intentional enough about certain sectors**, in some cases underrepresented stakeholders were specific to the context of the council (i.e. Alexandrina's workshop lacked representation from the seafood and fishing industry, noting that the workshop timing and too little notice impacted on their ability to participate).
- **Engagement was dependent on relationships**, with attendees more likely to attend if they received a personal invitation from a member of the steering group.

Steering group members identified the following ideas to help overcome these challenges in future projects:

- Diversify timing, nature and duration of workshops to enable participation. Ask key stakeholders when they can attend and conduct small focus sessions or interviews.
- Create upward pressure by engaging with other leaders in the community (farmers market, small supermarkets, etc).
- Network and gain knowledge from other relevant events - i.e. council agribusiness forum.

4. Coherent collective actions and priorities identified and outlined

Advised time frame	Advised KPIs (application)	Evaluation of the process	Evaluation of outcome
June 2021 - Feb 2022	End of project report # of stakeholders intending to undertake action	Who was involved in development? An important step for implementation is buy-in from other departments. Are there critical factors to help socialise food system priorities in council - i.e. each council developing their own Food Systems Working Group to build understanding and support for a vision.	Assessment of priorities developed. Do these meet the steering group's definition of coherence? Do they align with vision?

There was a lot of passion and energy cultivated in the workshops, however, there were potentially gaps between the vision and the development of a shared sense of priorities for participants and council. Participants interviewed felt the collaboration between different stakeholders, the knowledge gained and the networking opportunity was valuable, but they were pessimistic about whether the outputs would go anywhere. There was a sense of "where to next?". One council lead was concerned that participants felt like it was a council project, rather than a community-owned vision. Participants talked about the need to revive the energy and momentum of the project through regular engagement. They suggested the council could take on a coordination role to organise regular community events to bring interested stakeholders together and act as an "enabler" in bringing ideas and collaborations into fruition.

The community stakeholders could also be empowered to own and take collective action to implement the vision by taking one or more of the following steps:

● A workshop activity that encourages people to brainstorm and talk about what actions could be taken to achieve the vision and where this responsibility should sit.
● Framing the workshop as community vision development with the council acting as one stakeholder to support and enable the community to build a healthy and resilient food system.
● Using the backcasting activity to identify actions and priorities
● Engaging the community, by asking the question – "what are you passionate enough to act on?"
● Finding opportunities to build on the existing capacity of the community.

Mobilising the vision in the community: Onkaparinga Council

Existing food systems networks in Onkaparinga supported the mobilisation of the vision throughout the community. In June 2022, the Onkaparinga Food Security Collaborative hosted an open session and invited all the participants from the Our Local Food system workshop. This session provided an update on the project, launched the community vision poster (refer to *Appendix C*), and shared a summary of community and council projects or initiatives aligning with the vision (refer to *Appendix F*) and a visual mapping of current programs.

Two out of four councils have identified priorities based on the workshop outcomes. The evaluation has revealed that, unsurprisingly, council leads who were able to invest more time into this work after the workshops have developed specific priorities and action plans and leveraged the internal relationships cultivated through the project to address food systems resilience across different departments within council.

Key enablers identified in the development of priorities and addressing coherence/incoherence between the vision and council plans and policies include:

- **Feeding the input into an existing cross-department working group**. For example, the Onkaparinga internal Food Connect working group, a group established prior to the project, developed key action areas that aligned with the community food vision.
- **Engagement from staff who participated in the workshop** to identify opportunities or synergies within their own or other departments.
- established key action areas that aligned with the community food vision
- **Building on internal relationships** formed with or through staff who participated in or helped with the workshop.
- **Working with the Strategy team** to help identify where food systems are relevant in other plans and opportunities for this work to be supported across council (for example including questions in our community survey).
- **Reviewing how existing council plans and policies are coherent or incoherent** with actions identified within each Vision theme (refer to the case study below *Appendix D)*

Case Study Alexandrina Council: Assessment of coherence between the priorities & actions with existing council plans

Alexandrina Council undertook an exercise to review each action item developed from the vision theme against existing plans and policies. This activity (refer to *Appendix D*) identified that most actions aligned with existing plans, however, they lacked specific reference to food systems. This exercise illustrates how other departments, through the various plans and policies, can act as either enablers or barriers to the local food system vision for a more resilient food system.

5. Local governments advocating and investing in local food systems

Advised time frame	Advised KPIs (application)	Evaluation of the process	Evaluation of outcome
October 2021 - April 2022	# stakeholders influencing the system # of councils, stakeholders and communities using and embedding the maps, guides and tools in their work. Increase in investment in local food systems # of stakeholders using and embedding the maps, guides and tools in their work.	Are the tools practical, usable and relevant to the staff with access? How many stakeholders are using the tools? Are the tools being used to communicate with leadership?	Assessment of actions or key indicators of investments? i.e. working groups, a funded staff member allocated to food systems work, commitment to develop a strategy, motions passed etc.

There is considerable evidence that the project has contributed to advocacy and investment in local food systems both within the respective local councils and with other government stakeholders. A key success of the project has been building the capacity of the steering group members to influence the food system through improved knowledge, relationships and skills. For example, understanding what is important to food system stakeholders and identifying potential players in the space (particularly internally) and partners, allies or leaders to work with. Multiple participants also credited the consultant team, Ethical Fields and Collaborative Futures, as key contributors in improving their facilitation skills and developing a toolkit of resources that can be applied in other workshops or meetings to motivate participants or create visions.

At a very high level, **the project has increased the profile of food systems and its impact on health, economics, sustainability, culture and identity and started to identify ways local councils can enable resilient local food systems**. Preparing reports for Council staff and Councillors, based on the outputs from the workshops, and engaging in conversations about the project helped contribute to this advocacy outcome.

Specific examples of how the project enabled food system advocacy and investment include:

● **Using outputs from the project as evidence to advocate for further resourcing and build FTE support for food systems** in Mount Barker, Onkaparinga and Alexandrina councils. Alexandrina has committed to a 0.2 FTE for a Community Development Officer – Environment role until 30 June 2023 which will be responsible for furthering this work and facilitating education and awareness-raising to support the community to live a sustainable lifestyle. Mount Barker is currently negotiating a Senior Sustainability officer position who would be responsible for progressing a food strategy.
● **Built evidence to support why and how local government can be contributors and leaders** in the food system space.
● **Approaching departments with the findings to advocate for the inclusion of specific food systems actions** within their plans and policies or brainstorm actions within the

department's remit. For example, approaching the Economic Development Coordinator about a local produce trail.

- **Building on the momentum of the workshops, existing council projects and stakeholder relationships through meetings with local community groups and educational institutions**, participation in new or established food-related networks and visiting local initiatives. The nature of these interactions varied from networking and information-sharing to collaboration and exploring ways the council can support community groups or ideas. For example, Mount Barker Council is supporting a 'producer in residence' stall at the weekly farmers market for the next 12 months and Alexandrina Council is exploring how it can support a community project idea to supply families in medium-term accommodation (due to homelessness and domestic violence) with wicking beds and support to grow their own food.
- **Drawing on improved food systems literacy and community vision to inform existing council workstreams**. For example, Onkaparinga Council is involved in the co-design of pop-up social supermarkets. This project supported the Council lead, Linda Enright, to think about the design through a food systems lens.
- **Increased outreach to local hospitality businesses sourcing local food** for opportunities to cater for Council functions.
- **Using knowledge gained from the workshops to develop education programs or address the underlying issues of food insecurity**. For example, the Food System Network, facilitated by a member of the Steering group, developed an educational program about the role of planning in enabling resilient food systems, current regulations and constraints and opportunities to advocate for change. This was in response to local planners' feedback that they are hamstrung by the current Planning and Design Codes.
- **Accelerating the adoption of Grow It Local campaign** in a number of LGAs.
- **Connection with and learning from leaders in local food systems**, interstate and locally. Twenty-eight such engagements were identified during the course of the project (*see Appendix E).* For example, the **SA Urban Food Network** organised an event with City of Sydney Councillor Jess Miller and Brisbane researcher Kylie Newberry. Key learnings out of that event included the importance of **getting the right people in the room** and **the value of showing (by visiting thriving local food initiatives) rather than telling**. Council leads also reached out to other government stakeholders to discuss specific areas such as the relationship between climate change and the food system, regional planning opportunities, research including 'story-telling' and what the future of agriculture and food systems looks like in the region.
- **Helping to identify speakers or projects to participate in regular Food System Network discussions and case studies**, with a particular emphasis on food policy councils/alliances to elevate this work. The network is now looking at models and funding to enable increased connections between Green Adelaide and new local governments and different department areas within local governments. The project created a concrete example of councils taking local action and a central point for discussion with government stakeholders.
- **Advocacy for greater food systems literacy within Green Adelaide**, initially using internal resources with a plan for greater investment in the future. The project has **created evidence to support advocacy for State Government funding or policy changes to support resilient**

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local food systems. The project highlighted the need for strategic state government level support/scaffolding for all the local government action. There are major gaps at this level. Local governments have the opportunity to lead the way but the state government and industry have the greater investment power.

6. New local governments using the project approach themselves

Advised time frame	Advised KPIs (application)	Evaluation of the process	Evaluation of outcome
October 2021 - April 2022	# of NEW local governments stakeholders planning to undertake the approach in their local areas	Actions taken to involve other local government stakeholders.	Assessment of actions taken from other councils.

At the date of writing, no other government stakeholders have agreed to undertake the approach in their local areas. The project developed an online tool kit (accessible from this weblink https://www.saurbanfood.org/planners-toolbox) to enable and support other government stakeholders who are interested in supporting food system resilience.

The project was **shared at the LG Best Practice Expo**, a regional public health plan steering group meeting and SA Food Systems Network events. The general sentiment from Steering group members leading these interactions is that there is a medium level of interest from local governments, however, **concerns were raised about current workloads/FTE available** and **lack of alignment with community feedback** and/or **current strategic plans**. The project tool kit has been developed to help overcome these hurdles by showcasing what is possible and helping councils map what they are already doing so they can begin from a strengths-based outlook. The tool kit provides links, processes, gadgets, and examples of how local government might enable resilient food systems. Specifically, it can be used to help develop buy-in from government stakeholders by clearly communicating alignment to issues such as climate, jobs, health, food security, community-building and why it's valid for local governments to be working in the food system space.

7. Local governments embedding food systems policy and planning

Advised time frame	Advised KPIs (application)	Evaluation of the process	Evaluation of outcome
October 2021 - April 2022	# of stakeholders using and embedding the maps, guides and tools in their work.		Number of changes in council's policy or planning in respect to food systems.

Three changes to policy or planning documents have been made at the date of writing and include:

- Onkaparinga Council's Draft Climate Change Response Plan 2022-2027 - highlights the vulnerability of our food supply chains due to emergency events, the value of local food, and that strengthening local food systems is a way to provide food security.
- Onkaparinga Council's Regional Public Health Plan 2022-2027 - promotes programs to encourage healthy eating and food security including community gardens as a preventative measure.
- Alexandrina Council's DRAFT Community Wellbeing Action Plan 2022-2026.

Work is currently underway to advocate for inclusion of food systems in Onkaparinga's Community Plan and in Alexandrina's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Recommendations

HIGH-LEVEL RECOMMENDATION: Councils need to prioritise food systems work as a whole-of-organisation and whole-of-community commitment. This requires embedding food systems actions in Council strategic plans as well as a stand-alone food system strategy and action plan. It also requires the creation, resourcing and support of a dedicated food systems officer role within Council.

Recommendation	Rationale	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
1 Staff capacity and Council commitment Food systems work is complex and time-consuming. Staff need to be adequately resourced and supported to undertake it effectively. Ideally, each Council should have a dedicated, full-time food systems staff role to lead this work; and that person should be fully supported by Council leadership.				
2 Community engagement Build momentum and interest amongst a growing number of community members and organisations and create multiple and diverse opportunities for meaningful participation in local food systems work.				
2 a. Monthly / quarterly e-news / similar about local / regional food systems / food security events / initiatives - ideally some in-person events if possible	To maintain momentum and keep motivated community members engaged and connecting with each other	Staff time from local govts	Local govts	Immediate - short-term
2 b. Support the formation of a local food systems / food security network, if one doesn't already exist	To maintain momentum, build food systems literacy and keep key and motivated community leaders speaking with each other	Staff time from local govts and / or community organisation if external funding available	Local govts	Immediate - short-term

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3 Capacity building / food systems literacy

Support the development of food systems literacy amongst individual staff within different council teams; and build collective capacity through establishing and resourcing communities of practice within and across councils.

3 a.	Each participating staff member create an action plan about progressing food systems work within their own organisation / community for the next 12-24 months	Renew commitment to food systems and the vision / objectives of the project. Creates an opportunity to secure buy-in and additional support from managers / senior leaders within Council	Local govt staff time	Project participants - Councils	Immediate - short-term
3 b.	Participating staff to share their respective work plans with each other and provide supportive and constructive feedback	Renews commitment to food systems and the vision / objectives of the project. Renews the sense of a collaborating collective, and means that staff are accountable to themselves and each other	Local govt staff time	Project participants - Councils	Immediate - short-term
3 c.	Build communities of practice within local governments, so that food systems work doesn't sit with just one person and become siloed / marginalised	Help to overcome the siloing effect through productive collaborations across teams and departments. Food systems and food security are cross-cutting issues that touch on so many areas of government practice and across different professional boundaries and disciplines	Participation / engagement from key staff working on food systems in councils	Local govts	Short to medium term

| | | | | Opportunity for pilot project involving one or more Councils, with external support and facilitation - see Sustain project with the City of Wyndham in Melbourne | State govt / philanthropy | Short to medium term |

4   Coordination / Food systems governance

Build coherence across the food system at the city, regional and state level through a structured and supported governance and coordination mechanism.

| 4 | Build on existing networks, such as The Food System Network, to establish a city-wide and / or state-wide food systems community of practice and peer-to-peer learning network. | Maintain momentum, relationships, support and incentives to continue applying the tools and resources generated by the project | Secretariat / coordination function | State Govt / SA Urban Food Network / Green Adelaide | Immediate - short-term |
| | | | Participation / engagement from key staff working on food systems in councils | Local govts | Immediate - short-term |

5   Policy / Strategy development

Embed an iterative process of long-term food systems change through the development, implementation and monitoring of food systems strategies and action plans.

| 5 a. | Embed food systems work within councils and across communities by the participatory development of a food system strategy | Ensure the food systems work is prioritised within councils and that appropriate resources are allocated to it. Build support for this work amongst the community through a participatory and engaging process - | Local govt / State govt funding to support inclusive and participatory process of food system strategy development. Should not be rushed | State govt / local govt | Medium term |

		as in the City of Greater Bendigo and Cardinia Shire Council			
5 b.	Embed food systems work across State govt with a state-wide food systems and food security strategy	State govt needs to send a clear signal that this work is to be prioritised across all levels of government.	Staff / funding for extensive community engagement and participation	State govt / local govt	Medium term