



Community Food Hub Merri-bek

Food Leadership Action Group



Welcome!

- Acknowledgement of Country
 - Housekeeping
 - Catering by Merri Food Hub
 - Let's meet the Food Leadership Action Group!
- conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/community-food-hub-moreland/meet-our-flag-members
- Tonight the FLAG will share their vision and plans for the Community Food Hub project

conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/community-food-hub-moreland



Event flow

- Project background - why we are here
- The Collective Impact approach
- The role of the FLAG
- Merri-bek Food Hub & Community Kitchen - Vision, Mission and Emerging model
- On the ground projects testing the model:
 - Merri Food Hub 'Culturally Relevant Food for Fawkner'
 - Growing Farmers 'North Merri-bek Farming Network'
- FLAG Q&A
- Networking

Why are we here?

- North of Merri-bek has some of the least food secure communities in the municipality.
- Grass roots community organisations have been campaigning since 2014 for a better food system with many initiatives eg. Fawkner Food Bowls, 3000 Acres and Fawkner Commons.



Nearly 64% of Fawkner households speak a language other than English at home.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census



The price of fresh food has risen by over 12% in 12 months

The Guardian, 3 June 2022



6.1% of Fawkner households reported food insecurity with hunger

2019 Household Survey

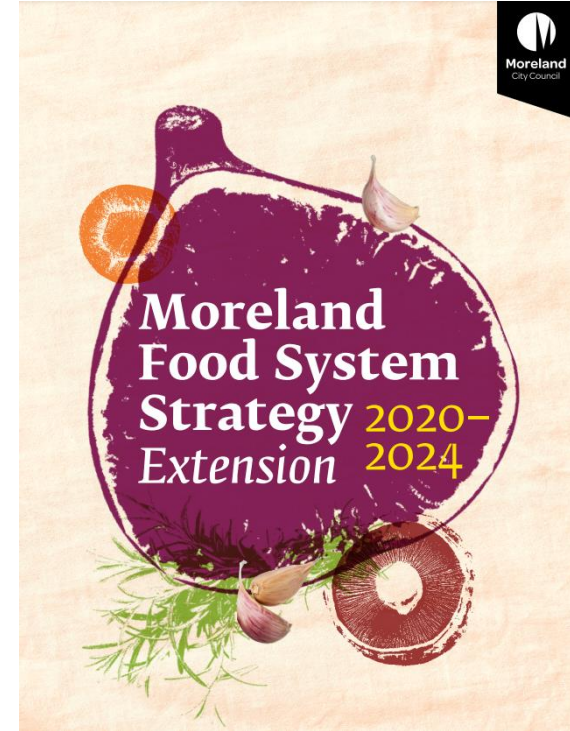


Food insecurity in the north of Merri-bek rose by an estimated 25-50% during COVID-19.

2021 Covid-19 Recovery Plan

Why are we here?

- Merri-bek 2017-24 Food System Strategy vision is to create a sustainable just and vibrant food system.
- Food equity and security is one of four priorities and the Community Food Hub is Council's flagship food security project.
- 2020 feasibility study for a Community Food Hub in the North of Merri-bek commissioned
- Council adopted outcomes and recommendation in May 2021





2020 Feasibility study - Key recommendations

1. Establish a Collective Impact approach to progressing community food hub/s in the North of Merri-bek.
2. Support two or more community food hubs to scale and become more sustainable.
3. Establish a Logistics Hub that supports community and micro food hubs.
4. Council activating infrastructure and seeding community projects.
5. A big bold vision: A hub that combines community connection, recommendations 2 and 3.

Strong community desire for the solution to be led by locally embedded organisations

The Collective Impact Approach

Collaboration framework that engages across sectors and groups who share a common interest to address a complex social issue, in a given community.



It starts with a common agenda

This means coming together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision to solve it.



It establishes shared measurement

That means tracking progress in the same way, allowing for continuous learning and accountability.



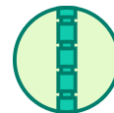
It fosters mutually reinforcing activities

That means integrating the participants' many different activities to maximize the end result.



It encourages continuous communications

That means building trust and strengthening relationships.



And it has a strong backbone

That means having a team dedicated to aligning and coordinating the work of the group.



The Food Leadership Action Group (FLAG)

The purpose of the **Food Leadership Action Group** is to:

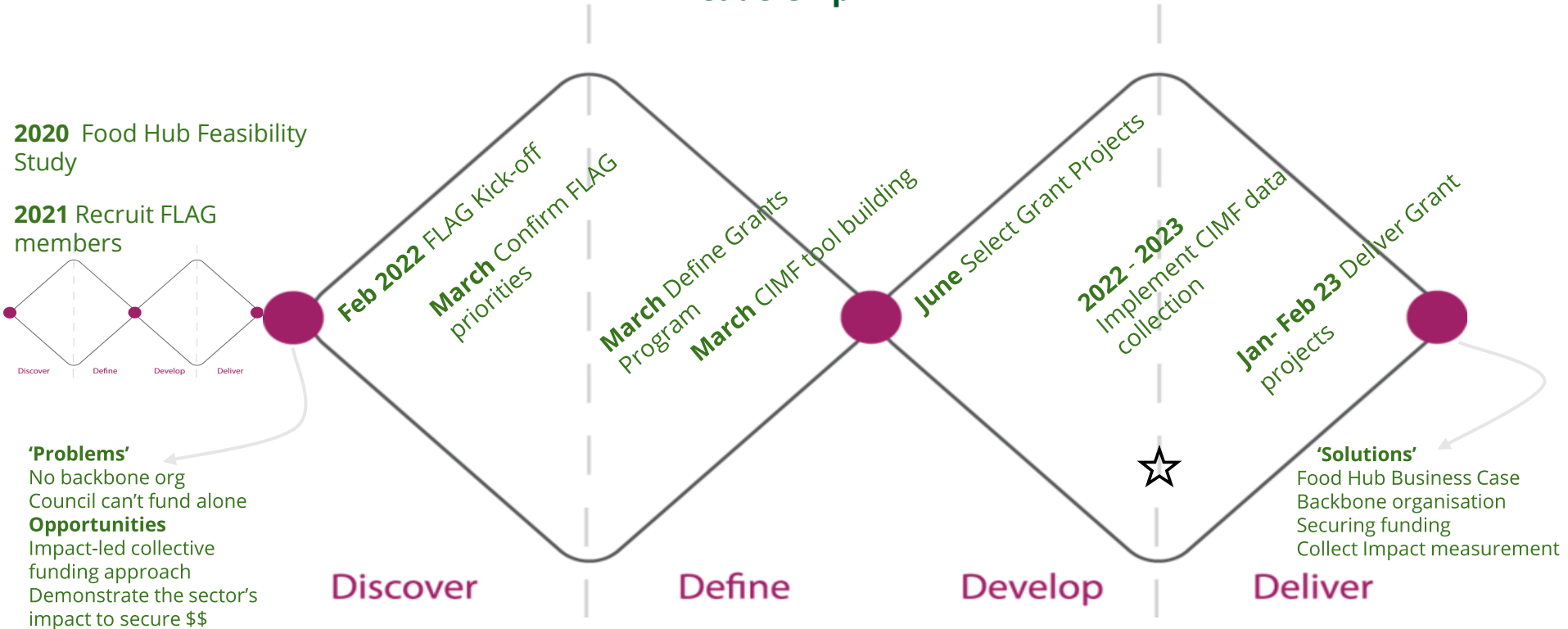
Develop a cohesive leadership group that *collaborates across community food enterprises* and groups in Merri-bek to:

- Drive establishment of a community food hub *serving multiple enterprises'/groups'* needs
- Institute governance for a long-lasting, *locally-driven backbone organisation*
- Play a participatory budgeting role to allocate funding collaboratively for *best shared outcomes* in Merri-bek's food systems/food security space
- Establish a Collective Impact Measurement Framework to track progress



Merri-bek FLAG Journey so far

The FLAG is an innovative and emergent process for collective & participatory community leadership



Collective Impact Measurement Framework (CIMF)

Health Impact



Increases availability of healthy, local food

Social Impact



Educates community, volunteers, and staff

**Number & type of community education activities provided

**Number of staff/volunteers trained

Number of volunteers gain skills for employment or own enterprise

Customers/participants report improved knowledge of nutrition, cooking skills, or food literacy

Evidence of transferrable skills gained by staff/volunteers

**Average monthly customers for fresh produce

Total volume of food produced



Environmental Impact



Creates network and infrastructure

**Number of partnerships developed within community supporting food security projects

Number of enterprises gain access to sufficient infrastructure through partnerships developed



Supports regenerative farming practices & sustainability

Percentage of energy use from renewable sources

Water use reduction measures in place

2020 Feasibility study - Community priorities





Merri-bek Food Hub & Community Kitchen

Vision: to empower culturally diverse communities to form a universally accessible, equitable and regenerative local food system.

Mission: We do this through network & logistics coordination, collaboration, education & training, food growing & processing, and sharing our foodways & stories with our community as a whole.



What is the Merri-bek Food Hub & Community Kitchen Model?

To move beyond food relief and focus on community's need for dignity and connection around food.

Food growing and
urban agriculture

Aggregation &
Distribution

Processing,
Preparation &
Sharing

What is the Merri-bek Food Hub & Community Kitchen Model?

Part 1: Food Growing and Urban Agriculture

Supporting the functions of groups and organisations involved in primary production of food in Merri-bek.



What is the Merri-bek Food Hub & Community Kitchen?

Part 2: Aggregation and Distribution

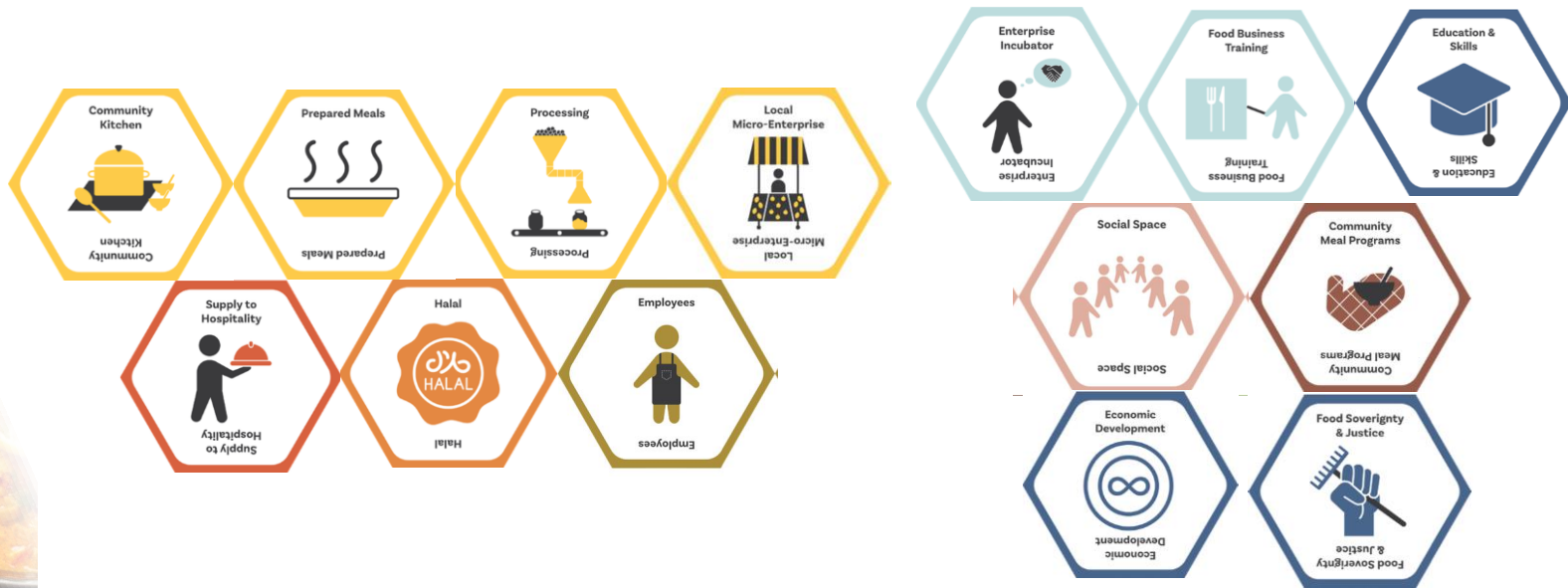
Coordinated access to food with infrastructure capabilities



What is the Merri-bek Food Hub & Community Kitchen?

Part 3: Food Processing, Cooking and Sharing

Community food enterprises get access to facilities to process fresh food into goods and meals suitable for the community.





Governance and Management

How the FLAG will work:

- Auspiced by Open Food Network as an interim step.
- FLAG to become the 'backbone organisation' as a not-for-profit incorporated association.
- FLAG will have autonomy in decisions relating to attracting, mobilising and spending funds for the establishment and operation of the Merri-bek Food Hub and Community Kitchen

Open Food Network will provide:

- HR functions and employment of project officer reporting to FLAG
- Administration of funds on behalf of FLAG
- Social support and professional mentoring for the project officer



Budget

Action	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Establish Food Leadership Action Group	\$35,000	\$25,000	
Project funding for testing model components	\$40,000	\$40,000	
Collective Impact Measurement Framework	\$20,000	\$5,000	
Service agreement with OFN to support expansion of proven model		\$170 000	
TOTAL	\$95,000	\$240,000	

How to get involved

Get in touch via the survey

<https://forms.office.com/r/fFHxdsaH0u>





Community Food Hub Projects

- Merri Food Hub ‘Culturally Relevant Food for Fawkner’
- Growing Farmers ‘North Merri-bek Farming Network’





Inspiration for our logo: Penelope's hands. Photo and logo by R. Gomez

"efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food system
for better production, better nutrition, a better environment
and a better life, leaving no one behind"



Charmaine and Sarah are two Fawkner residents who met whilst volunteering for Fawkner Commons, a project of Fawkner Food Bowls. Charmaine, a former lawyer and Sarah, a former interpreter, realised that food systems need change and that they are going to make a start at it in their home suburbs.



Large fruit & veg box, \$30

Fewer chain supply
links = fresher,
cheaper produce for
you + better price for
the farmer!



We seek partnerships with
growers and suppliers who are
local and who use
environmentally-sustainable
practises as a priority.





Fawkner Food Bowls

You should know where your
food comes from





French radishes, Fawkner Food Bowls



Finger eggplants, Fawkner Food Bowls





We've established the **Journey Project** that provides low-cost, high-quality fruit and vegetable boxes to vulnerable households.

We believe in food with dignity.



Herbs and lettuce, Fawkner Food Bowls

We work towards promoting gender equality and women's empowerment by remunerating workers (often women, often unpaid) because volunteer hours are an unsustainable privilege -> Test Kitchen





Building resilience

Merri Food Hub

FAWKNER food bowls

GROWING FARMERS

Strengthening community

