A community food hub for Moreland's north

Feasibility assessment and community consultation report, October 2020.

Authors: Jen Sheridan (Open Food Network Australia), Kirsten Larsen (Open Food Network Australia), Jen Rae (Fair Share Fare)

Executive Summary

> **"Food justice** seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly. Food justice represents a transformation of the current food system, including but not limited to eliminating disparities and inequities.**"** - Robert Gottlieb & Joshi Anupama, *Food Justice*, 2010

This study found that there was scope for a range of community food hub implementation designs to overcome the barriers identified by the community and Council. There were also a number of actions that could be incorporated into existing council activities to further advance the aims of addressing food insecurity in the north of Moreland.

Summary of Process

The consultation process consulted community stakeholders who would access the frontend of a food hub for food relief or purchase, and consulted those running community food enterprises who would make use of the backend of a food hub for their activities.

Consultation occurred through broad online surveys, five co-design workshops held across a variety of times and locations in the north of Moreland, and in-depth interviews. This information informed the development of draft food hub proposals which were sent to 27 self-identified key stakeholders from earlier stages of the consultation. Their feedback informed the specific recommendations, including the priority of them, as outlined in this proposal.

Summary of Recommendations

We are recommending that Council establish ongoing funding streams for continuing investment in **community capability** and **infrastructure** to build food justice in the north of Moreland. Throughout the course of this project, the community has demonstrated outstanding understanding of their context, as well as leadership, collaboration and a commitment to social inclusion. Our strongest recommendation is that Moreland Council get behind this community and invest in them.

We are outlining a proposed approach to doing this that places high value on democratic and participatory processes, with Council as a strong partner, friend, facilitator and investor. In doing so, we suggest that Council's role is to lead by creating and sustaining 'containers' that enable and nourish the work.

We are proposing that significant and ongoing funding is required for this as Community Food Hubs and Community Food Enterprises are not a 'magic bullet'. To be viable AND increase food access among vulnerable communities (or other public good outcome), they likely need

public and philanthropic support, especially for the start-up phase (first 3-5 years).[1] Council can be a leading investor in this space, in a way that facilitates and unlocks co-investment from other partners.

The Recommendations sections is structured as follows:

1. Set up a Collective Impact Approach

   a. Food Leadership Action Group, with paid positions and funded support
   b. Progress refinement and implementation of Collective Impact Shared Measurement Framework

2. Support two (or more) Community Food Hubs to increase their scale and sustainability

3. Establish a Logistics Hub that supports community and micro food hubs

4. Council activating infrastructure and seeding community projects

   a. Council facilitates infrastructure use for food projects
   b. Nourishing the network of community food enterprises

5. The Big Bold Vision . . Taking the Next Steps

Summary of Collective Impact Approach

Collective Impact (CI) is "the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration". The project proposal for assessing the need for a Community Food Hub in Moreland requested that the response point towards action within a Collective Impact approach. We fully endorse this approach and Table 1 summarises how our recommendations work towards this.

The global community of Collective Impact practitioners has continued to understand and evolve the Collective Impact approach and developed later 'versions' that better address the context of community-led Collective Impact, rather than an approach focused on the CEOs of particular organisations. There are insights in this more recent work (Collective Impact 3.0) that are very relevant to the approach we are suggesting for Moreland. These are shown at a high level in italics in the first column.

---

[1] Olya and Rysin, 2016; Fischer, Pirog and Hamm, 2015, cited in Hill, S. (2019) *Community food enterprises: Their role in food system change, opportunities, challenges, and support needs. Open Food Network Australia, p16* ; Larsen, Sheridan & Hill (2019), *Sustainable Food Systems - Philanthropy Briefing,* Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network here

Table 1: Detailed Summary of Collective Impact and Recommendations

| Collective Impact Approach	Our Recommendations
Common Agenda: Collective impact requires all participants to have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. *3.0: Community Aspiration*	*"Community connection and resilience through food justice"* (this is what was heard through consultation but should be validated with community through deliberative processes) The shared community agenda was for solutions that develop and increase: ● Community resilience ● Education and skills ● Sustainability ● Food affordability ● Access to inclusive and diverse spaces The strongest collaborations shared a food justice framing.
Shared Measurement Systems: Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact. Agreement on a common agenda is illusory without agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported. *3.0: Strategic Learning*	1b. The consultations informed the development of a draft Shared Measurement System as outlined below. We are recommending a pathway for iterating and embedding this in next steps - making sure it is a core part of the further development of this project.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities: Collective impact initiatives depend on a diverse group of stakeholders working together, not by requiring that all participants do the same thing, but by encouraging each participant to undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels in a way that supports and is coordinated with the actions of others. *3.0: High Leverage Activities*	2, 3 and 5 - Establishing pathways for Hub development that support community participants to continue and expand on where they are leading, while increasing coordination and potential collaboration with others. 4A. Build on Council's existing Moreland Local Food Network to deepen connections between enterprises, and help existing community food enterprises target food insecurity. 4B. Use a 'seeds of change' grant program with participation in collective systems change networks a compulsory element.
Continuous Communication: Developing trust among nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies is a monumental challenge.	1A. Establishing and resourcing the Food Leadership Action Group

3.0: Inclusive Community Engagement	
Backbone Support Organisations: Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative. ***3.0: Containers for Change***	Throughout the Consultation, no clear 'backbone organisation' has emerged. There are a large number of active, competent and leading players, who have all expressed a strong desire to be supported in independent collaboration. Consistent with Collective Impact 3.0, our proposed approach is to create and sustain a 'container for change' that resources community leaders to coordinate and facilitate the change. 1A. Our proposed approach is to establish a formal Food Leadership Action Group, with paid positions and funded support, to progress the best collective organisational structure.

1. Introduction

This report outlines the feasibility of a community food hub in the north of Moreland to address food insecurity. It was prepared by Open Food Network Australia and Fair Share Fare, following an in-depth community consultation and research on models used to combat similar challenges around the world.

Moreland context
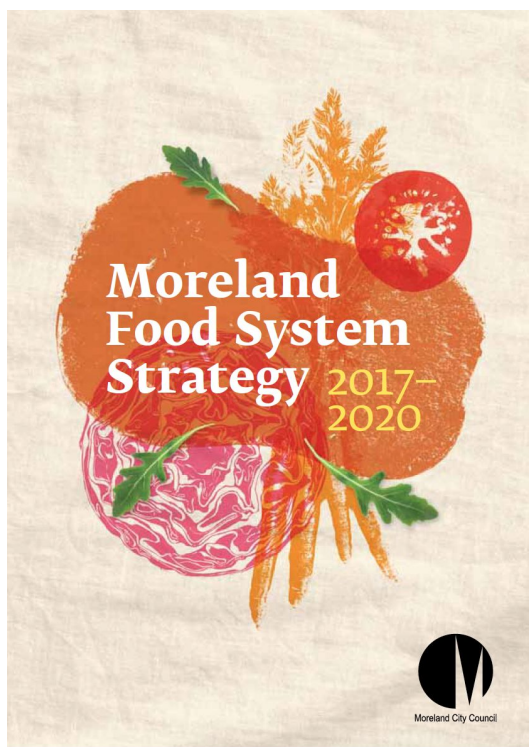
This feasibility study was initiated by Moreland Council as part of the Moreland Food System Strategy 2017-2020.

The underpinning vision held by the community is for a "sustainable, just and vibrant food system.

A sustainable food system contributes to a more resilient community and a healthier environment.

A just food system ensures that nutritious food is socially and economically accessible to everyone in the community.

A vibrant food system protects and nurtures healthy food culture and celebrates diversity."

Within that strategy, Goal 5 is "There are opportunities for everyone to access nutritious food, no matter what their economic or social situation." Within that, Councils wants to "ensure that food security in Moreland is improved through:

• people knowing how and where they can access nutritious food.

• people being equipped with the skills to grow food.

• addressing or advocating for change that addresses the underlying social and economic causes of food insecurity."

And as part of that goal, Council committed to "complete a feasibility study on establishing a community food hub / community food centre in the north of Moreland."

Food insecurity is multidimensional, and includes: the ability to access food because supply is uninterrupted, ability to access food thanks to adequate financial security to purchase food, ability of the body to utilise food thanks to adequate nutritional balance, and stability of those

three factors over time (e.g. no dips in ability to purchase food). Other factors influencing food security include cultural elements such as knowing where to purchase food and being able to source foods familiar to your cultural food knowledge, and having adequate means to store and prepare food, e.g. access to refrigeration and a stove.

2. Community consultation process

This consultation process targeted a number of key audiences: those experiencing food insecurity who might use a food hub, interested community members, and those running food initiatives who might use or run a community food hub. In order to consult as widely and appropriately as possible, the team used a range of consultation methods.

Online engagement

The project sought broad online engagement through the Conversations Moreland site, which was publicised by Council and project partners. 44 contributions were received through this survey. Of those participants, 38 lived in Moreland, 8 worked in Moreland, 16 shopped regularly in Moreland, 5 visited family regularly in Moreland, and 3 had another relationship with the place (participants were able to choose more than one option so totals are more than 100%).

Research interviews

We had 22 one-on-one conversations with affected residents and key stakeholders, as identified through the Community Asset Mapping, conversations with Council, snowball sampling (i.e. additional people recommended by interviewees), open invitations, and targeted introductions into different communities created by contacting community leaders. Conversations with all stakeholders identified in the Community Asset Mapping were pursued through this process, although some stakeholders had moved on (or projects ceased), others were unresponsive, and others chose to instead attend a workshop. These interviews focused on community needs and perceived opportunities.

Co-design workshops

Five co-design workshops were held across locations in Moreland's north, at a variety of times and meeting a range of specific cultural requirements (e.g. a women-only session). 65 people participated in those events, and all attendees were given the opportunity to identify themselves as a stakeholder for further consultation. 27 identified themselves in this way.

These workshops focused on community needs, what community wanted from a food hub, whether they thought a food hub would help, where a hub should be located, and who should run it.

Image: Some of the elements of a food hub used by workshop participants to explain their vision for their food hub.

Concept refining with key stakeholders

Additional one-on-one conversations with self-identified key stakeholders were used to refine the concepts developed in response to all other community inputs. We created a proposal for three community food hub options, and sent this information to all stakeholders who had identified as key stakeholders for detailed input on the community food hub. This consultation process also included any additional stakeholders revealed by their actions during COVID19 (e.g. starting new initiatives that might make use of a food hub). We received 13 detailed responses from key stakeholders with feedback on the proposals, and that feedback has been incorporated into final recommendations.

This round of feedback focused on those who would be likely to run a food hub, and focused on how to create a hub that would enable their activities to increase and be delivered sustainably.
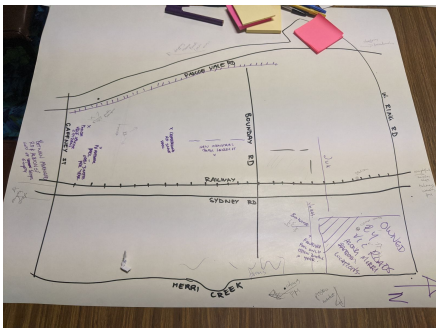
Images: Food hub visioning activity outcomes.

3. Consultation Outcomes: what does the community need and want?

Challenges identified by the community

Community members consistently identified the same challenges around food access across all forms of consultation (online survey, research interviews, etc.)

A key challenge is access to fresh food, due to:
- a lack of outlets,
- lack of transport options to travel to food outlets,
- lack of parking close to food outlets, and
- the produce available in local shops not being fresh or adequately varied.

Community members struggled to access food that met their needs, whether those were for foods specific to their cultural context or foods that met their ethics (e.g. no plastic packaging, organic, or locally sourced food). The lack of fresh organic produce and of bulk foods that were locally sourced was regularly singled out as an issue.

Those stakeholders who were involved in running community food enterprises consistently identified that barriers for them delivering their programs included:
- lack of funding/reliance on volunteer labour,
- lack of security of tenure for premises,
- lack of storage (particularly cold storage),
- lack of infrastructure to help with logistics (including delivery vehicles), and
- ageing or inadequate infrastructure.

Priorities identified by the community

The community consistently identified that they had shared priorities for a community food hub.

They wanted a place that enables community resilience by facilitating community interaction and social inclusion. This meant that they wanted diverse spaces available for use by community members and groups, kitchens that could be used by community members, and gardens in which to gather. They wanted spaces that were inclusive and diverse, which met the needs of many different sections of the community and allowed for sharing, interaction, integration and respect of differences. They hoped for places that were friendly, where you could chat to people, share food, and know you were welcome.

They wanted a place for learning, where education is delivered, skills are shared, and pathways to employment are made clear. They envisioned a hub that delivered events and workshops, but also more structured training and enterprise development, particularly related to food (be

OPEN FOOD NETWORK AUSTRALIA

that growing, cooking, preserving or otherwise preparing food). They wanted some of this food education to give people the opportunity to strengthen community bonds by learning about other cultures in the community through food.

They wanted a place where you could do a weekly, one-stop shop that was sustainable and affordable. They wanted to be able to access it by walking, biking, or catching public transport, and for it to have adequate parking for those who do drive. They wanted it to have diverse, fresh, seasonal produce; bulk foods they could pack themselves (or at least processes that minimised packaging); dairy, eggs, vegan and meat (including halal options). They wanted local produce from urban farms, community gardens, private gardens, and local source-identified farmers. They wanted diverse foods that met a variety of cultural needs.

There were some tensions and limitations within what community wanted. For example the desire for access to everything they want versus everything being local and seasonal; the desire to do away with packaging for some groups but the strong desire for packaging that ensure products are halal, organic, or source-identified from other groups; or the desire for it to be '5-10 minutes from me' for everywhere in the community. There are also some inherent challenges in the community desires that are not specific to Moreland but are unresolved challenges in sustainable food systems in Australia such as the balance between affordability and sustainability (including a fair price to farmers) and the desire for things to be open at all hours but to remain small and community driven.

Image above: some of the priorities identified by community for their hub.

The impact of COVID-19 on community consultation

Prior to COVID-19, the intention for this feasibility study was to refine a project concept, and to give Council and stakeholders a set of tools and processes to begin undertaking Lean experiments to test the risks and assumptions underpinning the proposed concepts.

The next stage in community consultation was to undertake community consultation to refine the concept and ensure there was sufficient local buy-in for the recommended approach.
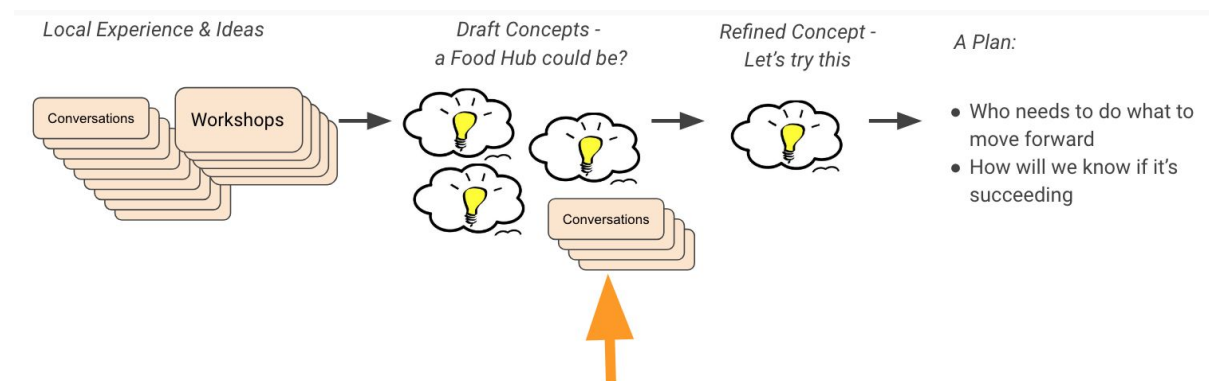
Community capacity to give feedback on theoretical hubs was diminished, as food insecurity became an increasing and urgent community need and a number of the key stakeholders scaled up their involvement in food provision.

The urgency of response to COVID-19 created an accelerated testing ground for these experiments. As a result of this community consultation project, new connections had been formed, and our project team took on roles in on-the-ground action or providing significant guidance and mentoring for those on the ground on topics such as logistics, packing and distribution. The remaining consultation was undertaken through phone calls and online meetings that were focused on live examples both in terms of needs at the time and additional council support that would have made it easier for food enterprises to deliver projects addressing food insecurity.

As a result, this feasibility study contains reflections from both those earlier community consultations and the action engagement process during COVID-19.

4. COVID-19 Food Justice Response in Moreland

COVID-19 had significant impact on food insecurity in Moreland's north. It has also as a result presented a period of rapid prototyping, networking and new activities for food activities in Moreland.

Examples of the increased activity include:

- Council has convened a fortnightly food and material relief network of around 12 service providers (with over 30 individuals in the database) which has resulted in better awareness across service providers and new collaborative delivery of programs including sharing infrastructure.

- Council provided $80,000 of COVID-19 grants through the Inner North Community Foundation www.innernorthfoundation.org.au/grants/apply-for-funding and a further $10,000 to Fawkner Commons towards establishment of low cost food box service.

- Jesuit Social Services Ecological Justice Hub started a Hub Meal Drop Program. The Hub's COVID-19 meal program created jobs in a recession and addressed local food insecurity by deploying 6 Permaculture gardeners to two large urban farms in Moreland. Every week the Hub kitchens prepared and delivered nutritious, gluten-free, nut-free, vegan meals with organic vegetables and bathroom and kitchen care packs for people severely disadvantaged and isolated by COVID in the Moreland community.

- The Ecological Justice Hub delivered Zero Waste cooking classes funded by Moreland Council, with subsidised produce for participants who needed it. These engaged people receiving food relief by providing them with the supplies and tools to participate which helped create a pathway between food relief and food skills

- The Muslim Women's Council of Victoria undertook food relief meal preparation at Coburg Town Hall kitchen (images below right).

- Micro hub Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective scaled up operations and attempted a Glenroy distribution (images left above).

- Fawkner Food Bowls developed a local COVID-response project, Fawkner Commons. This is a not-for-profit, community led, food distribution hub working with local food initiatives and small businesses. The main purpose is to secure access to food that is local to Fawkner and surrounds and distribute it safely. A secondary purpose is social cohesion and support of local businesses. They use the Open Food Network online platform so that customers can select from a number of suppliers on one page and pick up in one bundle. They supply fruit and veg boxes, organics, dry bulk goods, bakery items, dairy, cooked meals and beef. Built into the system is 'pay it forward' (PIF) which invites customers to donate $5 to food relief for Fawkner households.

- Fawkner Commons partnered with Natalie Abboud from Rumi restaurant, who ran a pop-up no-cost Wednesday soup kitchen for four weeks while the suburb was a 'hotspot', and with Lentil as Anything to provide a 'pay what you feel' takeaway pop up over nine Fridays with proceeds going to food relief efforts.

- Numerous new bulk food groups launched, including Fawkner Wholefoods Collective and Pascoe Vale Food Collective.

- The Community Grocer partnered with Fawkner Commons to provide fresh food boxes via the Open Food Network online platform (image left below).

- The Ecological Justice Hub applied for a variety of Working for Victoria positions, which included a number of permaculture gardeners who worked across their Hub and Fawkner Food Bowls to grow food for food relief (image right below).
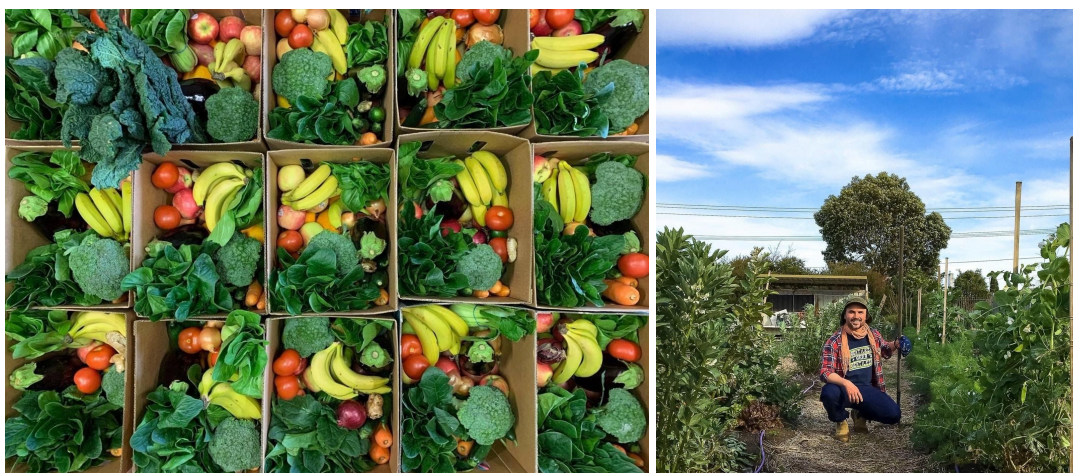
- Numerous individuals and small organisations have provided very tailored food relief efforts, for example Didi Bahini Samaj supplying food relief to 170 international students from Nepal.

- Numerous food growing collaborations were initiated across public spaces, schools, and private gardens. These fed into food relief efforts, and in numerous cases have been used to provide culturally appropriate vegetables for relief.

These are just a sample of some of the activities that occurred during this period. There was a strong theme of passionate local people who are driven to get things done, with the connections to deliver what was needed in their community. There was also a role played by the connections forged as part of this study, for example the Open Food Network connected Fawkner Commons, the Community Grocer and the Ecological Justice Hub with the opportunity to access cool storage and four refrigerated delivery vans with drivers, provided by the State Government.

5. Recommendations for Moreland

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Terminology

There were a number of models either present in Moreland or which community articulated a need for. These include:

Micro hubs
Micro hubs are a significant part of food relief and food purchasing in Moreland. These are small groups, frequently based out of one person's house. Many are buying groups for bulk foods, usually predominantly dry goods. It would appear that they are a response to the lack of bulk food purchasing options in the area. They are predominantly volunteer-run. Their focus is mostly on individuals' food access, predominantly through individual buying habits.

Community food hubs
Community food hubs vary in scale. They have public-facing premises, have a mix of volunteer and paid positions, and run a range of public programs focused across food systems issues, including training, food access, community development, and food growing. They aim to build the number of livelihoods in this space. Their focus tends towards a food justice lens, with a more food systems approach in program delivery. Community food hubs based in or serving Moreland's north include Fawkner Commons and the Ecological Justice Hub.

Logistics hub
There is not currently a logistics hub in Moreland's north. A logistics hub is a physical space that facilitates higher volumes of food being delivered, disaggregated, reaggregated, packed, prepared, and stored.

</div>

This study found that there was scope for a range of community food hub implementation designs to overcome the barriers identified by the community and Council. There were also a number of actions that could be incorporated into existing council activities to further advance the aims of addressing food insecurity in the north of Moreland.

Our experience offering community food enterprise mentoring and incubation services has given us extensive insight into best-practice for new enterprises. We have found that using a ***Lean approach*** has greater impact in early stages than a grand masterplan for a long time-frame. It helps enterprises reduce risk, make smart, data-driven decisions and learn more about successful intervention in their context through interaction with it. Lean experiments allow enterprises to make small, incremental changes, test how these are received, and make changes based on the results as they work towards a successful model. They are an inexpensive way to improve without investing in an untested idea.

However, COVID-19 has catalysed action and experimentation that effectively leapfrogs what might have otherwise been proposed. The community response has essentially been to ***do live experiments and adaptation in place*** - people involved in the consultation (and others) basically just implemented ideas that were being talked about - we received phone calls that basically said "hey this online food hub thing - can we just do it?" - to which the answer was

"Yes, let's". This experimentation and learning phase enables more explicit recommendations than might otherwise have been possible.

At a high level, we are recommending that Council:

- Establish ongoing funding streams for continuing investment in **community capability** and **infrastructure** to build food justice in the north of Moreland. Throughout the course of this project, the community has demonstrated outstanding understanding of their context, as well as leadership, collaboration and a commitment to social inclusion. Our strongest recommendation is that Moreland Council get behind this community and invest in them.
- Act as a partner, friend, facilitator and investor while establishing strong and resilient democratic and participatory processes, and setting up a strategic learning environment to maximise impact. In proposing this, we are suggesting that Council's role is to lead by creating and sustaining 'containers' that enable and nourish the work.

We are proposing that significant and ongoing funding is required for this as Community Food Hubs and Community Food Enterprises are not a 'magic bullet'. To be viable AND increase food access among vulnerable communities (or other public good outcome), they likely need public and philanthropic support, especially for the start-up phase (first 3-5 years).[2] Council can be a leading investor in this space, in a way that facilitates and unlocks co-investment from other partners.

The Recommendations sections is structured as follows:

1. Set up a Collective Impact Approach

   a. Food Leadership Action Group, with paid positions and funded support
   b. Progress refinement and implementation of Collective Impact Shared Measurement Framework

2. Support two (or more) Community Food Hubs to increase their scale and sustainability

3. Establish a Logistics Hub that supports community and micro food hubs

4. Council activating infrastructure and seeding community projects

   a. Council facilitates infrastructure use for food projects
   b. Nourishing the network of community food enterprises

5. The Big Bold Vision . . Taking the Next Steps

---

[2] Olya and Rysin, 2016; Fischer, Pirog and Hamm, 2015, cited in Hill, S. (2019) *Community food enterprises: Their role in food system change, opportunities, challenges, and support needs. Open Food Network Australia, p16* ; Larsen, Sheridan & Hill (2019), *Sustainable Food Systems - Philanthropy Briefing,* Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network here

Recommendation 1. Establish a Collective Impact Approach to Progressing Community Food Hub/s in North of Moreland

Collective Impact (CI) is "the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration".[3]

The project proposal for assessing the need for a Community Food Hub in Moreland requested that the response point towards action within a Collective Impact approach. We fully endorse this approach and Table 2 summarises how our recommendations work towards this.

The global community of Collective Impact practitioners has continued to understand and evolve the CI approach and developed later 'versions' that better address the context of community-led CI, rather than an approach focused on the CEOs of particular organisations. There are insights in this more recent work that are very relevant to the approach we are suggesting for Moreland. These are shown in italics in the first column.[4]

Collective Impact Approach[5]	How our Recommendations support / respond to this
Common Agenda *3.0: Community Aspiration*	*"Community connection and resilience through food justice"* (this is what was heard through consultation but should be validated with community through deliberative processes)
Shared Measurement Systems *3.0: Strategic Learning*	We have drafted a potential measurement framework and outlined a proposed approach to progress it in <u>*Recommendation 1B*</u>.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities *3.0: High Leverage Activities*	2, 3 and 5 as well as 1A to embed working together
Continuous Communication *3.0: Inclusive Community Engagement*	1A, 4A and B
Backbone Support Organisations *3.0: Containers for Change*	There is no single backbone support organisation that has emerged, but a very strong desire and commitment to work in the north being led by people and organisations in the north. <u>*Recommendation 1A*</u> suggests a way forward.

---

[3] https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact#
[4] Cabau & Weaver (2016), Collective Impact 3.0: An Evolving Framework for Community Change, Tamarack Institute
[5] https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact#

There are two core elements of our proposed approach that focus directly and explicitly on setting up appropriate containers for progressing a Collective Impact approach.

a) Establish a Food Leadership Action Group (FLAG) with paid participation and funded support

Throughout the Consultation, no clear 'backbone organisation' has emerged. There are a large number of active, competent and leading players, who have all expressed a strong desire to be supported in independent collaboration. Consistent with Collective Impact 3.0, our proposed approach is to create and sustain a 'container for change' that resources community leaders to coordinate and facilitate the change.

We propose establishment of a formal *Food Leadership Action Group*, with paid participation and funded support, to progress the best collective approach and potentially (if/when needed) organisational structure. This group may choose to sub-contract or nominate one of them or another party as a backbone organisation or host / auspice of collective funds, but that should be a decision of that group.

Council can support the development of this strong community-led collaboration by resourcing the group, rather than expecting it to be done on a voluntary basis or privileging participation of those already in funded positions within existing established organisations.

The *Food Leadership Action Group* should be made up of key actors to oversee the next steps. We recommend this include (at minimum) representatives of the Ecological Justice Hub, Fawkner Food Bowls, CISMoreland, Community Grocer, and two Micro Hubs. It would likely benefit from inclusion of other enabling partners including the Inner North Foundation and a member of Moreland City Council's food systems and economic development teams. Participants in this group, as representatives of primarily volunteer or community organisations, should be paid a small stipend for their time e.g. $30/hr for 3 hours per month. Ideally the group would also be supported with a project officer position (outside of Council) to support them and 'do the work' on next steps i.e.:

a. Establish and run an EOI process for Food Hubs - primarily Community Food Hubs but open also to proposals for Micro Hubs and/or a Logistics Hub

b. Use a participatory budgeting approach to advise on allocation Council funds within this sector. Participatory budgeting is a deliberative process used to allocate funding with input from those affected by those decisions. It has been used at a city scale for all citizens to have input on how local governments spend their money, and can be used with a subsection of the population on specific areas that affect them.

c. Develop a shared proposal and/or business plan for progressing the Logistics Hub

d. Establish partnership or collective for clear shared Governance and Ownership by and for organisations in the North. This partnership or collective MAY then choose to outsource or seek EOI from other organisations to run the Logistics Hub or other processes, but the local community must be in control.

We are suggesting a Food Leadership Action Group Project Officer / Coordinator for 4 days a week, with a view to this person also being able to support the work in Recommendation 4b, est. cost $66,000 per annum.

b) Refine and Implement Collective Impact Shared Measurement Framework

As discussed above, the requirement to significantly pivot this project in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has required a significant shift of resources from what was originally proposed. Nevertheless we have made major progress in the development of a draft shared measurement / impact assessment framework for food hub/s in Moreland, identifying measures of success and indicators that can be used to assess it as it progresses. This includes social, economic and environmental indicators that can be used to track the progress of the Hub in delivering value to the community.

The detail of how this framework has been developed is in Attachment 1: Local Food Enterprise Framework - Summary. It has been developed using:

- A bottom-up community-driven identification of value (through the Moreland consultations) which identified the priority impact areas shown to the right
- A comprehensive 'top-down' analysis of key impact areas and potential measures derived from global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Economics of Environment and Biodiversity (TEEB) Evaluation Framework for Agriculture and Food.

Healthy Food Consumption

Environmental Sustainability

Community Connection & Resilience

Education & Skills

Economic Development

Food Sovereignty

Food System / Sector Environment

Appendix 1 shows a high level summary of the Categories, Impact Areas and relevant SDGs and TEEB assessment. To see the current status of the full framework, including draft potential measures against each of these Impact Areas, view here.

We are recommending that continued development and implementation of this shared measurement framework be a key part of any next steps in this project. Specifically we propose additional investment to enable us to:

- Conduct a literature review to benchmark potential impact of local food enterprises in north of Moreland, drawing from international and national literature, informal sources etc. This will populate the Impact Framework with information on potential impacts and hence possible goals, using examples of where and how Food Hubs elsewhere have impacted on these measures (e.g. XX Hub in YY has increased fruit & vegetable intake in ZZ community by AA)

- Work closely with a small number of existing enterprises in Moreland to assess and populate this framework with information about their impact to date.

- Through this work with existing enterprises we would gather feedback on and refine priority measures that are accessible and can be consistent collective measures. It will reveal what information is available, or needs to be tracked as new proposals are rolled out.

- Publish a short synthesis report on the currently understood collective impact of the North Moreland Community Food Enterprises included in the study.

- Establish an easy and repeatable process for regular information collection and synthesis. We would then facilitate this process in the second year, to check and refine it, before stepping back for the Food Leadership Action Group / others to take it on.

This work is critical in setting up a strategic learning environment for the progression of the broader project. By understanding and agreeing what the impact we want to see is, and how we will know if we're going in the right direction - we set up an environment that allows for observation and adaptation.

This is particularly important in the context of Community Food Hubs, which can have many goals and impacts that don't always pull in the same direction. For example, if Food Justice is a primary goal, then independent financial viability may be secondary or not even actually a goal.

Indicators like the # of people fed healthy food; # of jobs created; amount or proportion of income generated through trade and/or diversity and longevity of funding streams become more significant than break even or a profit margin.

Suggested budget

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Establish Impact Framework	$15,000	$10,000			
Participatory Collective Impact Measurement & Reflection			$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
FLAG Participation	$7,560	$7,560	$10,080	$10,080	$10,080
FLAG Project Support Role	$66,248	$66,248	$66,248	$66,248	$66,248

Recommendation 2: Support two or more community food hubs to scale and become more sustainable

Hypothesis: *A fully fledged community food hub can provide food access as well as community connection activities, education and training opportunities. The connection across their communities - through food - is the main thing people are seeking.*

Proposal: *Build on existing sites that have activity and potential to develop community food hubs in the area. This could include Fawkner Food Bowls, the Ecological Justice Hub, a number of Neighbourhood Houses, Wheatsheaf Community Hub (when built) and other community garden and food spaces.*

There are a number of existing community sites that facilitate elements of a food hub identified as important by the community, such as selling, education, community kitchen access, distribution of food relief, meeting and gathering, food growing, etc. There are also new community hubs in development (e.g. Wheatsheaf) that could expand their remit to include food activities.

Throughout the COVID response, existing (and rapidly launched new) Community Food Hubs have demonstrated their ability to address both the 'front end' of community connection and education and the 'back end' of organising food procurement and logistics to increase local food access.

We are proposing that existing sites/groups be supported through additional infrastructure and funding to become more established and significant community food hubs. This would look different in each location - not all would have space for growing food, or a community kitchen - but using the strengths-based approach from the community food asset mapping in combination with lean experiments would reveal focus areas and areas for growth in each location.

It is assumed that this will increase food security because:

- access to culturally appropriate food is one of the barriers to food security. Growing culturally appropriate food at some of the food hubs has the potential to address this challenge;
- Education on how to grow, store, eat, cook and enjoy food equips people to eat better food with less money, helping overcome utilisation barriers;
- access to facilities and education that enable microenterprises can create opportunities for income streams, addressing the root cause of some food insecurity; and

OPEN FOOD NETWORK AUSTRALIA

- people want to (and will) participate in food activities that are connecting them to 'their' very local community.

There was evidence from community consultation that people felt less likely to experience food insecurity when they were part of a strong community network. There was a strong desire from community to build connections as part of the food hub so that they could address food insecurity through community connections, rather than formal food provision/relief.

This option had the most enthusiastic support from community members. They felt that it was tailored to local needs, and as a result was more responsive - particularly to varied cultural needs. They also saw that a networked approach with good communication between the community hubs was potentially the most unifying approach for Moreland as a whole, connecting the north and south of the area whilst providing activities that respond to local needs.

There is high community energy to pursue this option. There are two existing community food hubs - Fawkner Commons and the Ecological Justice Hub - who have expertise, energy, resources, and a lot of community endorsement. Supporting their scaling and security of tenure would be an immediately achievable goal.

To progress this, an EOI process could be held for sites/groups to submit proposals for 12 months of food activities. A possible funding guide / framework is provided below.

Suggested Budget

An indicative budget breakdown to support a Community Food Hub for 12 months is summarised in Table 2, suggesting up to $100,000 per Community Food Hub would be appropriate to activate a significant increase in capability and activity. The costs required to activate different sites and communities would vary greatly, depending on the extent to which they can leverage existing facilities, staff etc and the kinds of activities they are proposing. This example is for a Hub focused on food access and logistics - other Hubs may have a different focus. We suggest that at least one successful proposal should be primarily focused on logistics.

Table 2: Cost Guideline for Activation of Community Food Hubs

| Cost Area	Comment	Est. <= CFH	# of CFHs (2)
Site & Fitout	Support with lease costs, refrigeration, shelving and storage, incidentals - scales etc. NB. Where Council can assist with activating existing sites or securing access and tenure to suitable facilities this cost will reduce significantly.	$16,000	

Vehicle / Delivery	Sites at this size / scale are unlikely to justify vehicle purchase, but may seek support with hire	$14,144	
Expenses	Packaging, PPE, Cleaning etc	$1,600	
People	This is the most significant cost as 'activation' is the key activity - a paid 'activator' or 'coordinator' is the key to pulling it all together, managing and motivating volunteers, creating welcoming and thriving community etc. Costs include potential admin support, drivers, and small stipend for board / steering committees	$67,292	
Overheads	A budget line for other incidental expenses - insurance, web tools, accounting or legal advice etc	$1,000	
		$100,000	**$200,000**

We have suggested a 5-yr investment program, with significant up-front investment in two Community Food Hubs (within a transparent strategic learning framework) and continued but tapering support for these Hubs. This will enable them to have a baseline for a longer timeframe whilst also incentivising revenue through trade and build diversified funding streams.

Recommendation 4b outlines a 'Seeds of Change' funding program for small seed grants to surface and test more groups and ideas. We are proposing that funding be available to progress at least two more successful models into more established Community Food Hubs. This has the potential to create a network of Community Food Hubs throughout the North of Moreland - making local access more achievable over a larger area.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Community Food Hub 1	$100,000	$75,000	$50,000	$25,000	$25,000
Community Food Hub 2	$100,000	$75,000	$50,000	$25,000	$25,000
Community Food Hub 3		$25,000	$50,000	$75,000	$50,000
Community Food Hub 4			$25,000	$50,000	$75,000

Indicative 5-Yr Program
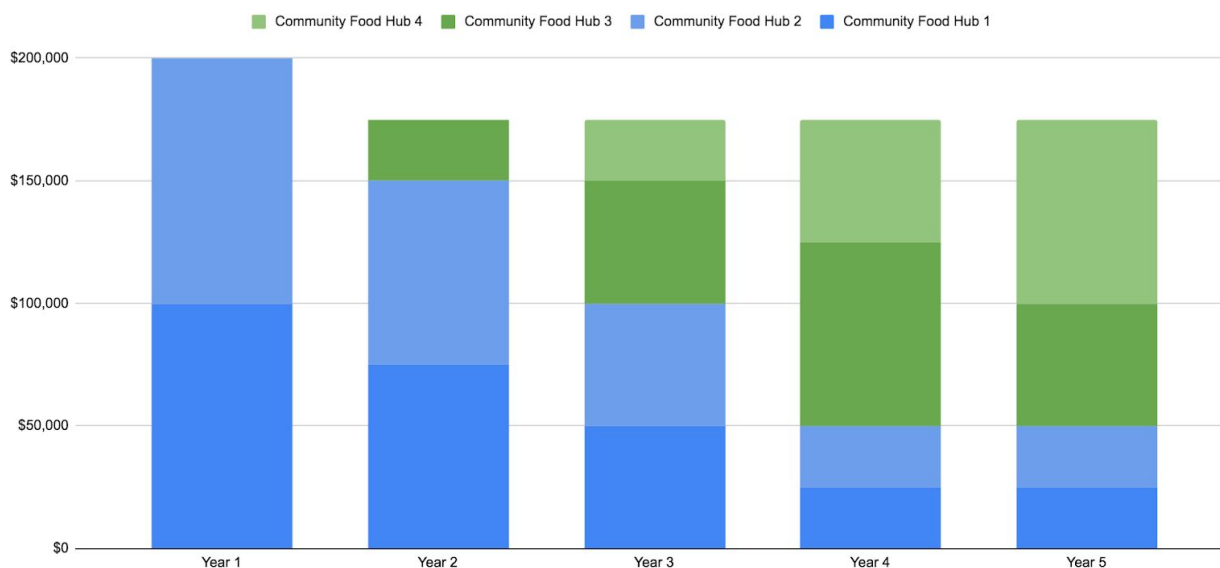
Governance Guidance

The Food Leadership Action Group would oversee the EOI / Application process for Community Food Hub Investment grants. Criteria for the EOI could / should include:

- Embedded - is the proposal coming from community members in the north of Moreland, clearly shaped and driven by the diverse community needs and interests of the area;
- Value for money - leveraging existing infrastructure, equipment, positions etc;
- Partnership - will this proposal strengthen the network and support mutually reinforcing activities of multiple stakeholders;
- Energy - do the proponents have clearly demonstrated history of action and successful collaboration, including within constrained resources (i.e. they make money go a long way); and
- Clarity of Council Support required - proposals can highlight where Council infrastructure, licensing and in-kind support would be of assistance.

Questions / Risks

There is an assumption that the existing community leaders in this space have the capacity and desire to scale up participation. While this is supported by community consultation, this model does rely on community activation - it won't work if there aren't people ready to step up and make things happen.

There is also likely to be a challenge around how much volunteer labour is still required, or is used because people want to participate in creating these solutions in their community but

don't see it as a professional opportunity. There can be tensions around the fact that the funds won't cover all project members and in 'professionalising' existing projects people may get excluded or lose motivation to volunteer. There are also challenges with funding enterprises - the most successful community food enterprises appear to be those where people have some stake in their success, rather than those enterprises where someone is being paid to run an enterprise and then the enterprise fails once initial funding runs out.

There are many ways to mitigate these risks. Detailed reports from some of our previous work cover some of them.[6]

Case study - The Stop

The Stop is a community food hub deeply embedded in the needs of the community it serves, in Toronto's West End. Their activities cover food relief, education, urban agriculture, community gardening, empowering activism and financial independence, and more.

They provide three days' worth of food each month to eligible community members through their Food Bank, which includes fresh produce, milk, eggs and whole grains thanks to partnerships and donor support. Ingredients are highlighted with recipes, cooking classes and more. A community kitchen also provides a space for people to learn to cook nutritious, culturally-diverse and affordable meals.

There are other food programs targeting specific community segments, such as Healthy Beginnings, a weekly pre- and post-natal nutrition and support program. Information, education and support are provided through group workshops, alongside individual care from nurses, dietitians, settlement workers, counsellor/therapists, and family support workers. Healthy meals, food hampers and vouchers are provided, and participation is supported with free childcare.

Socially inclusive drop-in spaces operate as a place where anyone can come and "enjoy nutritious food, meet others, and access information on social issues and community resources". Healthy breakfasts and lunches are available four days a week, alongside nutrition counselling and housing and legal services. These include workshops on things like tenants' and employment rights. Action programs empower people to take action through political advocacy and direct action.

Urban agriculture and community gardens are used for education and food growing. A weekly farmers' market draws over 2000 attendees and supports local farmers. A weekly pop-up cafe stall sells meals and snacks made from market produce.

There are also culturally-specific growing programs, including a partnership with the Native Men's Residence on one of the growing areas, which includes the Mashkikii;aki'ing (Medicine Earth) Medicine Wheel Garden. The program provides participants with opportunities to share and learn about plant medicine, gardening, and healthy living.

---

[6] Hill, S. (2019) *Community food enterprises: Their role in food system change, opportunities, challenges, and support needs.* Open Food Network Australia and Larsen, K. & Clarke, J. (2019) *South East Food Hub: Key Lessons & Recommendations from a Food Hub in Melbourne's South East,* Open Food Network Australia.

Recommendation 3: Establish a Logistics Hub that supports community and micro food hubs

Hypothesis: Coordinated access to fresh, quality and sustainable food, with storage, refrigeration and warehousing capabilities could underpin a network of diverse community food access options. Coordinated access to bulk pulses, grains, and dry goods could enable connections with Victorian growers who only sell in bulk (e.g. one tonne) quantities.

Proposal: One main warehousing hub, supporting a network of community food access sites, which could be shopfronts, home-based co-ops, community centres, micro hubs, community food hubs, etc.

Numerous community food enterprises on the frontline of providing food (including selling food) face significant challenges with sourcing produce regularly, storing it, refrigerated infrastructure, and more.

Recommendation 2 presents an approach that supports individual enterprises and sites with support to scale up - which can and should occur as soon as possible.

This recommendation is to commence work towards a single backend logistics hub that mutualises costs of storage, refrigeration, vehicles etc to meet the most challenging logistics constraints of community and micro scale hubs. This can be done in a way that relieves some workload of community food enterprises, underpinning their ability to engage with their communities in existing formats and venues, and expand their reach in response to the local needs and opportunities.

The key requirements of a logistics hub would be:

- Facilitate truck access, allowing enterprises to collaborate and purchase at a scale that reduces costs;
- Enable storage of produce - not necessarily for long periods, but enterprises identified that even being able to store fresh produce overnight would allow them to scale up operations;
- Facilitate packing - many enterprises wanted to efficiently pack produce (e.g. vegie boxes) in a food-safe space that enabled proper manual handling practices (e.g. using waist height packing tables with rollers);
- Facilitate division of bulk foods - there is the potential to access locally-grown grain at bulk prices if enterprises can divide bulk quantities; and
- Potentially store, load and unload vehicles - enabling sharing of vehicles across multiple hubs and therefore increasing options for delivery and expanded food access through the network.

Beyond those key needs, there is also the potential for storage of other equipment used to deliver programs. Depending on the priorities determined by those community food enterprises who opted in to the hub, an additional priority may be a commercial kitchen for meal preparation or small-scale processing and preserving.

The hub would *not* meet community needs for connection, meeting spaces, or classes, but *would* enable community food enterprises to deliver those outcomes and activities in a variety of locations and at a range of scales. By using existing community food enterprises as the 'spokes' in the model there is the opportunity to cover a broader range of geographical locations and a larger cross section of the community, with more diverse needs and connections.

Case study - Food Connect and the Food Connect Shed

Food Connect, in Brisbane, is a wholesale and retail food hub that supports a network of community food buying groups. Through their online shop, Food Connect offer a standard grocery offering for individual purchasers.

Through their wholesale arm, they provide buying opportunities for community and micro food hubs including buyer clubs and co-ops. They also supply to restaurants and cafes, food processors, and market stall holders who want to stock other farmers' produce on their stalls.

Food Connect work with around 90 farmers, in a very local model that cuts food miles by drawing produce from within 500 kilometres of Brisbane.

They now run Australia's only community-owned Food Shed, with over 20 food enterprises housed in the shared space. The Food Shed contains not just hub functionality but also commercial processing kitchens, shared loading docks for receiving and distribution, shared cold storage and dry goods storage, co-working spaces, event spaces and more.

It is assumed that this option will increase food security because smaller community food enterprises are addressing food insecurity reasonably effectively, but are constrained by infrastructure that limits their ability to expand. Similarly the need to find and use suitable infrastructure slows the establishment of more micro and community hubs throughout the area. Removing that barrier will enable both existing and new community food enterprises throughout the north of Moreland to deliver activities that address food insecurity.

Local access is context-specific and can be different for different parts of Moreland. We are proposing that provision of infrastructure that aids and enables localised enterprises will have greater impact than attempting to create a centralised solution that also aims to reach community.

Consultation participants were broadly in favour of this proposal, but less enthusiastic about this compared to Recommendation 2. They did see that having purpose-built infrastructure that was efficient would enable enterprises to focus on other activities beyond logistics. This in turn could unlock their time and resources to focus on on-the-ground delivery, or scaling up parts of their organisation that they see as core to their values and desired impact.

However, there were some concerns and clear directives about how it could / should be progressed, such as:

- some participants perceived this proposal as too centralised and likely to be too slow and unresponsive to community needs. It's possible that this concern was heightened due to the challenges presented by responding to COVID19 and that in less unusual circumstances this wouldn't have as much impact.
- complex logistics constraints are not just the physical building, but also infrastructure (e.g. cool rooms and trucks) and the expertise in managing large volumes of food. Just having a physical space wouldn't solve the problems.
- there was resistance to any idea that a logistics hub could be provided by using the existing capabilities of organisations in other parts of Moreland or beyond, or by 'bringing' or 'dropping' in expertise from elsewhere. A small number of participants suggested that an external organisation might be best placed to run it, but the majority were clear that it should be controlled by and delivered for enterprises in the north of Moreland.

We are recommending that work towards this solution should be continued, but with very strong attention to supporting its development in a way that embeds community needs and priorities inescapably at its core.

We are proposing that it will best be done if it is ***alongside*** rather than ***instead of*** Recommendation 2. It is critical to directly invest in the initiatives and organisations that are leading the way. This will strengthen capability, experience of existing community members as

well as further consolidating relationships, trust and partnerships that would then underpin a shared logistics hub.

Suggested Budget

The suggested budget below is based on a start-up / piloting budget for a logistics hub for 12 months, along with associated funds to support additional micro-hubs to take advantage of the facility.

Our proposed activities for progressing this option has a high focus on people and the purchase of a refrigerated vehicle that can be used to support diverse community food enterprise services. It also has a high cost for lease and fitout built into it. We encourage Council and the Food Leadership Action Group to first explore options for use of existing Council or other facilities, but there was no clear lead contender that emerged through the consultation. Lease of an independent and unencumbered warehouse space may be the best option.

Table 4: Cost Guideline for Activation of Logistics Hub

Cost Area	Comment	Hub
Site & Fitout	Support with lease costs, refrigeration, shelving and storage, incidentals - scales etc. NB. Where Council can assist with activating existing sites or securing access and tenure to suitable facilities this cost will reduce significantly. Some sites showing the range that could be considered include: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - some of these might go above the estimated cost.	$90,000
Vehicle / Delivery	Purchase and running costs of refrigerated vehicle, 2nd hand. Resale value will stay high	$49,000
Expenses	Packaging, PPE, Cleaning etc	$8,000
People	The main cost here is an appropriately qualified full-time manager to lead establishment and operation of the Hub. Costs also include potential admin support, warehouse staff, drivers, and small stipend for board / steering committees	$226,350
Overheads	A budget line for other incidental expenses - insurance, web tools, accounting or legal advice etc	$6,000
		$379,350

However, as outlined above - we are NOT proposing that attempting to fund a full 12-month pilot is the best next step.

We ARE proposing that:

- Recommendations 1 & 2 be progressed first
- Once the first year of Community Food Hub grants have been assessed and granted, the Food Leadership Action Group could focus on developing a pilot proposal and operating plan for a Logistics Hub trial, including building up partners and potential co-investors
- We are suggesting that funds be available for contributing to that work or the pilot itself in Year 2, with more significant funding available in Years 3-5 to scale up if the pilot is successful. NB. We are not proposing that Council be the sole funder of this work
- The EOI process for Community Food Hub Grants could be open to inclusion of proposals for a shared Logistics Hub in the north of Moreland, to assess if there is a group/collaboration that is ready to progress it. The *Food Leadership Action Group* could then assess any relevant proposals (potentially according to draft Criteria below) and recommend funding be brought forward to support further development. However, it must be clear that this will not be the only / most significant chance to progress this.

Disclaimer: As active participants in the local short food supply chain sector, we are aware of and actively involved in a number of live and collaborative conversations about potential shared and social enterprise warehousing needs in Melbourne. We consider it likely that these conversations will continue and mature, perhaps rapidly. We are open to and interested in the possibility of this occurring in the north of Moreland and will keep the community and Council abreast of any developments we become aware of, to ensure that opportunities for locating in this area are considered. However, our assessment of the community feedback is that progressing this as a primary goal - above Recommendations 1 & 2 - would NOT be consistent with the wishes of or best outcomes for the community.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Logistics Hub - Council seed investment		$75,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000

Questions / Risks

There is strong desire for this kind of enterprise to be 'by the north for the north' and to be firmly controlled by and embedded in organisations clearly committed to food justice and social inclusion. The proposed approach aims to respond to this by setting a pathway to build community capability, skills and cohesion to embark on this shared Hub within 2-3 years.

The assumption underpinning this model that community food enterprises will reach agreement on collaboration and be happy to work together to create this solution. While this assumption is supported by community consultation, this is likely to be a challenging relationship issue for enterprises with different values, budgets, and priorities, and delivering

OPEN FOOD NETWORK AUSTRALIA

this will require some effort. This is why Recommendations 1 & 2 (and 4) are so critical - ensuring that community leaders are resourced to participate and collaborate, and that the ability for the Community Food Hubs to do their core and immediate work is supported. We are hypothesising that these conditions are a necessary precursor to the greater collaboration and complexity of a proposed shared logistics hub.

As above - we encourage the Community Food Hub EOI process to be open to proposals also for the Logistics Hub. If there is an organisation or collaboration ready to focus on this now that the Food Leadership Action Group endorses and are happy to see progress or drive forward from Year 1, we fully endorse them being supported to do so.

Governance guidance

If a proposal is not forthcoming in the Community Food Hub EOI proposal, in Year 2 the Food Leadership Action Group would oversee the process of developing a collaborative proposal for a Logistics Hub to be run by one or more partners from the north of Moreland. Consideration could / should be given to whether the proposal is:

- Embedded - driven by one or more community members in the north of Moreland, clearly shaped and driven by the diverse community needs and interests of the area
- Community owned - embeds collective community control of any assets and services being developed, even if responsibility for implementation or service delivery may then be delegated to one or more organisations
- Value for money - leveraging existing infrastructure, equipment, positions etc
- Partnership - will this proposal strengthen the network and support mutually reinforcing activities of multiple stakeholders
- Energy - proponents have clearly demonstrated history of action and collaboration
- Clarity of Council Support required - proposals can highlight where Council infrastructure, licensing and in-kind support would be of assistance

Possible locations

A hub like this should be located in an area that facilitates truck access and logistics, with less attention paid to community access to the space. This most likely concentrates it in an industrial estate, business park, or on a main road.

Public transport access becomes less important as it is not the consumer/eater-facing outlet, but it should still be considered re. worker and volunteer participation.

Community identified that the warehouse hub should be located in Pascoe Vale, Fawkner or Coburg. The combination of requirements for truck access, transport, and building type mean that the area around Boundary Rd / Gaffney St / Sussex St presents reasonable options for a hub like this. Some sites showing the range that could be considered include: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - some of these might go above the estimated cost.

Recommendation 4: Council activating infrastructure and seeding community projects

The community consultation provided strong feedback that there are areas where Council could further address the goal of food security in the north, in addition to creating community food hub(s). We have included these additional recommendations as well as outlining how they tie in with the approach proposed in Recommendations 1-3. These again reflect strong community feedback, combined with evidence of effectiveness elsewhere.

a) Council facilitates infrastructure use for food projects

Freeing up community access to existing council facilities and assets could underpin a rapid increase in community food activities. This could be another solution to help smaller community food enterprises which are addressing food insecurity reasonable effectively, but are constrained by infrastructure. Council can underpin an increase in activity by:

- Conduct an Audit of Council-owned and managed facilities that may be suitable for Hub, Micro Hub or Community Food Hub activities (including community kitchens). Publish and maintain this audit so it is easy for communities to identify potential opportunities
- Improve community access to suitable infrastructure: free or cheaper rates for food justice activities; simplify booking and use
- Develop - with input from the Food Leadership Action Group - an assessment matrix for use of Council facilities, infrastructure and investment, with a clear commitment to prioritisation of community food access in decision-making and allocation. Work within and across Council to increase awareness of this priority in public spaces; environmental health teams etc
- Advocating to higher levels of government for additional community infrastructure
- This approach could be piloted with identification of 1-2 suitable assets and a focused Council effort on increasing access to / use of them.

Suggested Budget:

We have not suggested a budget line for this as it is primarily an internal Council role / responsibility. It would be up to Council Officers to suggest appropriate resourcing, lines of responsibility and ensure connections with appropriate strategy and policy e.g. it could be an expanded role for Food Systems Officer to facilitate access and streamline processes and/or increase requirement for other officers in Council to consider community food security in decision making.

Case study - Whittlesea Community Food Collective

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) are an emergency relief provider. They also lead a network of relief providers, including micro hub emergency food relief providers. They partnered with Yarra Valley Water to provide a 90 acre farm site with water access, and with Melbourne Polytechnic to begin using a disused building that met their needs on the Epping Campus.

The Whittlesea Community Food Collective opened its doors in December 2019 after two years of planning and hard work to secure the site. Led by WCC, the hub is a large building with truck access and a coolroom. They are 'A place full of food and opportunity'.

It was designed to meet the needs of emergency relief clients, achieved by involving them in the design. Clients spoke of the frustration of visiting multiple service providers for different needs like food, loans, petrol vouchers, housing assistance, and more. As a result the food hub also contains access to these services.

"It was a distribution centre that turned into a farm and a food collective. We decided would always prioritise where it came from - the best quality food for those who need it the most - but it's going to do a lot more than that because it is community-led," says Alex Haynes, CEO of Whittlesea Community Connections. For this project, securing a physical space has been the key thing that unlocked community input, donations of time and outfitting, and momentum on the project.

"You actually can't do stuff without space. You still need to know what you're doing, and know who the people are and know what the needs are," Alex says. "If I hadn't found a space I would still just be talking about it, and probably eventually I would have given up."

In terms of governance, it's run by WCC with a Community Advisory Group who help guide it, which keeps it focused on food and accessibility. WCC signed the lease on hub building, and already had training pathways and access to those needing emergency relief. They took an approach that community assets should be opened up for community use. Critical success factors included a strong backbone organisation, partnerships for assets and programs, a clear mission, and an empowered, persistent core team.

b) Nourishing the network of community food enterprises

There was a sense that the existing organisations/activities in the north of Moreland would be able to adequately address food insecurity if they were better connected to each other and better financed. Achieving this connection would involve drawing on the existing network of community food enterprises, food relief organisations, etc. to create a more systems-based approach of all working together to address food insecurity.

Council's existing *Moreland Local Food Network* presents an opportunity to deepen connections between enterprises, and help existing community food enterprises target food insecurity. We are assuming (with evidence from the community) that existing community food enterprises would be happy to work together if there were more funding to coordinate their work and to pay for time required to participate in the activities that network solutions and create systems change. This may overcome the barriers to participation that currently prevent people from attending Network events and engaging with the Network, and in doing so create more impact from the Network.

More effective activation of the Network could be piloted through a 'seeds of change' grant program. These would be small seed grants (e.g. $5-15K), designed to test and surface early-stage ideas and people with potential to support food security outcomes. The grant program could be run by Council but with advice and endorsement from the Food Leaders Action Group (supported by the resources provided in Recommendation 1A). Grant requirements could include:

- Compulsory participation in network activities;
- Inclusion in the Impact Framework and Assessment process and commitment to collective strategic learning; and
- Selection of strategic projects to be complementary and building towards a systemic response. For example, testing and developing different components and approaches to Micro & Community Food Hubs, building out the network that can then be supported by a Logistics Hub

NB. New and existing enterprises can be strengthened and scaled through enterprise support programs such as food incubators or launchpads, and business mentoring and coaching. We have not proposed specific community food enterprise incubation programs because we understand that there are likely possibilities through existing council (and state government) enterprise and business support programs. If this were not the case, specific and targeted enterprise mentoring and support programs could potentially apply for Seeds of Change grants.

Suggested Budget:

Resources for FLAG advice / endorsement and setting up the Impact Framework / Collective Impact environment for these new initiatives are included within Recommendation 1. Running, assessing and contracting the grants etc would need to be within Council resources.

The funding shown below is recommended for the actual Grant pool. NB. It is higher in the first two years and then reduces slightly to reflect the likely 'backlog' of ripe projects that would apply in the first two years.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Seeds of Change Grants	$70,000	$70,000	$50,000	$50,000	$30,000

Case study - Ripe for Change

"Ripe for Change is a place-based community grants program delivered by Sustainable Table, in partnership with founding philanthropic partners, Morris Family Foundation and Garry White Foundation. It was designed to improve our food-system and deliver enhanced health, employment and sustainability outcomes for the population and environment.

Ripe for Change began in 2017-18, following an in-depth review of local food-system challenges in Victoria. This revealed the key leverage points where philanthropic engagement could have the most meaningful impact at a community level.

Taking a 'place-based' approach has proven an effective way to empower community-led solutions. Since inception, Ripe for Change has developed deep connections within Casey, Cardinia, and the Mornington Peninsula, which forms a highly productive region of Victoria's foodbowl. Over $330,000 has now been awarded in food-system grants; strong relationships have been formed; and Ripe for Change has evolved into a powerful connector in the region."

IMPACT AREA 1

Farming for Regeneration & Resilience

IMPACT AREA 2

Innovative Enterprises

IMPACT AREA 3

Nutritious & Local Food for All

IMPACT AREA 4

Mobilised Communities

Recommendation 5: A Big Bold Vision . .

There is a future option that may manage to combine the two hub options above. There was certainly community appetite for a hub that combined both the community connections and activities of Recommendation 2 with the significant warehousing and logistics abilities of Recommendation 3. This type of hub would be a large site containing:

- significant warehousing capacity (truck access, packing areas, refrigerated storage, etc);
- an urban farm with training and social aspects;
- space for outdoor markets and a retail shop;
- commercial and teaching kitchens for meal preparation, education, and micro-enterprise incubation

However, as outlined above, there is extremely strong community desire to see any solution led by truly locally-embedded organisations, not external organisations (even if those organisations already run food hubs or food systems projects). There doesn't appear to be community capacity to currently run something of the scale envisioned and described.

Therefore to create a larger-scale community food hub that combined higher volume logistics *and* community activities will need to be a longer-term approach. We suggest that implementation of Recommendations 1, 2 and 4 *is* the best way to progress towards a possibility of this kind of Hub in the future. Investing in smaller community food enterprises scaling up over a number of years, building capacity, skills, and relationships, will build towards the ability to establish and maintain such a Hub within and controlled by this community.

We also emphasise that this is the *lowest priority* recommendation because of the extremely high priority that participants consistently placed on *ultra-local food access and building strong connections within their own immediate communities*. Focusing efforts on one mega-all-functions-site inevitably means that it is more accessible to some people than others. Investing in the network of Community Food Hubs and Micro Hubs first is the key to local and deeply connected community food access and engagement opportunities for diverse communities throughout the north of Moreland.

Successful early implementation of Recommendations 1, 2 and 4 could allow for this Ultimate Hub to be considered for progress in place of Recommendation 3, as it transcends and includes that capacity. It would increase the complexity of finding and funding a suitable site, but should one become available we again endorse going with it - *pending endorsement by the Food Leadership Action Group*. That Group provides the capacity to assess and take opportunities if they arise, while confident that the needs and priorities of the real community are never set aside for the thrill of a big 'all singing all dancing' project.

Case study - Farm on Ogden (USA)

Farm on Ogden is run by the Chicago Botanical Gardens. It is a distribution centre, urban farm, and more. Cooking and nutrition classes are offered to teach healthy food consumption. They offer affordable or free produce for community health patients with diet-related diseases. Their VeggieRx program allows local doctors to prescribe vegetables from the program, giving people access to fresh produce.

They produce large amounts of food on 15 farms, to redistribute into local communities. This is supported by an aggregation space. They also run an urban farm, including a large aquaponics set-up to produce not only fresh produce but also fish.

The organisation supports more than 60 community garden plots for locals to also grow their own food. A network of public markets across the city offers produce from the farms. There is also an undercover, year-round fresh produce market on-site.

Training programs provide paid, on-the-job training for more than 200 people each year, and they have incubated 20 small farm businesses. A commercial kitchen provides training and community access to food preparation space.

Cumulative Suggested Funding

Indicative 5-Yr Program
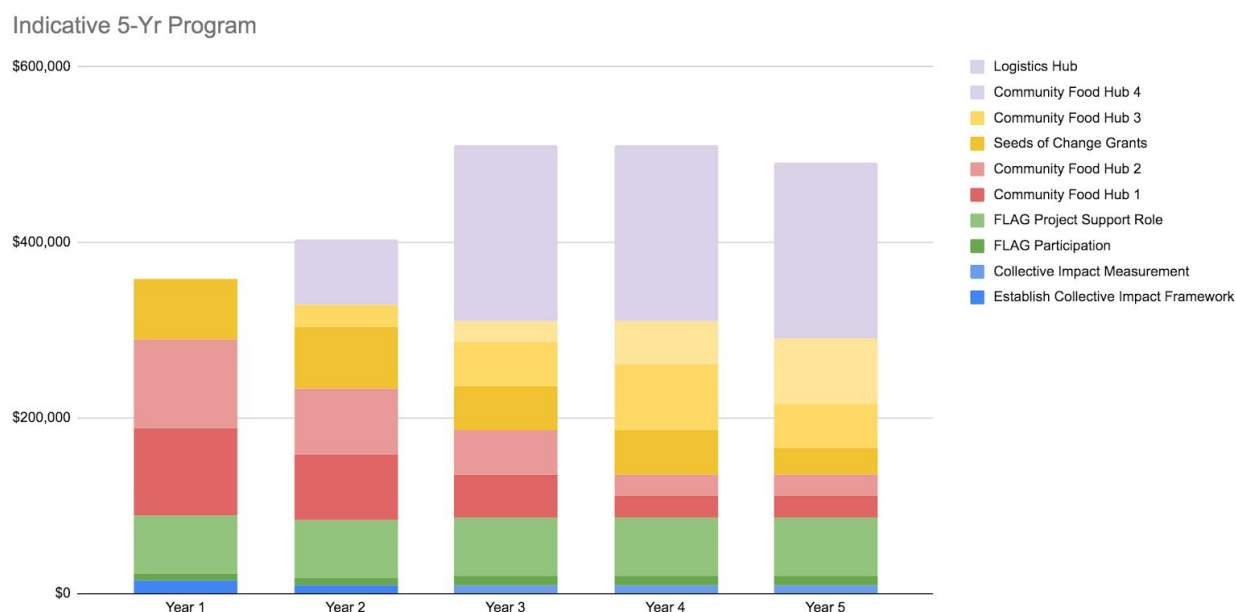
Additional project possibilities

During the consultation a number of other ideas were raised by the community as projects that would help address food insecurity. These were outside the scope of a 'food access' focused food hub feasibility assessment, but are worth documenting as additional possibilities for council consideration.

An urban farm and hub at Fawkner Cemetery

Community members identified the Fawkner Cemetery as a potential location for an urban farm. The basis for this was the location, which is central and easily accessed by numerous forms of transport; the fact that a cafe already exists on site and could meet community needs for a meeting place; that there is land available; and that the Cemetery Trust have expressed support for food growing on cemetery grounds with their enthusiastic endorsement of the Community Graft program. The Community Graft aims to graft food-growing varieties onto receptive ornamental trees, making food available to community and engaging local community with the cemetery as public space.

It can be daunting to reimagine new uses for urban space, and cultural traditions are core to community. However in testing times new solutions can become possible. While there may not be broader community appetite right now for an idea that uses cemetery land, when

faced with a choice between widespread food insecurity and those existing concerns, it's possible to see that great change and adaptation are possible in short periods of time.

A network of urban farms

Community members felt that there was potential for a network of urban farms across public spaces. They envisioned these as spaces of engagement, growing, distribution and public benefit. Some of the locations included sites along Merri Creek, in parks and sporting field areas, and in urban streets.

Public planting can be used to great effect for food security, and can be a means to produce culturally appropriate fruit and vegetables. Chris Williams has demonstrated this across Melbourne, e.g. planting Mountain Paw Paw and Taro in public City of Dandenong spaces with council support, or planting sweet potato crops at Northcote pool for use in their cafe.

With any urban farming projects consideration must be made of non-food uses of space, such as biodiversity, and care must be taken to not presume that spaces are 'empty' when they may play significant cultural or recreational roles for particular community segments. Care should also be taken around appropriating land in a way that perpetuates colonial practices, and projects can benefit from using the opportunity to engage with Indigenous communities over land practices and sovereignty.

6. Closing Remarks

> **"Food justice** seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly. Food justice represents a transformation of the current food system, including but not limited to eliminating disparities and inequities.**"** - Robert Gottlieb & Joshi Anupama, *Food Justice*, 2010

In December 2019 when we tendered to do this project, we outlined our theory of change in food systems which focuses on activating local people and local solutions, supported to apply lean approaches to experimentation and scale of community food enterprises. Our attention tends to focus on building networks of autonomous enterprises over centralised approaches to scale impact. Our openness to hearing and reflecting this proposed approach from the participants in this project therefore likely comes as no surprise.

However, at the outset of this project and even at the conclusion of the first round of consultation none of us knew what kind of year 2020 was to be. The bushfires that engulfed Australia drove innovation and adaptation in stressed and terrified regional communities - while ringing a warning bell about brittle food supply chains loud and clear. Then COVID-19 brought it home to Melbourne. For many people across Melbourne (and the world) this was their first real experience - yes, this is what food insecurity feels like.

The diverse communities in the north of Moreland stepped up and shone in ways that were only hinted at in the first round of consultations. There could not have been a stronger demonstration of the power and capability that rests in our communities when they put their minds to the task. As larger institutions moved as fast as they could to respond, people in communities in the north of Moreland started to work together to feed each other. They drew on pre-existing and new networks, they jumped on ideas that had surfaced in the consultations, and they started moving food. They are continuing to do so, but surge capacity cannot hold.

The food system shocks we have seen this year are not the end-game, they are more likely the beginning. A climate emergency - as recognised by Moreland Council - will be just one future challenge in this vein. Moreland Council has an opportunity to use this momentum now, to drive a step-change in local government recognition and empowerment of community-led food justice action. This can nourish and grow the community capability, networks and infrastructure that will underpin adaptation and response for years to come.

We see Council's opportunity here is to:

- Establish ongoing funding streams for continuing investment in **community capability** and **infrastructure**

- Be a partner, friend, facilitator and investor while establishing strong and resilient democratic and participatory processes, and setting up a strategic learning environment to maximise impact.
- Facilitate scale-up by linking broader domains of Council towards food justice aims - such as economic development and community wellbeing

We emphasise that significant and ongoing funding is required to ensure that a food justice approach is non-negotiable and does not get 'traded-off'. The justification for funding includes:

- Community Food Hubs and Community Food Enterprises need public and philanthropic support especially for the start-up phase (first 3-5 years).[7] Council can be a leading investor in this space, in a way that facilitates and unlocks co-investment from other partners.
- Funding enables projects that provide pathways to livelihoods (i.e. not just volunteers) and reduce dependence on donated seconds food by instead facilitating access to skills and space to grow food, or food grown by others in the community.
- There was also a consistently strong message from the community that funding is needed to ensure equitable access and participation in food enterprise opportunities. When funding isn't provided, solutions can become more oriented to those with privilege - often in terms of time, language, or comfort within existing bureaucratic structures - and leave others out.

The approach we have outlined also responds to a key consideration in building longevity and resilience within the enterprises themselves. There is also evidence that the most successful and effective food hubs in Australia are driven by passionate locals committed to seeing their enterprise thrive. Attempts to start food hubs from external organisations without community buy-in or passionate 'unstoppable' founders are yet to succeed in Australia, and usually falter when the first large tranche of funding is finished. By focusing strongly on people and enterprises that have already demonstrated commitment and impact, the risk of funding 'good ideas' with inadequate energy and commitment is significantly reduced.

Our Recommendations address these concerns by suggesting a pathway for targeted but flexible funding for building community capability and infrastructure, while strongly incentivising partnerships, and establishing a Collective Impact framework for continual improvement in understanding and effectiveness.

---

[7] Olya and Rysin, 2016; Fischer, Pirog and Hamm, 2015, cited in Hill, S. (2019) *Community food enterprises: Their role in food system change, opportunities, challenges, and support needs. Open Food Network Australia, p16* ; Larsen, Sheridan & Hill (2019), *Sustainable Food Systems - Philanthropy Briefing,* Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network here

The project team

Our experience at the Open Food Network working with food hubs and food system interventions is that local knowledge, relationships, drive and commitment are absolutely non-negotiable and critical to long-term viability. Over our 10 years focused on working intensively with community food enterprises we have developed significant expertise in operating models, functions, governance, supporting infrastructure and finance.

One of our key learnings and operating principles is always to support and empower local activists as they are the ones who make things happen. That is why we have partnered in this project with Dr Jen Rae of Fair Share Fare. Jen is already locally connected with many of the food systems actors, and has an in-depth understanding of the challenges of engagement and empowerment in these communities. Jen guided the development of a consultation approach that integrated with and enhanced other local food systems consultation occuring in the same time period - to ensure that the right people were involved, and to avoid 'consultation fatigue'.

One of the challenges of working with completely embedded stakeholders is that there can be a perception of bias. To avoid any conflict of interest, Jen Rae was involved in the early consultation phases of the project, but was not party to the data from later stages of consultation. This was communicated to those being consulted so that they knew they could speak freely without any impact on local relationships.

Open Food Network was responsible for analysing the data and making recommendations to Council. Jen Rae was not included in this stage of the project to avoid any conflict of interest arising. The recommendations made have been based on wide consultation.

Project resources

All project method resources, including the food hub visioning game, will be published at https://about.openfoodnetwork.org.au/resources/

You can sign up to our newsletter to be notified of their release.

Appendix 1

The detail of how this framework has been developed is in [Attachment 1: Local Food Enterprise Framework - Summary](#). It has been developed using both a bottom-up community-driven identification of value (through the Moreland consultations), as well as a comprehensive 'top-down' analysis of key impact areas and potential measures derived from global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Economics of Environment and Biodiversity (TEEB) Evaluation Framework for Agriculture and Food.

Appendix 1 shows summaries of the Categories, Impact Areas and relevant SDGs and TEEB assessment. To see the full framework, including draft potential measures against each of these Impact Areas, view [here](#)

Impact Area	Type	SDGs	TEEB	TEEB Capital / Flow
CATEGORY Healthy Food Consumption Count 3				
1 Increases access to healthy, sustainable, local (good) food	Direct	3.4.1. 2.2.2 2.1.	4.2 Food security (access, distribution)	Social capital
2 Increases consumption of F&V, wholefoods etc	Direct	2.2.2	3.2 Health	Human capital
3 Decreases consumption of unhealthy foods	Indirect	3.4.1.	3.2 Health	Human capital
+				
CATEGORY Environmental Sustainability Count 7				
4 Reduces food waste	Direct	11.6.1 12.3.1	8.1 Agricultural and food waste	Residuals
5 Minimises net greenhouse emissions	Direct In	9.4.1	1.6 Carbon 1.3 Air 8.2 GHG emissions	Residuals, Natural capital, Nat...
6 Reduces packaging and other waste	Direct In	12.2.1 14.1.1 12	8.5 Solid waste and other residuals	Residuals
7 Reduces energy use	Direct	7.3.1	6.2 Intermediate consumption (produced inp	Purchased inputs
8 Uses renewable energy	Direct In	7.2.1	6.2 Intermediate consumption (produced inp	Purchased inputs
9 Drives / incentivises regenerative farming practices	Indirect	2.4.1 15.2.1 15.	1.6 Carbon 1.1 Water (incl.quality, quantity)	Natural capital, Natural capita...
10 Strengthens native and agricultural biodiversity	Indirect	2.5.2 15.5.1 15.	1.4 Vegetation cover and habitat quality 1.5	Natural capital, Natural capital

CATEGORY Community Connection & Resilience				Count 3		
11	Increases equitable access to good food		1.3.1	4.2 Food security (access, distribution)	Social capital	
12	Provides engagement and empowerment opportunities for disadv…		8.3.1	4.3 Opportunities for empowerment (gender	Social capital	
13	Supports social cooperation and community development			4.4 Social cooperation (incl. networks/unions	Social capital	
+						

CATEGORY Education & Skills				Count 3		
14	Educates community			3.1 Education/skills	Human capital	
15	Educates volunteers and staff			6.1 Labour inputs (incl. skills) 3.1 Education/	Human capital, Purchased inp…	
16	Educates producers			3.1 Education/skills	Human capital	
+						

CATEGORY Economic Development				Count 11		
17	Financials: 'viable' business model, in which trade / enterprise con…	Direct	8.1.1	5.2 Income: value added, operating surplus	Agricultural and food outputs	
18	Profit / operating surplus (including for social purpose or reinvest…	Direct	2.3.1 8.1.1	5.2 Income: value added, operating surplus	Agricultural and food outputs	
19	Contributions to public good are valued and paid for (somehow)	Direct		5.2 Income: value added, operating surplus	Agricultural and food outputs	
20	Value added	Direct	9.2.2 9.2.1	5.2 Income: value added, operating surplus	Agricultural and food outputs	
21	Local employment opportunities	Direct	2.3.1	6.1 Labour inputs (incl. skills) 3.3 Working c	Human capital, Purchased inp…	
22	Employees have fair and rewarding work conditions	Direct		6.1 Labour inputs (incl. skills) 3.3 Working c	Human capital, Purchased inp…	
23	Food safety	Direct		3.2 Health 5.1 Agricultural and food product	Agricultural and food outputs,…	
24	Resilient and adaptable enterprise	Direct	13.2.1	4.4 Social cooperation (incl. networks/unions	Social capital	
25	Network and infrastructure, collaboration	Direct Un	9	4.4 Social cooperation (incl. networks/unions	Social capital	
26	Tenure & strength	Underpin		2.3 Infrastructure 2.2 Machinery 2.1 Buildin	Produced capital, Produced c…	
27	Finance	Underpin		2.5 Finance	Produced capital	

CATEGORY Food Sovereignty				Count 7		
28	Increases First Nations self-determination and/or control of land a…		5.A.1	4.1 Land access/tenure (private, public and c	Social capital	
29	Increases farm viability and control in supplying producers	Direct	5.A.1 2.3.2 2.B	4.1 Land access/tenure (private, public and c	Agricultural and food outputs,…	
30	Increases land access for food production	Direct In	1.4.2 2.4.1	4.1 Land access/tenure (private, public and c	Social capital	
31	Increases worker control of food systems	Direct		4.1 Land access/tenure (private, public and c	Social capital	
32	Increases eater and community control of their food systems	Direct		4.1 Land access/tenure (private, public and c	Social capital	
33	Business Structure					
34	Transparency					
+						

CATEGORY Food System / Sector Environment				Count 5		
35	Support for regenerative farm transition - enabling policy and pro…	Underpin	2.C.1 2.B.1	4.6 Laws and regulation (e.g. child labor) 4.5	Agricultural and food outputs,…	
36	Research & Development investment in the sector, self-funded by…	Underpin	9.5.1	4.5 Institutions 5.3 Subsidies, taxes and inte	Agricultural and food outputs,…	
37	Support for climate transition - enabling policy and programs	Underpin	13.2.1 12.C.1	4.6 Laws and regulation (e.g. child labor) 4.5	Agricultural and food outputs,…	
38	Support for short supply chains	Underpin		4.6 Laws and regulation (e.g. child labor) 4.5	Agricultural and food outputs,…	
39	Part of the movement: your involvement in broader systems change					

This project is funded by Moreland City Council.