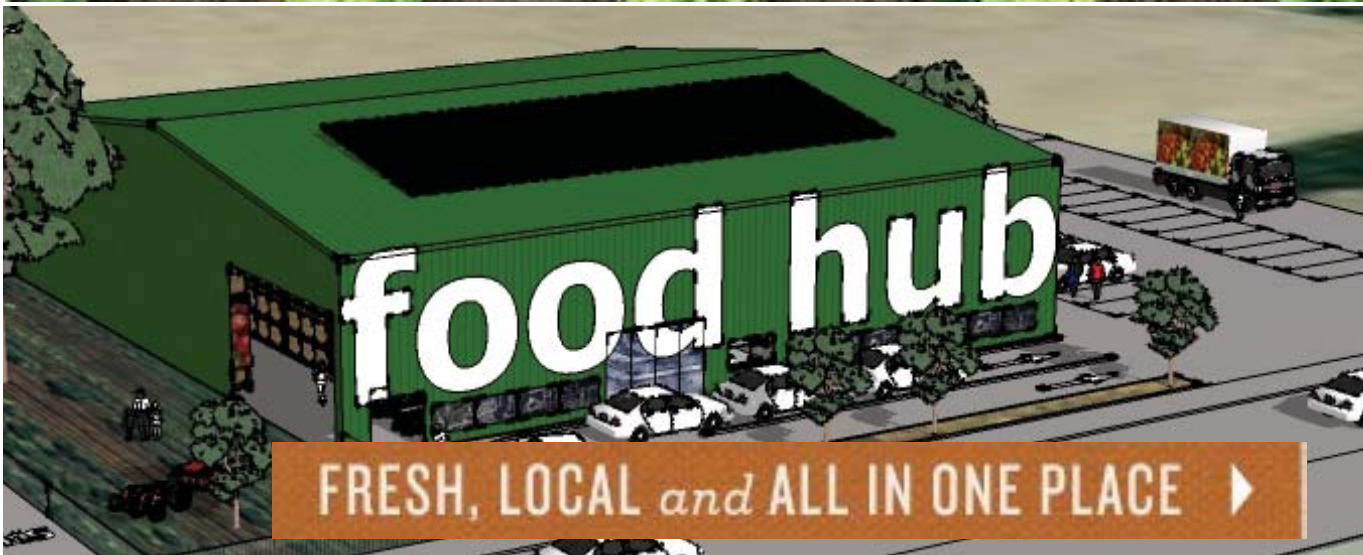


Imagining a Casey

Food Hub



"The Casey Cardinia region is a highly productive food bowl and has an increasingly vital role to play in feeding Victoria's population. It is one of Australia's most fertile and valuable agriculture areas." (City of Casey, 2008)

Food Hubs are being established around the world to provide a 'missing middle man' in local food infrastructure. They make it easier for farmers to sell into local markets and for people to access fresh, seasonal food.



Introduction

Intensifying challenges to how our food is produced, processed, distributed and eaten are not just problems for other parts of the world - they are showing up in Casey. These challenges mean that changing the way we do things is both unavoidable and necessary. They include:

- People not being able to access healthy, nutritious and affordable food, leading to poor nutrition and increasing food insecurity
- Declining viability of farming in the area, and the loss of productive farms and farmers
- A vulnerability amongst the majority of residents to increasing costs (associated with resource scarcity) and economic downturn
- Significant and continuing loss of healthy ecosystems that will support the well-being of future generations

However, these challenges are also driving a wave of innovation and the re-invigoration of regional food systems. The City of Casey is uniquely positioned to take advantage of these emerging ideas, as many of them address the needs of urban populations and offer new opportunities for highly productive farms and farmers close-by. Concepts like those outlined in this document open up opportunities for:

- New skills, jobs and businesses supplying markets for regional produce
- Improving access for Casey residents to fresh, quality and affordable produce
- Better prices and market outlets for regional producers
- Strengthening both landscapes and communities through better connections to our food and farmers

This concept document is intended to provide a platform for deeper engagement and discussion about what a Food Hub in Casey could achieve.

It is very much a work in progress, and further development will continue to be heavily dependent on the engagement and participation of a widening range of key stakeholders and local leaders.



What are Food Hubs?

Food Hubs originated in the United States over the past decade and a half, and they are now operating right across the country, many experiencing strong growth and expansion. Both in the US and beyond, they represent a conscious effort to build on the many thriving and highly popular examples of emerging local food economies, such as farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture enterprises, by identifying and meeting key gaps in local circuits of food production, distribution and consumption.

The primary functions of Food Hubs are usually the aggregation, marketing and distribution of local fresh produce. In some ways they resemble a wholesaler, with the key difference being that their mandate is to source as much local produce as possible, and channel it into local businesses, institutions and households.



A Food Hub is a 'centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.'

There are now at least 100 food hubs operating in the USA and many of these are experiencing rapid growth e.g. the turnover of the Local Food Hub in Charlottesville grew from \$74K in its first year (2009) to \$600K in 2011.

Some longer running food hubs have become significant local businesses. One food hub surveyed by the USDA in 2011 has 100 suppliers, including many small and mid-sized producers, and offers over 7,000 products. They own a 30,000 sq. ft. warehouse and 11 trucks, with 34 full-time employees and over \$6 million in gross sales in 2010.

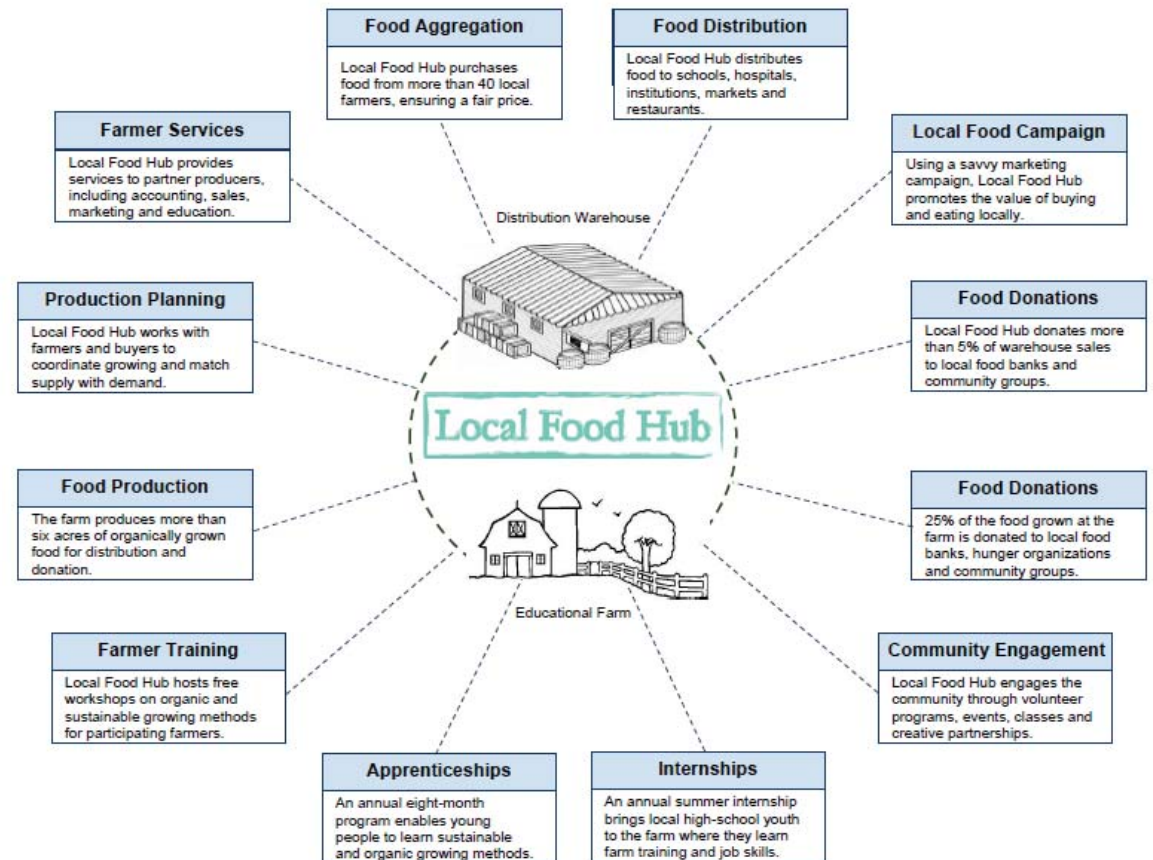
(USDA, 2011)

What do Food Hubs achieve for the community?

By aggregating and brokering into local markets, Food Hubs can streamline marketing and procurement of produce, assist with food safety requirements and often also incorporate elements of training and education e.g. working with local growers to build capacity, diversify production and share information about sustainable production practices.

Food Hubs are usually run as either for-profit or not-for-profit social enterprises; and the experience in the US has been that over time they can achieve financial viability in their own right. However, they often have financial or in-kind support from government and/or philanthropic funds in their start-up phases.

We have prepared a series of case studies to showcase different models of food hubs operating or under development around the world. These are available at www.eaterprises.com.au.



Local Food Hub * localfoodhub.org * P.O. Box 4647, Charlottesville, VA 22905 * (434) 286-2176

The two core objectives that are common across the Food Hubs that we have surveyed are:

- ***Improving the livelihoods of local farmers and growers***
- ***Increasing access to healthy fresh food for all residents***

Key Considerations for Casey

The scoping process to date has included a desktop review of documentation outlining the key challenges and current response strategies in Casey, as well as preliminary consultations with Casey Council staff, growers and representatives of food relief agencies. These processes informed a framework that was further developed in a workshop held in the Old Shire Offices on 9 August 2011.

Consultations suggest that three core objectives should be priorities for a Casey Food Hub.

Critical Objective	Rationale – why a primary concern?
1. Better marketing outlet and fair prices for producers	For farming to be retained and become more valued in the area, the farmers must be viable and want to stay (or investment from new farmers must be encouraged).
2. Healthy eating for residents – more fruit and vegetables	The health and food security concerns of the area are paramount, with higher than average obesity and poor physical activity coupled with high housing stress, employment vulnerability and increasing food stress.
3. Skill development, community connection and job creation through new local enterprises	Opportunities for re-skilling and enterprise development in sectors that are sustainable in the long-term are critical. An essential objective of this initiative is as a 'springboard' for jobs, training and innovative food system entrepreneurs.

Consultations also identified four distinct stakeholder groups to be considered as priority groups in this initial phase. These are by no means the only relevant stakeholders, just a starting point to identify core functions and to scope strategies for implementation.

Producers / Growers	Eaters
Small producers: 10 or more lines, sales channels through wholesale markets (Footscray), farmers markets and small amounts sold directly (e.g. Cranbourne Market, F&V).	Average family consumers - 'Mr and Mrs Casey': "The problem is dire but understandable" – couple with two kids, both working and driving to work out of the city, tired in evenings, maybe not a lot of extra cash, high debt and vulnerable – "It's hard to compete with the \$20 maccas meal – no cooking, no dishes, everyone's fed"
Large producers: 2-3 lines, substantial amounts of produce, intensifying and expanding to stay competitive. Mostly selling through supermarkets and wholesale markets (Footscray), important not to jeopardise relationships with their key buyers.	Low income consumers: Doing it tough – low-SES group, with poor physical and/or financial access to healthy food as well as limited training and employment opportunities. A diverse group, increasingly visible in demand for food relief or malnourished children in schools.

Concepts for a Casey Food Hub designed with these core objectives and key stakeholder groups in mind are outlined on the following pages.

A Food Hub for Casey

There is a strong case for a Food Hub in Casey to be based within a piece of physical infrastructure, so that it provides a permanent physical place for growers and eaters to exchange and enjoy high quality local produce. The social aspects of farmers' markets were mentioned repeatedly throughout the consultations, as was the demand for more regularity in opportunities to sell directly in the area. From the eater side, key issues that arose were around competing with fast food and energy dense pre-packaged meals, with more convenient, affordable meals for tired and car-dependent families. The need for accessible and regular meals was also

highlighted as a priority for food relief services.

The three core ideas or 'modules' that emerged for the proposed food hub are outlined below. Each module reflects a unique set of activities and skills for implementation. At the same time, each module would potentially be part of a single entity and operation, and are therefore being considered as mutually supportive and interdependent.



1) Aggregation, marketing and distribution for local growers

- Buyer of regional produce, broker into local sales channels – potentially overarching local Casey brand
- Aiming for regular and significant purchase from growers - with an initial focus on **small / medium farmers** (potential to buy all produce)
- Kitchen and processing facilities on site to turn gluts and seconds into quality processed products (e.g. chutney) and prepared meals (sold fresh and frozen), juices etc.
- No food to landfill - integrated waste processing
- Increased retention of local food dollar

2) Good value and convenient access to healthy affordable prepared and fresh food

- A healthy 'fast food' outlet, offering sit-down, take-away and drive-through meal options
- Branded to attract 'aspirational' eaters – fast, clean, quick and tasty
- Accessible to all, with flexibility in payment i.e. cash, vouchers, volunteer time etc.
- Attractive to children (playground)
- Simplicity - tasty meals that you could also cook at home

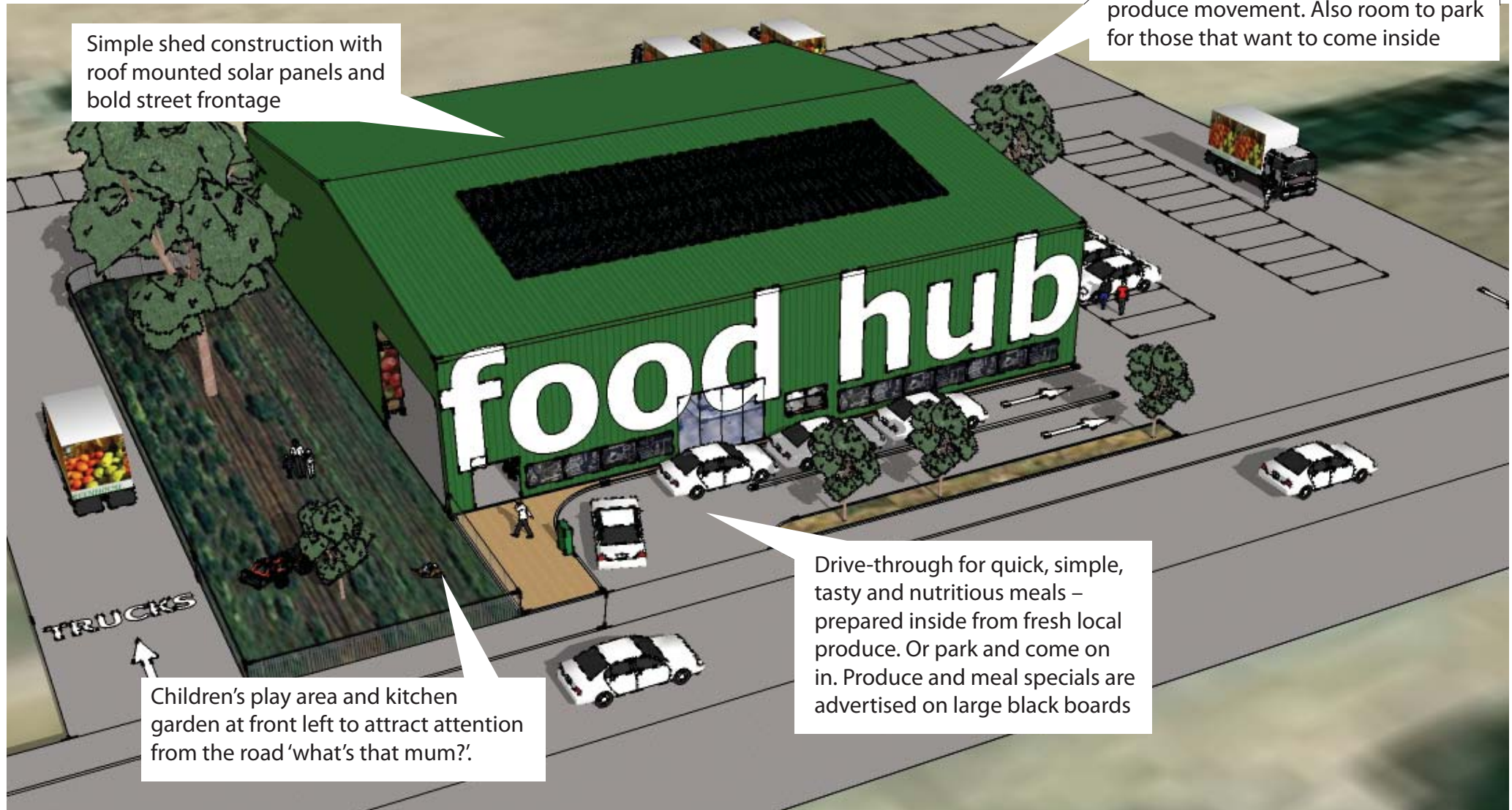
3) Enterprise and employment pathways – catering and hospitality; warehousing and distribution

- Partnership with TAFE to offer certification in (e.g.) warehousing & forklift driving; catering & food preparation; horticulture; business development etc.
- Government training subsidy to support set-up and potentially ongoing operational costs (without being sole funding source)
- Aiming to build local capability in all aspects of food system, and everybody coming through training programs gets basic 'kitchen garden' experience

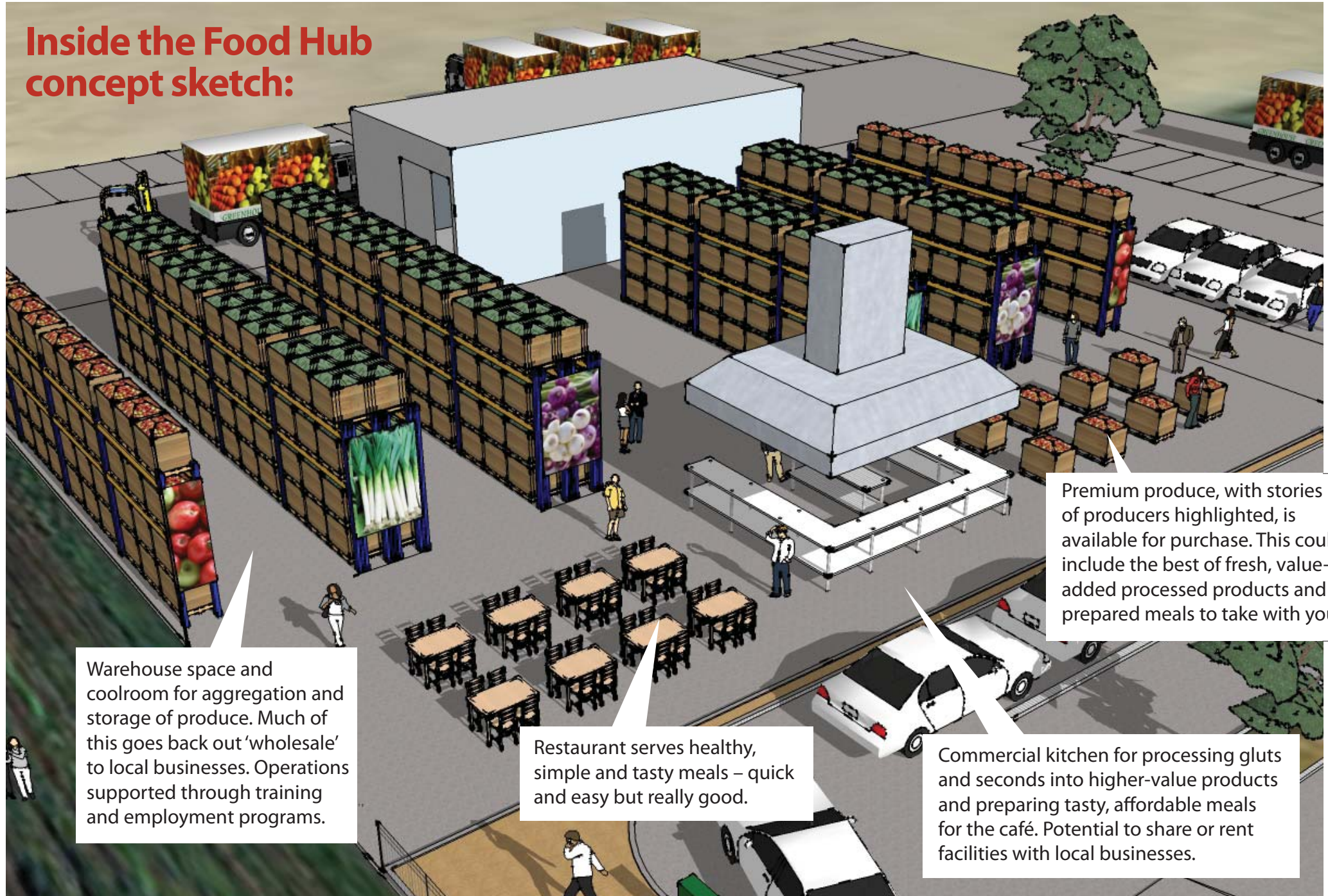
The core modules would be critical as the fundamental building blocks for the hub. We anticipate that each should be designed to deliver revenue streams within a short time frame of commencement, with a view to working towards independent financial viability of the Hub following an initial establishment phase. In the remainder of this paper, we outline these core modules in more detail.

A Food Hub for Casey - concept sketches

These computer modeled architectural sketches have been created to illustrate how a Food Hub at Casey could be simply designed to provide a mix of services for farmers and the general community. These designs are intended as 'conversation starters'. A final Casey Food Hub design could end up being many times larger or much smaller depending upon the needs and desires for the local community.



Inside the Food Hub concept sketch:



Warehouse space and coolroom for aggregation and storage of produce. Much of this goes back out 'wholesale' to local businesses. Operations supported through training and employment programs.

Restaurant serves healthy, simple and tasty meals – quick and easy but really good.

Commercial kitchen for processing gluts and seconds into higher-value products and preparing tasty, affordable meals for the café. Potential to share or rent facilities with local businesses.

Premium produce, with stories of producers highlighted, is available for purchase. This could include the best of fresh, value-added processed products and prepared meals to take with you.

Module 1: Aggregation, marketing and distribution for local growers

The Food Hub would be an aggregator, marketer and distributor of local and regional produce – directing produce into different streams to obtain (and return to local growers) the highest possible value of that produce.

Highest quality produce would be featured and available to buy on-site, as well as being delivered to local restaurants and cafes, independent retailers and F&V outlets, providing them with an easy option for streamlined access to a variety of the best and freshest local produce. There would be potential for overarching branding that could be displayed prominently at participating outlets e.g. 'Buy Fresh Buy Local' or 'Casey Fresh is Best' etc. It would also be important for the identity of the actual growers to be maintained to point of sale where this is a grower preference. Similarly there should be flexibility in the level of grower engagement – e.g. s/he could just deliver produce, or play a more active role in the Hub, according to individual preference and capacity.

The integration of this warehouse with Modules 2 & 3 increases the ability of the Hub to buy and direct other produce into appropriate supply chains – seconds, processing / cooking, food relief and organic waste processing.

By celebrating and engaging people with this function, the Food Hub would scale-up and streamline local food distribution whilst maintaining openness and opportunities for direct exchange and social interaction between growers and eaters.



Simple 'one-stop' delivery and payment



Display and direct sale – individually identified product where preferred

What's in it for:

- Small producers:** the Hub provides an option for a regular and predictable single sales point for large proportion of produce, including premium and secondary quality produce
- Larger producers:** the Hub represents the potential sale or donation of unsold produce, outlet for 'experimental' lines, opportunities to access more value from product (moving up supply chain)
- Restaurants / outlets:** the Hub facilitates the streamlined purchase of fresh, high quality local produce, i.e. it is a simplified 'one-stop' ordering point to access produce from a range of growers

Objectives / Outcomes sought

- Reliable sales outlet offering above market prices for producers and able to consistently move a wide range of product
- Greater availability of local food in Casey's restaurants and independent supermarkets
- Greater awareness of and access to fresh, local produce throughout Casey

Design criteria (ideas identified in consultations)

- Has to be a simple, single process for buying / selling produce
- Clear, fair and transparent pricing, the Hub pays on time
- Minimise overheads and maximize cross-subsidization (e.g. from training) to keep costs down (return to growers)
- Clear governance to maintain integrity of 'local' and ensure fair outcomes
- Maintaining grower identity to point of sale (and not, when it suits them)
- Clarify competitors and partners early on, support improved local food access throughout Casey - do not undermine independent grocers
- Meet the challenges around handling large amounts of the same produce in first instance

Examples

The *Local Food Hub* in Charlottesville, USA is exclusively a wholesaler of local fruit, vegetables and other produce, focused on sale through institutions (schools, hospitals, universities, aged care), grocers, caterers / food service and restaurants. It is on track to break-even / profit within 2-3 years of being established, having increased turnover from \$75K in 2009 to \$600K in 2011. Both the *Local Food Hub* and *HenHouse Supermarkets* in Kansas emphasise the importance of prominent and consistent branding across a range of outlets, so customers start to identify, expect and value local options.

The successful integration of training and employment opportunities with warehousing and distribution (as well as a café and community kitchen on site) has been demonstrated by the *AvoCare Community Distribution Centre* in Dandenong.

The potential of co-siting retail and facilities for prepared meals to avoid food waste has been demonstrated by the *People's Supermarket* in London, through '*The People's Kitchen*' which makes prepared meals from produce that is close to its use-by date.

Module 2: 'Casey Fresh Food Restaurant'

Healthy, desirable and affordable meals would be cooked on site and made easily available – “fresh and fast, it’s on your way”. Meals would be available through drive-through, take-away and sit down options, as well as through sale of pre-prepared meal packs. The restaurant would prioritise and celebrate local and seasonal produce, making use of what is fresh and abundant to showcase simple, tasty meals. You get them here without having to cook or clean up, but you can also get some pumpkins and onions – and a recipe suggestion – to take home and DIY.

The restaurant would be branded to be 'funky' – attractive to children and teenagers as well as their parents with a variety of spaces, including outside recreational areas, to make it a place where kids want to go. The high-quality meals could be provided at an affordable price through integration and immediate access to a wide variety of produce, both premium and seconds, as well as use of training and potentially volunteer / member staff.

Thought Starter:
Branding for the Food
Hub would need to
suggest fast, fresh and
appealing to kids

beep beep...



Café and eating area – simple, tasty meals for all



Training kitchen garden and play area visible from the road

What's in it for:

- Mr & Mrs Casey:** convenient, affordable, varied, healthy, tasty food; good atmosphere, fun night out, sense of pride in supporting local community
- Local Growers:** profile raised, local brand identification, strong connection in supporting the local community
- Youth & Unemployed:** Training and Employment Opportunities
- Local government and community:** real action to address food insecurity & access to nutritious meals. Broader health, economic and social benefits.

Objectives / Outcomes sought

- The Restaurant is well patronised by Casey residents and achieves strong brand recognition in the fast food marketplace
- The Restaurant serves increasing quantities of healthy food to the target customers
- A large and increasing proportion of the produce is from local growers, providing an important outlet for their businesses
- The Restaurant encourages other local restaurants to also adopt buy-local policies

Design criteria (ideas identified in consultations)

- Must be **convenient and affordable** – the key priority is competitiveness with existing fast food outlets, hence the need for drive-thru and take-away options
- Branding** critical so it's not 'daggy' – aiming for difference and uniqueness based on local pride, but also a 'fun place to be', a 'cool place to hang out' – kids want to go there and parents want to go there too – you're tired but it's a nicer place to be
- Priced to maximise access (**good value for money**) as well as having flexibility for those who are really 'up against it'. The need for more meal programs was identified as critical (by emergency relief agencies), and the restaurant could both provide affordable meals, accept vouchers (not identifiable as emergency vouchers), and offer volunteer discounts.

Examples

The *People's Restaurants* in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) are a leading example of local food restaurants being run to maximise access to good food. Three large 'people's restaurants', and some smaller ones, serve more than 12,000 people a day, using mostly locally grown food, for the equivalent of less than 50 cents a meal. Effective positioning and marketing of these restaurants means that they are attended by all kinds of people – businessmen, housewives, students, unemployed etc. Their success in getting people in for a meal and staying to talk has led to an array of community activities, clubs and sporting teams.

There was previously a successful community kitchen / restaurant running in Cranbourne, using trainees to cook and serve meals. However, it is believed that it was dependent on a 'one-off' donation and was not continued when that initial donation ran out. Training and employment programs in cafes / kitchens has also been part of the *AvoCare Community Distribution Hub* in Dandenong.

The *CERES* café in Brunswick makes use of produce from on-site and local growers (as well as from other sources) in its Café, which is now a very popular meeting place particularly on weekends. As above, the *People's Supermarket* in London, through '*The People's Kitchen*', also makes and serves prepared meals from produce that is close to its use-by date.

Module 3: Enterprise and Employment Pathways

The Food Hub would be established and designed to provide training and employment opportunities, as well as real service. The primary model would provide opportunities in catering and hospitality as well as warehousing and distribution, generating multiple training and employment opportunities and pathways for local youth and unemployed people.

Ideally the site would be large enough for demonstration and training facilities in food handling and/or production, enabling integration with basic horticulture and food production skills throughout the programs.

Once established, the commercial kitchen and warehouse could be scheduled to be used as shared facilities for the incubation of small independent businesses. The Hub's activities would provide many opportunities for niches to be filled by existing businesses and entrepreneurs (see 'Seasonings').



Catering and hospitality training



Warehousing and distribution

What's in it for:

- Local youth & unemployed:** opportunity to gain training qualifications in (initially) warehousing, forklift driving and catering & hospitality. Once established, the training opportunities could be extended into horticulture; business development and start-up
- Micro and small home-based businesses:** shared access to equipment and facilities for value-adding, marketing, distribution etc.
- TAFE:** opportunity to support a highly innovative and pioneering social enterprise
- Casey Council:** a proven and replicable model of local business training and employment, and enterprise generation
- Registered Training Organisation:** opportunity to establish or expand operations

Objectives / Outcomes sought

- Training outcomes achieved
- Solid partnerships established with TAFE and other stakeholders
- Jobs created within the Hub itself
- Support available to those who want to start micro-food enterprises

Design criteria (ideas identified in consultations)

- Partnerships with TAFE / other training providers** and government agencies is key
- Diversity of training opportunities must be regularly available
- The Hub should act as a springboard or **incubator** – while not everyone trained at the Hub would be able to work there, they should be well-positioned to go into further training, employment or potentially into start-up micro-food enterprises (e.g. Casey branded foods).

Examples

CERES has supported the establishment of local value-adding micro-food enterprises, and is experimenting with related small businesses such as biogas generation. A key factor in the success of *CERES* as a micro-business incubator has been the ability to provide space, shared infrastructure and a market outlet for people with an idea to give it a go (e.g. organic seedlings, aquaponics systems, compost collections). This has also been important in the establishment of social enterprises focused around training, which have led to business start-ups e.g. *Seven Stars Catering*.

The *Intervale Centre* in North-East US ran the Healthy City program, providing jobs and life-skills training for at-risk youth, as well as educating children about healthy eating and the food system. This led to the establishment of the *Healthy Cities Youth Farm* to continue and strengthen these training opportunities.

Other Food Hubs (e.g. *Charlottesville Local Food Hub*) run training and support services for local growers and internship programs for young and new farmers, which could easily be a potential extension of the Casey Food Hub in future years.

A Platform for Community Food Enterprise

The three core modules are a starting point for discussion of the type of Food Hub that might suit Casey's growers and eaters. The model we have outlined would have requirements for physical infrastructure of sufficient dimensions to enable adequate warehousing and storage capacity, including a cool-room, as well as the incorporation of a fast-food style restaurant. There may be possibilities to make use of existing built infrastructure, potentially with enough surrounding area to support a demonstration market garden.

There were many more ideas that emerged in the consultations and are demonstrated in the case studies, that could potentially be supported by a Food Hub as described. We outline some of these below, describing them as 'Seasonings' as they would potentially be bonus activities once the Food Hub was established. Some of these seasonings may be identified as earlier priorities if there was energy to make them happen among local individuals and groups.

A selection of these areas follows:



Supply to community food schemes
e.g. coops, buying clubs



Supply bulk dry foods



Linkages to schools - visits / breakfast
clubs / schools as delivery points /
farm-to-school program



Box schemes (potential combined
with school deliveries)



Horticultural demonstration farm
–including innovative systems and
techniques e.g. aquaponics

- ➔ **Build local grower capacity**
- ➔ **Increase the supply base of the Food Hub**
- ➔ **Donate a percentage of produce to local emergency relief providers**

More production on-site to support expanded production training & capacity building



Innovative support for young farmers / new production enterprise development



On-site energy and fertiliser production from organic waste



Expansion of prepared meal offering
– weekly box of (frozen) prepared meals for freezer; meals on wheels.



Discounts for DIY packaging (i.e. bringing own containers)

- ➔ 1 - Box of week's prepared meals to freeze at home
- ➔ 2- Includes fresh herbs etc. to mix in / some basic extra prep
- ➔ 3 - Box with some prepared / semi-prepared and some fresh food with recipes

Packages to transition to cooking at home



Cooking demonstrations / classes



"Pick 5" box scheme



Juice bar / green smoothies



Mobile market



Catering



Food delivery to business (e.g. lunch van; sandwiches)



Enterprise incubator - microprocessors



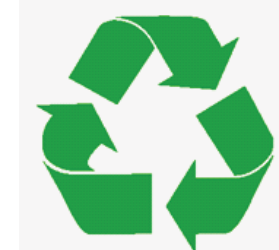
Jams, curries, sauces (branded)



Production trainee placements on farms



Inviting other local businesses and expertise to be involved (e.g. software; logistics/transport)



Food recovery – e.g. partnership with Secondbite

What foods would be available at the Food Hub?

A common question that has come up through consultations is the variety of produce needed to support a viable Food Hub - would a Food Hub in Casey be able to access a sufficient variety of foods? While specialisation and the need to compete through scale has meant the production of very large amounts of some foods, Casey-Cardinia and the surrounding regions (Baw Baw, Mornington Peninsula, Gippsland etc) already have a wide variety of produce available that could provide a solid base for a Food Hub enterprise.

The following table indicates the extent and variety of production just from the Casey/Cardinia area. The value of the produce is shown compared to Victoria's total.

	Commodity	Value	% State Value
A	Livestock – Products	\$188m	7%
1	Poultry meat	\$97m	27%
2	Cattle slaughtered	\$31m	2%
3	Milk	\$43m	2%
4	Eggs	\$17m	15%
B	Vegetables	\$115m	18%
5	Asparagus	\$39m	88%
6	Potatoes	\$18m	16%
7	Celery	\$13m	50%
8	Leeks	\$10m	71%
9	Others eg Asian vegetables, herbs etc	\$17m	34-79%
C	Other	\$70m	n/a
10	Nurseries	\$26m	10%
11	Cut flowers	\$25m	17%
12	Turf	\$7m	30%
13	Apples	\$9m	5%
14	Other fruit - berry fruit, kiwi fruit	\$3m	9-12%

Green Wedge Study, City of Casey 2011

The operations of Food Hubs elsewhere have often led to diversification in local production as producers have a reliable outlet and receive a good price for smaller amounts of produce, and customers develop a growing appreciation of seasonality. Over time a Food Hub in Casey could also be expected to support increasing diversification through promotion of seasonal produce.



How could a Casey Food Hub work?

The concepts outlined in this paper will undergo much greater engagement and rigorous analysis before recommendations around ownership, governance and the most appropriate business model are made. However, it is important to note at this stage that a range of possible models would need to be considered, and that the choice of these will be important for the viability, buy-in and resilience of the Hub.

Who would establish it, pay for it, run it? Options include:

Public: driven, funded and run primarily through council or other government

Private: establish commercial business model, run as separate entity for private profit

Public-private: specifications for public benefit and appropriate contributions to guide private entity that operates the hub

Non-profit: run as or by a non-profit organisation - dependent on grants and donations

Cooperative: owned by members that benefit from the hub (incl. farmers and customers)

Social business: established as a business entity with main income through trading. Profits are largely reinvested in the social outcome sought (e.g. improved food outcomes in Casey)

How can you pay a fair price to farmers AND make food affordable for eaters?

Potential for mutually beneficial pricing has been a key design consideration for the modules outlined above. While too early in the project for detailed analysis, the core concepts include:

One-stop outlet for farmers: sale and delivery of both premium and imperfect produce

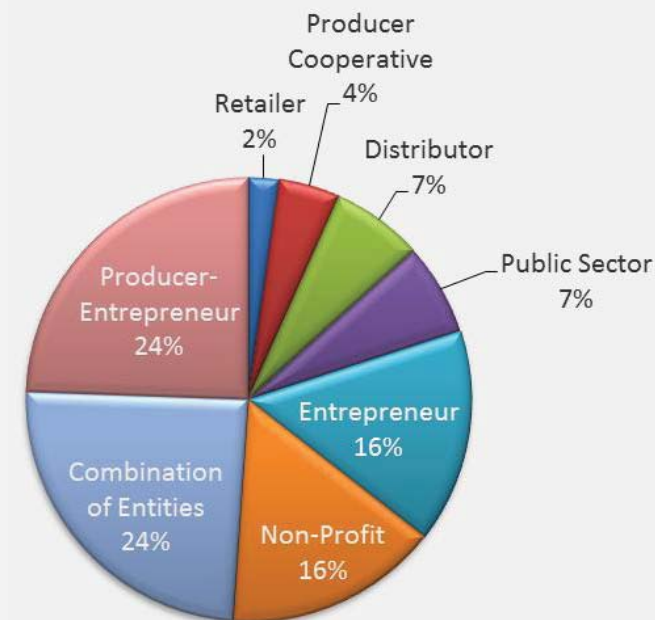
Choice of ownership model critical: hub overheads kept to minimum so farmers get close to retail price

Use of seconds in meals to keep costs lower (farmer gets paid but less)

Cross-subsidisation of operational costs through training and employment programs

Range of customer payment options: membership cards or vouchers (that do not identify emergency relief from other customers); ability to volunteer and receive reduced price food

Lead Organising Entities for Establishing Food Hubs



The 'Archetypal' Food Hub has strong producer engagement and participation in both the establishment and operations of the food hub services/activities

Entrepreneurs took the organising lead in establishing 40% of the food hubs

Seven out of the eleven hubs in the "combination category" included non profit or public sector involvement

(USDA 2011)

About us:

The concepts in this document have been developed by combining consultations in the City of Casey with the project team's combined knowledge and experience of community food enterprises development in Australia. The project team includes:

Kirsten Larsen - Kirsten develops projects and resources to inform and accelerate development of sustainable and resilient food systems. This work has included the development and management of the policy research program at the Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab at the University of Melbourne and establishment of Eaterprises Australia (with Serenity Hill) to translate this work into action.

Serenity Hill - is from a farming family in NE Victoria and is currently undertaking food systems research at the University of Melbourne's School of Land and Environments, focused on the complex challenges facing farmers and opportunities for innovative response. Co-Founder of Eaterprises Australia.

Rob Pekin - a former dairy farmer and market gardener, is recognised nationally and internationally for his pioneering work in establishing the award-winning Brisbane-based social enterprise Food Connect: a unique and highly innovative 'Australianised' model of Community-Shared Agriculture.

Chris Ennis - manager of the CERES Organic Farm and CERES Fair Food, both parts of a thriving not-for-profit environmental education centre in the heart of Melbourne.

Stephen Mushin - the CERES Green Technology manager and a freelance designer who works on ecologically focused design, masterplanning and urban agriculture projects.

Nick Rose - former lawyer, researcher, writer, and founding Director of a development not-for-profit in Central America, has over the past three and a half years been a leading actor in the growth of the local food movement in the Coffs Coast region of NSW, and nationally through the Food Connect Foundation and the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance.

Russell Shields - operations manager with SecondBite since February 2007, has overseen the rapid expansion of the organisation to a dedicated team of fourteen full time staff and 448 volunteers across Victoria and Tasmania, while retaining its focus on the needs of the community organisations and food relief agencies it exists to serve.

Jen Alden - CEO of Cultivating Community, a leading organisation in community gardens, edible classrooms and local food systems in Victoria.

Where to from here?

These ideas are intended to provide a platform for deeper engagement and discussion about what a Food Hub in Casey could achieve. It is very much a work in progress, and further development will continue to be heavily dependent on the engagement and participation of a widening range of key stakeholders and local leaders.

Let us know what you think ...

Which ideas appeal to you? Do you think they could work?

Which ideas do you dislike, or think would be inappropriate?

Do you have any suggestions for how the concept might be improved?

Would you like to receive updates about this project?

Send us your contact details and/or comments:

kirsten@eaterprises.com.au or call Kirsten on: 0425 794 848

