How Can Food Hubs Catalyse Healthy and Resilient Local Food Systems in Victoria:

Developing a Food Hub in the City of Casey

Report on Phase 1

24 December 2012

Big context

Can 'Food Hubs' catalyse and support local food systems in Victoria and Australia?

1. Work with stakeholders to design and 'establish?' a Food Hub in Casey
2. Develop an effective framework for assessing / evaluating the impact of Food Hubs
3. Establish the Australian Food Hubs Network to share knowledge

Two Years . . .

1. **Mapping of the 'state of play' in Casey's local / regional food**

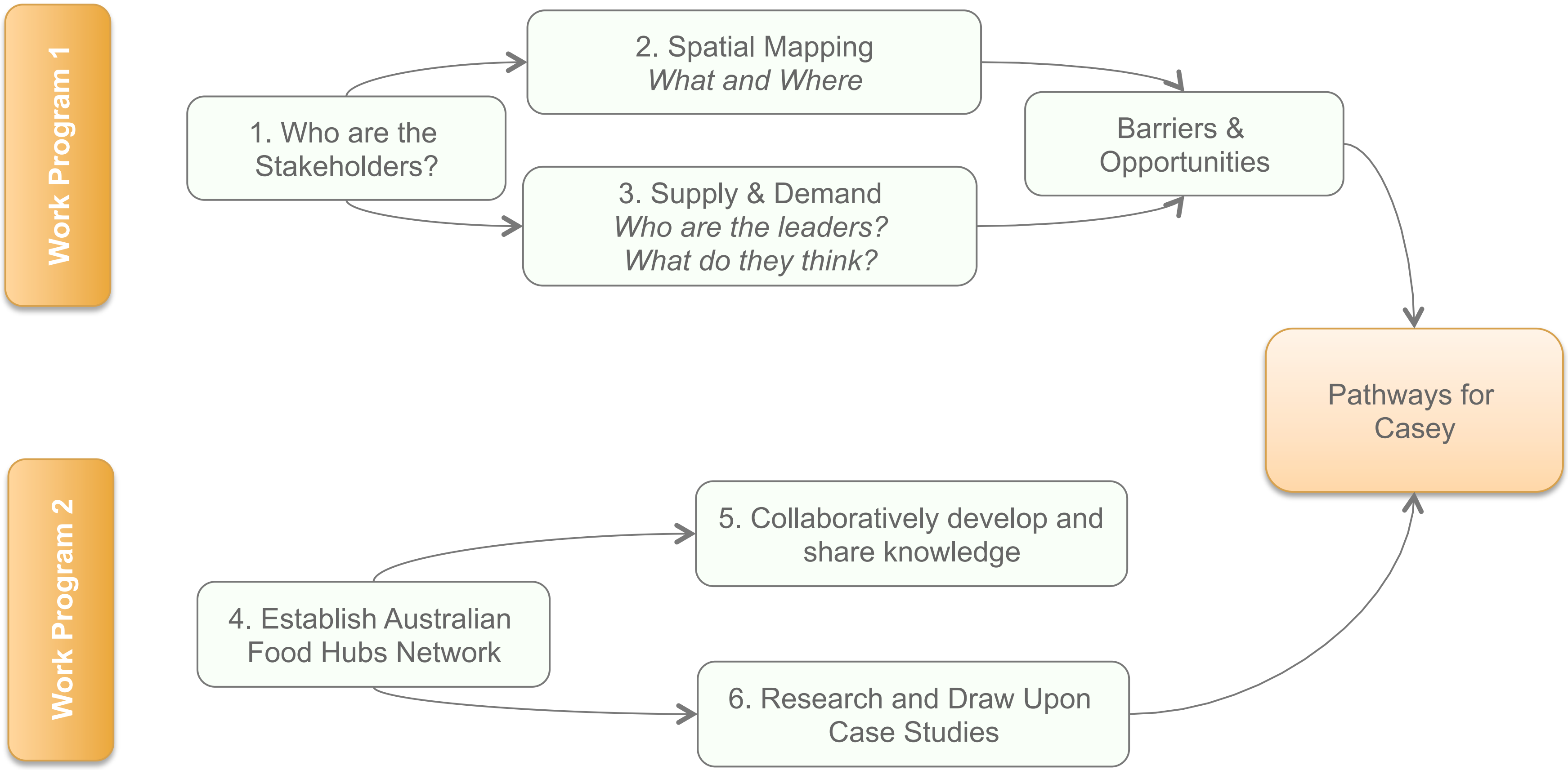
Phase 1

2. Hub and system' design work
3. Investigating feasibility
4. Share knowledge

Phase 1 Project Plan

Activities			*Milestones*
PHASE 1: AUGUST 2012 –JANUARY 2013. UNDERSTANDING, RELATIONSHIPS AND GROUNDWORK			**January 31 2012: Phase 1 Report submitted to VicHealth**
Work Program 1	**Casey: Understanding Local Context:** *Barriers and Opportunities for a Food Hub*	Aim: To identify, map and engage potential partners in development of a Food Hub Objectives: • Build knowledge about Casey’s existing local food system (benchmark); • Explore *opportunities and barriers* to development of a local food system • Identification and engagement of key stakeholders	Work Program 1 Milestones • December 21st 2012: Summary Report of mapping and engagement. • Early December 2012: Key Stakeholder Forum
Work Program 2	**Australian Food Hubs Network:** *Establishment of a best practice knowledge base and network*	Aim: To draw on existing knowledge to inform project development and potential from successful innovations in Victoria, Australia and internationally. Objectives: • Research initiatives and niche development in other countries, Australia and Victoria • Explore design features of systems that are successfully improving community health and well being	Work Program 2a Milestones: • December 21st 2012: Summary paper of best practice case studies • November 2012: Case studies on AFHN website • December 10th 2012: Summary paper of draft Food Hub evaluation considerations
		Aim: Support and enable the establishment of the AFHN as a vehicle for propagating this knowledge and methodology across Australia. Objectives: • Developing and using an online platform for AFHN and the Food Hub in Casey project. • Supporting AFHN to be involved in the process	Work Program 2b Milestones: • AFHN website live by November 1 2012 • Communication system established by November 10 2012: social media, blogs, newsletter and yammer activity

PHASE 1: Key Activities and Logic Flow



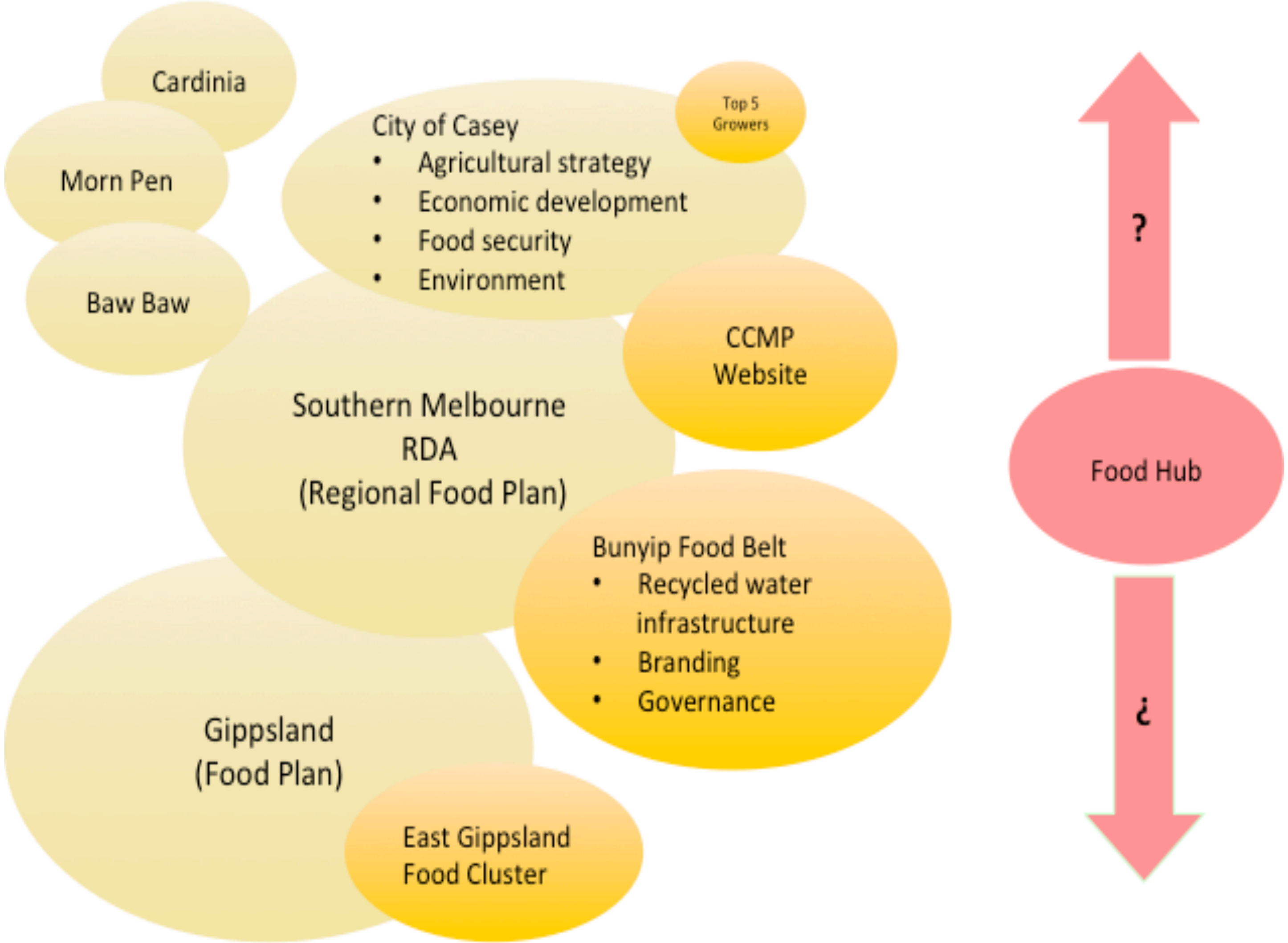
Understanding Local Context: Barriers and Opportunities for a Food Hub in Casey

Work Program 1

Objectives:

- Identify and engage key stakeholders
- Build knowledge about Casey's existing local food system (benchmark);
- Explore *opportunities and barriers* to development of a local food system

1. Stakeholders – Regional Context



Point of Clarity: Food Hub ≠ Food Policy

Council Food Policy / Strategy
Play key role in development of thriving regional food sector.

Coherent food direction across Casey Council Service areas: Planning, Environment, Community Strengthening, Leisure, Health Promotion.

Priority areas include:
1. Transition opportunities for Casey growers
2. Economic development and jobs
3. Align with MPHP plan and Food Security Policy
4. Education and community strengthening

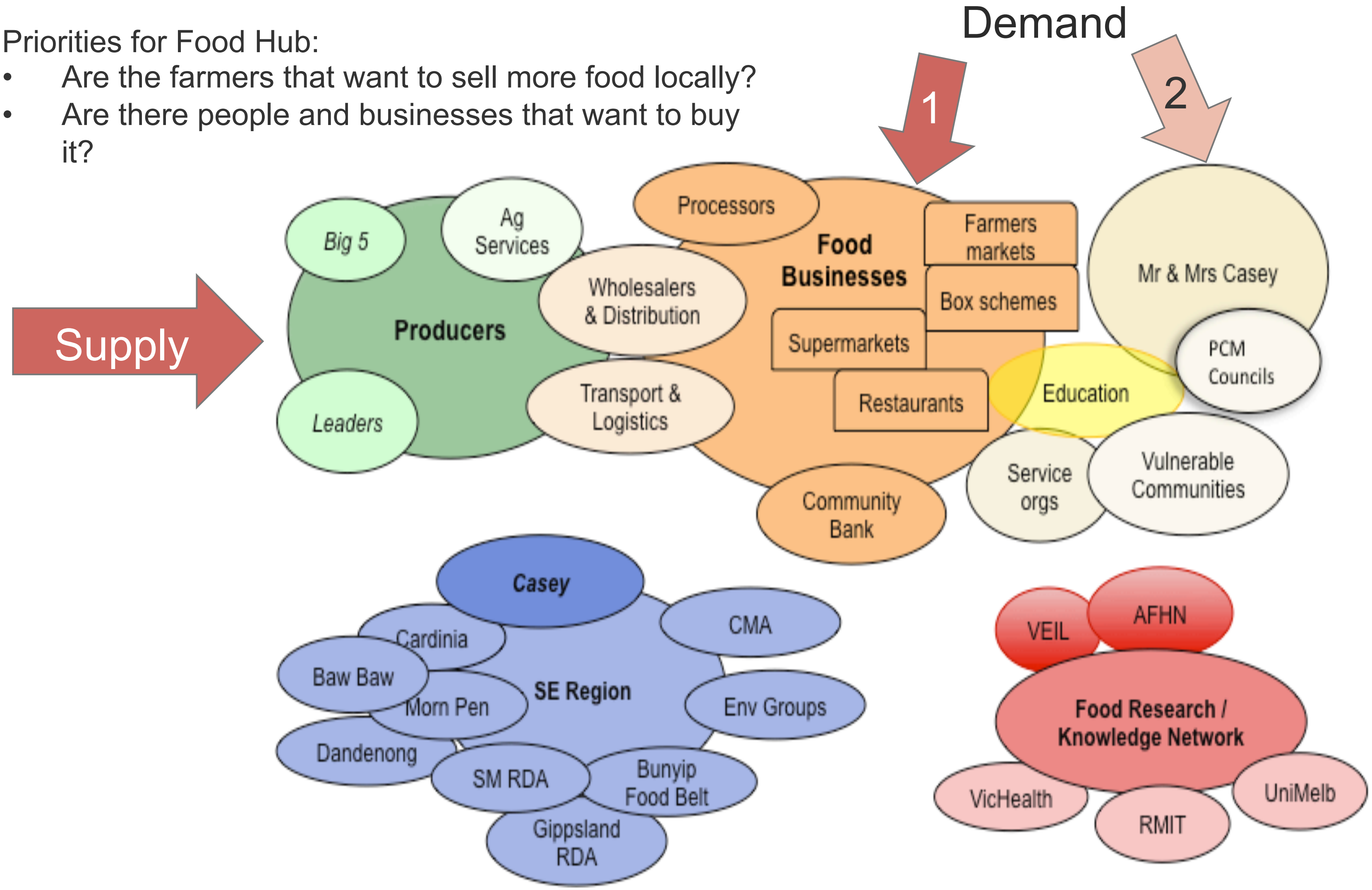
Food Hub
Catalyse local food system through strategic intervention that supports multiple outcomes, e.g.
1. New market opportunities for diverse producers (horticulture and others)
2. Immediate supply and market for local businesses
3. Access to healthy, affordable, attractive food options

Mutual Benefits:
- Networks and relationships across key sectors
- Leverage PCM initiatives in neighbouring councils
- Engage community around food
- Facilitate and coordinate diverse pilots / experiments

Stakeholders: Food System

Priorities for Food Hub:

- Are the farmers that want to sell more food locally?
- Are there people and businesses that want to buy it?



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2. Mapping the Existing Food System - Spatial

What and who is already here?

- **Initial Scoping:** what's in a food system
- **Data Collection:** availability, quality and consistency
- **Classification:** and reclassification… and reclassification… and reclassification…
- **Creating the maps:** what to depict and how

Working out what we're interested in . .

What's in a Food System

- Production
- Processing and manufacturing
- Fresh and prepared food retail
- Other meal / food services

Frameworks

- VLGA Food Security Assessment Tool
- VLUIS land use classifications
- FSPUD matrix
- Categories from other data sources

Particularly relevant to Hub

- Operational differences e.g. IGA vs Coles
- Existing local / regional focused efforts
- Potential wholesale buyers

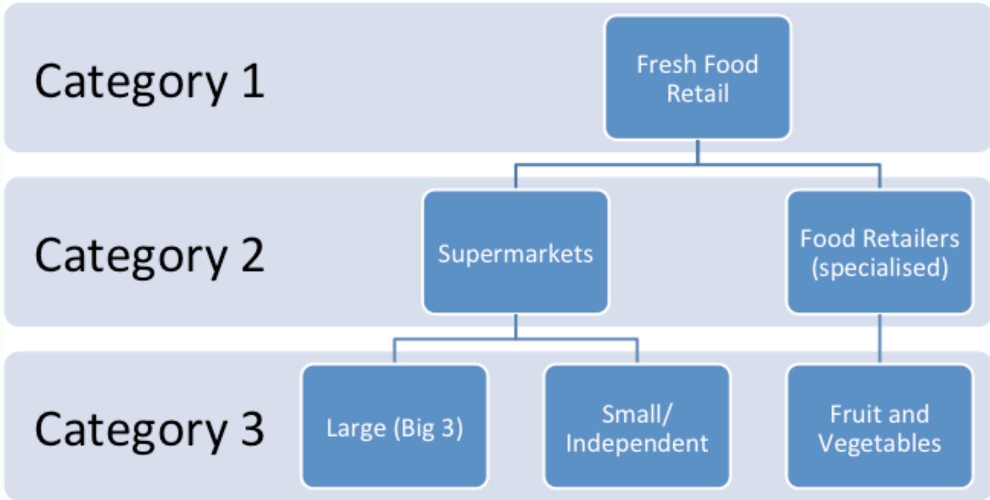
Working out what we have . .

Data Source	Used for	Strength	Weakness
Health Master Database (2012)	Food premises	Current Detailed retail	No meat No production No manufacturing No transport No wholesale
ANZSIC Database 1 – 3977	Production Manufacturing Wholesale Some retail	Geocoded Useful classification Detailed production Detailed manufacturing & wholesale	Only from 3977 Retail not comprehensive
ANZSIC Database 2 – Bugseye (2010?)	Production Manufacturing Wholesale	Detailed production Detailed manufacturing & wholesale Whole of Casey	No Supermarket/ grocery 2010 data

Challenge	Response
Gaps in data	Yellow Pages/True local
Illogical data	Google Maps/MapInfo
Collating multiple data sources	Time

Developing a Useful Classification System

Layer
Food Distribution
Food Manufacturing and Processing
Food Production
Food Relief
Fresh Food Retail
Prepared Food Retail
Wholesale Buyers
Other



etc

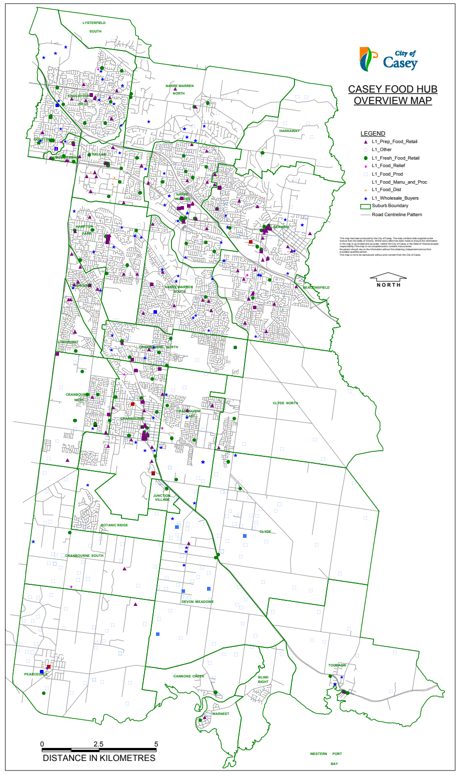
Classification and Building Maps

Food System Tool?

- » Is this classification system useful to others?
- » How should it most effectively be shared and developed?

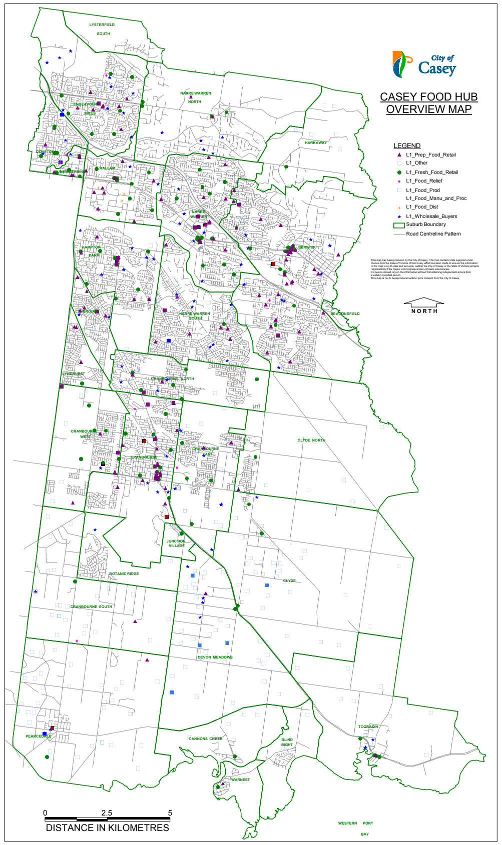
Layer	Cat 1	Label (more info where useful)
Food Distribution	Food Distribution	
Food Manufacturing and Processing	Bread/Cakes	
	Dairy	
	Fruit and Vegetables	
	Meat/Poultry/Smallgoods	
	Other Manufacturing	
Food Production	Vegetable Growing	
	Grain/Crops	
	Fish	
	Livestock Production (Dairy/Beef/Sheep)	
	Orchards/Groves/Plantations	
	Other Production	
	Pig/Poultry/Eggs	
Food Relief	Meals	
	Packages	
	Assorted	
Fresh Food Retail	Supermarkets (Int. Grocery)	
	Supermarkets (Big 3)	e.g. Coles
	Supermarkets (Small / Independent)	
	Fresh Food Retail (General and Convenience Stores)	
	Fresh Food Retail (Specialised)	
	Fresh Food Retail (Proposed NAC)	
Local Food Systems	Farmers Market	
	Food Co-Op	
Prepared Food Retail	Domestic Premises	
	Coffee and Sweets	
	Fast Food Chain	
	Restaurant/Café/Hotel	
	Take Away	e.g. Fish and Chips
Other Meal Services	Meals (Catering)	
	Meals (Hostels)	
	Meals (Aged Care)	
	Meals (Childcare)	
	Meals (Community)	
	Meals (Hospital)	
	Meals (School)	
	Meals (Sporting Club)	

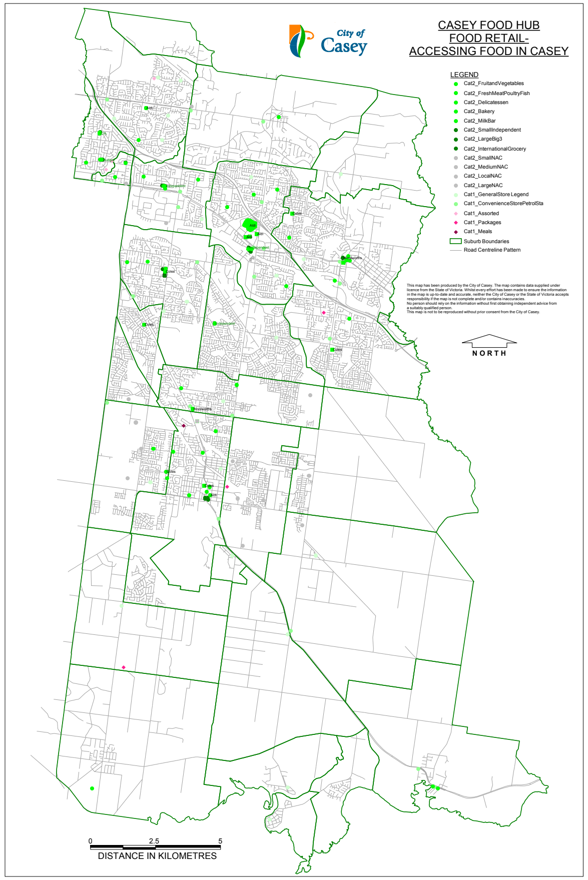
- » How to get the data onto a map
  - ○ Geocodes Vs. MapInfo
  - ○ Intramaps / GIS vs. Google



Creating and Using Maps from Council GIS

» How to best represent the data
  - Level of detail
  - Type of maps



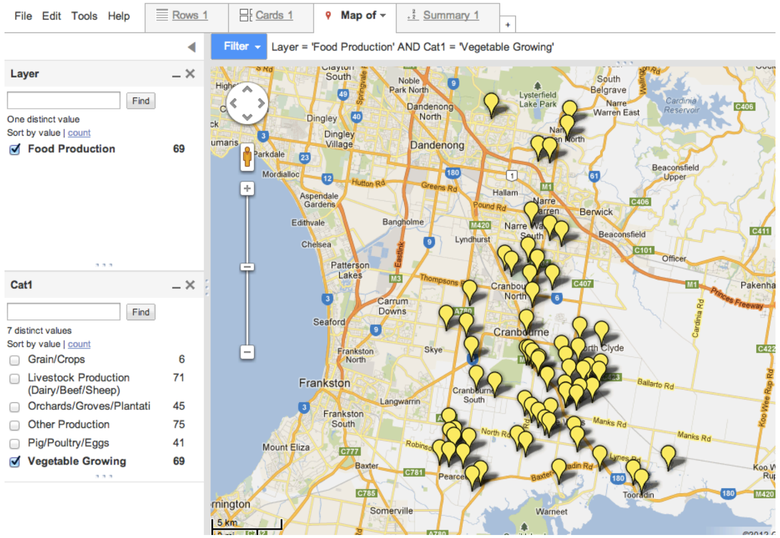


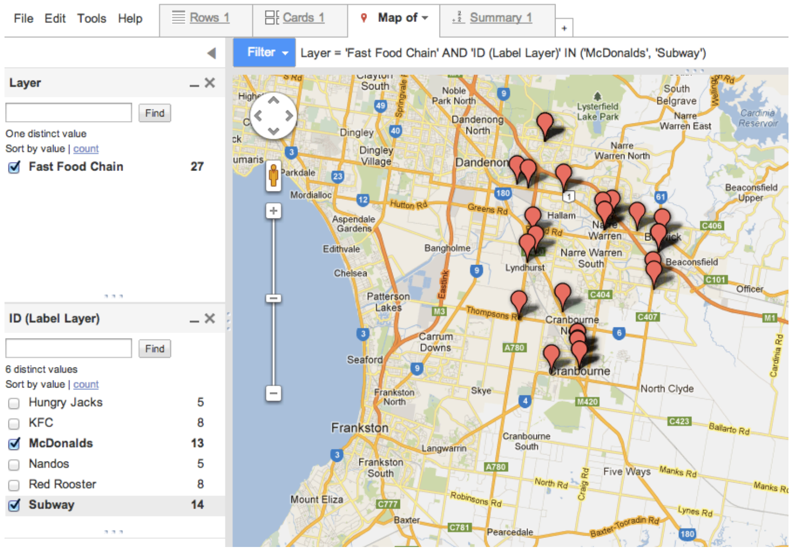
Completed . .
- First maps
- Workshop with Council to discuss
- Revisions and suggestions for rework

Tool: Google Fusion Data and Mapping

Food System Tool?

» Once cleaned and classified, the data can easily be drawn into a Google framework, making it very accessible to anyone to explore Casey's food system (see pics below)





TBC

» Public availability – 'technically' nothing stopping us making this available for people to play with

» Checking w. Council whether ok to do so

» Detailed methodology that others can emulate with their own data

Outcomes

City of Casey

- Increased knowledge of data available and of food premises in Casey
- Mapping tool (available on Intramaps system) for considering food within planning and other decision making
- Starting point for improved articulation and collection of relevant information

Food Hub

- Initial maps: for Council input and suggestions
- Public maps: to inform public discussions and design processes next year
- Increased spatial understanding of the area
- Google mapping tool

Australian Food Hubs Network

- Methodology: will be available for others to emulate

Mapping Methodology and Report

? Casey Food System Mapping Tool

Food System Mapping – Indicators of Food Insecurity

Adam Rossimel (Masters of Planning)

- Aim: to test the hypothesis that those most at risk to food security in Melbourne are located in the outer suburbs

Methodology

- Examined 22 LGAs (7 inner, 8 middle and 7 outer)
- Tested each for accessibility and affordability indicators of food security
- Collection District + 2km radius
- Identified healthy and unhealthy food stores
- Conducted Victorian Healthy Food Basket Assessments
- Analysed VAMPIRE indices

Summary Report

Key Findings

- No difference in price of food across inner, middle and outer suburbs, but significant variations in cost of food as proportion of household income
- Declining access to healthy food options further from the city
- Similarly, ratio of unhealthy to healthy food increased (outer suburbs 6x less access to healthy food)
- ***Green grocers provided significantly cheaper fresh fruit and vegetables than in the major supermarkets, a price differential of up to 23%.***
- Significantly fewer greengrocers in outer suburbs, especially growth areas

3. Supply and Demand

Supply: Producer Interviews

Demand: Business Interviews

Demand: Preliminary Household Survey

Interview Summary Report

Sacco – Summary of Household Survey

Producer Interviews: Design and Aims

3 key aims:

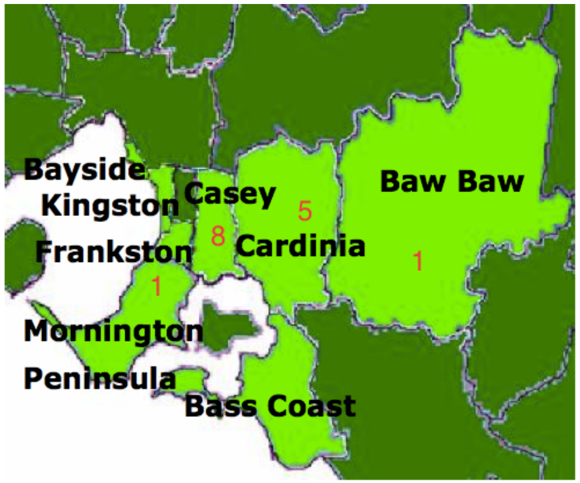
- Locate and engage interested farmers in the project
- Deepen understanding of local context, production and distribution patterns
- Explore opportunities and barriers to developing a food hub/scaling up local food distribution

Interview Design: 3 sections:

- Context
- Current Distribution
- Response to, interest in alternative models and what would work for them.

Sample design: 16 formal interviews.

A range of network meetings and informal conversations occurred prior to and during the interview process. It became obvious from the outset that producers beyond the borders of the City of Casey needed to be included to adequate explore the flow of food across the SE region.



Producer Interview Breakdown:

Casey: 9 interviews	Cardinia: 5 interviews	Baw Baw : 1 interview	Mornington Peninsula: 1 interview
2 large 3 medium 2 small vegetable growers	1 large 1 medium 1 small vegetable grower	1 dairy and egg producer	1 small mixed vegetable grower
1 small fruit grower	1 dairy producer		
1 beef producer	1 orchardist		

- 3 of the 15 interviews- female farmers
- 1 farmer <30, 2 < 40, 3 < 50
- 11 farmers self identified as ‘conventional’
- 5 farmers - accredited/marketed their products as organic/Enviroveg.
- Interviews were transcribed and analysed to draw out recurrent themes and issues

Context: common issues for farm viability

Impact of Urban Growth:

- right to farm - *'we're the outsiders'*
- RATES and land prices

Council –perceived lack of consultation and communication

Undercut by **cheap products**

'*Asian backyarders'* and other low cost operators:

'*The price they sell this stuff at, we can't grow it at*'

Most distribution is through the supermarkets and the wholesale market - this is working for some but not others

Supermarkets

Pro: quantity, security

Con: price squeeze, dominance

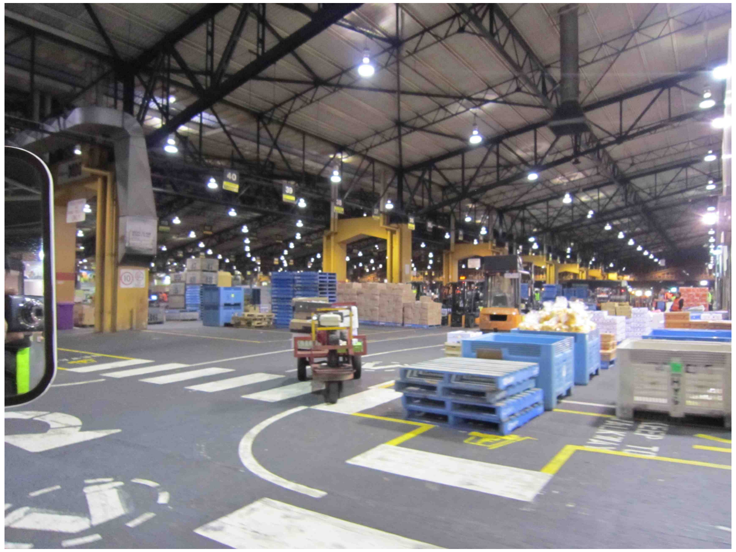
Wholesale

'*None of the farmers supply shops directly round here on a big scale. You'll find it all goes to Footscray, and the local shops buy it from there and bring it back*'.

Move to Epping is a concern

It's going to knock a lot of growers on the head'

'They don't want the little growers in there, so they just want to squeeze us out'.



Is there existing retail and community demand?

Uncertain of community demand, feel unvalued by/invisible to the broader community:

'They don't see us as an asset to the local community, they see us more as a peripheral thing…'

Aware that independent grocers are also having a rough time

'what happens to the local fruiterers because they're in the market sometimes 5 days a week and anything that hurts them flows back through to us, the commercial growers.'

Challenges:

- Does the community value farming in the region?
- Will demand increase with activity / identification of local farmers?
- Is it possible to develop a Food Hub that complements existing independent retail?

There are very different world views, but farmers do work together

Overarching narratives

Small high value

'You either get bigger or you get better'

Ever expanding

'It's all about economies of scale, because we produce a lot more product now the margins are a lot lower …so you have to turn over a lot more product'

Will farmers work together?

Diverse farmers do collaborate in the region

'You develop such a good relationship with the guys and we do help each other out'

Successful formal ventures may require more 'value-alignment'

'They're all like-minded farmers, which is a big thing- they're all farming the same way and it's a different way'

Challenges:

- Diversity of perspectives- could/should a food hub attempt to work with them all?

A Food Hub? Farmers interested . . but

» **Interest Scale:**

'That would be fantastic if you can get it to work'

'I'd like to distribute more locally. It's the logistics…We're too busy to focus on the distribution side of things'

» **Scale of Operation:**

Big farmer: *''If you're talking about doing it on a small scale with testing the waters so to speak that's fine but you're not going to get a huge uptake.'*

Challenges:

- Value proposition v. different for small and large farmers
- Plenty of 'followers' – are there leaders?
- For some farmers, consistency and ability to take bulk is non-negotiable
- How will it work – and for who? How do we find out?

Business Interview Design and Aims:

3 key aims:

- Locate and engage potential interested business
- Deepen understanding of local context, buying and distribution patterns
- Explore opportunities and barriers to developing a hub

Interview Design:

- **Part 1:** Context
- **Part 2:** Distribution/Procurement Patterns
- **Part 3:** Interest in alternative models and what would work for them.

Business Type
1 Independent Grocer
1 Wholesale Distributor
1 Cafe
1 Cafe
1 Pub/Bistro
1 Restaurant (Indian)
1 Catering Company
1 Café/Grocer
1 Butcher
1 Distributor
1 Organic Box Scheme
1 IGA

Sample Design:

Focus on Casey Businesses:

- 8 interviews in Casey
- 1 in Dandenong
- 3 in Pakenham

Competitive retail space with little direct buying

Already fiercely competitive

'There are about 14 different supermarkets in a 5 to 10 kilometre radius'

A retail hub would intensify this

'They (grocers)'ll be looking at you as competition for sure'

Minimal direct local buying

'Our fruit and veg comes from markets in the city'

'do some directly now- asparagus… cherries…potatoes'

Test the waters before committing:

'I would love to sample some stuff and see how it goes and compare to our current suppliers.'

Challenges:

- Will not be well received if perceived to compete w. existing retail businesses
- Gap in local procurement system

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Local Procurement – happening but piecemeal

Lack of systems/access to local produce:

'there isn't a lot I've seen around this area.'

'it's about getting know different people and what they can provide and getting their contact details and giving them a go'

Concerns re efficiency, price and quantity:

'If we could get really good fresh stuff at a reasonable price it would be wonderful'

Unwilling to compromise existing relationships

'It's also a bit of a problem because I have relationships with suppliers – you know for 8 or 9 years – my loyalty is important'

Challenges

- Needs to be easy
- Competitive on price
- How to handle quantity /seasonality issue?
- Support not compete with existing relationships

Uncertain community demand and awareness

Price squeeze in the mortgage belt:

'New houses, young people, they're not going to spend $10 when they can get the same for $4.'

Demand in some sectors for organic, fresh, healthy food

'The biggest change has been to the organics/health range in the last five years. It's quite dramatic'.

Wider awareness:

'It's about changing people's habits though…to make it really work you have to change 80%. At the moment you may have 30%'

Challenges:

- Community awareness and interest unknown
- Price likely to be critical

Existing business activity:

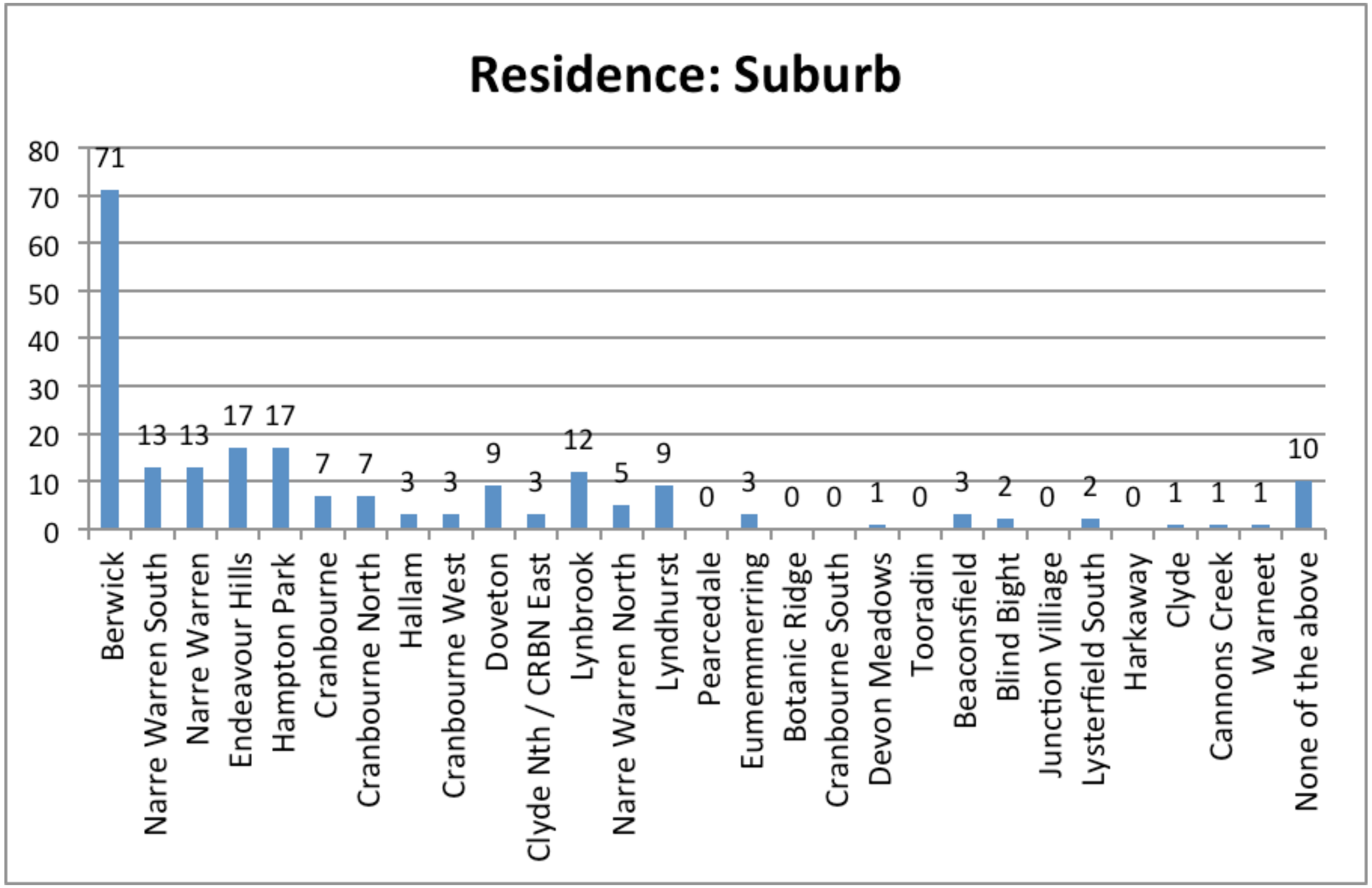
- 4 box schemes operating – 1 based in Melbourne, 1 in Yarra Ranges, 1 in Berwick.
- Aussie Farmers Direct - Berwick
- Farmers Markets
- Myuna Market
- The Andrews Centre (co-op)
- Herdshare – Organic Dairy and Beef – Berwick depot.
- Handful direct farm-business relationships (within Casey and into Melbourne) to grocer…
- Tully's, Cranbourne Market etc

Household Demand (Matthew Sacco) – Shoppers’ attitudes to fresh local produce

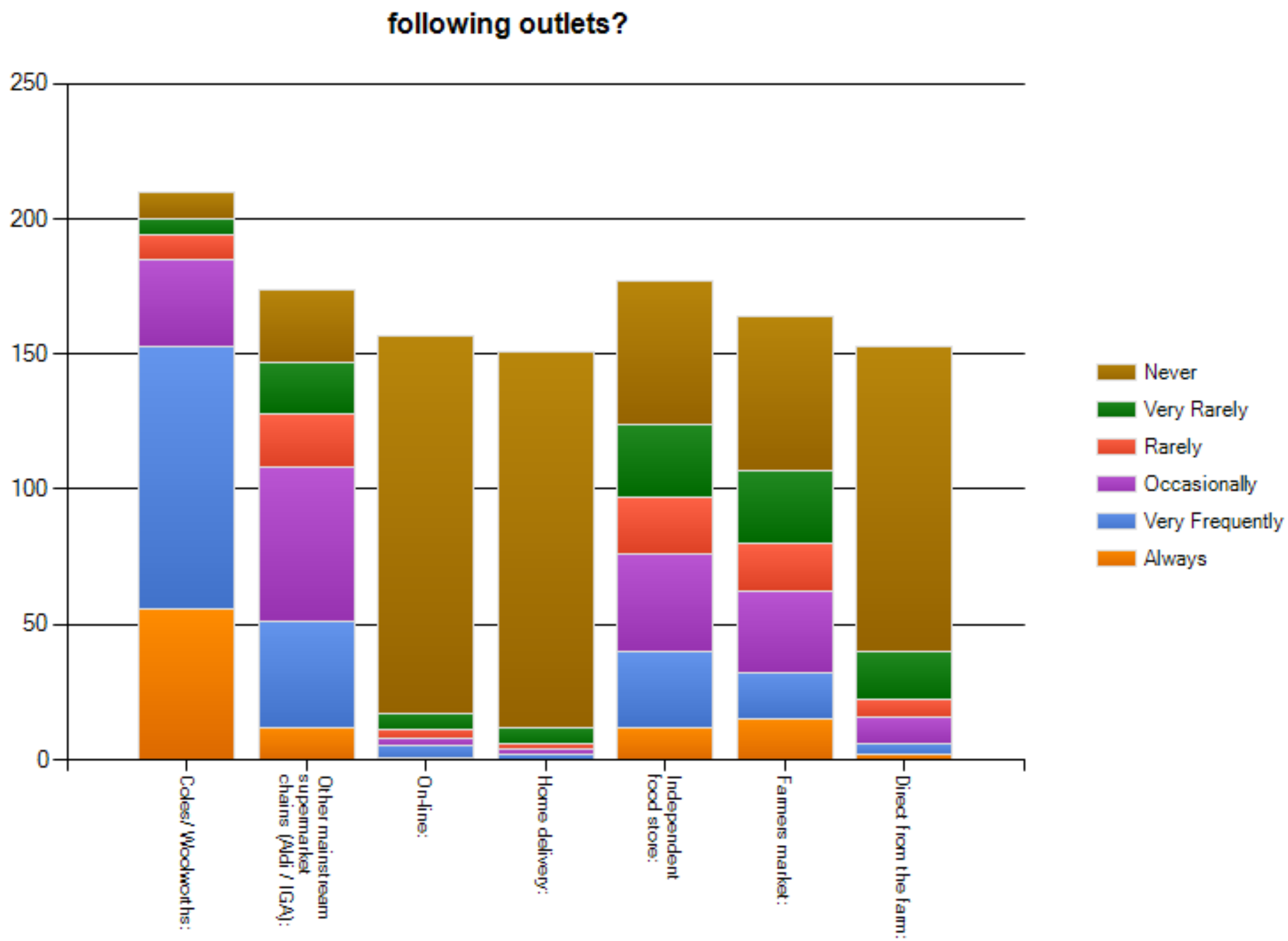
- What are the shoppers’ current purchasing behaviours of fresh food produce (fruit and vegetables)?
- How do shoppers define “Local Fresh Produce?”
- What are the shopper’s attitudes towards local fresh produce?
- Do shoppers have the intent of purchasing local fresh produce whilst purchasing their groceries?
- Do relationships exist between Casey’s demographics and their attitude towards fresh local produce?

Key Findings

» Higher response rate in northern part of Casey



Where do Casey shoppers shop?



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Some preliminary results

» More than half of the shoppers surveyed (52.3%) stated that their household spends between $30-$59 per week on fresh fruit and vegetables.

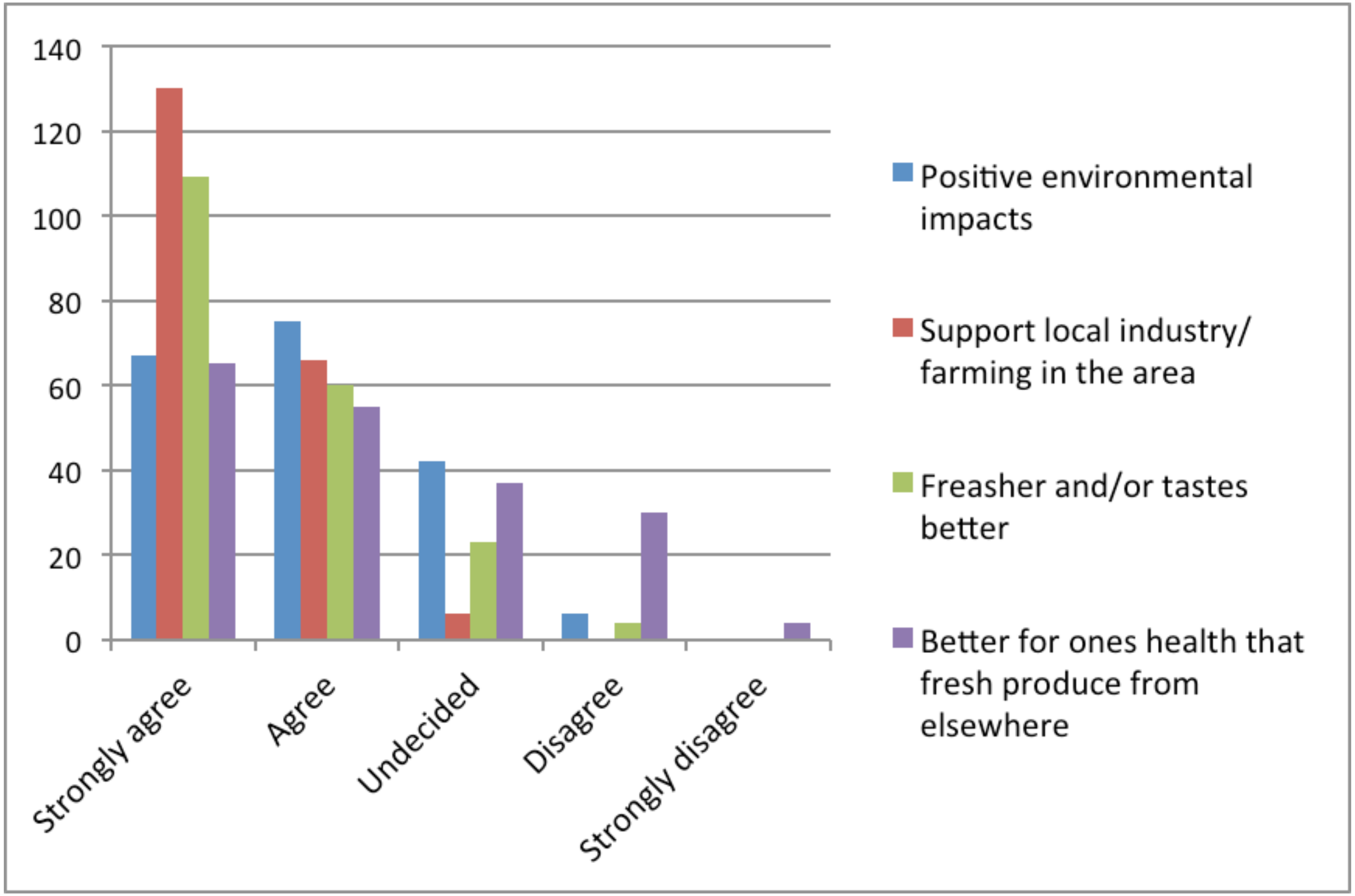
» 36.7% of respondents say they check the origins of fresh food produce when grocery shopping (19.1% never check whilst the remaining 44.2% sometimes check)

» For those who check: 39.4% use labels; 20.6% say they use signage; and another 15.5% say they use strategies at point of purchase

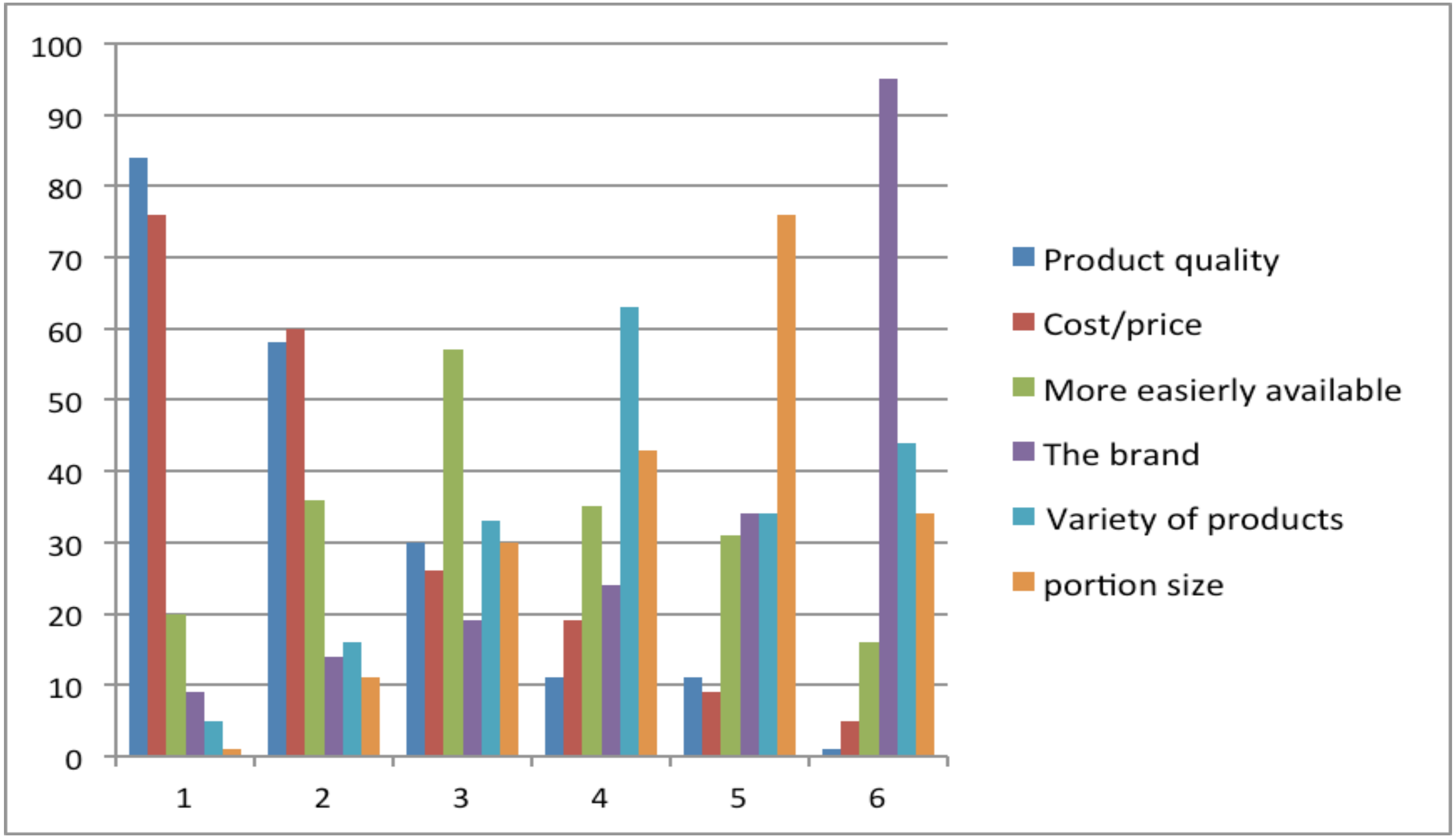
» 56.6% of shoppers indicated that local fresh food produce is food that comes from Victoria or Australia whilst only 43.4% of shoppers define local fresh food produce is food the comes from local farmers markets, local farms or from Casey and surrounding areas.

» 65.9% of shoppers say “when purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables, I care were it is grown”

Reasons for supporting local produce



Influences in buying more local produce



What does this mean?

» Shoppers generally displayed a positive attitude towards fresh local produce

» BUT responses highly dominated by northern (wealthier) communities e.g. Berwick

» Strongest motivation to support local industry and farming enterprises

» Does intent reflect behaviour? Yes and . .

… the influence of the subjective norms shoppers are exposed to

… shoppers' perceived behavioural control when analysing how a shopper's intention is developed

… effect of impulse buying and unplanned purchasing

Australian Food Hubs Network: Establishment of a Best Practice Knowledge Base and Network

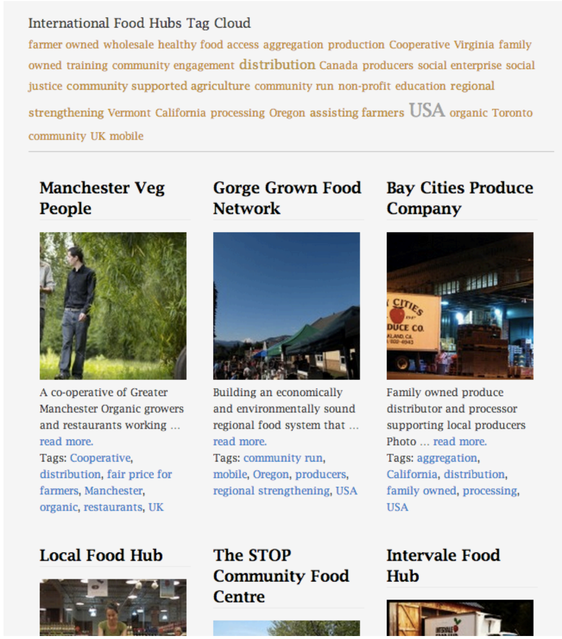
Work Program 2

To draw on existing knowledge to inform project development and potential from successful innovations in Victoria, Australia and internationally.

- Research initiatives and niche development in other countries, Australia and Victoria
- Support and enable the establishment of the AFHN as a vehicle for propagating this knowledge and methodology across Australia

Australian Food Hubs Network - Website

Profiles of Australian projects and people involved in them

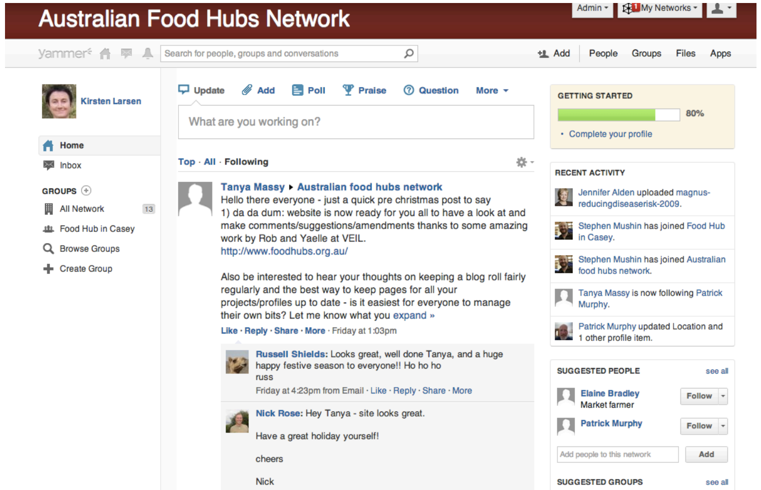


Searchable database of international case studies

www.foodhubs.org.au *Launch February 2012*

Building the AFHN

» Public network: active Facebook page: 135 'likes', frequent comments and activity



» Community of Practice: Yammer network for discussion and sharing amongst people working on Food Hubs around Australia (currently 13 active members)

Pathways for Casey

Where to from here . .

Designing a Food Hub

Action Research: Test and Build . .

1. Seed an Idea

Scoping Project - 2011

2. Explore local context in more depth

Work Program 1

3. Iterative Design - Practical Application of Themes and Assumptions

- Emerging ‘themes’ - can we turn these into *assumptions* we can test?
- What’s the smallest REAL test we could do (design experiments)?
- Can our ‘tests’ build interest and momentum?

Assumption 1: Best to start with Wholesale

Phase 1 results:

» Competitive retail space

» Need to support existing independent retail/distribution activity

» Concern re jeopardising existing/long-term relationships

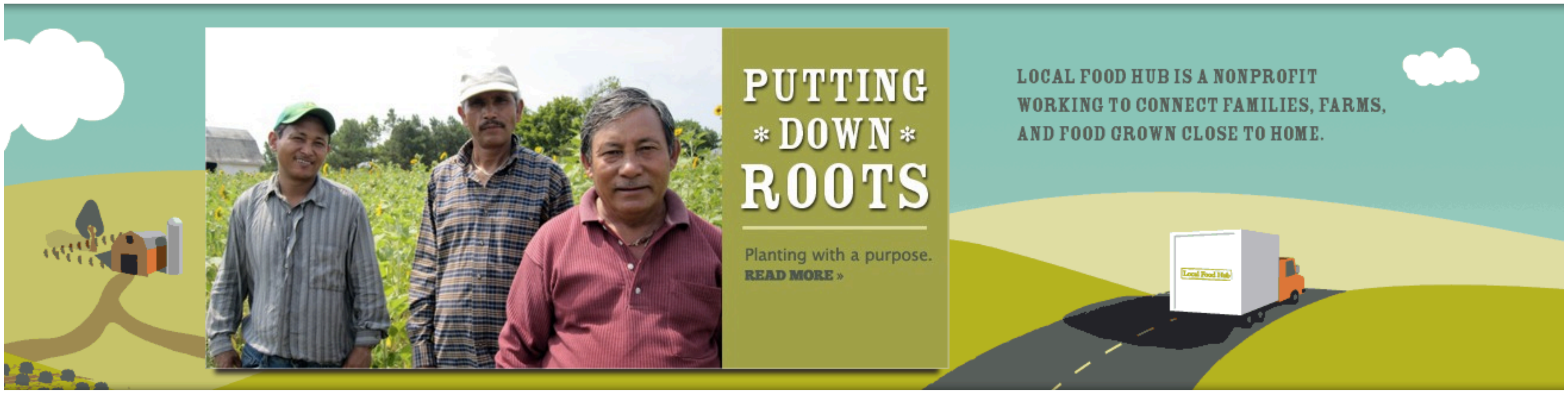
Provide opportunities for existing relationships and businesses

Example: Local Food Hub

» 60-75 local farmers deliver produce to warehouse.

» Aggregate and distribute: schools, hospitals, restaurants, retail and food distributors

» Work with buyers and farmers to produce a 'demand document' each season



Assumption 2: Businesses potentially interested if easy and cost competitive

Phase 1 results:

» Businesses lack streamlined pathway of accessing local food

» Concern over efficiency and price

» Ambiguity – what is local?

» Guarded interest - like to test the waters…

How can we test and build business interest?

Opportunities to easily purchase local food

- Online platforms
- Catalogue?
- Pilot new distribution systems

Connections and networks

- Local food dinners, networking opps. etc for farmers and businesses

Assumption 3: If local produce is available the community will want it

- Farmers think people lack knowledge and interest
- Businesses think hip pocket wins
- Community *says* they're interested
- 2 box schemes say there is strong demand for fresh, local produce

How can we test *and build* community demand?

Local branding

- North Carolina 10% Campaign- branding and awareness raising

Pop-Ups

- Markets – schools, neighborhoods, shopping centers
- Meals – food vans, festivals

Assumption 4: There's something about schools

Phase 1 results:

- Schools mentioned by many people
- 44% of households are made up of couples with children (34% in Greater Melbourne) (ABS 2011).
- 66 primary schools and 29 secondary schools - many of which have canteens…
- 49 Kindergartens, 69 Childcare centers, 9 before and after school care programs – many provide fruit and morning / afternoon tea…

Possibilities

- Pop up school markets
- Collection nodes for local produce orders/boxes
- US farm to school model – but in Australian context- more around linkages – canteens, food service providers

Assumption 5: Food relief networks could be connected with local farmers

Phase 1 results:

» (Preliminary) existing centers don't engage in much local food procurement, but are interested

Myuna Market, Andrews Centre- NO – but interested.

» There are existing networks and centers that could be supported to increase healthy fresh food access and utilisation

» Included in distribution / aggregation system - not just food relief?

Example: Stop Community Food Centre

» Food relief, education, food bank but ALSO farmers markets, catering business, community hub

Revised Goals and Approach:

- Public Stakeholder Forum to be held in Casey in February 2012
- Design process to occur Feb-June 2012: will include significant student work component
- Surveys to become an ongoing tool for understanding the position and needs of those working with us (rather than mapping system more broadly)
- Testing the assumptions drawn from the mapping phase through Action Research and experimentation
- Identify and 'poke' intervention points e.g. facilitating Council purchase of food from local farmers