

Creating localised food systems:

The role of the metropolitan planning strategy

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Theme and Structure

- By necessity food production and a localised food system was historically part of our cities – and our metropolitan planning strategies – then it wasn't - what happened?
- BUT - Food has emerged again on the agenda of cities for very different reasons
- How can we again make food and localised food systems a key ingredient in our metropolitan planning strategies?

Urban Agriculture

The Story So Far

- Historically cities were small (we forget how small) – many foods couldn't be stored and transported long distances – so a lot of food was grown and produced in and around cities – much the way it still occurs in and around many cities in the developing world (estimated to be 30% of the world's food)

- Cities in the west increased their population dramatically – fresh food production (market gardens and livestock) expanded rapidly on the edge of cities to cope with this demand

Urban Agriculture

The Story So Far

- In Australia, once a upon a time, *every* second home on a quarter acre block had a veggie patch, fruit trees and some chooks
- Large scale, long haul transport, large scale refrigerated storage and combined (refrigerated transport) were invented and the necessity for a nexus between a city and its localised food supply were severed – it looked like forever

Urban Agriculture

The Story So Far

- Local farmers growing food and selling in a city economy were replaced by large scale farmers producing commodities sold by contracts to manufacturing companies, wholesalers and supermarket chains

- Vegetables and other food production became part of a supply chain

Urban Agriculture

The Story So Far

- House sizes kept increasing and backyards kept getting smaller – backyards are converted to entertainment areas and swimming pools
- Supermarkets supply year round produce - so why bother growing it at home
- Productive market gardeners in and around cities sell up and move out as land developers buy them up and produce the last crop - housing

Urban Agriculture

The Story So Far

- Metropolitan planning strategies were originally developed in part to protect and support agricultural production in and around cities
- MMBW 1954 *'a line must be drawn somewhere, or the city will continue sprawling over a wider and wider area, increasing the disabilities inherent in this type of growth and putting out of production more and more food producing areas'*

Urban Agriculture

The Story So Far

- Metropolitan planning strategies increasingly provided only token reference to food production – land producing food was increasingly seen as largely an aesthetic value in the eyes of policy makers
- In terms of policy makers – little practical necessity and argument for the retention of food production in and around our cities
- The loss of productive agricultural land is *inevitable*

Urban Agriculture

But the story wasn't finished – there is more!

**Increasing numbers of people, for a growing range
reasons, are **not happy** with how the story
unfolded and appears to have ended**

George W and Laura have definitely move out



Urban Agriculture

Not Happy!

- Supermarket chains are evil
- Naming and blaming for obesity breaks out
- Fast food challenged by slow food
- Water supplies dried up and the inefficiency of water and food exposed
- The rise and rise of Jamie Oliver
- Farmers markets are trendy --- and good for you
- Consumers dare to question what is in their food – and they don't like the answer
- Agriculture & food miles are *discovered* to *cause* climate change
- Michelle Obama gives the White House lawn a makeover

Urban Agriculture is Rediscovered

- The benefits of local food systems are proclaimed
- Guerrilla gardening* breaks out and is legitimised!
- Edible landscapes sound and look funky
- We can grow vegetables on roof tops!
- We can even have vertical gardens!
- Urban agriculture* is not an oxymoron!
- Food sensitive urban design* invented (Kirsten Larson 2009)

Urban Agriculture is Rediscovered

What about the economy, land use and transport of food in our Australian cities?

- Food is about 12.3% of Melbourne's GVA (gross value added) and employs 210,000 persons
(SGS Economics and Planning 2009)
- Food is a major component of the economy of all cities eg tourism
- Transporting food and transport to buy food is not factored into transport planning and land use

Urban Agriculture is Rediscovered

- Cities, regions and whole countries are *discovered* to be food insecure and vulnerable
- Community agitation, some disturbing data (eg the identification of 'food deserts'), and combining the need for climate change action with the discovery of the benefits of urban food production, produces a new coalition of forces
- Populist Mayors (overseas) establish food councils, city wide food policies and food is part of the strategic planning agenda
- Food is at last back *on the table* – an *essential ingredient* in the call for new metropolitan strategies and major revisions to existing strategies



Urban Agriculture is Rediscovered

The Next Generation of Metropolitan Planning Strategies

- Food
 - where it is grown,
 - how far and how many times it has to be transported,
 - where it is sold, bought and consumed
 - who has convenient and equitable access to it
 - how the wasted product is disposed of, and
 - the planning rules that impact on and support food

Are all vital ingredients and must be addressed in the next round of metropolitan strategies

Urban Agriculture is Rediscovered

What needs to be done to get food on the metropolitan planning strategy agenda

- Integrate every aspect of food into the social, environmental and **economic** agenda of land use planning
- Move away from references to 'food insecurity' when talking at the local level in terms of land use planning
- Talk about local and regional food economies

Urban Agriculture is Rediscovered

What needs to be done to get food on the metropolitan planning strategy agenda

- Link food in its widest sense to health outcomes that relate to land use planning and urban design
- Get food into local Councils Municipal Strategic Statement
- Get food into the State Planning Policy Framework and it will be in the Metropolitan Planning Strategy and VCAT decisions