

CITY OF MELBOURNE

FOOD POLICY  
DISCUSSION  
PAPER



Melbourne is world-renowned for the quality of its food and its liveability – we want it to stay that way. We want to make sure that everyone in Melbourne can enjoy good food, now and reliably into the future.



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## INTRODUCTION

Melbourne is world-renowned for the quality of its food and its liveability, and we want it to stay that way. We want to make sure that everyone in Melbourne can enjoy good food, now and reliably into the future.

For many of us, Melbourne's food is a cause for celebration – we have ready access to a wide variety of high-quality foods all year-round, which we enjoy at home and in a diverse and thriving scene of cafes, restaurants, bars and other outlets. These and other related businesses are an important part of our local economy, providing diverse jobs, opportunities and enterprise.

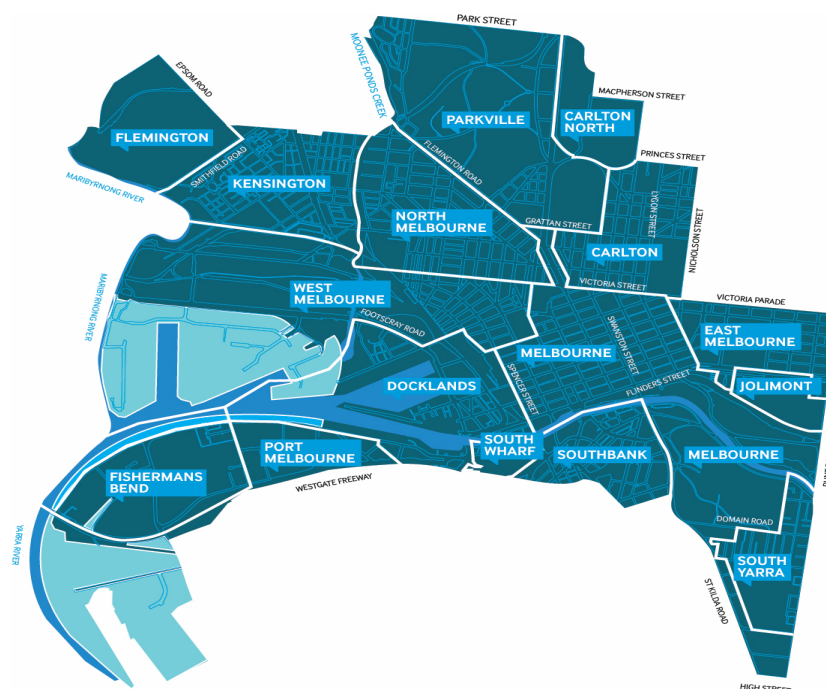
For others, there are real challenges in consistently being able to get the food they need. Limited choices often combined with poor physical or economic access undermines health and contributes to food insecurity. Those of us who do have ready access to the foods we want also often eat in ways that undermine our health.

It is increasingly apparent that food systems and the health of the natural systems that support them (our land, water and atmosphere) are unsustainable. The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to a changing climate and reduce oil vulnerability in the food system, are pressing.

These issues are emerging as important global concerns. Cities around the world are recognising the important role they can play in leading and catalysing change towards healthy, sustainable, fair and resilient food systems.

**The community has articulated a vision for Melbourne as a “bold, inspirational and sustainable city” – this discussion paper starts the conversation about what this means for food.**

FIGURE 1: CITY OF MELBOURNE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES



## WHY DO WE NEED A FOOD POLICY?

We recognise a need to take a broad approach to addressing the health and sustainability challenges facing our food system in order to ensure adequate and safe food for the municipality into the future.

The City of Melbourne is developing a food policy to:

- Raise awareness that what we eat as individuals has an affect on our health, the welfare of others and on the planet itself.
- Position the City of Melbourne as leaders in working towards a safe, healthy, sustainable food system for Melbourne, Victoria and beyond.
- Guide decision-making on aspects of the City of Melbourne's food system.

This discussion paper is the first step in the development of the food policy. It initiates a public conversation about the City of Melbourne's food system by explaining the challenges and opportunities, and by inviting you to participate in a discussion about what matters for Melbourne's food.

Your feedback on this discussion paper will inform a food policy that sets out a vision and key directions for food in the City of Melbourne. Leading cities around the world, including Toronto, Vancouver and New York have developed high level food policies.

## GET INVOLVED

We want to get people talking about how food is consumed, distributed and grown in and for the City of Melbourne. We encourage you to be part of the discussion.

### QUESTIONS

What do you think matters in a successful Food Policy for the City of Melbourne?

What do you value about the City of Melbourne's food culture?

What would you like to see change?

## WHAT IS MELBOURNE'S FOOD SYSTEM?

Melbourne has a long history as a place where communities have gathered and feasted on food. Indigenous communities hunted and gathered in the place now known as 'Melbourne', following the seasonal food supply. The first European settlers were squatters looking for fertile land, and the city's first institutions of government were set up to enable the management of the city's markets. The important historical contribution of food to Melbourne's economy is also reflected in the city flag, which depicts the main economic activities of nineteenth century Melbourne: wool growing, cattle raising, whaling and shipping.

Building on this original food system, the food we eat in Melbourne today is drawn from a complex global food system (Figure 2), made up of many organisations and people involved in producing, distributing and selling food. These include farms, food processors, storage facilities, freight companies and wholesalers in Victoria and further afield, as well as shops, restaurants and markets in the city itself. As consumers, we are all also part of the city's food system.

The quality and affordability of our food depends on the viability of the farms and businesses that make up our food system, which is in turn is affected by their access to land, resources and labour. The food on our supermarket shelves is often manufactured by global companies and sourced from all over the world. However, Melbourne is also blessed with a rich and diverse source of food on its doorstep in Victoria.

The City of Melbourne sits at the centre of the Melbourne Statistical District (MSD), which still retains significant areas of highly productive agriculture. In 2007-08, food represented 12.3% (\$21.2 billion) of Melbourne's Gross Value Added, although this is declining as land is converted from farming to housing or commercial enterprise.<sup>1</sup> A surprising amount of the food produced in the state is grown on Melbourne's fringe within 100 km of the city, including over 50% of the state's vegetables and 17% of the fruit.<sup>2</sup>

FIGURE 2: A FOOD SYSTEM<sup>3</sup>

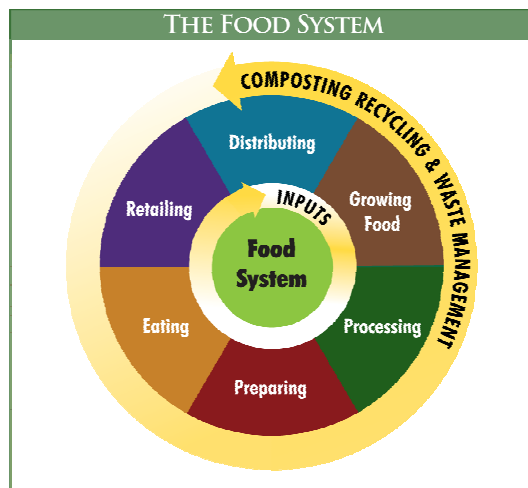


Image courtesy of Michigan Good Food Charter

<sup>1</sup> SGS Economics and Planning (2009), Economic Significance of the Food Sector, La Trobe University for VLGA

<sup>2</sup> Carey and McConell (2011), A resilient fruit and vegetable supply for a healthy Victoria: Working together to secure the future, A Food Alliance Report.

<sup>3</sup> Colasanti, K. et al (2010). Michigan Good Food Charter. East Lansing, MI: C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University, Food Bank Council of Michigan, Michigan Food Policy Council. Available from: [www.michiganfood.org](http://www.michiganfood.org) (viewed October 2011)



Moving beyond Melbourne, Victoria is one of Australia's biggest food producers and exporters.<sup>4</sup> The state's main agricultural exports are dairy, meat and grains<sup>5</sup>, but Victoria also produces a significant proportion of Australia's fruit and vegetables.<sup>6</sup> As the State capital, Melbourne plays a critical role in supporting the regional food sector through access to the Melbourne Wholesale Markets (moving to Epping in 2013) and the Port of Melbourne; and increasingly with opportunities for regional growers to promote their produce to Melbourne's residents and visitors

The *Future Melbourne Plan* has set a target for 30% of food consumed in the city to be grown within 50 km of the municipality by 2020.<sup>7</sup> A detailed study of Melbourne's food system is yet to be conducted, so it is unclear how much of the food currently consumed in the city is produced locally or in regional Victoria. However, research in other areas of the state suggests that barriers exist to effective sourcing of local foods.<sup>8</sup>

QUESTIONS:

What is most important to you about the food you eat?

What important food issues will our community face in the future?

What do you think is important to retain, improve or change in the City of Melbourne's food system?

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Primary Industries DPI (2009) Summary of Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance, 2008-9 Financial Year.

<sup>5</sup> Reference as above

<sup>6</sup> DPI (2011), Victoria's Fruit Industries Summer 2011, <http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/horticulture/fruit-nuts/fruit-industry-profile-summer-2011> ; DPI (2011), Victoria's Vegetable industries Summer 2011, <http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/horticulture/vegetables/industries-summer-2011> (viewed October 2011)

<sup>7</sup> City of Melbourne (2008), Future Melbourne Plan, <http://www.futuremelbourne.com.au/wiki/view/FMPlan/S2G3P5LivingAndWorkingInUrbanCentres> (viewed October 2011)

<sup>8</sup> Stewart (2010), Mornington Peninsula Shire Audit, Mornington Peninsula Shire.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR FOOD POLICY

This section explores some of the challenges in our food system that the City of Melbourne's food policy could address, as well as the strengths that we can draw upon as we develop effective and inspiring responses to these challenges.

### CITY OF MELBOURNE'S STRENGTHS

There are opportunities to approach change in our food system in a way that delivers multiple benefits for the City of Melbourne, consciously integrating food into the weaving of better communities, places, jobs and a more sustainable city.

Melbourne has some unique assets that could shape a bold and inspirational approach to food:

- Melbourne is consistently rated as one of the worlds' most liveable cities, and it attracts creative and enterprising people and businesses from around Australia and the world.
- Melbourne has a reputation as a 'city of food' and a strongly established multi-cultural food culture.
- Melbourne is a 'knowledge city', with the potential to attract and draw upon the insights and experience of international visitors and students and leading tertiary institutions.
- A broad range of food is produced on the city's doorstep, all year round; and Melbourne has significant existing resources, including: public open space, Council owned and operated infrastructure and services and leading festivals and events.

Melbourne's strengths, opportunities, aspirations and strategies have been extensively explored through the Future Melbourne community engagement and plan. That guiding framework has now been included in the *Council Plan 2009-13*, which adopts the six goals of the *Future Melbourne Plan* to be a bold, inspirational and sustainable city:

- A city for people
- A creative city
- A prosperous city
- A knowledge city
- An eco-city
- A connected city.

The development of a food policy provides an opportunity to explore how changed approaches to food can draw upon Melbourne's strengths and support achievement of many existing goals.

#### QUESTIONS:

How could Melbourne draw upon its strengths in developing responses to the challenges facing our food system?

How could a Food Policy help the City of Melbourne to achieve other goals?



## FOOD, NUTRITION AND HEALTH

What we eat has a big influence on our health, and poor diet is associated with around 16% of Victoria's 'burden of disease'.<sup>9</sup> Most of us eat too many foods that are high in fat and sugar, and not enough fruit and vegetables. In fact, less than 10% of Victorians eat the recommended number of serves of fruit and vegetables.<sup>10</sup>

Almost half of all Victorian adults and around 25% of children are now overweight or obese, and obesity-related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, are increasing.<sup>11,12</sup>

### CASE STUDY: SAN FRANCISCO'S HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD DIRECTIVE

All city government departments purchasing food for events or meetings using city funds are required to follow 'healthy meeting guidelines' and purchase healthy, locally produced and/or sustainably certified foods to the maximum extent possible. City departments entering into agreements with food businesses or mobile vendors to sell food on the premises must also give preference to businesses selling healthy and sustainably produced foods.

### SOME OF THE THINGS WE ARE DOING:

The City of Melbourne has a number of initiatives to increase availability and access to healthy foods:

- We have incorporated public health and wellbeing objectives and activities in the *Council Plan 2009-13* as part of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.
- City of Melbourne's *Council Plan 2009-13* and the *Future Melbourne Plan* have set goals to improve access to affordable, healthy food in the municipality.
- The City of Melbourne's Green Light, Eat Right program is aimed at improving the range and access of nutritious food within the municipality according to a 'traffic light' food labelling system. The program commenced as a pilot for food outlets and currently operates within recreation centre kiosks, cafes and vending machines.

It is now clear that rising obesity levels are related to changes in our environment and our lifestyle, including an increase in the availability of high fat, high sugar foods in our food supply and a decrease in physical activity levels<sup>13</sup>. For example, the fast food sector<sup>14</sup> in the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD) has grown by over 50% in the past 10 years, with almost one in three city users now consuming fast food when they are in the city. The CBD has 24/7 takeaway food services, equivalent to almost one on every corner of the city block.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Department of Human Services (2005), Victorian Burden of Disease Study in 2001, Public Health Group, Department of Human Services

<sup>10</sup> Department of Health (2011), Victorian Population Health Survey 2008, Department of Health

<sup>11</sup> Department of Health (2011), Victorian Population Health Survey 2008, Department of Health

<sup>12</sup> Australian Government (2008), 2007 Australian National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey – Main Findings

<sup>13</sup> National Preventative Health Taskforce (2009), Australia the Healthiest Country by 2020, Technical report number 1, Obesity in Australia: a need for urgent action.

<sup>14</sup> Fast foods' are foods that can be prepared and served quickly, often bought through take away outlets and food service chains. While foods prepared quickly are not necessarily unhealthy, many of the fast foods sold by the food service sector are energy-dense and regular consumption can contribute to nutritional concerns.

<sup>15</sup> City of Melbourne (2009), Urban Health Profile 2008, Melbourne City Research, City of Melbourne



QUESTIONS:

How easy is it to make healthy food choices in the City of Melbourne?

What role could food businesses and other organisations in the City of Melbourne play in increasing the availability of healthy foods?

## FOOD SECURITY

There's plenty of good food in the City of Melbourne....why would anyone be food insecure?

Food Security is generally defined as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”.<sup>16</sup>

For people to be food secure, they need to be able to get the right amounts of nutritious and culturally appropriate foods whenever they need them. Many factors affect food security, including:<sup>17</sup>

- Availability: that a sufficient quantity and quality of the required foods is available in the city.
- Access: that people have the physical, economic and social means to access the food that is available.
- Utilisation: that the food is safe, and people have the skills, facilities, health and safe environments to cook and eat it.
- Stability: that these conditions hold over time.

There is currently sufficient availability of food in the City of Melbourne to meet the nutritional requirements of the population. However, not everyone is able to access this food. A 2007 survey found that 4.6% of respondents in the City of Melbourne had experiences in the previous 12 months when they had run out of food and unable to afford to buy more.<sup>18</sup>

There can also be physical access barriers to food security, such as a lack of healthy food outlets near where people live. This is especially a problem for vulnerable households or individuals that cannot drive, or have difficulty using public transport.

A City of Melbourne *Food Mapping Study* found that some areas have an increased risk of food insecurity due to poor accessibility and affordability of food. Those areas are Carlton, North Melbourne, Melbourne and Parkville. Food deserts (without a supermarket within 400m) were also found in some parts of the city.<sup>19</sup>

Food stress and food insecurity can cause poor nutrition in two ways: firstly through insufficient energy intake (i.e. simply not having enough food and being hungry); and secondly by seeking to 'fill up' as cheaply as possible with 'energy dense' foods that have high levels of fat, sugar and salt (such as fast food and processed/package meals). These factors combine to increase the risks of obesity and diabetes in communities that are food insecure, e.g. the risk of obesity is 20–40% higher in women who have low incomes and are experiencing food insecurity.<sup>20,21</sup>

Increasing constraints on resources for food production and distribution may lead to worsening food security in future.<sup>22</sup> There are opportunities to plan and design our cities today in ways that will improve our own food security as well as that of future generations.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> SGS Economics and Planning (2009), Economic Significance of the Food Sector, La Trobe University for VLGA

<sup>17</sup> Adapted for relevance to Melbourne from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's (UN FAO) four essential components.

<sup>18</sup> McCaughey Centre (2007). Community Indicators Project. The McCaughey Centre: Melbourne. Available online at:

<http://www.communityindicators.net.au> (viewed October 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Haw, C and Pizzinga, J (2010), An assessment of the accessibility and affordability of nutritious foods in the city of Melbourne. October 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Burns C. (2004), A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia, VicHealth.

<sup>21</sup> Department of Health and Ageing (2003), Healthy Weight 2008: Australia's Future: The National action agenda for children and young people and their families, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

<sup>22</sup> Larsen, K., Turner, G., Ryan, C., & Lawrence, M., (2011), Victorian Food Supply Scenarios: Impacts on Availability of a Nutritious Diet, Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab (University of Melbourne), CSIRO and Deakin University, Melbourne

<sup>23</sup> Donovan J, Larsen K and McWhinnie J. (2011) Food-sensitive planning and urban design: A conceptual framework for achieving a sustainable and healthy food system. Melbourne: Report commissioned by the National Heart Foundation of Australia (Victorian Division).

#### CASE STUDY: VICHEALTH FOOD FOR ALL PROGRAM

Nine Victorian municipalities explored new ways to address food insecurity through improved access to healthy food in disadvantaged communities. Initiatives included:

- enabling residents to identify local sources of fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices
- ensuring that those in poor-quality housing have access to food storage and cooking facilities
- improving food and cooking knowledge and skills among disadvantaged groups
- improving transport options for those without a car.

An evaluation identified 10 key learnings for local government, now available as a set of 10 micro-movies and '10 Key Ways' information sheets – [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

#### SOME OF THE THINGS WE ARE DOING

Some of the initiatives currently underway in the City of Melbourne to improve the food security of communities and individuals include:

- Support for redistribution of food to food relief services, through organisations such as SecondBite.
- The City of Melbourne supports a range of community gardens across the municipality, which contribute to public health and well-being, support community development, foster environmental education and increase awareness of sustainability principles.

#### QUESTIONS:

What challenges does the City of Melbourne face in improving food security?

What are the opportunities for improving food security in the City of Melbourne?



## FOOD AND SUSTAINABILITY

There is a growing consensus that modern food systems are fundamentally unsustainable, in that:

- Our food choices and patterns of food production and distribution contribute significantly to our total environmental impacts.
- Our food is dependent on energy, natural resources, and a stable climate – all of which are constrained or being seriously undermined.

The environmental impact of our diets is significant. For example:

### GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

- 28% of greenhouse gas emissions from final household consumption occur through food.<sup>24,25</sup>
- Direct emissions from agriculture 'mainly methane and nitrous oxides' were responsible for 12% of Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions in 2007.<sup>26,27</sup>
- 9% of Victoria's manufacturing emissions are from food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing,<sup>28</sup> and 20-30% of Australian road freight is related to food.<sup>29,30</sup>

### WATER

- Almost 50% of an Australian urban household's water use occurs indirectly through food consumption, compared to 11% directly through showers, gardens and cleaning.<sup>31</sup>
- Irrigated agriculture requires water to be diverted from rivers, and the flow in both the Yarra and Werribee Rivers has reduced to around 70% of their average natural flow.<sup>32</sup> Previous patterns of irrigation are very unlikely to be sustained under climate change.
- Farming systems that use excessive amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser often lead to runoff into waterways, in many cases affecting water quality and leading to algal bloom.<sup>33</sup>

### WASTE

- Around 21% of material sent to landfill in Victoria is food waste.<sup>34</sup>
- Garden and food waste makes up 50% of household waste, of which only 20% is recovered.<sup>35</sup>
- Organic material in landfill produces methane when it breaks down, a much more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

<sup>24</sup> ACF (2007), Consuming Australia: Main Findings. Australian Conservation Foundation, University of Sydney and NSW Environmental Trust

<sup>25</sup> This does not include emissions associated with refrigeration, cooking and transport to access food.

<sup>26</sup> DCC (2007), State and Territory Greenhouse Gas Inventories 2007, Department of Climate Change

<sup>27</sup> These 'agricultural' emissions do not include the emissions from manufacture or transport of agricultural inputs, fuel and energy used on farm or any of the downstream emissions from food processing, packaging etc

<sup>28</sup> City of Melbourne (2008), Zero Net Emissions by 2020, 2008 Review, City of Melbourne

<sup>29</sup> This includes food for human and animal consumption, cereal grains and live animals

<sup>30</sup> ABS (2002), Freight Movements, Australia, Cat. no 9222.0, Australian bureau of Statistics

<sup>31</sup> Lenzen, M. (2002), cited in Watermark Australia (2007), Our Water Mark: Australian's Making a Difference in Water Reform, The Victorian Women's Trust, Melbourne

<sup>32</sup> AIUS (2007), Environmental Indicators for Metropolitan Melbourne – Bulletin 9, Australian Institute of Urban Studies

<sup>33</sup> AIUS (2007), Environmental Indicators for Metropolitan Melbourne – Bulletin 9, Australian Institute of Urban Studies

<sup>34</sup> SV (2009), Sustainability Victoria Submission to Outer Suburban Interface Services and Development Committee Inquiry into Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne

<sup>35</sup> AIUS (2007), Environmental Indicators for Metropolitan Melbourne – Bulletin 9, Australian Institute of Urban Studies

Food sustainability has been somewhat overlooked as a key element in urban sustainability. Figure 3 shows that almost 50% of our ecological footprint is related to food consumption.

FIGURE 3: ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF AUSTRALIAN CONSUMPTION <sup>36</sup>

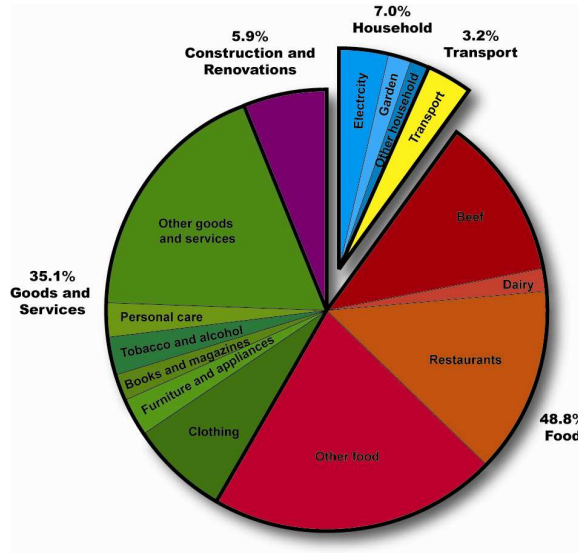


Image courtesy of Australian Conservation Foundation

The intrinsic dependence of the food system on natural resources, like water and land, and its heavy reliance on fossil fuel inputs (e.g. oil and fertilisers produced from natural gas) mean that it is extremely vulnerable to the continued decline of land and water systems, increasingly unstable climate and the disruption and increasing costs of critical inputs.

The International Energy Agency has acknowledged that global peak oil likely occurred in 2006, and the implications for food businesses and the food system (as well as the broader economy) are significant.<sup>37, 38, 39</sup>

The food we eat in Melbourne impacts on how land is farmed throughout Victoria and beyond. If we want to have access to food from farms that look after soils, water, vegetation and biodiversity, then we will need to support those farmers who provide it.

There is increasing community awareness and interest in reducing the environmental impact of diets. This is reflected in demand for organic and locally produced foods, as well as increasing interest in home and community food production.<sup>40</sup> There are significant opportunities to re-integrate food into cities to add value to other sustainability goals, as well as increasing the resilience of urban communities to climate change and peak oil.

<sup>36</sup> ACF (2007), Consuming Australia: Main Findings. Australian Conservation Foundation, University of Sydney and NSW Environmental Trust

<sup>37</sup> Lloyd's Risk Insight (2010). Sustainable Energy Security: Strategic Risks and Opportunities for Business.

<sup>38</sup> Larsen, K., Turner, G., Ryan, C., & Lawrence, M., (2011), Victorian Food Supply Scenarios: Impacts on Availability of a Nutritious Diet, Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab (University of Melbourne), CSIRO and Deakin University, Melbourne

<sup>39</sup> Heinberg, R. and Bomford, M (2009). The Food and Farming Transition: Toward a Post-Carbon Food System. Available online at: <http://www.postcarbon.org/report/41306> -the-food-and-farming-transition-toward (viewed March 2011).

<sup>40</sup> Sustainability Victoria (2009), Green Light Report

#### CASE STUDY: CERES FARM AND MARKET

The Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES) site sits on 4.5 hectares (10 acres) in East Brunswick, Melbourne. It is an award winning, not for profit, sustainability centre which includes a working urban farm in the heart of a densely populated residential area. The farm achieved organic certification despite being established on an old landfill site. It also manages an adjacent section of land for food production and runs a market of its own. <http://www.ceres.org.au>

#### SOME OF THE THINGS WE ARE DOING

- The *Future Melbourne Plan* includes a commitment to increase production, distribution and consumption of locally (within 50km of the municipality) and regionally grown food to 30% of total consumption.
- The *Zero Net Emissions by 2020 Plan (2008 Update)* outlines the City of Melbourne's clear commitment to early and significant action to reduce emissions where these are within its power.
- In April 2005, the City of Melbourne adopted *Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) Guidelines* for application to all city infrastructure, open space and facilities projects – there is significant potential to adapt and apply these to food.<sup>41</sup>
- The City of Melbourne encourages residents and businesses to reduce organic waste to landfill, by listing food waste services and businesses that take surplus food (e.g. 'SecondBite') on its website, as well as providing information on home composting.
- The City of Melbourne's Integrated Waste Management Program has investigated a kerbside organics collection, which will become more feasible as new treatment facilities are built and there is greater demand for end products (e.g. fertilisers).
- In October 2011, Epicure based at the Melbourne Town Hall started processing organic waste through a bio-digester. The bio-digester dries out the food waste, reducing its mass by up to 70%.

#### QUESTIONS:

How important is eating sustainably to you?

How easy is it to make sustainable food choices in the City of Melbourne?

What opportunities are there for food businesses and other organisations in the City of Melbourne to increase the availability of sustainable food?

<sup>41</sup> Donovan J, Larsen K and McWhinnie J. (2011) Food-sensitive planning and urban design: A conceptual framework for achieving a sustainable and healthy food system. Melbourne: Report commissioned by the National Heart Foundation of Australia (Victorian Division).



## FOOD SAFETY

Food safety is important to public trust and confidence in food. Consumer surveys suggest that Victorians have a relatively high level of confidence in the safety of the food supply.<sup>42,43.</sup>

However, it is also estimated that up to five million Australians are affected each year by food poisoning.<sup>44</sup> The number of food poisoning incidents in City of Melbourne food establishments fluctuates from year to year.<sup>45</sup>

As food supply chains and production methods have become more complex, new food safety challenges have emerged.<sup>46</sup> Contaminated food products can be distributed widely through global food distribution networks, and new production methods can lead to the emergence of new pathogens and diseases, such as those associated with some types of intensive animal production. Consumer awareness about food safety issues has also increased. Consumer concerns include the use of pesticides, additives and preservatives in food production, as well as the use of technologies like genetic modification (GM) and nanotechnology.<sup>47, 48</sup>

Food safety regulation has developed significantly over the last decade to keep pace with the complexity of modern food systems. However, stringent regulations can place a particular burden on small farms and food businesses<sup>49</sup>, and create challenges for some types of supply arrangements, such as farmgate sales.<sup>50</sup>

### CASE STUDY: THE BAY CITIES PRODUCE COMPANY, SAN LEANDRO CALIFORNIA

Bay Cities is a family owned produce distributor and processor with a particular focus on supporting local producers. Most of its customers are institutional (including hospitals) and restaurants, so food safety is paramount, however meeting standards can be unaffordable and too complex for many small producers. Because of its commitment to the longevity of these small, diverse, local farmers, Bay Cities has introduced a range of programs and supports to help them meet food safety requirements so they can buy their produce. "If we don't work with the smaller farms to bring them up to speed on food safety and affordably we will lose them." Steve Delmasso

<sup>42</sup> Campbell Research and Consulting (2005) Food Safety Confidence: Final Report. Prepared for the Food Safety Unit, Department of Human Services, Victoria

<sup>43</sup> FSANZ (2007), Consumer attitudes survey 2007: a benchmark survey of consumers' attitudes to food issues. Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

<sup>44</sup> Food Safety Information Council (2010) Strike food poisoning off the gift list, Media Release, 17 December 2010.

<sup>45</sup> City of Melbourne (2009), Urban Health Profile 2008, Melbourne City Research, City of Melbourne

<sup>46</sup> WHO (2002) WHO global strategy for food safety: safer food for better health. World Health Organisation.

<sup>47</sup> FSANZ (2007), Consumer attitudes survey 2007: a benchmark survey of consumers' attitudes to food issues. Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

<sup>48</sup> Better Health Channel (2010), Genetically modified foods,

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/genetically\\_modified\\_foods?open](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/genetically_modified_foods?open) (viewed October 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Sabic, D and Creyke, P (1998) Overcooked – a study of the food compliance costs for small businesses. Small Enterprise Research 6 (1), pp 64 - 67

<sup>50</sup> North East Ag Works (2007), Understanding food safety regulations for direct farm-direct sales: a study of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Vermont.



### SOME OF THE THINGS WE ARE DOING

- City of Melbourne Environmental Health Officers regularly inspect city food businesses to assess compliance with food safety regulations. Council also has a range of food safety education programs that promote safer and more hygienic food.
- The City of Melbourne provides food safety information and resources in a number of different languages to meet the needs of food businesses in Melbourne's multi-cultural communities.
- Environmental Health Officers regularly conduct food sampling at City of Melbourne food premises, and samples undergo a range of microbiological tests.

### QUESTIONS:

What areas of food safety are of most concern to you?

What opportunities are there for food businesses and other organisations in the City of Melbourne to improve food safety?

## FOOD BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

Food businesses make a significant economic contribution to the City of Melbourne and this contribution changes with the city and its inhabitants. The largest food-related sector of the economy is hospitality and food services, including cafes, bars, catering services and restaurants. In 2009-10, the food services industry in the City of Melbourne contributed over \$700 million to the economy and employed 30,000 staff.<sup>51</sup>

Melbourne's reputation for the quality and variety of its food, along with increased residential and commercial development within the city has seen the City of Melbourne's share of the greater Melbourne food services industry increase from around 12% in 2003-4 to almost 22% in 2009-10. Within the City of Melbourne, the CBD has seen particularly strong growth, employing 61% more people in 2006.<sup>52</sup> This reputation for food and attraction of people to the 'restaurant capital' of Australia also plays a significant role in Melbourne's tourism industry, with nearly 1.2 million international visitors dining out in the city in 2008.<sup>53</sup>

The Queen Victoria Market (QVM) is an important asset for the people of Melbourne. A vibrant working market since 1878, QVM is the only one of the city's original market places that remains trading today, providing a unique link with the past. The City of Melbourne owns QVM and originally had operation and management responsibilities, in recognition of the important role they have in the food supply of the city. QVM is the city's biggest market and around half its market stalls sell food, including fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, chicken, seafood and deli products. The departure of the Melbourne Wholesale Markets to Epping (scheduled for 2013) could present an opportunity for the revival of the QVM.

The changing population, demographics and interests of Melbourne's residents and visitors present both new challenges and opportunities to its food businesses. The growth in residents in the central city is driving demand for more local food businesses.

However freight solutions developed for more suburban locations may be less suited to the central city and remain emissions and oil intensive. There is a need for new food supply chains and freight solutions to service the needs of central city residents and businesses, and these present opportunities to entrepreneurs.

The local economic benefits (within City of Melbourne and the greater Melbourne area) of strengthened regional food systems are attracting significant attention internationally and may present new opportunities to the City of Melbourne and its surrounding regions.

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<sup>51</sup> SGS (2011), Value of Hospitality Study: Economic Profile of Cafes, Bars, Catering Services and Restaurants in the City of Melbourne 2011, SGS Economics and Planning for the City of Melbourne.

<sup>52</sup> City of Melbourne (2009), Urban Health Profile 2008, Melbourne City Research, City of Melbourne

<sup>53</sup> SGS Economics and Planning (2009) Economic Significance Of The Food Sector, La Trobe University for VLGA. March 2009.



#### SOME THINGS WE ARE ALREADY DOING

- The City of Melbourne is in the process of developing a long term strategy for the QVM, to ensure the market continues to trade sustainably while also playing a significant role in Melbourne's food system long into the future.
- The *Enterprise Melbourne Hospitality Toolkit* has been developed as part of the *Melbourne Hospitality Strategy 2008-2012*. The toolkit assists hospitality businesses that are starting out providing tips and suggestions, practical guides and informative links.
- *Table Talk* is an existing newsletter for direct communication with the City of Melbourne hospitality and food service businesses. It conveys new information on local government requirements (such as new food safety and waste laws), sustainability practices, local and global consumer trends, and marketing opportunities and events around Melbourne.
- Supporting social enterprise, including the Hub Melbourne as an incubator for creative enterprise development in Melbourne

#### QUESTIONS:

What is most important to the success of diverse food businesses and enterprises in the City of Melbourne?

What are the opportunities for food businesses and entrepreneurs to respond to broader challenges in the food system?

Are there opportunities to strengthen relationships between residents and businesses in the City of Melbourne and Victoria's regional farmers and food businesses?

## FOOD CULTURE

Melbourne has a reputation for great food, and the city's restaurants, cafes and markets draw residents and visitors in large numbers.<sup>54</sup> An important element of the city's food reputation is the cultural diversity of its food.

Melbourne is home to over 140 different cultures including Indigenous Australians, post World War II European migrants and arrivals from Asia.<sup>55</sup> These migrant communities have made a significant contribution to Melbourne's food culture and to the city's unique 'food precincts' like Chinatown, the city's Greek Precinct and Lygon St in Carlton.

Melbourne's *Hospitality Strategy 2008-12* aims to draw on the city's unique cultural diversity in developing Melbourne as a leading hospitality destination, and flagship events, like the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, also celebrate the city's culinary diversity.

The city's food culture is also influenced by broader social trends that affect our interactions around food within families and communities. As our lives become busier, convenience is becoming more important in our food choices and we eat out more than we used to<sup>56</sup>. The ability to participate fully in all aspects of our food culture is an important part of social inclusion, but full participation can be difficult for people on low incomes.

Our food culture is dynamic. It changes as society evolves, and there has been a recent increase in interest in reconnecting with where our food comes from, as seen in the growth of backyard fruit and vegetable growing, community gardens and farmers markets.

### CASE STUDY: LONDON FOOD LINK'S 'GREENER CURRY' PROJECT

This project aims to increase the proportion of local, organic and fair trade food consumed by London's multi-cultural communities and offered at multi-cultural restaurants. It includes a free brokering service that puts restaurants in touch with suppliers of local, organic and fair trade goods, ensuring best price and service, matching needs and solving transport problems.

### SOME OF THE THINGS WE ARE DOING

- The City of Melbourne supports the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival in partnership with the Victorian Government. The festival promotes food and wine offerings from Melbourne and Victoria and is the largest festival of its kind in the world.
- The City of Melbourne's Cultural Precincts program started in 2008. It aims to develop and promote Melbourne's cultural precincts, including Chinatown, the Greek Precinct and the Lygon St precinct.<sup>57</sup>
- The City of Melbourne provides Community Services Grants that may be used to support the delivery of programs and services that strengthen community connections through food in Melbourne's culturally diverse communities.

<sup>54</sup> SGS Economics and Planning (2009) Economic Significance of The Food Sector. La Trobe University for VLGA. March 2009

<sup>55</sup> City of Melbourne (2008), Melbourne City Council Council Plan 2009-13: A bold, inspirational and sustainable city.

<sup>56</sup> Spencer, S & Kneebone, M 2007, FoodMap: A comparative analysis of Australian food distribution channels, Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra.

<sup>57</sup> City of Melbourne (2010), Melbourne Hospitality Strategy Report 2010, Enterprise Melbourne.

QUESTIONS:

What do you value most about Melbourne's food culture?

What role do the City of Melbourne's diverse multi-cultural communities play in the city's food culture?

How would you like to see Melbourne's food culture develop in future?

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Could the City of Melbourne take a bold leadership position to strengthen the growth and development of a localised food system which promotes social equity, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, global fair-trade and the health and well-being for all city users, now and in the future?

The development of a food policy is an opportunity to start a broad conversation, about what we value as a community regarding food and how we would like to see Melbourne's food system develop in the future.

### WE'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS

What is most important to you about food in the City of Melbourne?

Do you agree or disagree with what we've said in this paper?

What are the gaps?

Have we missed anything?

We have provided questions throughout to help you frame your response. You may wish to respond to a few questions or a specific area of interest. Take part in the food conversation and give us your feedback on this discussion paper by:

**Visiting our website:** [www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodpolicy](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodpolicy)

**Mail:** City of Melbourne Health Services Branch, GPO Box 1603, Melbourne VIC 3001

**Closing date for feedback:** 5pm, Friday 9 December, 2011

Attend one of our community or stakeholder Food Forums on:

Community / Residents Food Forum

**Date:** Wednesday 16 November 2011

**Time:** 6pm – 8.30pm (light refreshments provided)

**Venue:** Visy Park (Carlton Football Club), George Harris Function Room, Royal Parade, Carlton North

Industry / Stakeholder Food Forum

**Date:** Thursday 17 November 2011

**Time:** 9.30am – 12pm (Morning Tea provided)

**Venue:** Melbourne Town Hall, Supper Room, 120 Swanston Street, Melbourne

To register your place at one of our Food Forums email [health@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:health@melbourne.vic.gov.au) or call 9658 9658.



