

KIMBERLEY

FOOD ACTION GROUPS

Stakeholder Focus Group | Early Feedback Report



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The Food Community team would like to thank all participants for their valuable contributions and time towards this project, and for their ongoing efforts in supporting food security across Western Australia.

The Issue

All people need food in sufficient amounts, and of good quality, to meet their dietary needs. It can be challenging for some people to have guaranteed physical, social and economic access to healthy and affordable food (food security). At a community level, this means residents can obtain a safe, nutritious diet produced through a sustainable food system that maximises healthy choices, supports cultural and taste preferences, and provides everyone with equal food access.

The Background

The Food Community project, aims to identify, map, evaluate and strengthen initiatives supporting food security. The [Food Community website](#) helps to bring people interested in working in food security together to learn more about food security and how to support it, in a coordinated and collaborative way. However, for sustainability, a governance approach is required to progress food security action. Food Action Groups offer an excellent 'where to from here' solution to this problem.

Food Action Groups have been helping community members and people working in food security to get involved in food system decision-making in Europe, the UK and North America for over 20 years. Stakeholders collaborate to implement activities like nutrition programs, social supermarkets, and getting locally produced food into hospitals, aged care centres and school meals (among others). No such Food Action Group model exists in regional Western Australia. This is a clear gap that presents us with an opportunity for innovation.



LOCATION | Kimberley, Western Australia

The Kimberley is the most northern region of WA, covers 424,517 square kilometres and includes four local government areas [1].

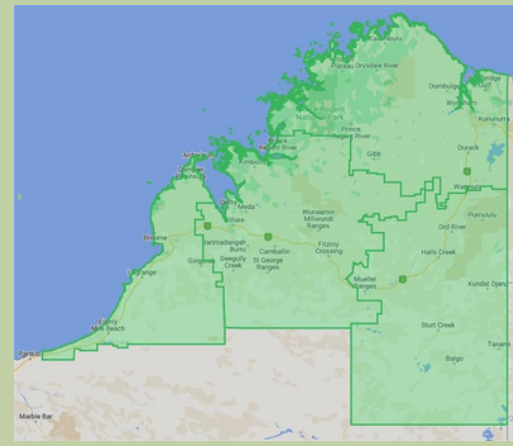


Figure 1. Kimberley Western Australia [2]

Current Status

Kimberley focus groups were held in August 2023, where the team shared their findings from an international review of Food Action Groups' activities, and sought feedback on preferences for an ideal Food Action Groups model, the key stakeholders to be involved in its creation, potential barriers, and funders.

What we heard...

What a good food pathway looks like...

A holistic, community led pathway that recognises the importance of nourishing the eco system; includes food education for young people to ensure a future in primary production; and access to affordable food and financial literacy education.

When the food pathway works, why does it work?

Plenty of quality water; climate ideal for growing a variety of food (WA's 'food bowl'); strong community relationships and desire to create change; and existing emergency food relief initiatives.

Kimberley Food Problems...

High food prices and production costs; strict biosecurity laws prevents accessing food from Northern Territory during seasonal interruptions to normal distribution; no public transport (limits access for people); no local food processing; and limited availability of nutrition education programs.



Proposed Food Action Group Activities...

- Facilitate nutrition literacy programs for community members.
- Enhance food education in schools (long term curriculum approach).
- Increase healthy eating campaigns in schools.
- Advocate for affordable food options (health versus profit).
- Increase access to healthy food for families.
- Build collaboration between existing food security initiatives.

Proposed Structure...

Local-based approach with an overarching aim; embedded within existing working group recently established; collaborate with current local food security initiatives in Kununurra and Halls Creek; and focus on a variety of problems across all components of the food pathway.

Stakeholders...

Local schools/education department; local government; WA Country Health Service (WACHS); primary producers; and representatives from all parts of the food pathway and existing food security initiatives (e.g. BBy and Ag Dots).

Perceived Barriers...

Conflicting agendas among members; buy-in from large organisations (e.g. chain supermarkets); state-level policy and legislation preventing action; and changing business owners attitudes (health versus profit).

“

If you've got the education to spend your money wisely, then everything's gonna [sic] change... we then value food and the environment, we have less waste...

”

Where to from here?

We are now looking into our findings from the Kimberley and other WA regions more deeply. Once complete, we'll commence identifying suitable funding for the establishment of one or more Food Action Groups in the Kimberley.

Follow the project through Facebook and sign up to the Food Community website today!



foodcommunity@ecu.edu.au



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www.foodcommunity.com.au

References:

1. WA Country Health Service. Kimberley regional profile. From: <https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Kimberley/Kimberley-regional-profile>, 2021
2. Kimberley Western Australia. Adapted from: REMPLAN MapBuilder, <https://mapbuilder.remplan.com.au/?link=10dc50-d04f-4b3f-bbf8-5ec1198b79db>