



Central Great Southern Food Action Group: Co-creation Workshops

Summary Report, December 2024



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This report can be cited as:

Godrich, S., Whitehouse, A., Doe, J., & Goodwin, S. (2024). *Central Great Southern Food Action Group: co-creation workshops summary report, November 2024*. Bunbury, Western Australia: Edith Cowan University.

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Acknowledgement:

The team wishes to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which these workshops were conducted, and pay their respects to Elders past and present.

Sincere thanks to the following people who provided advice regarding the workshops structure and content: Jo Pollitt (Edith Cowan University); Prof Karen Charlton (University of Wollongong); A/Prof Flavio Macau (Edith Cowan University); Dr Rebecca Lindberg (Deakin University); Dr Tahna Pettman (Flinders University); A/Prof Deana Leahy (Monash University); Dr Amy Carrad (Australian National University); Dr Katherine Kent (University of Wollongong).

Thanks to Professors Rachel Ankeny and Amanda Devine for their review of and feedback about this report.

These co-creation workshops were funded by Edith Cowan University's Strategic Research Fund.

Executive Summary

Food security is the access to good quality foods at all times to meet the dietary needs of individuals and populations, and involves the guaranteed physical, social and economic access to healthy and affordable food [1]. Food security at a community level is dependent on access to a sustainable food system maximising healthy choices, community self-reliance and equality of access for everyone to obtain a safe and personally acceptable nutritious diet.

Food Action Groups, known internationally as Food Policy Groups or Food Policy Councils, facilitate participation in food system decision-making through the collaborative efforts of stakeholders and local governments to incorporate place-based food system solutions into government policy/plans. They also lead or support direct program delivery, such as cooking and gardening education programs, or sustainable food initiatives, among others [2].

There is a clear gap in the Western Australian context for Food Action Groups, given no such model has been established previously in regional Western Australia (WA). Food Action Groups offer a sustainable and structured governance approach solution to implementing food security action in WA.

Edith Cowan University (ECU) has undertaken a comprehensive body of research, and engaged stakeholders and community members, to understand and respond to local food issues and devise potential solutions.

The work has included the identification, mapping and evaluation of food security initiatives across each Western Australian region, and the subsequent co-design of focused food security action plans. An international scoping review of the impact of Food Action Groups on food system issues also forms part of this body of research.

Preliminary work conducted by ECU and partners to support the establishment of a pilot Food Action Group in the Central Great Southern region has included research into existing food security initiatives within the region and how these have supported food security systems change. The ECU team also conducted community and stakeholder focus groups (2023) to determine the need and interest for a Food Action Group within the region. Three co-creation workshops have been undertaken in 2024 to consult with various community members and stakeholder representatives to inform the establishment of the Central Great Southern Food Action Group. The workshops identified priority food security initiatives, funding requirements, and the current infrastructure, partnerships, and programs available to support priority initiatives. Barriers and opportunities identified from previous focus groups were addressed to increase the likelihood of creating a successful and sustainable Food Action Group. Furthermore, the workshops sought to determine the structure of the pilot Food Action Group, and to identify relevant stakeholders and their potential roles in supporting the group.

Recommendations

- 1. Form Central Great Southern Food Action Group pilot** including representation from: government, social services sector, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, food producers, and community members
- 2. Develop and implement priority initiatives** identified through community and stakeholder consultations. Initiatives include a community food hub; food, cooking and gardening education programs; and a community kitchen.
- 3. Create a structured Food Action Group** including a formal committee, and a Terms of Reference to provide a clear framework within which staff and volunteers will work.
- 4. Implement awareness-raising activities** to increase Food Action Group profile.



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Introduction

Food systems

Food systems are complex and refer to a network of actors, resources and activities involved in the production, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food, and their associated social, economic and environmental outcomes [3]. Figure 1 below depicts the range of processes involved to get food from the farm to fork, with interrelated drivers and associated impacts across health, social, political, environmental and economic aspects. These aspects can in turn determine whether a person, their family, and wider community has regular and reliable food access.

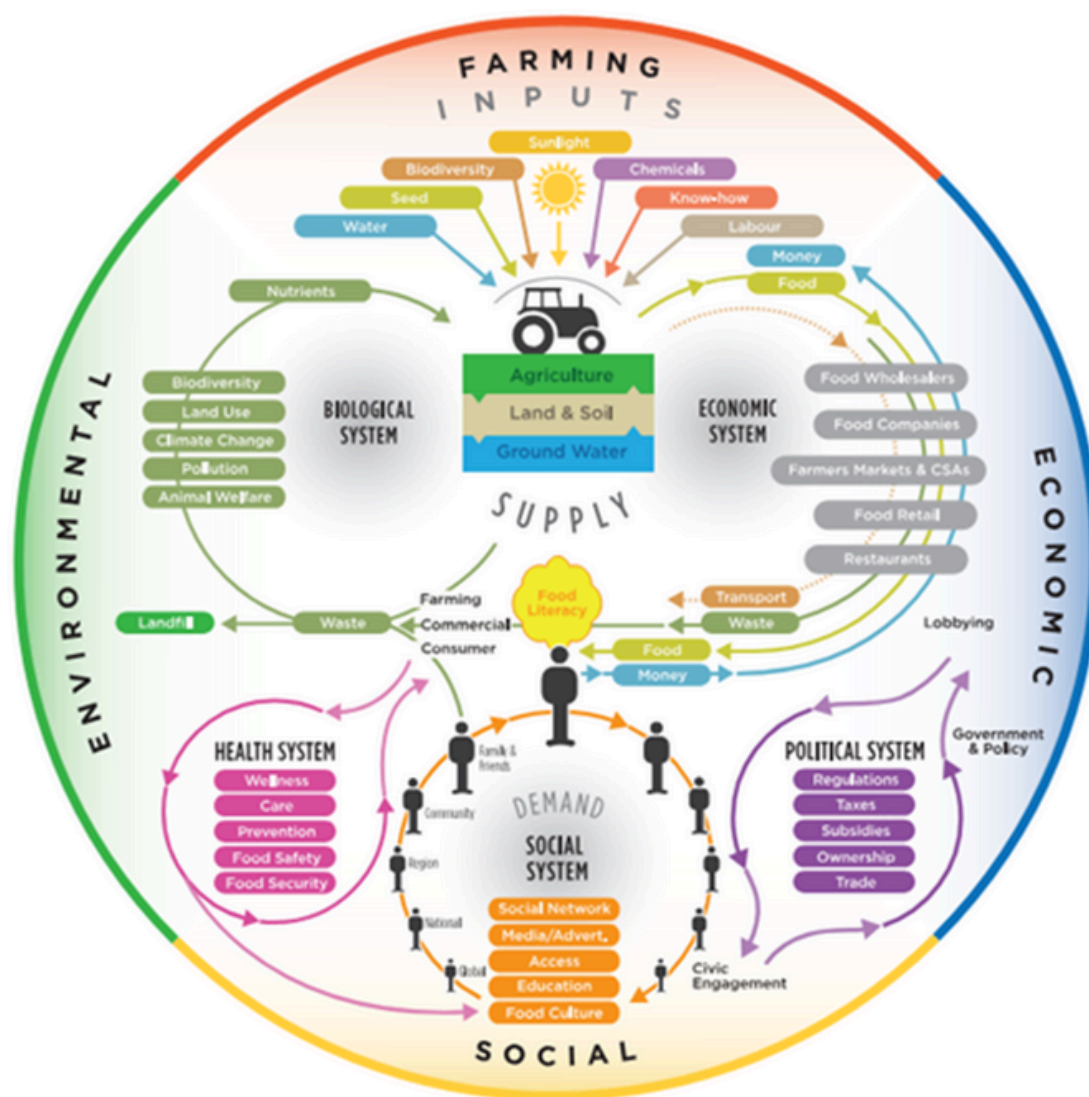


Figure 1: Food System Diagram.

Diagram adapted and reproduced with permission from Nourish Food System Map, www.nourishlife.org. Copyright WorldLink, all rights reserved.

Food security

All people need food in sufficient amounts, and of good quality, to meet their dietary and cultural needs. It can be challenging for some people to have guaranteed physical, social and economic access to healthy and affordable food and hence meet the requirements for being considered food secure (food security) [1]. At a community level, food security refers to residents' abilities to obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximises healthy choices, community self-reliance, and equal access for everyone. A visual representation of the six dimensions of food security (food availability, food access, food utilisation, stability, agency, and sustainability) and associated determinants is provided in Figure 2 below [1, 4-7]:

Regular physical, social and economic access to healthy food is called food security [1].



Figure 2: Determinants of food security

Food Action Groups

Food Action Groups are increasingly being utilised to facilitate participation in food system decision-making in Europe and North America. A diverse range of stakeholders work collaboratively with local government to incorporate food system solutions into government policy/plans. No such model exists in regional Western Australia (WA). This is a clear gap that presents us with an opportunity for innovation that can make significant improvements for communities.

Food Action Groups undertake a range of activities, developed in line with place-based priorities, to support a sustainable and resilient local food system. These activities align with a variety of food system activities (as depicted in Figure 1), involve various actors and focus on many aspects of domains such as subsidies (political system), access and culture (social system), food security (health system) and land use (biological system). Figure 3 provides several examples of Food Action Group activities [2].



Figure 3: Food Action Group activities

Great Southern region

Great Southern food systems and food security

The Great Southern region spans 39,007 square kilometres and is comprised of a diverse range of communities from rural villages to the major trading towns of Albany, Katanning, Denmark and Mount Barker [8]. Though the region's key primary production areas of broadacre cropping, livestock farming and horticulture generate \$1.2 billion in production value annually [9], research into food problems in the region identified that food available in the region to residents is of a low quality. Further food problems reported by Great Southern residents includes the lack of support for local growers (e.g. subsidies), no dignified access to food relief, and a lack of culturally appropriate food (e.g. Halal) available in the region.

Preliminary ECU work to understand Great Southern food issues and opportunities

ECU's Food Community project team has undertaken several years of consultations and engagement to explore Great Southern stakeholders' and community members' perceptions of Great Southern food system issues and opportunities, identify existing programs and services that support food security, and understand their vision for a food secure region.

The Food Community project aims to:



Identify



Map



Evaluate



Strengthen

food security initiatives across WA regions, to support food security action.

The Food Community team identified, mapped and evaluated food security initiatives and co-designed action plans to strengthen their work, and built the [Food Community website](#) as a knowledge hub to share food security information through webinars, infographics, fact sheets, a map of existing food security initiatives and an advocacy training course. In addition, a range of community involvement activities have been conducted. The outcomes and findings of focus groups, interviews, events, and workshops are outlined below.

Great Southern food issues

The Food Community team conducted focus group sessions to understand stakeholder and community member perceptions of food problems in the region, with key food security challenges depicted in the following infographic [10].

Great Southern region food problems in 2023

Community and stakeholder perceptions of Great Southern region food problems.

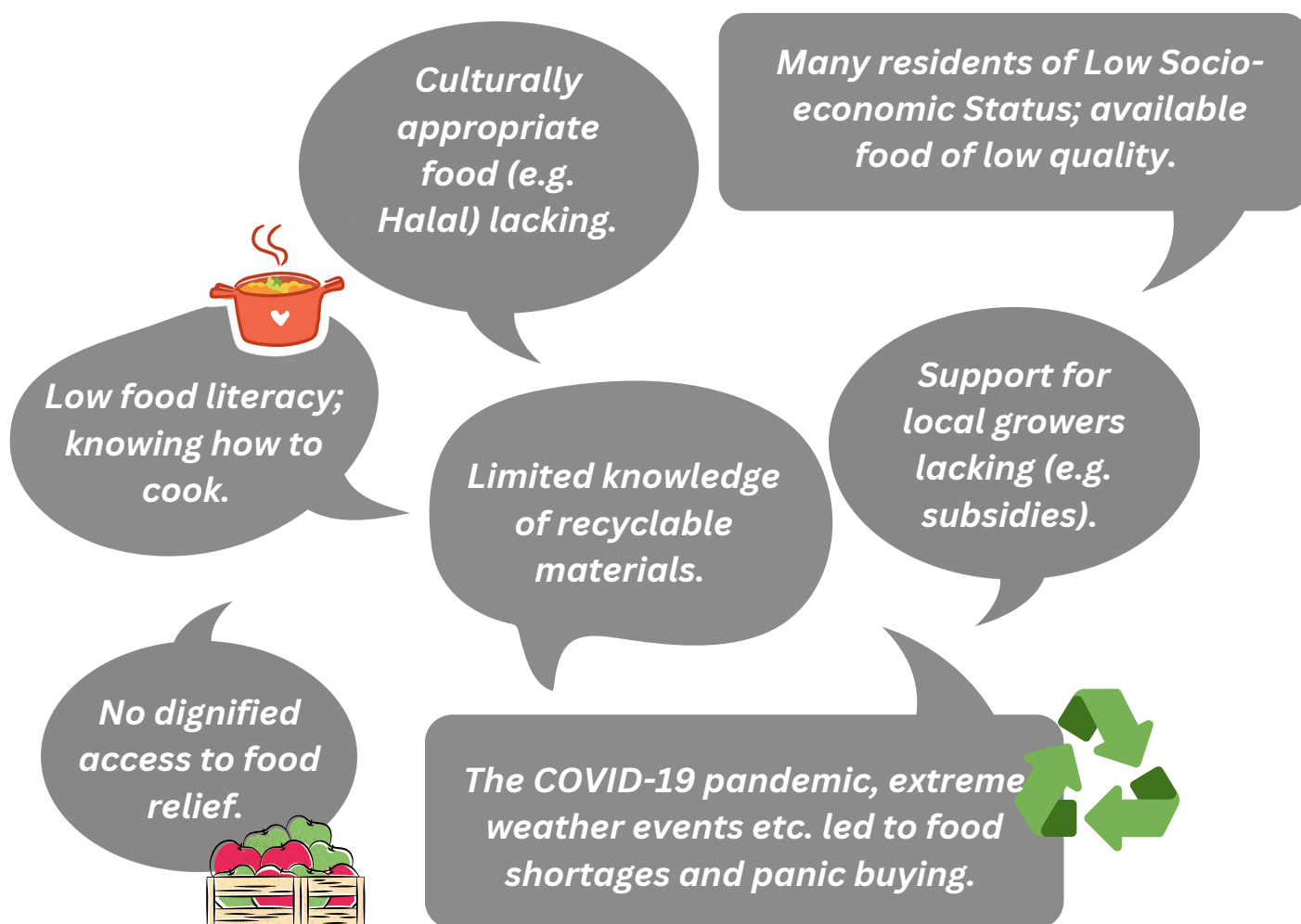


Figure 4: Great Southern food problems outlined by community members and stakeholders

Great Southern food security

The Food Community team has investigated food-related projects and programs currently operating within the community. Sixty food security initiatives have been identified in the Great Southern region [10], which have been grouped into the following domains:



Figure 5: Great Southern food security initiatives

In addition to understanding existing service provisions, the Food Community team consulted Great Southern community members and stakeholders to articulate their vision of a food security Great Southern region. The graphic in Figure 6 below provides a visual representation of the key aspects of Great Southern food security described in the sessions [11].

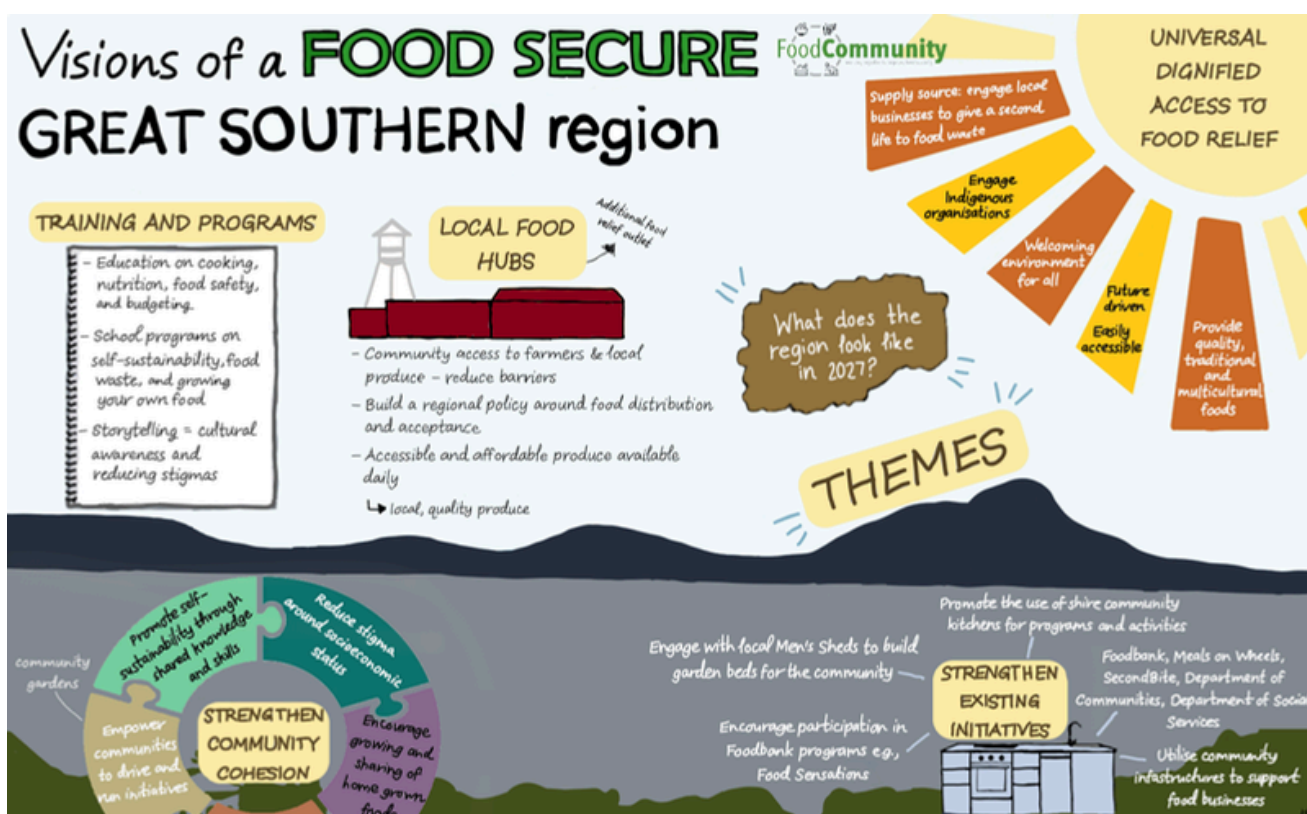


Figure 6: Great Southern food security vision, as described by stakeholders and community members

Based on the existing food security services delivered in the Great Southern, and community member and stakeholder visions for a food secure region, stakeholders and community members were asked to identify ideas for new food initiatives needed, to further strengthen food security in the Great Southern region. Figure 7 below visually depicts these ideas as suggested and discussed by focus group participants [10]:

New initiative ideas and actions for the Great Southern region

Community and stakeholder ideas for new initiatives and actions needed in the Great Southern region to better support food security systems change.



Figure 7: New food security ideas needed in the Great Southern region

ECU work on Food Action Groups

A comprehensive body of work has been undertaken over several years, to explore the potential of Food Action Groups as a solution to food system challenges in other countries and in regional WA, including the Great Southern region. The work has included:

- 1. International scoping review** – This review examined international peer-reviewed and grey literature across high income countries, of the impact of Food Action Groups on food system issues. The published work is available [here](#).
- 2. Great Southern Food Community mapping of existing food security initiatives** – The range of food security initiatives has been mapped, evaluated against systems change characteristics and co-designed action plans developed with initiative leaders (see Figure 5). These plans strengthen initiatives' contributions to a better way of supporting food security in the region. A range of resources is available [here](#).
- 3. Food Action Group scoping (2023)** – Focus groups were undertaken in 2023, to understand the need and interest in Food Action Groups, identify local food problems, outline possible food programs/services to address the problems, discuss a potential governance structure, stakeholders and barriers to success associated with a Food Action Group. These focus groups were underpinned by the food system framework depicted in Figure 1. The early findings reports are available [here](#).
- 4. Co-creation workshops (2024)** – Our team has undertaken further co-creation workshops, with a total of 12 participants, to inform specific components of an external grant application.

The figure below outlines the significant preliminary work undertaken by the ECU team.

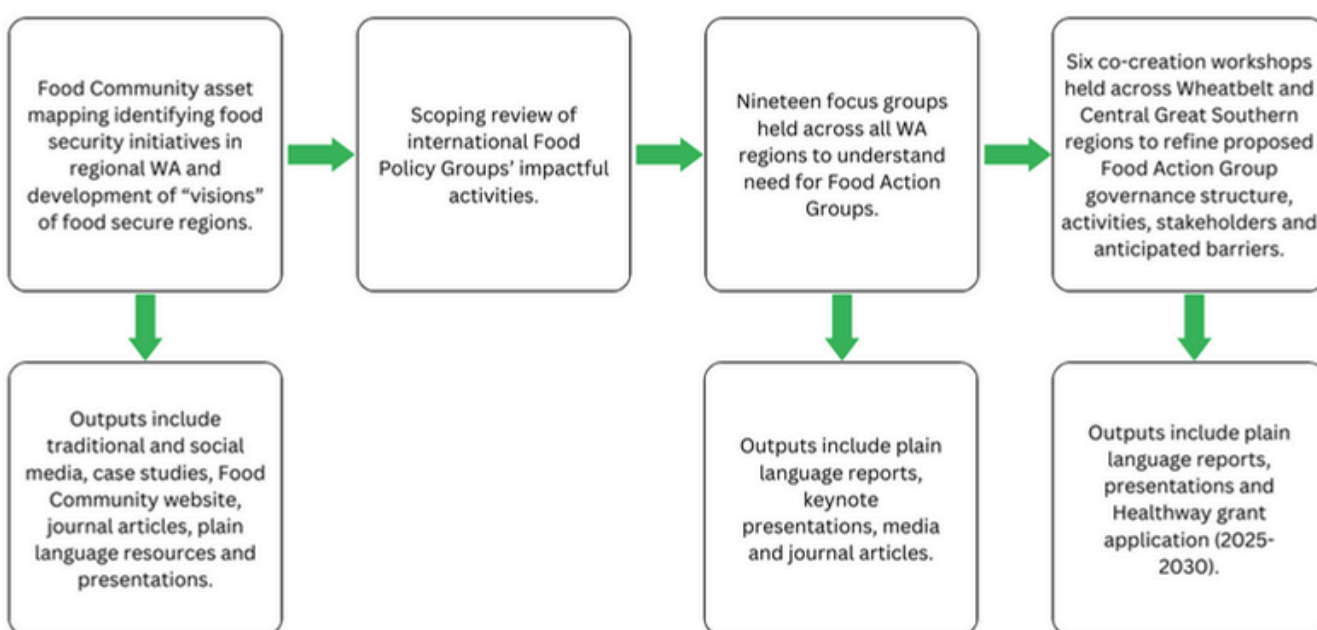


Figure 8: Food Action Group scoping work

Co-creation workshops

Building on the high-level insights gathered from the 2023 focus groups, three co-creation workshops were held between August and October, 2024. The purpose of these additional workshops was to:

- Identify three priority programs or activities for implementation;
- Define the geographical scope of a Food Action Group (Central Great Southern);
- Develop the structure of the proposed Food Action Group;
- Identify stakeholders and clarify their roles;
- Address potential barriers and identify opportunities;
- Determine budget items and cost estimates; and
- Establish objectives to inform grant applications.

The workshops were delivered online, using open-ended prompt questions where possible.

A potential participant list was developed to include people representing health promotion agencies, community organisations, food security working groups, government, and the general community. Potential participants were invited by email to partake in a survey to determine ideal workshop dates to maximise participation. Additionally, social and traditional media were used to increase awareness about the sessions. A total of 12 people participated in the workshops.

Workshop content was drafted by the project team and circulated to eight content experts in food security and food systems, from WA and across Australia.



Each workshop's content is summarised below:

| Workshop number | Objectives | Content | Duration |
|-----------------|---|--|----------|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise potential Central Great Southern Food Action Group activities/programs. • Obtain feedback on draft grant objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of previous focus group findings on new initiatives and actions the community considered beneficial to local food problems. • Voting on proposed Central Great Southern Food Action Group Initiatives, using the MoSCow Method of Prioritisation¹⁵. • Discuss proposed Food Action Group grant objectives. | 3 hours |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine proposed structure of the Central Great Southern Food Action Group. • Identify potential stakeholders pertinent to the group and their roles. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on workshop 1. • Food Action Group Pilot Proposed Structure. • Food Action Group Pilot Proposed Stakeholders and Roles. • Discussion of potential auspicing arrangements. • Discussion of embedding themed working groups in structure. | 2 hours |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address potential barriers to Food Action Group success. • Identify solutions and opportunities to overcome barriers. • Establish budget items. • Determine suitability of proposed grant objectives for the Central Great Southern Food Action Group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on workshop 2. • Proposed Food Action Group grant objectives. • Food Action Group budget. • Anticipated barriers and strategies to overcome them. • Wrap up and next steps. | 2 hours |

See Appendices A, B and C for a list of prompt and discussion questions used in the presentations.

Central Great Southern profile

The outer regional locality of the Central Great Southern was selected as a pilot location to establish a Food Action Group due to agriculture being a dominant industry in the region, but food access remaining problematic, areas with a low SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD of 2 or high disadvantage) [13], relatively high Aboriginal populations (Broomehill-Tambellup 10.4% [14], Gnowangerup 7.2% [15], Katanning 8% [16]), and a range of food supply issues articulated in ECU's 2023 focus groups [6]. Figure 10 provides a visual representation of key Central Great Southern demographics.

Geographical location and demographics

Situated in the north of the Great Southern region, the Central Great Southern includes the Shires of Katanning, Kojonup, Broomehill-Tambellup and Gnowangerup (Figure 9). The Central Great Southern spans an area of approximately 11,328 square kilometres [17-20] with broadacre farming and livestock at the core of its predominant agriculture industry. A summary of each Shire's demographics is provided in Figure 10 (on the following page).

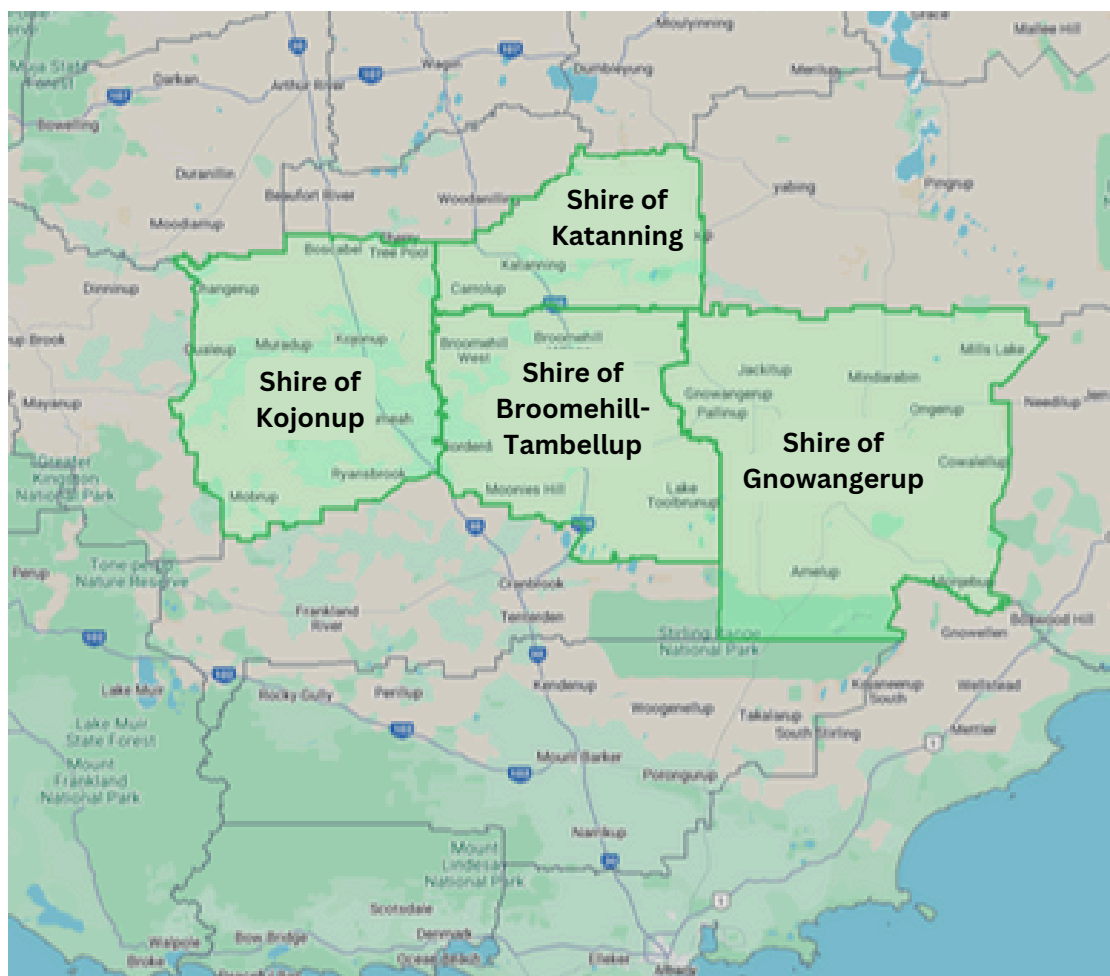
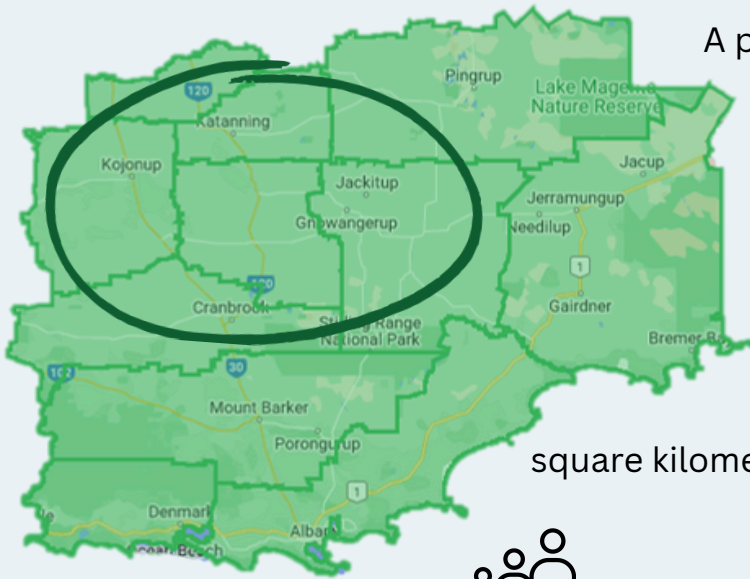


Figure 9: Central Great Southern boundary map

A snapshot of the Central Great Southern



A population of



8,219 people [14,15,16,21]



4

local government authorities

11,328

square kilometres [17-20]



41

Median age [14,15,16,21]

Median weekly income [14,15,16,21]

\$825 - Personal

\$1,880 - Family

\$1,409 - Household



Katanning

SEIFA 1
Index of Relative Disadvantage [13]

(indicating higher levels of social and economic disadvantage)

Ancestry [16]

- 34.1% - Australian
- 32.4% - English
- 8.0% - Australian Aboriginal
- 6.0% - Scottish
- 5.3% - Irish



Kojonup

SEIFA 4
Index of Relative Disadvantage [13]

(indicating higher levels of social and economic disadvantage)

Ancestry [21]

- 43.3% - English
- 42.7% - Australian
- 9.9% - Scottish
- 7.3% - Irish
- 5.1% - Italian



Broomehill-Tambellup

SEIFA 3
Index of Relative Disadvantage [13]

(indicating higher levels of social and economic disadvantage)

Ancestry [14]

- 41.0% - Australian
- 37.4% - English
- 10.4% - Australian Aboriginal
- 8.6% - Scottish
- 8.3% - Irish



Gnowangerup

SEIFA 4
Index of Relative Disadvantage [13]

(indicating higher levels of social and economic disadvantage)

Ancestry [15]

- 43.5% - Australian
- 40.2% - English
- 9.0% - Scottish
- 7.2% - Australian Aboriginal
- 7.1% - Irish



Figure 10: Central Great Southern demographics

Summary of Findings

Proposed Food Action Group priority initiatives

Three initiatives have been prioritised for the Central Great Southern Food Action Group through the co-creation workshops with the community and stakeholders, and based on the multiple lines of research presented above.

ACTIVITY 1: Local food hub with direct food-sourcing from producers

The activity scope includes the creation of a central food hub in Katanning in which local produce directly sourced from food producers can be accessed by all community members.

Target group/s for this initiative

- Whole-of-community activity.
- Undertake concerted efforts to include overwhelmed (commonly referred to as vulnerable individuals or population groups) and low-income individuals and groups.

Specific role(s) for a Food Action Group

- Support the creation of a local food hub in a central Katanning location, with direct food-sourcing from producers, as a central point of connection for all community members to access.
- Facilitate connections to farmers, food producers and the agricultural society to plant community crops to supply the hub.
- Provide an accessible and culturally appropriate space for all community members to access produce, with special consideration for priority populations.
- Research the challenges surrounding equitable access to the hub, especially within overwhelmed populations, and implement solutions.
- Support a Community Liaison role to facilitate connections with agricultural and farming communities to plant community crops and supply produce to the hub.
- Support a Community Liaison role to generate volunteer opportunities within the hub and to create links to external employment opportunities with local farmers and food producers.

Links to existing work and people to inform this activity

- The Central Great Southern Early Years Partnership (CGS EYP) is currently working to improve children's health and wellbeing in the Central Great Southern region and has existing Community Connectors capable of facilitating connections with priority groups.

ACTIVITY 2: Food, cooking and gardening education

The activity scope includes the creation and organisation of food, cooking and gardening education programs for all community members.

Target group/s for this initiative

- Whole-of-community activity.
- Programs designed for specific sub-groups, such as multicultural groups.

Specific role(s) for a Food Action Group

- Organise the facilitation of education programs on gardening for food production, cooking with available produce, and food for nutrition.
- Hold activities at existing facilities, such as Shire venues with kitchen facilities and community gardens.
- Engage multiple groups in the community to share knowledge of varying cultural, gardening and cooking practices amongst groups. For example, multicultural groups, the farming community, the over 50s groups, the Badgebup Aboriginal Corporation Junior Ranger group, and the Men's and Women's groups of the Badgebup Aboriginal Corporation.
- Create opportunities for groups to share their differing knowledge across multicultural food practices and cooking methods, food preservation techniques, knowledge of heritage plant food species and how these are used in cooking and nutrition, and gardening techniques to increase local food production.
- Link in with a local community garden to access produce for classes and demonstrations
- Connect with the Badgebup Aboriginal Corporation to access heritage food crops.



ACTIVITY 3: Community kitchen to prepare meals

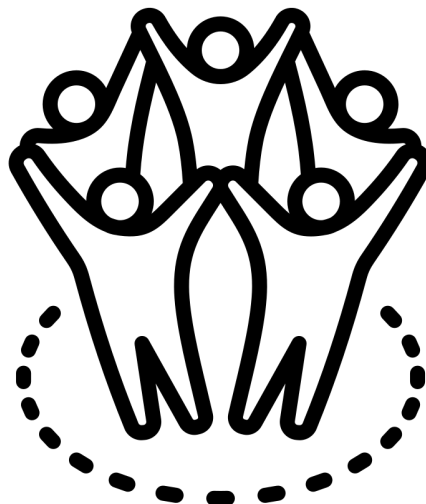
The activity scope includes regular meal-cooking times at a local community kitchen, with meals being prepared for the specific groups' own consumption, or to distribute to other groups or individuals feeling overwhelmed or in times of need.

Target group/s for this initiative

- Whole-of-community activity.
- Specific population groups identified as being important to this initiative were children, young people, multicultural groups, and overwhelmed individuals and groups.

Specific role(s) for a Food Action Group

- Facilitate regular meal-cooking opportunities for varying community groups at existing kitchen facilities in the four CGS EYP communities.
- Engage in regular consultations with community groups to determine their specific interests and meal-cooking requirements.
- Coordinate the use of Shire kitchen facilities.
- The group coordinator will also seek opportunities for activity leaders and/or participants to engage in food handling and safety training.
- Distribution of meals was also discussed as an additional component of this initiative; however, cost estimates indicate that this aspect would be outside of the initial budget scope. The meal-cooking activity could expand to include this service as the Food Action Group matures; however, the initial focus will be on the facilitation of meal-cooking opportunities.



Proposed Food Action Group structure

- Establish the Central Great Southern Food Action Group Pilot within an existing organisation, such as Badgebup Aboriginal Corporation or Wanslea Katanning.
- Following start-up and establishment of the Food Action Group, the group will progress into a stand-alone formalised organisation.

Proposed staffing

- Include paid staff and volunteers.
- Paid staff include a Coordinator, with further staff positions to be determined based on the initial setup and requirements of group initiatives. It was also agreed that the time requirements of the working group leader/s were important inclusions as part of the paid staff position/s, and that the working group leader/s will be paid for these duties. An option will also be included to pay office-bearers, though these positions may attract people already in paid employment who do not require, or are ineligible to receive, payment.
- Volunteer positions will include general committee members, with a provision to be included to offer an honoraria or other in-kind payment as acknowledgement of their contributions. Participants determined that not all volunteers will be paid or receive an alternative to payment, and the specific payment arrangement of volunteer positions will be determined on the group's establishment.

Governance Consultant/Training requirements

- Governance training will be investigated when the Food Action Group becomes an incorporated entity and will be dependent on the existing knowledge and experience of individual staff and volunteers.
- An option to engage a governance consultant will be considered based on requirements upon incorporation.
- The Shire of Katanning currently conduct governance training and may be an option for the group's members upon start-up. Further research is to be conducted into other training institutes with suitable governance training options.

Regional scope

- The Food Action Group will focus on the Central Great Southern region, with Katanning serving as a central base from which activities and programs will be located initially.
- Though discussions were held on the inclusion of the Lower Central Great Southern, the participants were concerned that the focus of the group may shift to towns in those areas due to their larger size. Therefore, the pilot Central Great Southern Food Action Group will focus its initiatives within the Shires of Katanning, Broomehill-Tambellup, Gnowangerup and Kojonup.

Working groups – Themes

- Working groups categorised into themes to address differing aspects of the Food Action Group’s work were discussed with workshop participants. It was noted that the thematic approach may increase the likelihood of attracting different members of the community to different activities due to their individual knowledge and strengths. Examples of working group themes relevant to the Central Great Southern Food Action Group may include food hubs, food equity and access, and nutrition for health.
- Themed working groups will be determined once the initiatives are finalised and members of the Central Great Southern Food Action Group have been recruited.
- Further information on themed working groups and international examples have been circulated to participants for further consideration prior to adopting this approach.

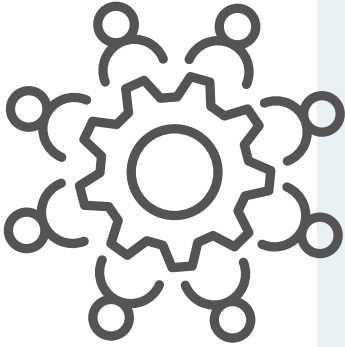
Proposed Food Action Group stakeholders

Community members

- Ensuring inclusivity of all community groups was of major importance to the Central Great Southern Food Action Group, as the group seeks to benefit all residents in the region.
- It was acknowledged that the Central Great Southern is a place where many multicultural residents have settled and the inclusion of the perspectives, knowledge and experiences of all groups allows for cross-cultural exchanges.
- The Central Great Southern Food Action Group seeks to provide the opportunity for any individual or group to contribute and will incorporate tailored upskilling opportunities specific to the interests and existing skills/knowledge of the individual in relation to the group’s vision and initiatives. Tailored training opportunities allow individuals to add value based on their unique interests, skills and knowledge.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

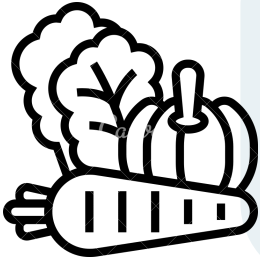


- Inclusivity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is of major importance to the Central Great Southern Food Action Group and the group will seek the input of local Elders in the group's formation and delivery of initiatives, to gain their perspectives and to be guided by their unique knowledge.
- The group will seek to engage Community Connectors and Champions through the Early Years Partnership, who may offer their insight and assistance in facilitating connections within the varying local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Initial discussions with the Aboriginal Leadership Group are to be conducted to understand the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the Katanning and Central Great Southern region. A local Cultural Advisor was also nominated for further discussions to support the Food Action Group to provide culturally appropriate initiatives.

Government

- The Shire of Katanning will continue to be engaged due to their development of local food policies that may support or affect the delivery of initiatives of the group. The Shire is also preparing a Public Health Plan, which may support the delivery of accessible healthy food initiatives of the Food Action Group. Discussions with the Shire of Katanning are ongoing and include determining their level of support of the initiatives of the group.
- The WA County Health Service (WACHS) team has informed the group of their capacity to provide nutrition and food education programs to support initiatives. WACHS currently employs six program facilitators in the Central Great Southern region capable of delivering nutrition education. WACHS has informed the group of their intentions to develop a new nutrition education program for delivery in the region. Costs will involve the purchasing of food for the program by the Central Great Southern Food Action Group, which is to be negotiated with WACHS.
- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is another state government key stakeholder that also needs to be involved throughout the development phase.





Food producers

- The group will seek to assess the potential to access excess, unsellable produce from local producers for use in the Food Action Group initiatives, and a list of potential producers within the region will be obtained from the DPIRD website.

Retailers

- Workshop participants reported that Woolworths Katanning is currently engaged in the donation of surplus food produce to existing charities and not-for-profit organisations. Though other services are already engaged with Woolworths Katanning, participants acknowledged that addressing food security in the region was the overarching priority and having a Food Action Group in this region was seen as beneficial in its potential to increase sustainability of these connections and initiatives.



Education sector (universities, schools, TAFE college)

- The Central Great Southern Food Action Group will determine the interest of schools and early childhood education and care centres in setting up their own kitchen gardens and support the establishment of these where appropriate. This would increase nutrition education opportunities and may also have the potential to feed surplus produce into Food Action Group initiatives. Information obtained from schools throughout the region indicates most schools do not currently have a kitchen garden, indicating there is a gap within the region.
- Evaluation of the Central Great Southern Food Action Group is of importance to the group. It was identified that ECU can evaluate Food Action Group programs to identify successes and learnings, and a PhD Candidate will be commencing in 2025 to do so.



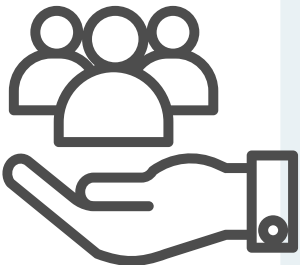
Business sector

- The Katanning Regional Business Association is to be approached to create connections with local businesspeople in their capacity to address challenges that may arise.
- Local groups, such as the Men's Shed, will be approached to support volunteer opportunities and access resources beneficial to Food Action Group initiatives.



Food relief organisations/social services sector

- The Food Action Group could collaborate with social services and food relief organisations to access the data they collect on current trends within the community to inform the Food Action Group initiatives. Organisations identified include Foodbank WA, Community Harvest and churches in the area, and initial discussions will be facilitated to explain the Food Action Group and how organisations may become involved.
- The above organisations also have the potential to connect overwhelmed families and individuals to Food Action Group initiatives, with dignified and culturally appropriate access.
- Partnerships with the above organisations may also provide volunteer, employment and education opportunities for individuals.
- Opportunities exist to engage temporary overseas workers within the community to provide support and increase inclusivity. There is potential to grow crops familiar to these populations, which would also provide an opportunity for cultural exchanges.
- It was identified that Anglicare WA Katanning have a financial advisor available to assist individuals with support and information to access food if required.



Overcoming potential barriers

Potential barriers

Opportunities to overcome barriers

Expertise and skills/Volunteer time and burnout

- To overcome volunteer burnout, volunteer positions will have a standard set term of two years, with the option to extend through discussions on volunteer commitments and/or holding a vote on volunteer positions. Providing opportunities for volunteers to discuss or vote on their ongoing term may allow for continuity in the position, as well as allowing volunteers to contribute to the decision-making process.
 - A volunteer buddy system could also be employed, in which two people are paired together in the same volunteer position. The buddy system provides opportunities to ease the time pressure of volunteer roles and to engage in peer learning through knowledge and idea-sharing between volunteers.
 - Regular opportunities to thank volunteers will be established to overcome social isolation and to show volunteers that they are valued.
 - The Central Great Southern Food Action Group will create opportunities within initiatives for corporate volunteering and other volunteer services, such as Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services, which alleviates the reliance on the recurring volunteer contributions of one type of local group/s.
 - Training and upskilling opportunities will be created as incentives for volunteers to gain transferrable employment skills.
-

Funding

- Opportunities to secure further funding and in-kind contributions to help share infrastructure and operational costs were explored, and potential partnerships include the Early Years Partnership, Minderoo, the Great Southern Development Commission, CBH Community Investment Fund, WACHS, and DPIRD.
 - WACHS have the capacity to deliver nutrition education on an in-kind basis to support the food and cooking education activity.
 - Initial consultations with DPIRD indicate that there is an underutilised site in Katanning including greenhouses, a vacant block of land, and a warehouse that may be utilised periodically throughout the year. This has the potential to support food growing activities, with further progress to be made regarding required approvals to utilise the site.
 - Community partnerships to support the group's initiatives included potential collaborations with local nurseries to grow and supply fruit and vegetable seedlings, which could then be grown in a market garden set up by the Food Action Group. Initial investigations suggest that if fruit and vegetable seedlings are required, these can be purchased from Sunnyvale and Benara Nursery for delivery to Katanning. Further research is required on the associated market garden setup and running costs to ensure consistent supply.
-

Overcoming lack of interest and buy-in from organisations and initiatives

- To portray the value and relevance of the Central Great Southern Food Action Group within the region the group will engage local business, agricultural and community groups, and local schools to communicate the purpose and details of the group and its initiatives.
- Groups that have been contacted and are willing to share information with their members are the Rotary Club of Katanning, WA Farmers Federation, Badgebup Rockwell Country Women’s Association, Katanning Lions Club, Katanning Agricultural Society, Katanning Senior’s Club, Katanning Garden Group and the South Regional TAFE Katanning Campus. Further consultations will be held with the Katanning Noongar Leadership Group and the Red Hat Hidden Treasures Katanning Group.
- Workshop participants were also able to extend the reach of the group amongst their networks as Community Champions.
- The group also plans to leverage support by promoting the Central Great Southern Food Action Group at the Katanning Harmony Festival and Waitangi Day celebrations hosted by the EYP.
- The priority initiatives of the group have also been mapped to the food systems of the Public Health Plans of the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Gnowangerup. Mapping the priority activities to individual local government food priority areas portrays the value of the group towards implementing each local government’s Public Health Plan.

Strategies to overcome this barrier have been broken down according to proposed activity:

ACTIVITY 1: Local food hub

- Potential venues for the food hub were discussed, including a former bakery and cafe, former grocery store, and an unused commercial kitchen, with all sites requiring significant investment and renovation. Further research is required on current infrastructure suitable for the proposed food hub. Consideration is also required on the need for capital investments, as the proposed Healthway grant application does not have the scope to allow capital purchases, such as buildings. Alternative funding will need to be explored if the group are required to purchase a venue.
- Staffing requirements to oversee the food hub highlighted the need for a dedicated position. It was suggested that creating a dual role with the Coordinator position could allow sufficient hours to oversee the food hub, whilst also increasing interest in the Coordinator position. This would however increase funding requirements and requires further consideration.

Potential barriers to implementing priority activities

ACTIVITY 2: Food, cooking and gardening education

- Connecting with local groups already engaged in similar activities to avoid duplication and extend existing services.
- Contact other settings with existing gardens to learn from their experiences. The Rainbow Coast community garden is highlighted as a potential contact for information on setting up gardening education programs.
- Research is to be undertaken into existing garden and cooking education programs, identify gaps, and determine the need for multiple venues based on this information.

ACTIVITY 3: Community kitchen for meal cooking

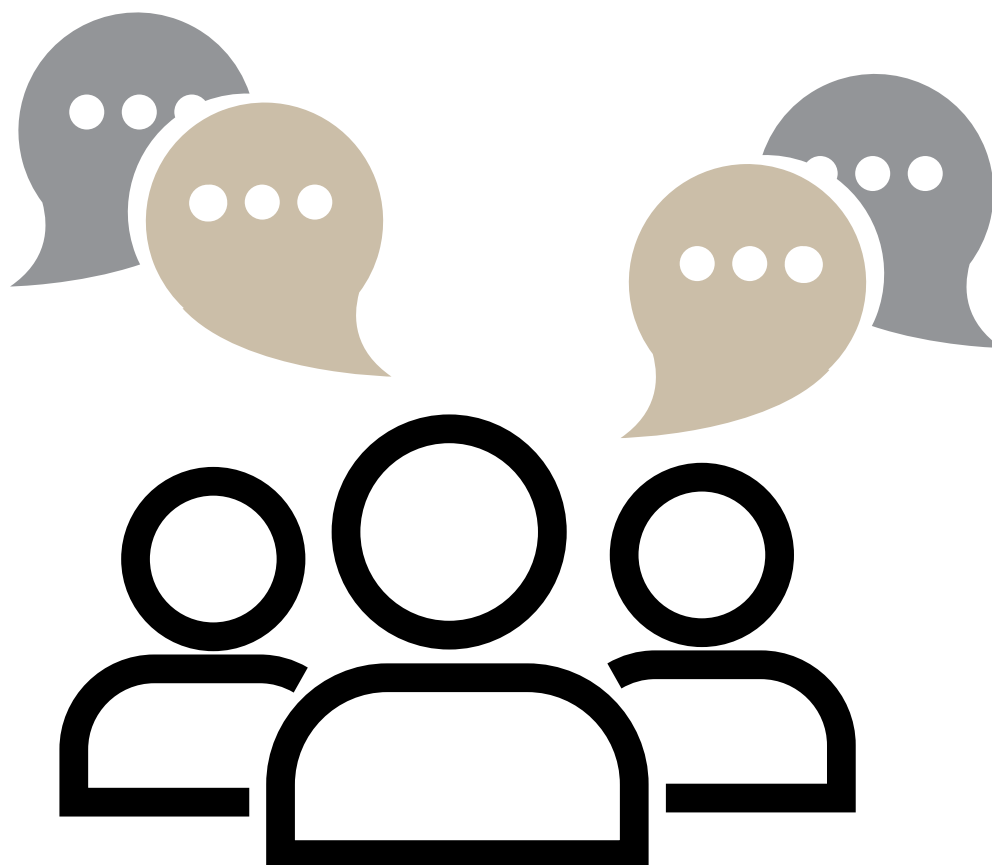
Potential barriers to implementing priority activities

- Utilise Shire-owned commercial kitchens across Katanning, Kojonup, Broomehill-Tambellup and Gnowangerup. Further commercial kitchens in the region will be researched and will be contacted to determine their suitability for this initiative.
 - Utilise donated produce, possibly from Woolworths, to prepare meals for consumption by community members.
 - Suggestions included engaging a local chef or cook to help manage the kitchen and cooking. Further research is required to identify a local chef/cook with the capacity to assist with this initiative.
 - The Community Kitchens Australia website linked [here](#) has information and resources on starting a community kitchen, and learnings will be used to inform the creation and implementation of this initiative.
 - Furthermore, the Vincent Community Kitchen in Perth has been contacted to share their learnings.
 - If the Group expands this initiative to include meal distribution, the Shire of Katanning currently own two food vans with refrigeration facilities that could be used to deliver meals to central locations in the greater region.
-

Objectives for Food Action Groups grant application

- To establish Food Action Groups in the Central Great Southern region that include representation from diverse stakeholders, by the end of year 1.
- To identify and prioritise place-based solutions that address local food problems in the Central Great Southern region, by the end of Year 1.
- To successfully advocate for improved food access for Central Great Southern region residents, by the end of year 2.
- To develop and strengthen partnerships between cross-sector stakeholders in the Central Great Southern region, by the end of year 4.
- To identify the key success factors associated with the establishment and implementation of a Food Action Group, by the end of year 5.
- To understand whether a Food Action Group increases empowerment and agency among stakeholders to implement robust food system solutions, by the end of year 5.

The above Food Action Group objectives were discussed in workshops with participants contributing to the Central Great Southern Food Action Group pilot. The grant objectives were found to be suitable to the proposed Central Great Southern pilot and were approved by attending participants.



Recommendations

Recommendations and actions relating to the formation of the Central Great Southern Food Action Group pilot are to:



1. Form Central Great Southern Food Action Group pilot including representation from: government, social services sector, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, food producers, and community members.

Potential actions:

- Engage in dialogue with identified stakeholders to determine specific role in the Food Action Group.
- Undertake skills matrix of requirements to fulfil each Food Action Group paid role.
- Continue liaison with local community groups who may be able to expand the reach and exposure of the Central Great Southern Food Action Group, such as Farmers' Federation, Katanning Agricultural Society, Katanning Garden Group, Katanning TAFE, Rotary Katanning, Senior's Group.



2. Develop and implement priority initiatives including a community food hub; food, cooking and gardening education programs; and a community kitchen.

Potential actions:

- Progress discussions with Minderoo regarding funding further community consultations across the four EYP communities in early 2025 to inform the food hub design. Subsequently, progress discussions with Minderoo to collaborate on implementing the chosen food hub model.
- Continue discussions with DPIRD regarding use of the Katanning greenhouses, unused land and warehouses in the centre of Katanning. Provide formal request for use of these facilities for approval.
- Progress initial discussions with Woolworths Katanning regarding donations of surplus fresh fruit and vegetables (estimated value to be \$600-\$800 per month) to clarify volumes of produce required for the community kitchen and cooking/nutrition education sessions.
- Confirm the most appropriate host organisation associated with the Food Action Group with Tax File Number/ABN, liability insurance, and capacity to store collected food, to collect surplus food preferably on Saturday/Sundays from Woolworths Katanning.

- Obtain written confirmation from the WACHS regarding in-kind support for delivery of nutrition education and cooking sessions across the four CGS towns of Gnowangerup, Katanning, Kojonup and Broomehill-Tambellup.
- Progress discussions with Grow Cook Eat WA to deliver cooking and gardening programs to meet the needs of community members.



3. Create a structured Food Action Group including a formal committee. Create a Terms of Reference to provide a clear framework within which staff and volunteers will work.

Potential actions:

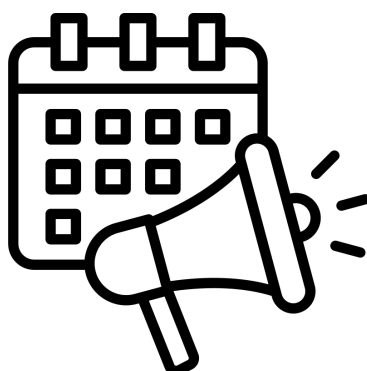
- Develop a Terms of Reference for the Food Action Group.
- Devise appropriate structure, taking learnings from international models.
- Identify the need for themed working groups, to inform relevant work plans.
- Engage in further discussions with community members and stakeholders interested in Group membership to develop position descriptions



4. Implement awareness-raising activities to increase Food Action Group profile.

Potential actions:

- Engage local business, agricultural and community groups, and local schools to communicate the purpose and details of the Group and its initiatives.
- Engage Community Champions to extend the reach of the group amongst their networks.
- Promote the Group at the Katanning Harmony Festival, Waitangi Day celebrations hosted by the Early Years Initiative, and at other local community events.
- Engage the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Gnowangerup, Katanning and Kojonup in their support of the implementation of initiatives to align with council policies.



Conclusion

This report has outlined the concept of Food Action Groups and summarised the key outcomes of the three co-creation workshops held with a range of Central Great Southern community members and stakeholders. Initiatives prioritised from earlier 2023 focus groups included food hub/warehouse, food, cooking and gardening education programs, and opportunities for community groups to cook meals in a community kitchen. The pilot Food Action Group structure includes both paid staff and volunteers, the geographical scope will initially be limited to the Central Great Southern, and initiatives will be categorised within working groups. Anticipated barriers included volunteer burnout, funding, lack of interest or time capacity among community members, and increasing the promotion and exposure of the group. A range of strategies were proposed to mitigate these barriers. Key stakeholders to involve included community members, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, multicultural groups, government, food producers, education sector, business sector, and food relief organisations. Food Action Group project objectives focused on identifying place-based solutions, creating a group with diverse stakeholders, advocating for improved food access, developing, and strengthening partnerships, identifying key success factors and understanding whether a Food Action Group increases agency and empowerment among participants.

A funding proposal is currently being prepared for Healthway, based on the outcomes of the co-creation workshops.



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Appendices

Appendix A - Prompt and discussion questions used in workshop 1

Workshop 1:

Prioritising Initiatives

1. Who is/are the target group/s for this initiative?
2. What specific role(s) would a Food Action Group play in this initiative?
3. What skill set/s will be needed to facilitate this initiative among likely Food Action Group members?
 - a. Who else would we need to make it achievable?
4. Is this initiative feasible from a budget perspective?
5. Please vote using the MoSCoW prioritisation method, keeping in mind whether you think the Food Action Group will still achieve its aims with or without this initiative?
6. What resources would we need to implement this initiative?
7. What would some key measures of success be for each initiative?

Workshop 2:

Proposed Structure (in terms of formal structure)

1. Would you create an incorporated organisation with a constitution?
2. Should it be formalised with a with a committee and Terms of Reference?
3. Should it include paid staff and volunteers?
4. Should the Food Action Group be embedded within an existing organisation?
5. Should a governance consultant or training be provided to upskill Food Action Group members in governance?
6. Should this Food Action Group operate across the whole Central Great Southern region?
7. Should the Food Action have different working groups who each focus on a theme of activities?

Proposed Stakeholders

1. Let's talk about the role of community members in this Food Action Group – with the role of members with lived experience of food security challenges:
 - a. Should all committee members be paid or receive an alternative to payment (e.g. gift vouchers)?
 - b. Would there be training requirements for community members?
2. To ensure activities are culturally appropriate, how should Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be involved?
 - a. Which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations exist in this space that can be involved?
 - b. Should we appoint a Community Liaison Officer and/or Cultural Advisor
3. Government Engagement:
 - a. How could we engage government in Food Action Groups?
 - b. How could the Food Action Group link with state government?
4. Let's talk about the role of other stakeholders:
 - a. How could food producers be involved in a Food Action Group?
 - b. What is the role of retailers? E.g. Large supermarkets, independent food retailers, farmgate sellers, food hubs?
5. What about the education sector (universities, schools, Ag. College)?
 - a. How should the Business sector be involved (e.g. Chamber of Commerce and Industry).
 - b. What is the role of food relief organisations/social services sector?
 - c. What about the education sector (universities, schools, Ag. College)?
 - d. How should the Business sector be involved (e.g. Chamber of Commerce and Industry).
 - e. What is the role of food relief organisations/social services sector?

Appendix C - Prompt and discussion questions used in workshop 3

Workshop 3:

Grant Objectives:

1. Do you think all of these objectives are relevant to the Katanning Food Action Group? If not, which objectives would you change?
2. If any objectives are irrelevant, which would you leave out and what is the objective that you would replace it with?
3. Do you feel as though the timelines are adequate/within the scope of the Katanning pilot Food Action Group?

Barriers and Opportunities

1. How can we overcome volunteer burnout? For example, can we include the following:
 - a. Should we have a set time-period for volunteer contribution (e.g. two years)?
2. How do we find a balance between upskilling and building capacity within Food Action Group and employing external consultants/organisations?
3. What local businesses, organisations or grant program could we partner with to secure funding and in-kind contributions that will help share infrastructure and operational costs?
4. Should there be a specific Treasurer role to monitor and forecast expenses to inform future grant applications? E.g. include the creation of a standard grant application template to maximise on funding opportunities.
5. What things should the Food Action Group do to increase its portrayed value and relevance? E.g. regular media, community event?
6. Who are some potential community champions to promote and advocate for the success of the Food Action Group?

Thinking of the specific priority activities below:

Whole of community food hub/warehouse:

1. Can you identify any possible venues for the hub/warehouse, and contacts for these?
2. What existing community assets (e.g. storage spaces, kitchens) can we utilise to minimise costs for refrigeration, kitchen appliances?
3. Should we adopt a volunteer-based model to reduce staffing costs, or if there is a need for key paid positions, which specifically should they be? (e.g. operation manager).

Food, cooking and gardening education:

1. What existing food, cooking and garden programs can we link up with who might be able to extend their reach to our target groups?
2. Which component of garden education/community garden initiative should this Healthway grant fund? E.g. training, several gardening workshops, venue hire?
3. Will this initiative require access to multiple venues, e.g. schools, community garden, community kitchen?

Meal cooking opportunities for community groups:

1. Apart from Shire facilities, are there any other commercial kitchen spaces that are culturally appropriate and centrally-located?
2. If distribution of meals is a critical component, what are the distribution considerations? E.g. An accessible pick-up point in Katanning?
3. Will the food vans have a central drop-off point in each outlying town or require multiple locations?
4. What are the key food compliance regulations we need to budget for, including staff training?
5. What partnerships can we form with local training providers to reduce the costs of compliance related education for staff and volunteers?