

WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

Food security occurs when people have physical, social and economic access to healthy and affordable food. This food needs to be available in enough quantities to meet their needs and be of good quality (1). At a community level, this means that everyone can access healthy food from sustainable and resilient food systems.

Rural and remote Western Australia (WA) is vast and diverse. The opportunities to support food security differ within and between regions. Community-level food security can be supported through sufficient availability of healthy food, a range of opportunities to access food, clean and functioning food preparation and cooking facilities, nutrition knowledge and cooking skills to utilise food (2). Figure 1 outlines the dimensions of food security and a range of determinants.



Figure 1. Determinants of food security.

PROJECT AIM

The Food Community Project aims to:



Identify



Map



Evaluate



Strengthen

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

FROM ONE REGION, TO A WHOLE STATE!

The Food Community project commenced as a pilot in the South West region in 2018, and is currently being implemented across six WA regions. Figure 2 (below) outlines the six-stage approach that we are using.

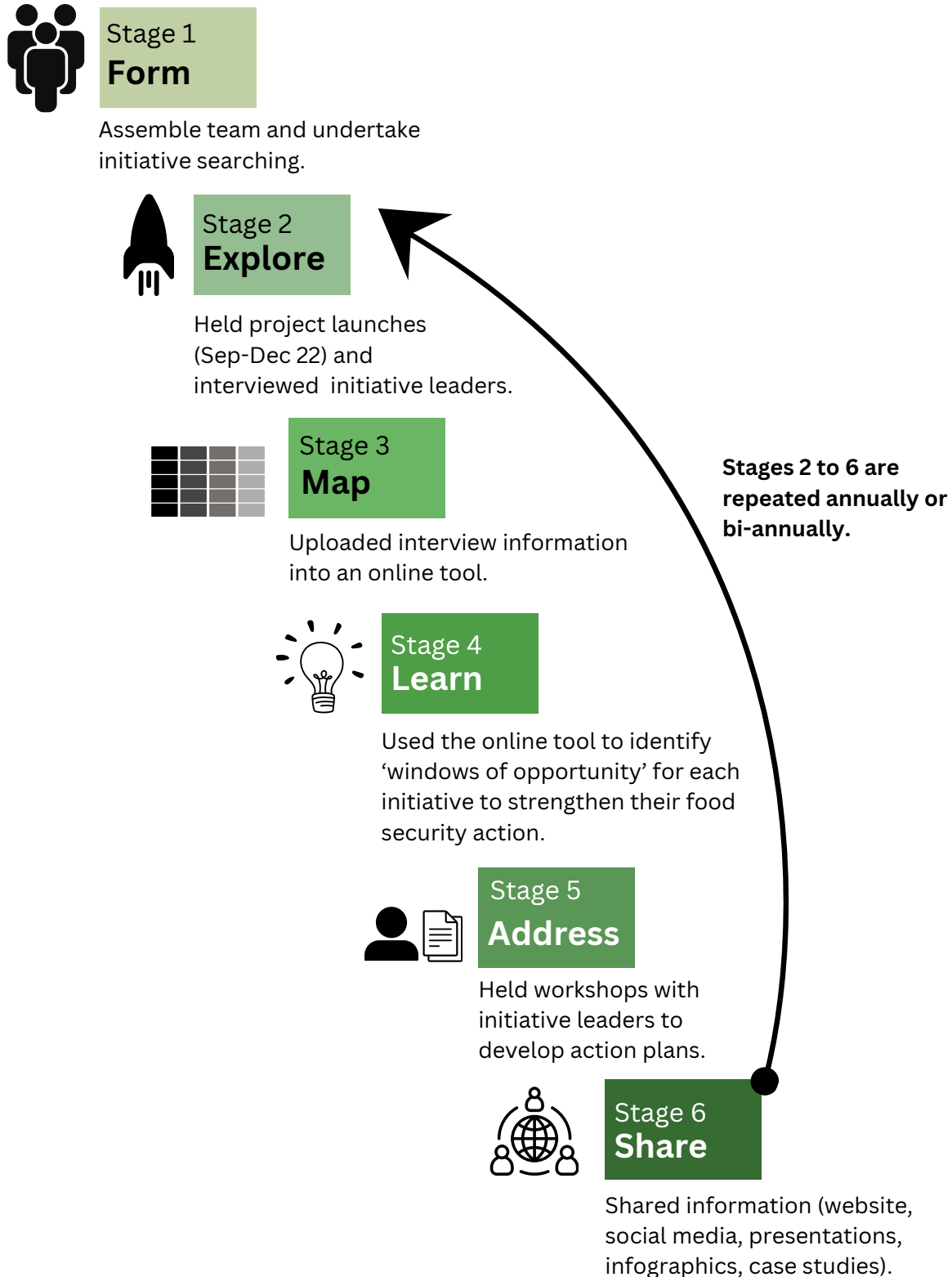


Figure 2. Food Community process – adapted from Wicked Lab’s Systemic Innovation Lab approach.

STAGE 1: FORM

During the Form stage, the Food Community team formed a core team, a statewide advisory group, and mapped existing food security initiatives across the Wheatbelt, Midwest, Great Southern, Kimberley, Pilbara and Goldfields regions. Figure 3 outlines the Food Community project scope across regional WA.

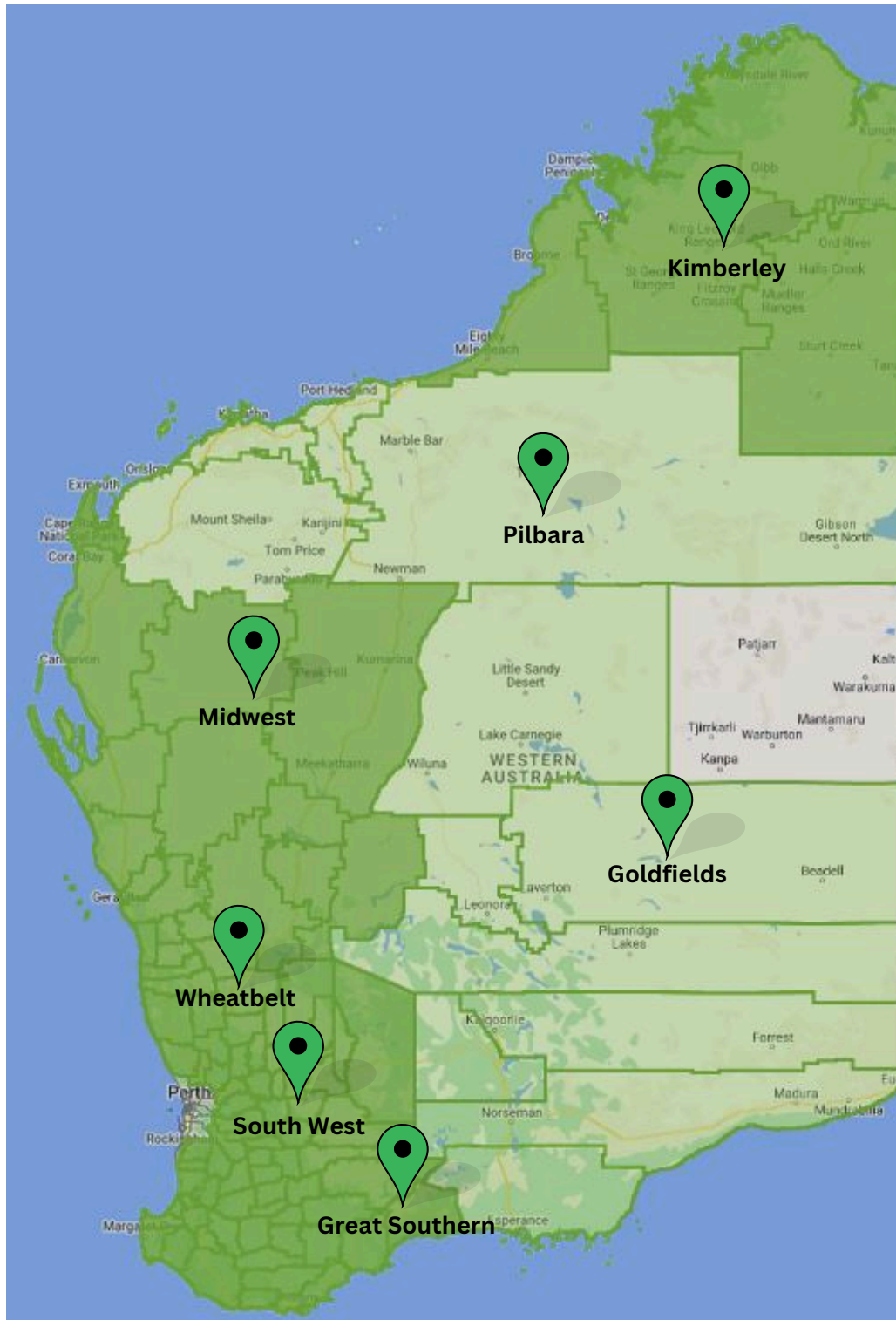


Figure 3. Food Community project scope - regional Western Australia.

STAGE 2: EXPLORE

During the Explore stage, the Food Community team travelled to each participating region to launch the project. See Figure 4 for images from the Food Community project launches! Each project launch included a ‘visioning’ activity where project participants, stakeholders and the wider community brainstormed their vision for a food secure region. The Food Community team has transformed these visions into graphic illustrations (see Figure 5).



Figure 4. Food Community project launches across regional Western Australia.

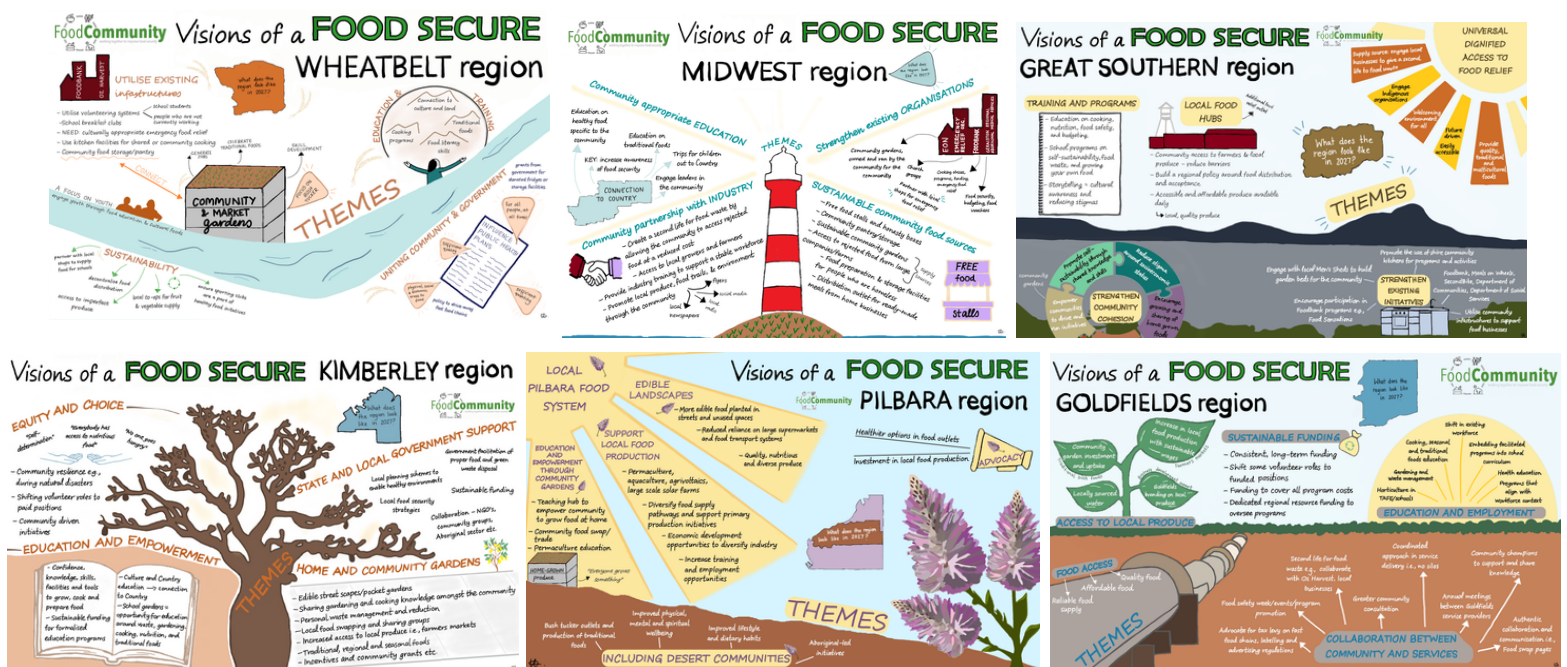


Figure 5. The Food Community network’s visions for food secure regions.

After launching the project, the Food Community team conducted interviews with initiative leaders across each region to better understand their work supporting food security, and evaluated their work against systems change characteristics.

Head over to the Food Community website to see some [food security initiative examples, mapped across the dimensions of food security.](#)

STAGE 3: MAP

During the Map stage, the Food Community team uploaded the interview data to an online tool, the Tool for Systemic Change (see Figure 6). This Tool visualises how initiatives are supporting food security systems change.

The Food Community team has also developed a number of case studies showcasing the amazing work these initiatives are doing to support food security across regional WA. Figure 7 outlines the [case study categories available to view on the Food Community website.](#)

Throughout 2022-2023, the Food Community team conducted 95 interviews with 103 initiative leaders. Participants represented:

- 58 x Food Literacy and Health Promotion Projects
- 42 x Emergency Food Relief and Community Programs
- 18 x Community Gardens and Food Swapping Groups
- 17 x Businesses, Networks or Alliances
- 7 x Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Projects
- 7 x Farmers' Markets and Food Events
- 5 x Policies or Strategic Plans

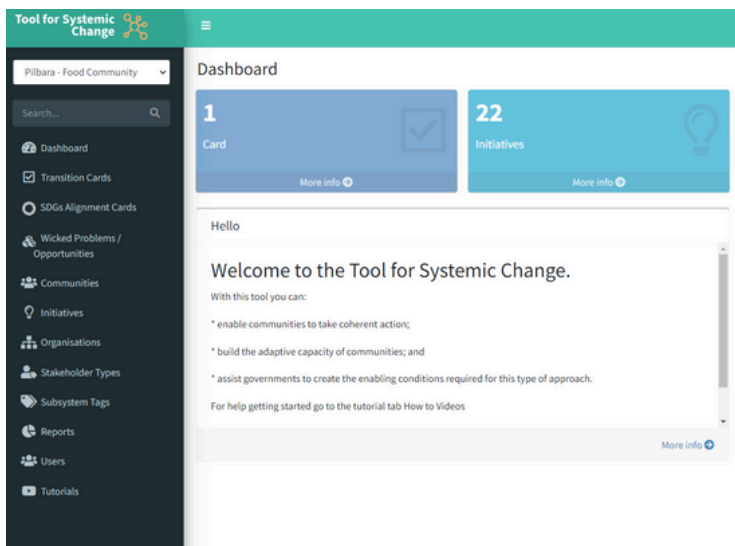


Figure 6. The Tool for Systemic Change.

Figure 7. Food Community Case Study Range

STAGE 4: LEARN

During the Learn stage, the Food Community team used the Tool for Systemic change to identify 'windows of opportunity' - attributes of the system of initiatives requiring strengthening.

The Tool for Systemic Change produces various maps including:

- **Transition Cards:** the region-based transition cards visualise how the interviewed initiatives are contributing to 36 systems change characteristics across nine Focus Areas. See Figure 8 for an image of each regions transition card. Find a live version of the transition cards on the [Food Community website](#).
- **Partnership Network Maps:** the region-based partnership network maps or solution ecosystems shows all of the different partnerships and collaborations between the organisations working on food security within the region. See Figure 9 for an image of each regions' partnership network map. Find a live version of the partnership network maps on the [Food Community website](#).

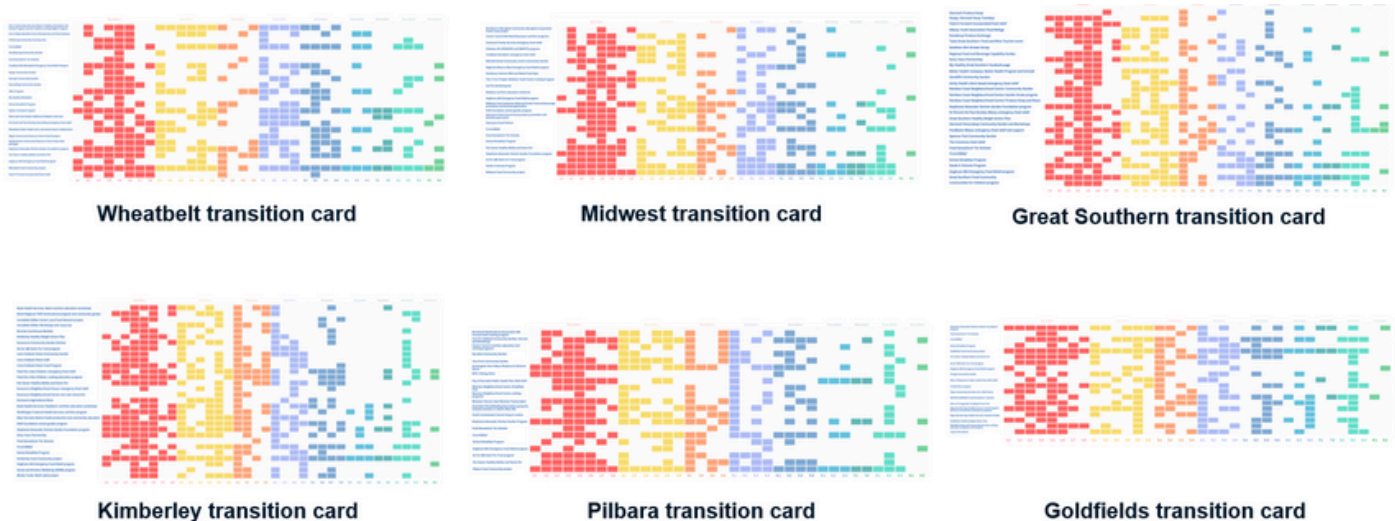


Figure 8. Transition Cards



Figure 9. Partnership Network Maps

STAGE 5: ADDRESS

During the Address stage, the Food Community team travelled back to each participating region to hold a Results-Sharing and Action Planning Workshop. During these workshops, participants and stakeholders were brought together to share early results and the Food Community team co-designed action plans with initiative leaders, to further strengthen their work. See Figure 10 for images from the Food Community project Results-Sharing and Action Planning Workshops!

Workshop attendees contributed to a discussion about new food security initiatives needed in their region to better support food security systems change. Figure 11 outlines some new initiatives ideas identified across regional WA to help fill service provision gaps.



Figure 10. Food Community Results-Sharing and Action Planning Workshops.

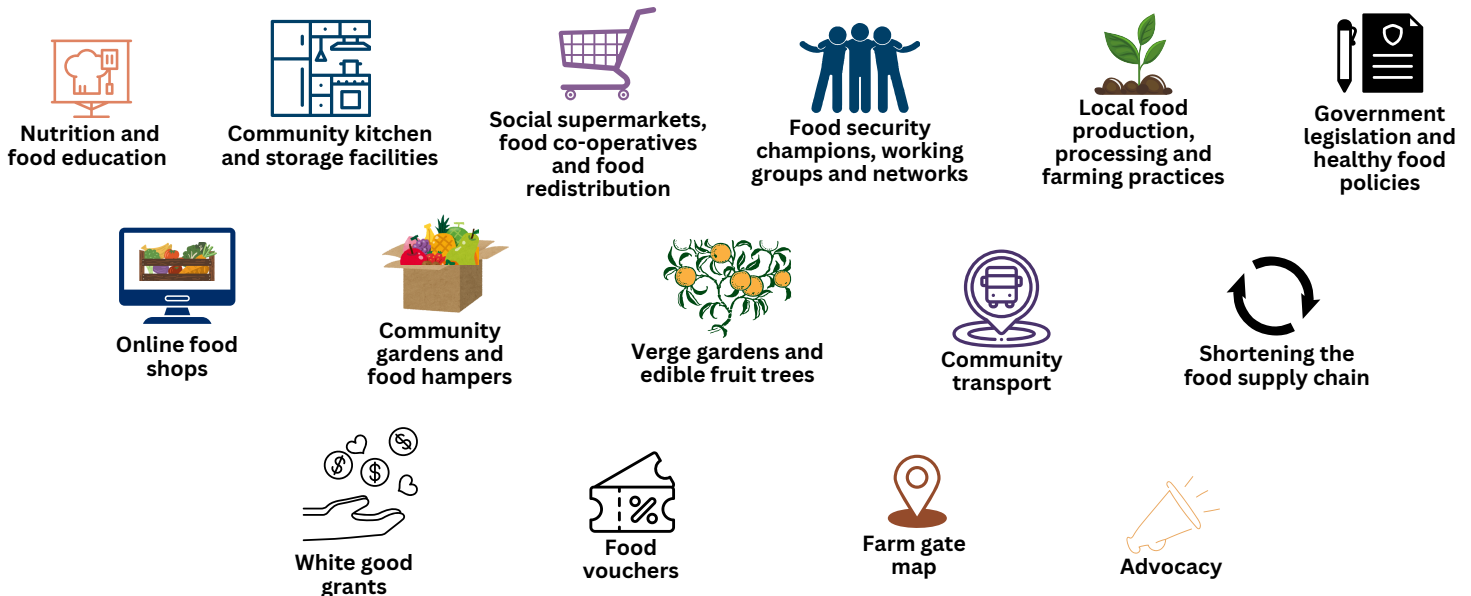


Figure 11. New initiative ideas.

STAGE 6: SHARE

During the Share stage, the Food Community team communicates project findings widely through the reports and resources available on the [Food Community website](https://www.foodcommunity.com.au), journal articles, presentations and more! See Figure 12 for a sneak peek of the Food Community website.

www.foodcommunity.com.au

Visit the Food Community website and sign-up for free to access:

- Regional Food Community project information.
- Resources including webinars, infographics, fact sheets, training and more!
- Networking opportunities with others in your region.
- Case studies.
- The 'Connect' section.

The **'Connect'** section helps stakeholders and community members to see which food security initiatives (projects, programs or services) are available to their local community and region.

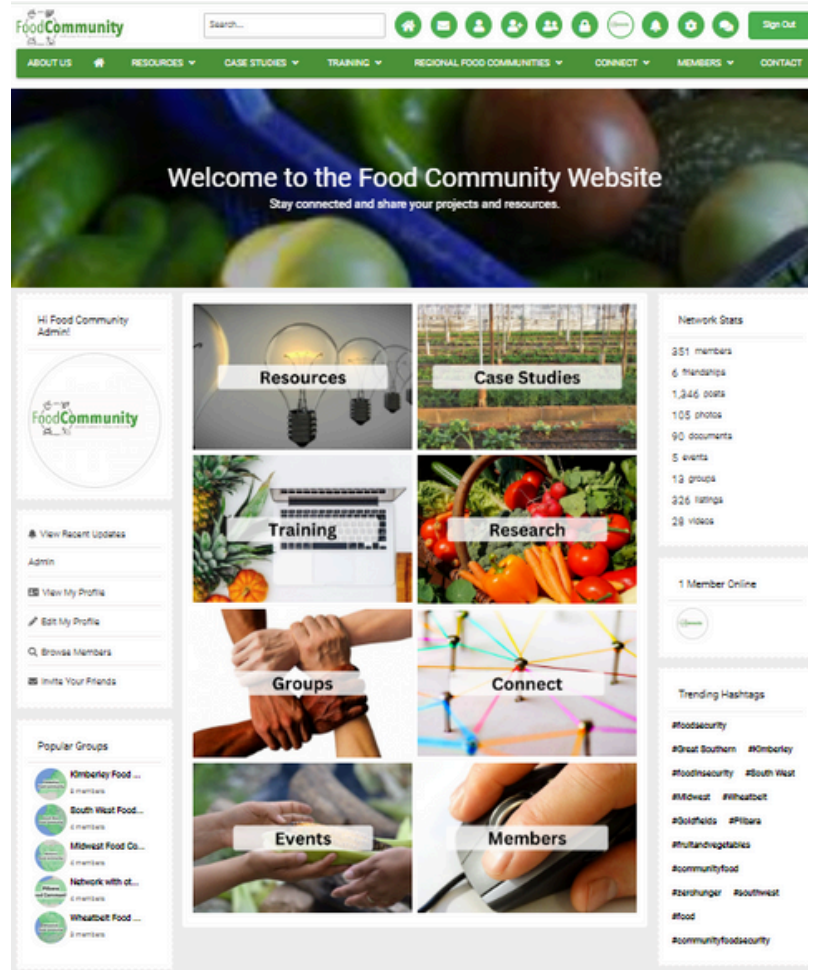


Figure 12. The Food Community website.

WHAT'S NEXT:

The Food Community project has a lot of exciting plans ahead. We are:

- Sharing our findings from the 2022/2023 interview cycle through plain language resources and journal articles.
- Conducting six-month action plan follow-up interviews with initiative leaders.
- Conducting the 2024 round of interviews with initiative leaders in regional towns and schools in WA. If you're involved in a food security initiative and would like to participate in an interview, please reach out to the Food Community team!
- Preparing for the 2025 project cycle!



CONCLUSION

For people to be food secure, they must have physical, social and economic access to healthy, affordable, quality food. Western Australia provides numerous opportunities to support community-level food security. The Food Community project identifies, maps, evaluates and strengthens food security initiatives to enhance food security action in regional WA. Our team is working with food initiative leaders in each WA region to support food security system change, and working towards the visions stakeholders have for their food secure regions.

REFERENCES

1. Food and Agriculture Organization. Coming to terms with terminology, Thirty-ninth session; 2012; Rome, Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization.
2. Godrich SL, Davies, C.R., Darby, J., Devine, A.,. What are the determinants of food security among regional and remote Western Australian children? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2017;41(2):172-7.
3. Zivkovic S. Systemic Innovation Labs: A lab for wicked problems. Social Enterprise Journal. 2018;14(3):348-66.
4. Zivkovic S. Addressing food insecurity: a systemic innovation approach. Social Enterprise Journal. 2017;13(3):234-350.
5. Godrich, S., Payet, J., Brealey, D., Edmunds, M., Stoneham, M., Devine, A. South West Food Community: A Place-Based Pilot Study to Understand the Food Security System. Nutrients. 2019;11(4).
6. Godrich, S., Stoneham, M., Edmunds, M., Devine, A. South West Food Community: how government and community initiatives are supporting systemic change towards enhanced food security. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2020;44(2), 129-136.
7. Rewa, J., Devine, A., Godrich, S. South West Food Community: understanding systemic change, and its associated challenges and successes, among food security projects. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2020;44(6), 493-501.
8. Rewa, J., Devine, A., Godrich, S. Food community: Understanding community needs for a food security website to support rural and remote Western Australians. Health Promotion Journal of Australia. 2020; 1-9.
9. Rewa, J., Devine, A., Godrich, S. Evaluating the impact of a community- based food security project: The value in facilitating collaboration and understanding. Health Promotion Journal of Australia. 2021; 1-4.

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



foodcommunity@ecu.edu.au



[@ecufoodcommunity](https://www.facebook.com/ecufoodcommunity)



www.foodcommunity.com.au



Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service



Centre for People,
Place & Planet
STRATEGIC RESEARCH CENTRE

