

GOLDFIELDS (KALGOORLIE) FOOD ACTION GROUPS

Community Focus Group | Early Feedback Report



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Acknowledgement:

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 | Goldfields, Western Australia

The Goldfields region is located in the south eastern corner of WA, covers 770,488 square kilometres and includes 8 local government areas [1].

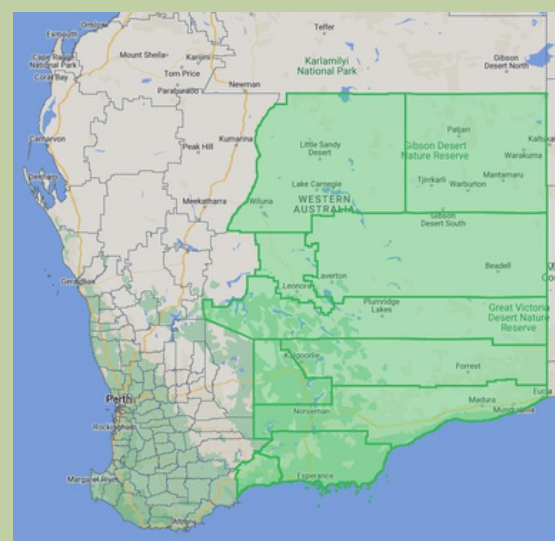


Figure 1. Goldfields Western Australia [2]

Current Status

Goldfields focus groups were held in November 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...

Access to affordable, fresh food; sustainable local food production through shared food growing knowledge and skills among community members'; and increased access to healthy meal options to support people living with chronic disease.

When the food pathway works, why does it work?

Community members' food growing skills can be enhanced through education; and as a multicultural society there is access to a diverse range of food.

Goldfields Food Problems...

Lack of understanding of the food pathway in the region; not everyone has access to permanent housing to grow their own food; those with housing lack the knowledge and skills to grow vegetables; community gardens tend to be established by older community members, limited skills among youth to maintain; the need to overcome local restrictions to develop community gardens; limited access to fresh foods and nutrition education programs; and loss of knowledge and skills to grow Traditional foods.



Proposed Food Action Group Activities...

- Facilitate education around food growing.
- Enhance knowledge around and use of Traditional Foods.
- Assess existing food related initiatives in the region.
- Support food composting initiatives.
- Create social connections and opportunities around preparing and cooking food.
- Assist to establish sustainable vegetable gardens in remote communities.
- Extend food relief services beyond town centres.

Proposed Structure...

Focus on all aspects of the food pathway; issues to be viewed through a local lens; keep it small and simple; and ensure there is an employed coordinator.

Stakeholders...

Local government; agricultural specialists; allied health professionals (e.g. nutritionist); education department; retailers (e.g. supermarkets); and community members.

Perceived Barriers...

Local regulations and bylaws; attitude of members (e.g. that a project is too difficult); and people overcomplicating tasks and goals.

“ We have a lot of [food] waste... it should be taken out to communities... for families that need it. ”

Where to from here?

We are now looking into our findings from the Goldfields 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 Goldfields.

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

References:

1. WA Country Health Service. Goldfields regional profile. From: <https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Goldfields/Goldfields-regional-profile>, 2023.
2. Goldfields Western Australia. Adapted from REMPLAN MapBuilder, <https://mapbuilder.remplan.com.au/?link=10dcdc50-d04f-4b3f-bbf8-5ec1198b79db>