



Great Southern Food Community: Snapshot Report



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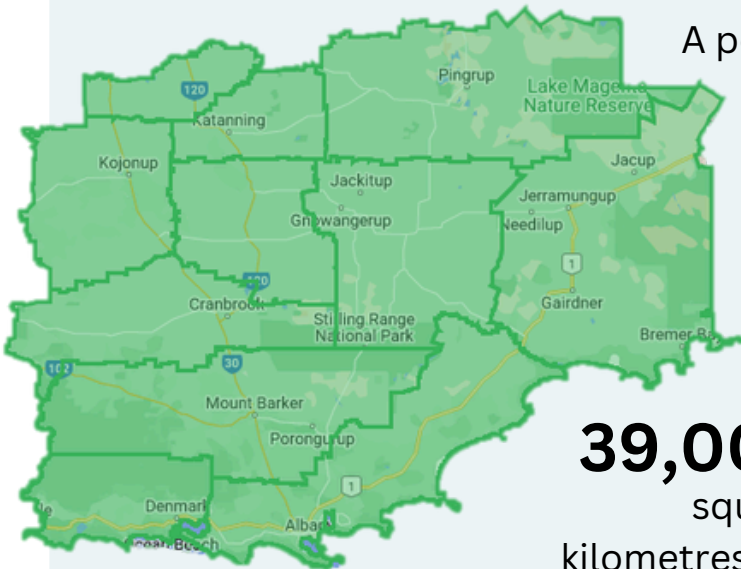
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Great Southern Food Community Snapshot

We need good quality food, in sufficient amounts, to meet our dietary needs. Regular physical, social and economic access to healthy food is called **food security** [1]. **Food insecurity** arises when people cannot regularly or reliably obtain food in adequate quantities or in socially acceptable ways for good health and wellbeing [1].

A snapshot of the Great Southern region demographics



A population of  **61,400** people [2].

 **13** local government authorities [2].

39,007 square kilometres [2].

Map of the Great Southern region (Adapted from REMPLAN MapBuilder, <https://mapbuilder.remplan.com.au/>)

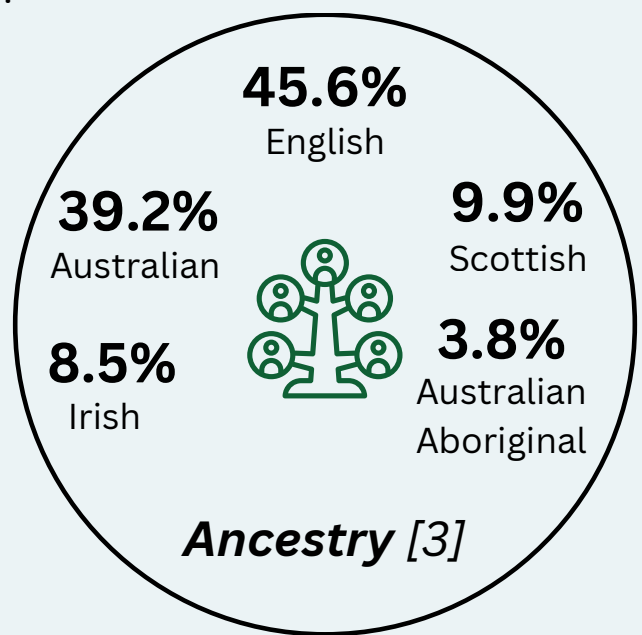
Employment status [3]



53.3% Worked full-time
35.8% Worked part-time
7.1% Away from work
3.8% Unemployed


Median weekly income [3]


\$709 - Personal
\$1,723 - Family
\$1,323 - Household



Family composition [3]


47.6%
Couple without children



37.1%
Couple family with children


14.2%
One parent family


1.1%
Other family

Tenure type [3]


36.9%
Owned outright


30.1%
Owned with a mortgage


24.6%
Rented




2.4
Average number of people per household [3]

Mortgage and rent [3]


\$240
Median weekly rent repayments


\$1,434
Median monthly mortgage repayments

What we know about food insecurity across Australia


13%
of Australian households [4].


20%
of children in regional Western Australia [5].

- Low incomes.
- Unexpected bills [6].
- Children whose families received government financial assistance are 2.6 times more likely to be food insecure [5].

Food insecurity impacts:

- Behavioural problems [7], impaired academic performance [8], low self-esteem and low self-efficacy [9].
- Compromised dietary intake, nutrient deficiencies like iron deficiency, and poor growth and development [10].
- Increased risk of heart disease [11].
- Diet-related diseases [12].
- Malnutrition among seniors [13].



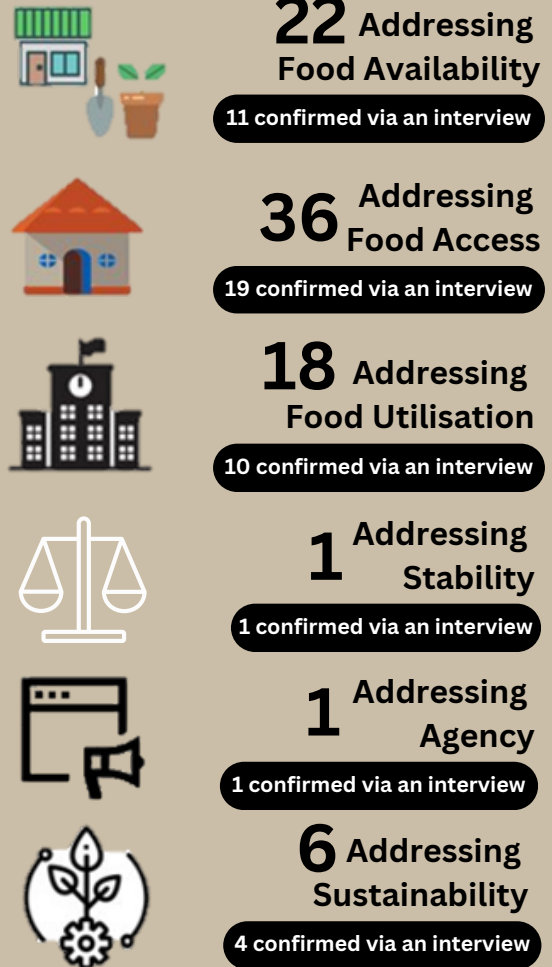
Food in regional and remote areas is **expensive**, the **quality is often poorer**, **availability lower**, and **transport options reduced** [14].

Great Southern region food problems in 2023

Community and interest holder perceptions of Great Southern region food problems [15].



How are existing initiatives supporting regional food security in 2023?* [16]



Great Southern region response to food security issues in 2023** [16]



*some initiatives address multiple aspects

**some initiatives run across multiple regions and initiative types

Great Southern region Socio-Ecological Model of food security initiatives: Levels of intervention

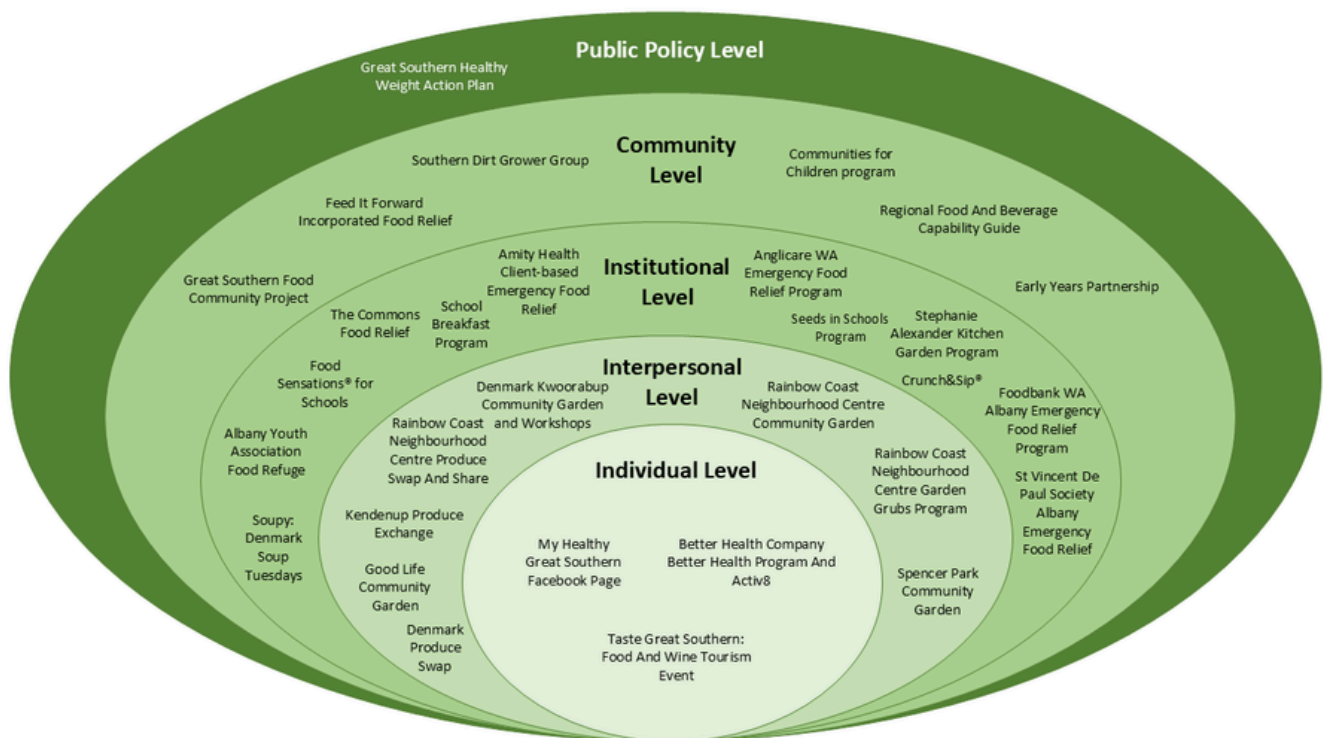


Figure 1: Great Southern region Socio-Ecological Model of food security initiatives. (Adapted from the model described by McLeroy et al. (1988) [17]).

The social-ecological model shows the different levels of intervention that these initiatives are focusing on (Figure 1). For example:

- The individual level focuses on knowledge, skills or attitudes of individual clients or people that they are working directly with.
- The interpersonal level focuses on relationships between family or social networks, or looking at the connection between them.
- The institutional level is often embedded within schools or other settings, like workplaces.
- The community level focuses on different partnerships between community organisations.
- The public policy level relates to supporting a variety of policy frameworks and initiatives.

Most Great Southern initiatives were delivered at the interpersonal or institutional level of influence. For example, through schools, and targeting parents of children. To increase impact, more initiatives should focus on the public policy or community level of influence, such as being incorporated into policy or delivered within community settings.

Great Southern food security systems change impact card

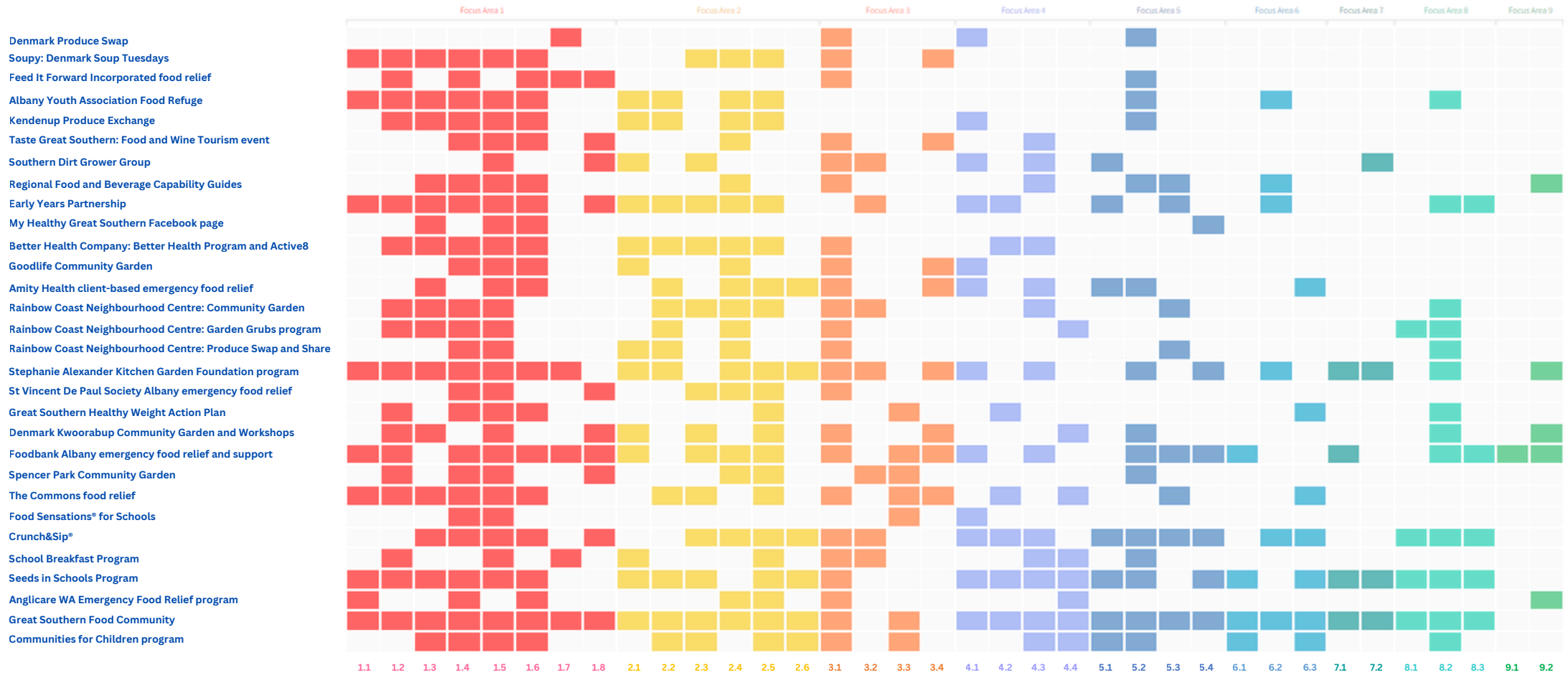


Figure 2: Great Southern food security systems change impact card. (Source: © 2023 Wicked Lab, © 2025 Eventide Systems. Tool for Systemic Change. <https://toolforsystemicchange.com>)

This impact card provides a visualisation of which systems change characteristics were most likely to be possessed by Great Southern food security initiatives in 2023. (Adapted from Godrich et al. (2025) [16]).

Focus Areas initiatives possessed:

- 1** Shake things up
- 2** Join up and ripple out
- 3** Create identity and combine resources
- 4** Embed, watch and respond

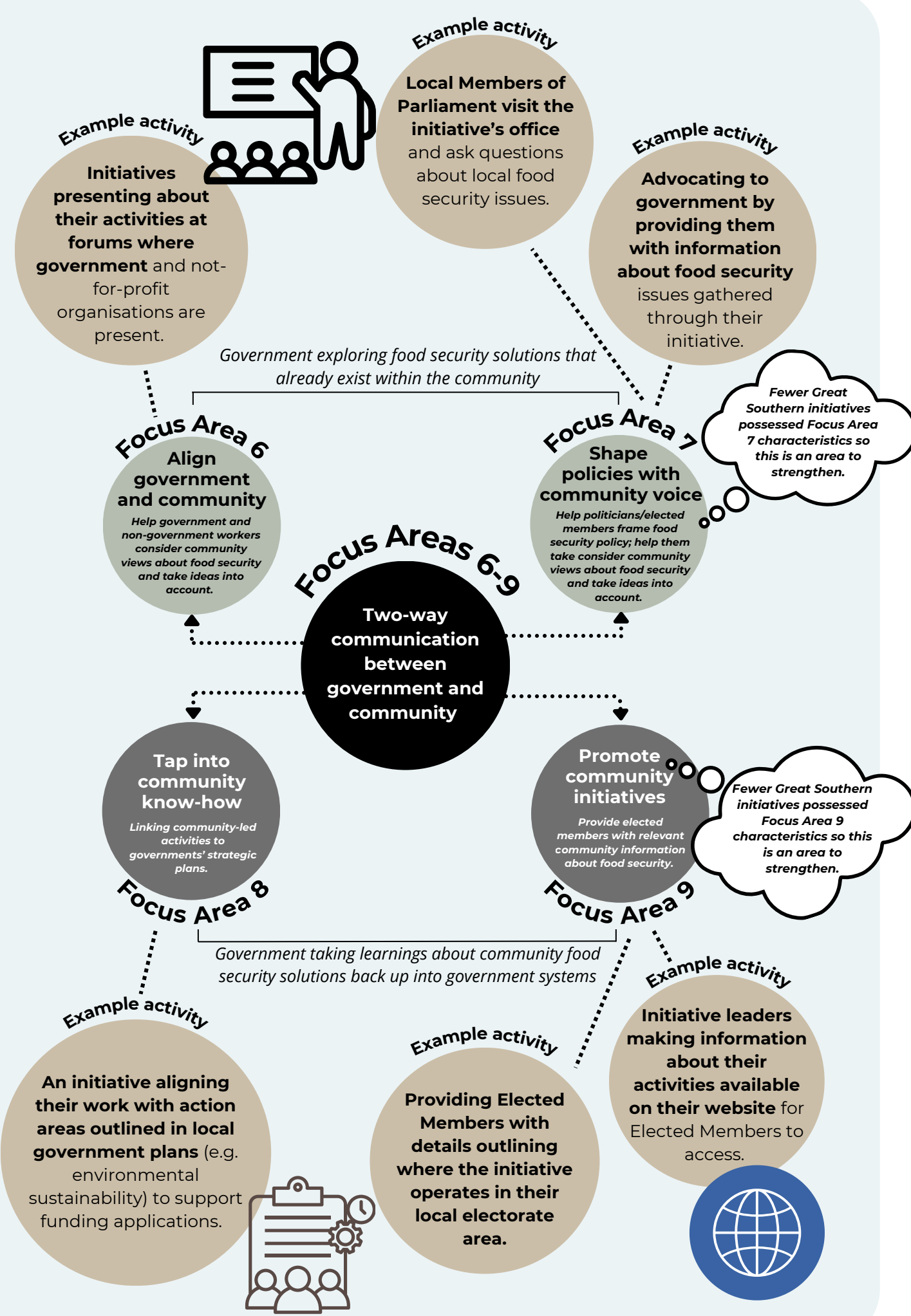


Focus Areas to strengthen:

- 5** Build collective knowledge
- 6** Align government and community
- 7** Shape policies with community voices
- 8** Tap into community know-how
- 9** Promote community initiatives

How Great Southern region initiatives are contributing towards food security systems change





Types of partnering organisations in the Great Southern region in 2023 [18]

36 

Non-government
or not-for-profit
organisations

17 

Businesses

8 

State government

5 

Community group

4 

Local government

4 

Federal
government

2 

Education

1 

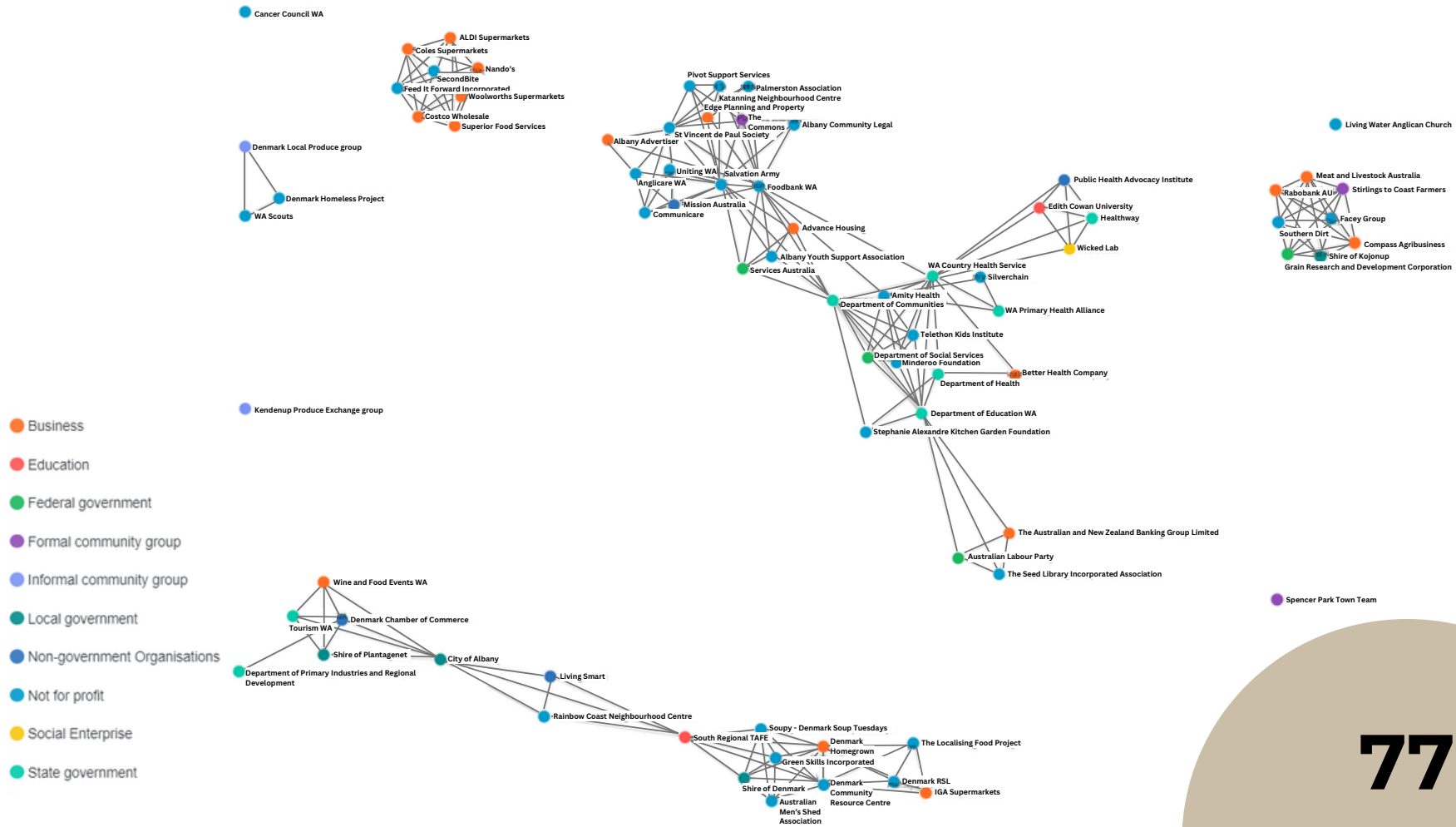
Social enterprise

Great Southern region partnership findings

- The Great Southern partnership map demonstrates a **‘scattered fragments’ model** which indicates a siloed network in the early stages of development [19].
- **33 organisations were ‘hubs’** in the Great Southern network. These organisations connected with more than the average number of partners and were essential to spreading information throughout different parts of the network [19].
- **Two state government organisations and one not-for-profit organisation were critical for information sharing [19].**
- **40 organisations were connected components.** They used their partnerships to receive and share information throughout the network [19].
- **Four organisations were unconnected** and they had no partnerships [19].

**See the next page for a visual representation of these findings.*

Great Southern partnership map



77
partnering
organisations

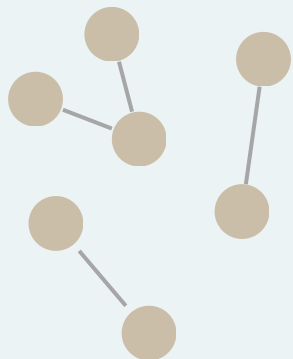
Figure 3. Great Southern Partnership Map. (Source: © 2023 Wicked Lab, © 2025 Eventide Systems. Tool for Systemic Change. <https://toolforsystemicchange.com>)

This partnership map shows all of the different partnerships and collaborations between the organisations working on food security within the Great Southern region in 2023. (Adapted from Godrich et al. (2026) [19]).

Partnership Typologies

The Great Southern partnership map demonstrates a 'scattered fragments' model.

Scattered fragments model



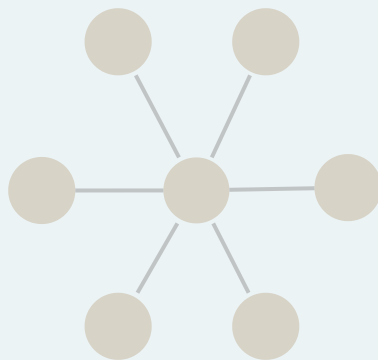
Characteristics:

- Multiple separate clusters of partners.
- No active leaders building network.

Suggestions to mature the Great Southern partnership network from a 'scattered fragments' model to a 'hub-and-spoke' model:

- Identify potential network weavers.
- Support unconnected nodes to connect into network.
- Develop inventory of partnering opportunities.

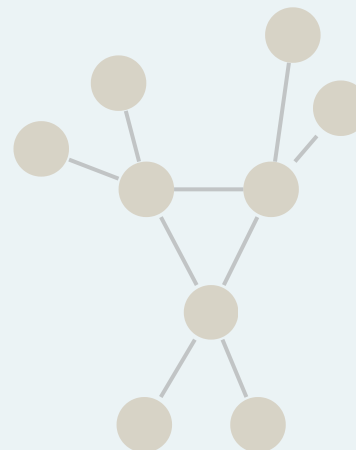
Hub-and-spoke model



Characteristics:

- Network weavers connect individuals/groups to create information flows.
- Should be temporary network type - power concentration in hub.

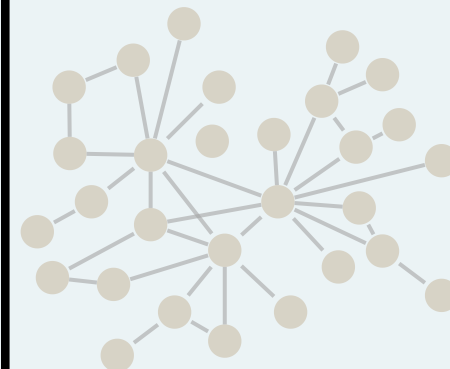
Multi-hub model



Characteristics:

- More than one hub.
- Multiple weavers connecting to each other.
- Short path lengths = fast information flow.

Core/periphery model



Characteristics:

- Central network core with strong ties.
- Periphery contains new network members, bridges outside of the network, actors/organisations spanning several communities.

Figure 4. Characteristics of network typologies and strategies to mature them. (Adapted from Godrich et al. (2026) [19], Krebs & Holley (2006) [20], Mohr (2016) [21] and Ehrlichman (2021) [22]).

Ways that Great Southern region organisations are working in partnership

Examples from initiatives across the Great Southern region:

Collaboration, coordinated action and capacity building [18]

Partnerships included formal and informal collaborations between different organisations. For example:

- Some initiatives partnered to promote each other's work among the community.
- Initiatives described partnering with specific people in their region to draw on their unique skills.



Food and financial donations [18]

Several food relief initiatives received food donations from other organisations, local businesses and supermarkets. For example:

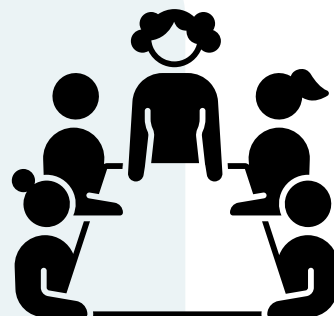
- A food relief initiative received a budget from their overarching organisation which they could allocate to food resources based on the needs of their local community.
- Some initiatives had partnerships with local business who would provide yearly financial donations to cover daily running costs.

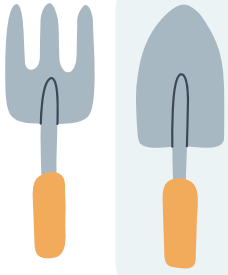


On-ground program and service delivery [18]

Initiatives joined to support on-ground program delivery. For example:

- A food relief initiative partnered with a local community legal service where they referred clients to one another based on their needs.
- An initiative established a local working group made up of various industry representatives such as local government and schools, to support the implementation of a community plan.





Physical and human resources [18]

Initiatives regularly shared physical and human resources. For example:

- A community garden located on Shire land.
- A community garden supported by volunteers who undertake all daily activities.

Funding and grants for program delivery [18]

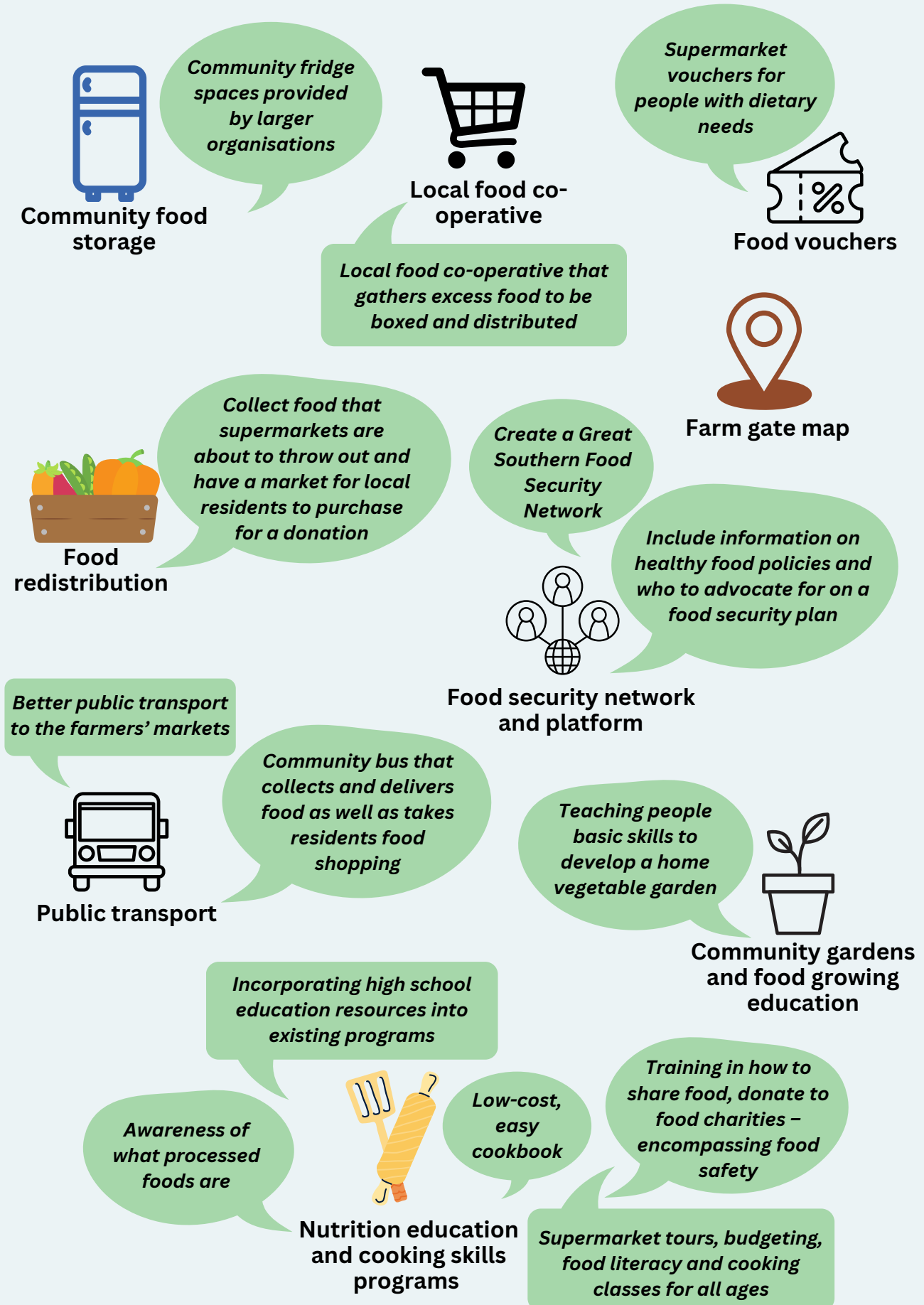
Initiatives often received funding and grants for program delivery from multiple organisations. For example:

- A food relief initiative collaborated with surrounding organisations during Christmas time to support the increased demand for food.



New initiative ideas and actions for the Great Southern region

Community and interest holder ideas for new initiatives and actions needed in the Great Southern region to better support food security systems change [23].



Recommendations from the Food Community project findings



Recommendations to support the current food security system to shift towards a more effective way of working [16]:

- Great Southern food security **initiative leaders could strengthen their food security impact by enhancing Focus Area 7 attributes**, such as in the following ways:
 - **Engaging government representatives** in program activities or speaking with them about their food initiative, **to increase their understanding of how it supports food security.**
 - **Sharing community member views about food security with government representatives.**
 - **Supporting government representatives to talk about food security** in a way that community members can understand and use.
 - **Undertaking government advocacy, to get food security on their agenda and actioned.**
- Great Southern food security initiative leaders could **strengthen their food security impact by enhancing Focus Area 9 attributes**, such as in the following ways:
 - **Advocating to local, state or federal government about addressing food security.**
 - Ensuring their **initiative is listed on the Food Community website ‘Initiative Directory’** – as a project register relevant to the local government area.
- **Food security initiatives should consider the ‘big picture’ of food security** (including broader political, social, technological, economic, national and international forces that affect local food security efforts) when sharing information with their networks and undertaking food security activities.
- Support **better collaborations between government and community organisations.**



Recommendations to strengthen WA regions’ partnership networks [18, 19]:

- **Organisations should identify and document (through adaptable formal partnership agreements) clear partnership purposes, roles, and actions.**
- If desired, **the four unconnected organisations should be supported to connect into their partnership network.** This could be achieved through creating a bank of region-based partnership opportunities e.g. the Food Community website (www.foodcommunity.com.au) and interagency networking groups.
- **The Great Southern region network should be supported to shift across the network stages.** E.g. by connecting organisations, increasing collaboration on small food security projects, bringing in new organisations, and implementing ways to share information.

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