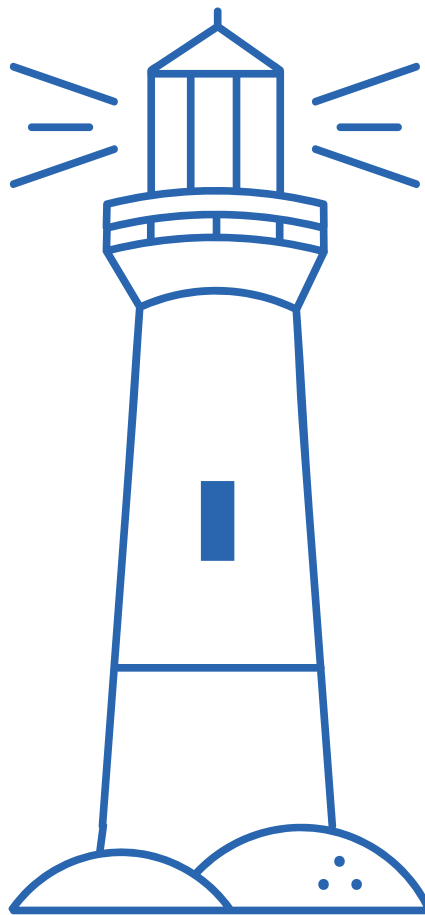




# Midwest Food Community: Snapshot Report



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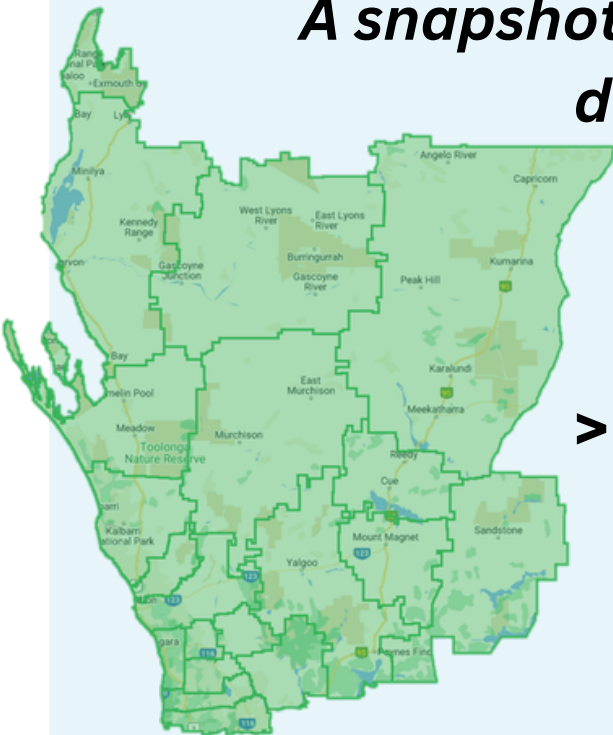
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# Midwest Food Community Snapshot

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 Midwest region demographics



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

A population of  **65,000** people [2].

**>600,000**  
square  
kilometres [2].

 **22**  
local government  
authorities [3].

### Employment status [4]



**57.2%** Worked full-time  
**31.0%** Worked part-time  
**6.9%** Away from work  
**4.9%** Unemployed

### Median weekly income [4]

**\$766** - Personal  
**\$1,908** - Family  
**\$1,455** - Household



**38.5%**

English

**37.9%**

Australian

**8.8%**

Irish

**8.7%**

Australian  
Aboriginal




**8.6%**


Scottish

### Ancestry [4]

## Family composition [4]


  
**41.5%**  
Couple without children


  
**36.8%**  
Couple family with children


  
**16.6%**  
One parent family


  
**1.5%**  
Other family

## Tenure type [4]

  
**35.1%**  
Owned outright


  
**31.4%**  
Owned with a mortgage

  
**27.9%**  
Rented


  
**2.4**  
Average number of people per household [4]

## Mortgage and rent [4]

  
**\$220**  
Median weekly rent repayments

  
**\$1,504**  
Median monthly mortgage repayments

## What we know about food insecurity across Australia

  
**13%**  
of Australian households [5].

  
**20%**  
of children in regional Western Australia [6].

- Low incomes.
- Unexpected bills [7].
- Children whose families received government financial assistance are 2.6 times more likely to be food insecure [6].

### Food insecurity impacts:

- Behavioural problems [8], impaired academic performance [9], low self-esteem and low self-efficacy [10].
- Compromised dietary intake, nutrient deficiencies like iron deficiency, and poor growth and development [11].
- Increased risk of heart disease [12].
- Diet-related diseases [13].
- Malnutrition among seniors [14].



Food in regional and remote areas is **expensive**, the **quality is often poorer**, **availability lower**, and **transport options reduced** [15].

## Midwest region food problems in 2023

Community and interest holder perceptions of Midwest region food problems [16].



## How are existing initiatives supporting regional food security in 2023?\* [17]



**20** Addressing Food Availability

10 confirmed via an interview



**26** Addressing Food Access

12 confirmed via an interview



**14** Addressing Food Utilisation

11 confirmed via an interview



**1** Addressing Stability

1 confirmed via an interview



**1** Addressing Agency

1 confirmed via an interview



**3** Addressing Sustainability

2 confirmed via an interview

## Midwest region response to food security issues in 2023\*\* [17]



**14**

Emergency Food Relief and Community Programs

6 explored via an interview



**12**

Food Literacy and Health Promotion Initiatives

11 explored via an interview



**7**

Community Gardens and Food Swapping Groups

1 explored via an interview



**5**

Businesses, Networks or Alliances

4 explored via an interview



**4**

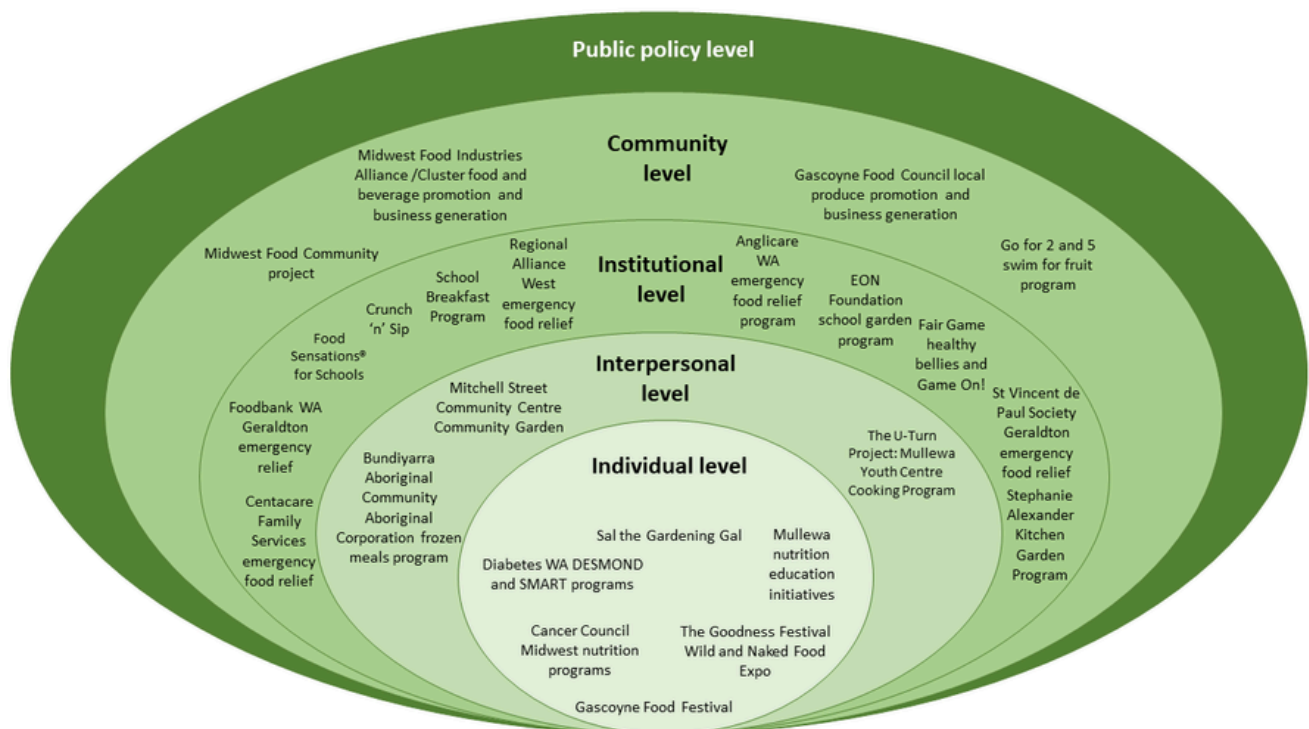
Farmers' Markets and Food Events

2 explored via an interview

\*some initiatives address multiple aspects

\*\*some initiatives run across multiple regions and initiative types

# Midwest region Socio-Ecological Model of food security initiatives: Levels of intervention



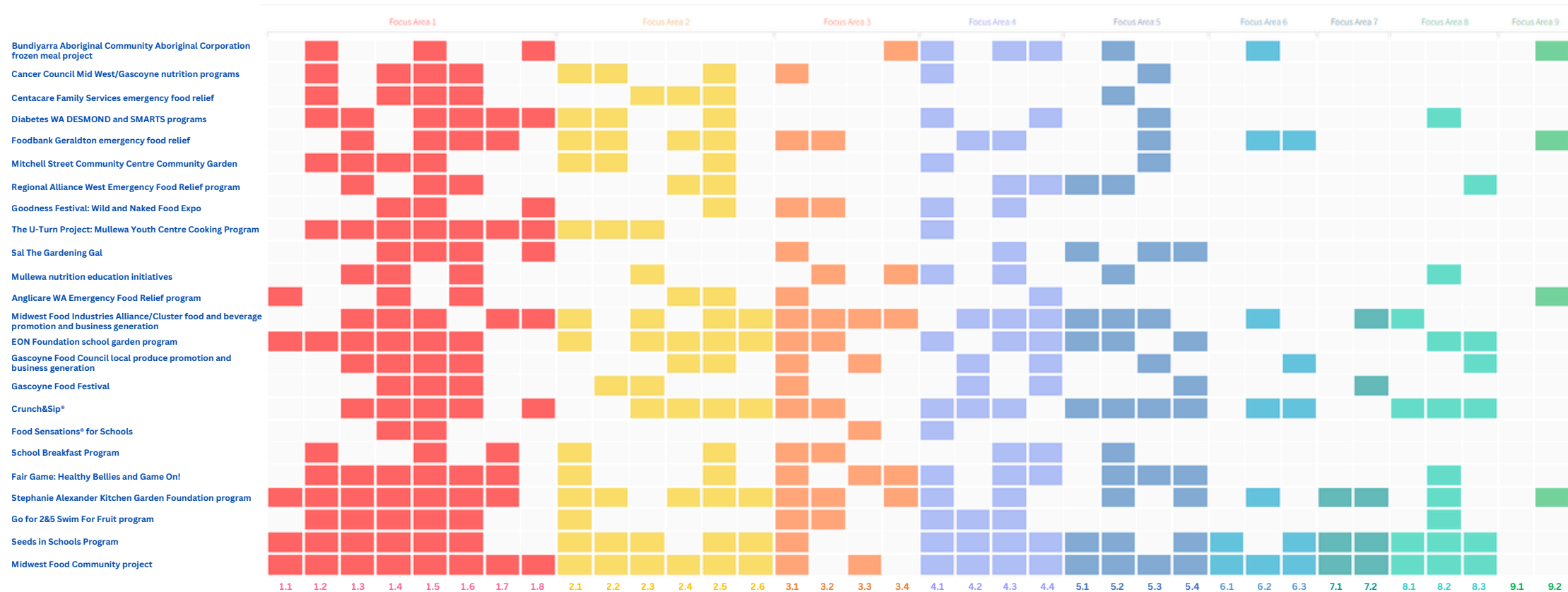
**Figure 1: Midwest region Socio-Ecological Model of food security initiatives.** (Adapted from the model described by McLeroy et al. (1988) [18]).

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.

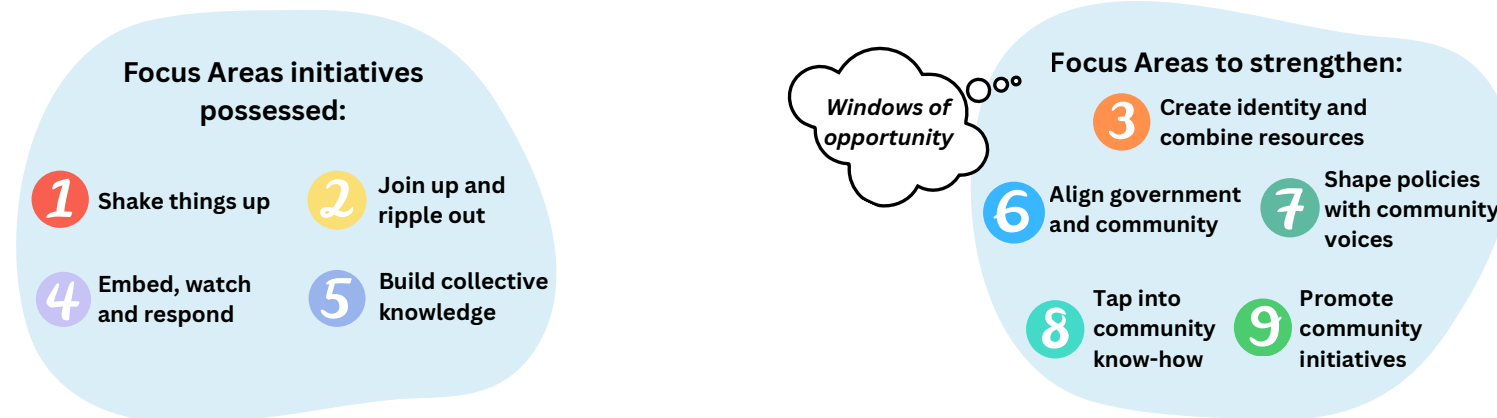
There are many initiatives targeting the institutional level and none at the public policy level. It is important that initiatives span across all levels of influence collectively, to have the most impact.

# Midwest food security systems change impact card



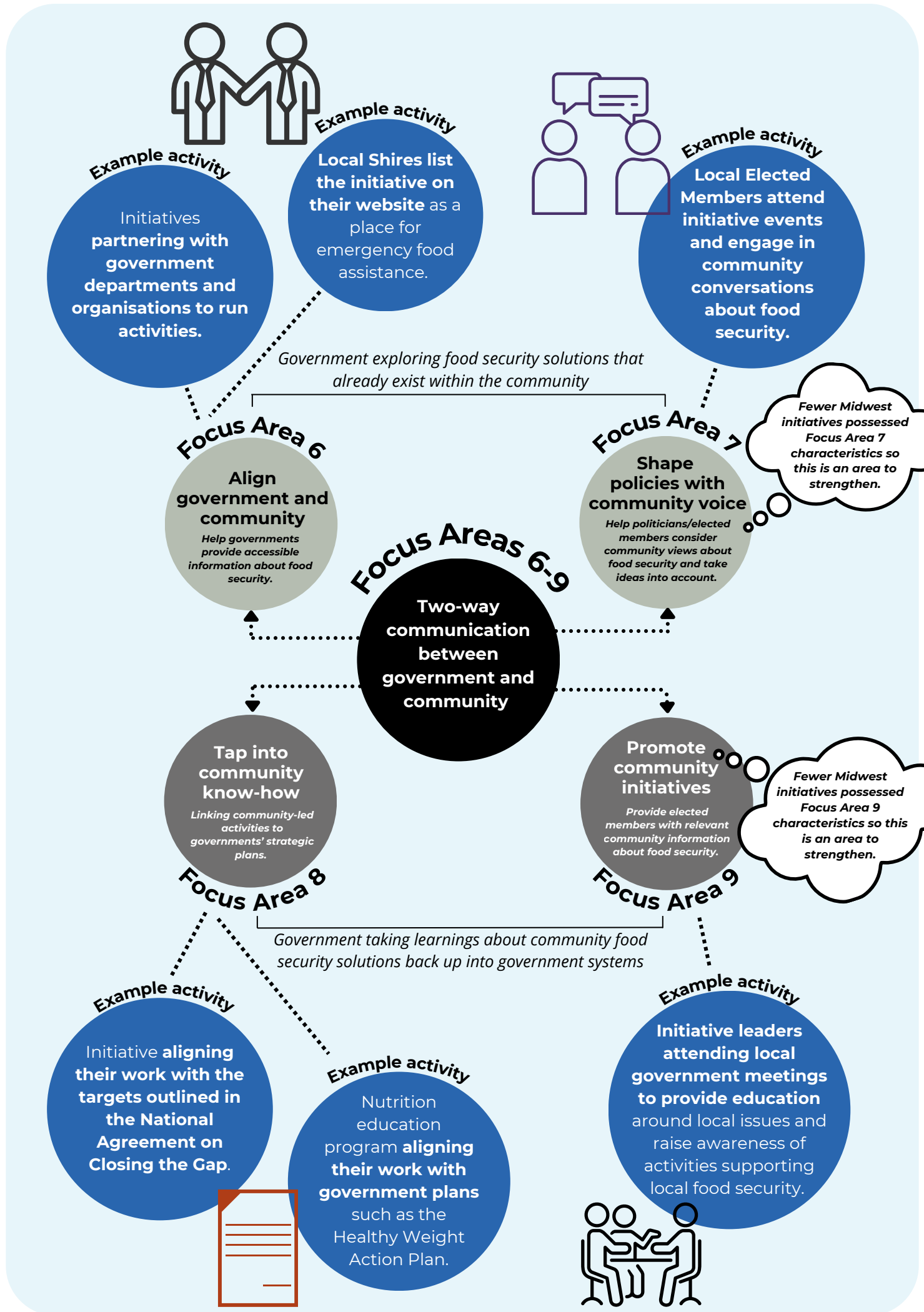
**Figure 2: Midwest food security systems change impact card.** (Source: © 2023 Wicked Lab, © 2025 Eventide Systems. Tool for Systemic Change. <https://toolforsystemicchange.com>)

This impact card provides a visualisation of which systems change characteristics were most likely to be possessed by Midwest food security initiatives in 2023. (Adapted from Godrich et al. (2025) [17]).

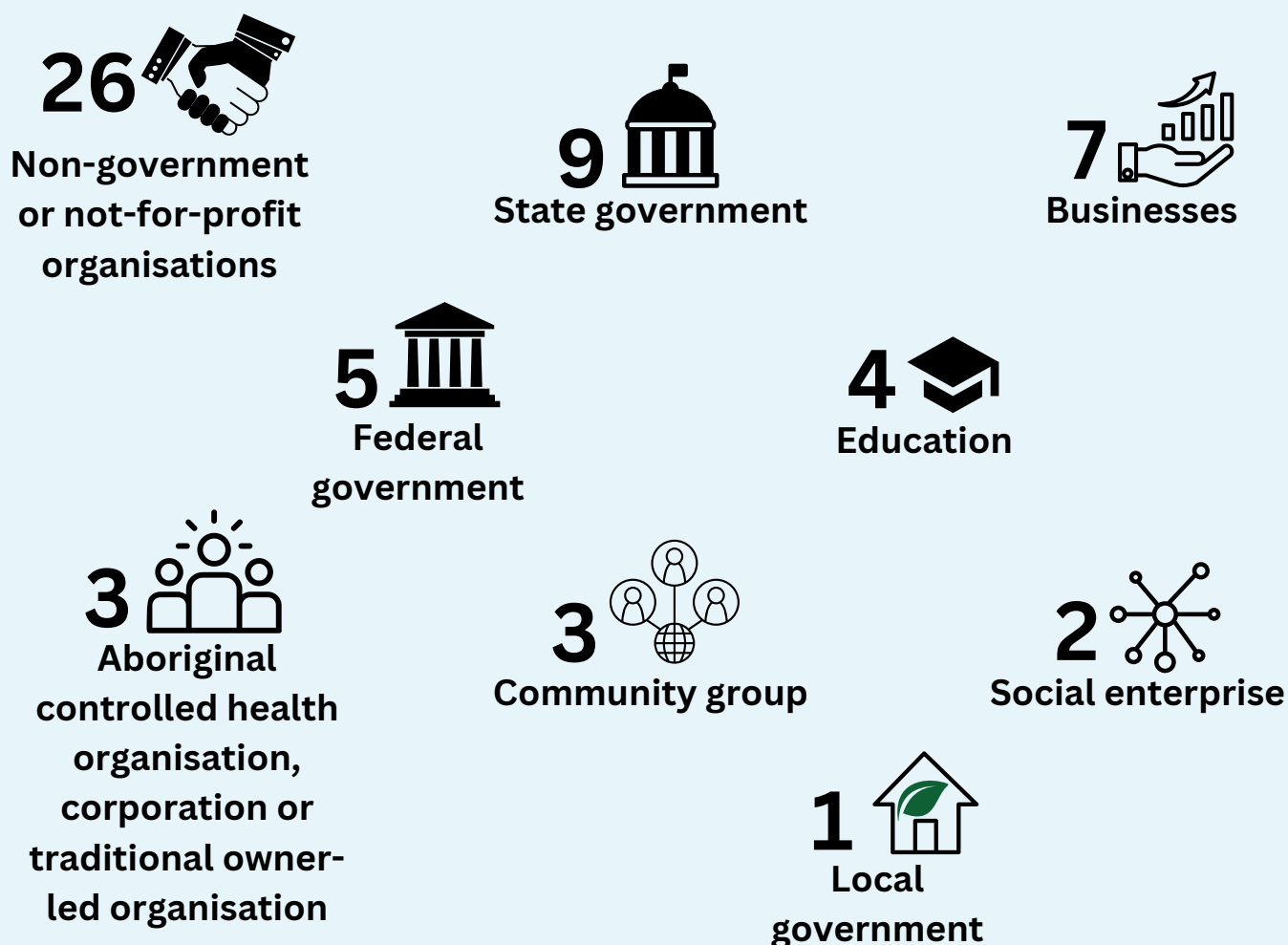


# How Midwest region initiatives are contributing towards food security systems change





## Types of partnering organisations in the Midwest region in 2023 [19]



### Midwest region partnership findings

- The Midwest partnership map demonstrates a ‘**scattered fragments**’ model which indicates a siloed network in the early stages of development [20].
- **21 organisations were ‘hubs’** in the Midwest network. These organisations connected with more than the average number of partners and were essential to spreading information throughout different parts of the network [20].
- **One not-for-profit organisation (with five times the average number of partnerships across the region), one local government organisation and one state government organisation were critical for information sharing [20].**
- **37 organisations were connected components.** They used their partnerships to receive and share information throughout the network [20].
- **Two organisations were unconnected** and they had no partnerships [20].

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

# Midwest partnership map



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

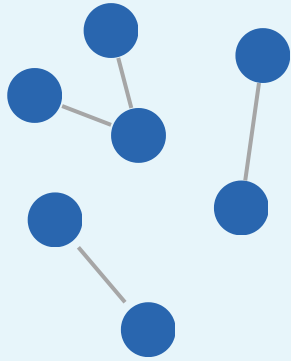
This partnership map shows all of the different partnerships and collaborations between the organisations working on food security within the Midwest region in 2023. (Adapted from Godrich et al. (2026) [20]).

**60**  
partnering  
organisations

# Partnership Typologies

The Midwest partnership map demonstrates a 'scattered fragments' model.

## Scattered fragments model



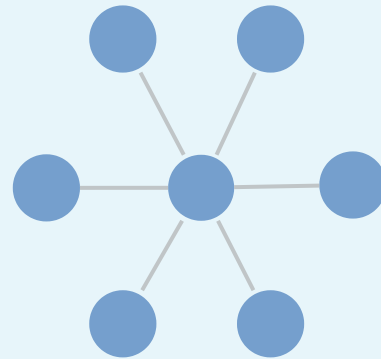
### Characteristics:

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

### Suggestions to mature the Midwest 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.

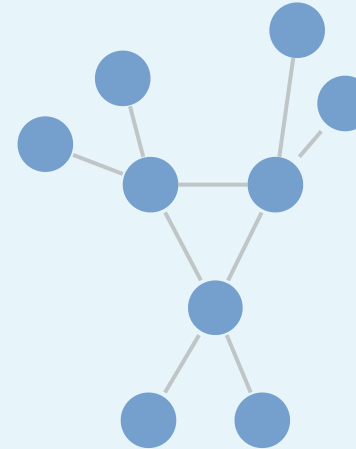
## Hub-and-spoke model



### Characteristics:

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

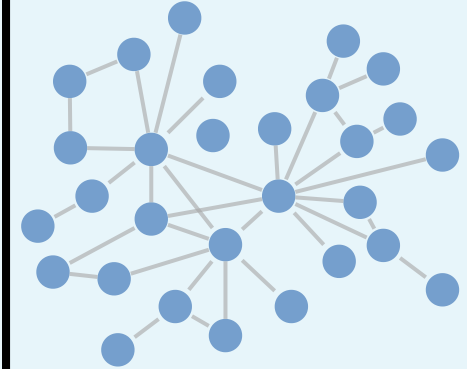
## Multi-hub model



### 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) [20], Krebs & Holley (2006) [21], Mohr (2016) [22] and Ehrlichman (2021) [23]).

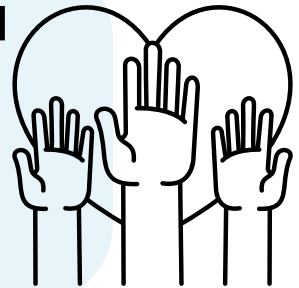
# Ways that Midwest region organisations are working in partnership

Examples from initiatives across the Midwest region:

## Collaboration, coordinated action and capacity building [19]

Partnerships focused on collaborating to build capacity. For example:

- A food relief organisation established referral systems with other organisations working in the same field.



## Community consultation and involvement [19]

Community members were involved in the design and/or delivery of services. For example:

- An initiative leader described the adaption of their program to fit within what is currently happening in the community.
- Collaboration with relevant Aboriginal organisations in each community to ensure that the program is community-led and culturally appropriate.



## Physical and human resources [19]

Initiatives regularly shared physical and human resources including sharing staff such as nutritionists as chefs. For example:

- Food Councils/Alliances partnered with the local TAFE, to bring students and chefs together at food festivals and provide opportunities for hands-on learning.
- An initiative leader managing a regional branch of a larger not-for-profit emergency food relief organisation described how they brought together local organisations to partner in response to disaster events.



## Food and financial donations [19]

Some food relief initiatives received food and financial donations from different types of organisations. For example:



- A food relief initiative received donations from the main branch of their overarching organisation in Perth.




## Funding and grants for program delivery [19]

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

- A nutrition education initiative was funded by a state government funding body for a specific timeframe.
- Other initiatives described receiving funding from larger organisations who aligned with their values and goals.

# ***New initiative ideas and actions for the Midwest region***


Community and interest holder ideas for new initiatives and actions needed in the Midwest region to better support food security systems change [24].



*Food system education through the community garden*

*Food exposure programs*

**Food education**



**Food co-operative**



**Community kitchen and storage facilities**

*Free community bus that travels in and out of Geraldton for food shopping*



**Community bus**



**Small food businesses and producers**

*Encourage growing at family owned and individual small business levels*

*Community advocate*

*Voice for Aboriginal people around community food security*



**Food security champions and groups**



**Healthy food policies**

*Healthy food options at community sporting clubs*

*Governance of food stores on price and quality in remote towns*

*Advocate to local government to not have unhealthy food advertising on government property*

# Recommendations from the Food Community project findings



Recommendations to support the current food security system to shift towards a more effective way of working [17]:

- Midwest food security initiative leaders could **strengthen their food security impact by enhancing Focus Area 7 attributes**, 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.**
- Midwest food security initiative leaders could **strengthen their food security impact by enhancing Focus Area 9 attributes**, 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 [19, 20]:

- **Organisations should identify and document (through adaptable formal partnership agreements) clear partnership purposes, roles, and actions.**
- If desired, **the two 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](http://www.foodcommunity.com.au)) and interagency networking groups.
- **The Midwest 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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