

# PEEL

# FOOD ACTION GROUPS

Stakeholder and  
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 | Peel, Western Australia

The Peel region is located 75 kilometres south of WA's capital, Perth, and includes five local government areas: Boddington, Murray, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Waroona shires and City of Mandurah [1].

## Current Status

Peel focus groups were held in June and August 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.

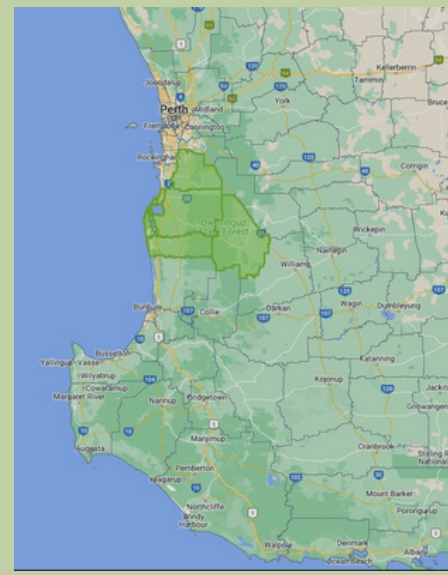


Figure 1. Peel Western Australia [2]

## What we heard...

### What a good food pathway looks like...

Access to fresh, locally grown food; shorter food supply chains; markets providing seasonal produce; knowledge of food origins; ability to walk to supermarkets.

### When the food pathway works, why does it work?

The Peel Development Commission's producers registry; the mobile Foodbank WA truck, functioning in a food hub style.

### Peel Food Problems...

Accessibility of food due to limited supermarket options, high food prices and lack of public transport; disconnect between local government and producers; regulations preventing some fresh produce sales (e.g. lower quality fruit and vegetables); community members lack of understanding around seasonal foods and awareness of low cost food outlets.



## Proposed Food Action Group Activities...

- Increase capacity of Foodbank WA's mobile truck through increased donations and extended services.
- Develop a 'food stamps' program for healthcare card holders (funded through corporate organisations).
- Advocate for increased public transport options.
- Improve communication to link community members with food-related services.
- Work with local government to enhance the Independent Growers Association by connecting food producers in the region.

## Proposed Structure...

The Peel Development Commission being an overarching organisation, supplying funding and knowledge, and working in collaboration with Community Resource Centres who could drive the action (coordinate people and activities).

## Stakeholders...

Local businesses; government; community members; primary producers; schools (e.g. students placements linking in with community initiatives).

## Perceived Barriers...

Funding; overcoming local bylaws and regulations; succession planning for volunteer coordination (to ensure sustainability of the group); limited transport options; not everyone having access to the internet.

**“ ...from my perspective... being a primary producer, the support through a [farmer's] market shortens that supply chain... the community know that they can have that produce every week, seasonal produce... they also get to know their producers. ”**

## Where to from here?

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

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



[foodcommunity@ecu.edu.au](mailto:foodcommunity@ecu.edu.au)



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[www.foodcommunity.com.au](http://www.foodcommunity.com.au)

### References:

1. Peel Development Commission. Our region. From: <https://www.peel.wa.gov.au/our-region/>

2. Peel Western Australia. Adapted from REMPLAN MapBuilder, <https://mapbuilder.remplan.com.au/?link=10dcdc50-d04f-4b3f-bbf8-5ec1198b79db>