

# PEEL FOOD ACTION GROUPS

Stakeholder 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.

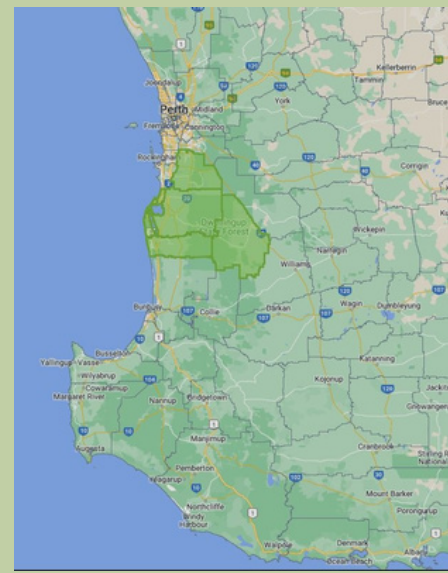


Figure 1. Peel Western Australia [2]

## What we heard...

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

A circular pathway, which incorporates all components (primary production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and waste); focused on local food production to reduce food transport and increase sustainability; includes collaboration between stakeholders to maximise use of existing resources and skills within the current pathway; incorporates nutrition education and food utilisation skills into schools.

### When the food pathway works, why does it...

Some collaboration between existing initiatives (e.g. the Food and Farm Alliance) and the potential to further enhance this collaboration; establishment of the Food Innovation Precinct of WA (FIPWA), to support smaller producers with a local food processing option.

### Peel Food Problems...

Existing policy and legislation that restricts local food production; limited availability of land for production due to poor quality soil and the urban spread; lack of food processing facilities; high food miles due to lack of local food distribution centre or system; limited supermarket options increases cost of food and reduces access for those without transport; lack of knowledge around seasonal foods; no FOGO of food waste processing system in Mandurah.



## Proposed Food Action Group Activities...

- Advocating for sustainable farming and locally grown foods.
- Enhancing the community's access to locally grown, fresh foods through farmers markets and food relief.
- Providing education opportunities to increase community members nutrition, seasonal foods and waste utilisation knowledge and skills.
- Linking farms with educators to increase farming knowledge and skills.
- Facilitating collaboration between initiatives (e.g. the Food and Farm Alliance and FIPWA) to maximise the existing networks within the current food pathway.

## Proposed Structure...

Separate to, but engaged with government to assist with implementing actions; membership-based with a committee; or embed as a sub-committee within an existing body; utilise the Peel Development Commission's regional lens and connections.

## Stakeholders...

A range of producers and businesses working within each component of the food pathway, ensuring representation from across the region; educators; the Regional Development Authority and Peel Development Commission.

## Perceived Barriers...

Funding; challenges associated with incorporating a new organisation; recruiting members and ensuring a diversity of skills and knowledge across all components of the food pathway; making sure members have a united vision versus competing agendas.

**“ ...you've got people... that are doing good things in various parts of this [supply] chain... but it's connecting those to make the most out of those minds, infrastructure, experts but then once you build those connections... perhaps collectively looking at where those gaps are along that ideal chain, however many years that takes. ”**

## 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!**



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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>