

Leadership in Local Produce

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Developing Tasmania's local food economy is a commonsense approach to building healthier and more resilient communities.

Local food systems can be a powerful way to enshrine food security within communities for enhanced social¹, economic² and environmental³ benefits.

Local food networks increase returns to the farmer,⁴ provide the nutritional benefit of fresh food to areas of social disadvantage and begin to realign family eating patterns with healthy choices.

Improved food literacy, increased participation in urban agriculture, improved supply and increasing access for students to school gardens, are all vital aspects of a thriving local food network and could be entrenched in a Local Food Act.

THE GREENS WILL

- ▲ Introduce a Local Food Act.
- ▲ Invest in food literacy and school gardens.
- ▲ Invest in local food supply.
- ▲ Support Agribusiness, Agritourism, Urban Agriculture, and Innovation Clusters.

A LOCAL FOOD ACT

According to the United States Food and Agriculture Organisation, 40-50% of global fruit and vegetable products are wasted.⁵ At every stage of the supply chain there is a loss, including fruit and vegetables discarded due to aesthetic defects (25-30%).⁶

This is an incredible untapped resource, and while work is underway to reduce some produce waste, a formal, cohesive framework is required. The Greens would develop a Local Food Act for Tasmania, supported by a Local Food Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Local Food Act is an overarching piece of legislation which entrenches local food initiatives. The Act will provide an enabling framework for policy development, with target settings and annual reporting to ensure that policy investment does not lapse.

A Local Food Act will improve food literacy, agribusiness and agritourism opportunities, urban agriculture, food security, sustainable farming practices, food hubs and innovation clusters.

The Greens will establish a Local Food Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to administer the Local Food Act and local food policies.

The Central Coast Local Food Strategy is the most advanced of the Tasmanian LGAs. The strategy has been detailed with the expressed aim "to guide and inform collective efforts to improve healthy eating in our community".⁷

The Local Food Unit will work with all local governments to promote the adoption of similar strategies.

SCHOOLS

The 'Healthy Food Access Tasmania' study identified that in Launceston 27% of children do not have enough healthy food. Some of the reasons given were income stress, lack of transport to access healthy food, lack of healthy food in community shops, lack of education and awareness of healthy food choices.⁸

Increasing health literacy in schools in the form of farming activities has a flow on effect into the wider community. For the schools in Tasmania fortunate enough to be part of the 24 Carrots project, the students are reaping the benefits of normalising the growing of food for their own consumption.

School gardens are not only places where children learn to grow but also to prepare food and that knowledge can be taken back to families.⁹

The Greens, through the Local Food Unit, will invite expressions of interest for a similar project in the North of the State and provide \$500,000 per annum in financial support.

The Greens also believe that making healthy food the default option, especially in schools, means a better future for all students. We would undertake a comprehensive review of current canteen practices and establish minimum nutritional standards.

FOOD LITERACY

A Local Food Act would entrench in legislation the preference for locally grown food and the government's ability to put its money where its mouth is and support local producers.

A proactive procurement practise from government departments is a solid step in acknowledging the importance of our local food systems.

Eating with the seasons has a positive effect throughout the community.¹⁰ The Local Food Unit will develop an education campaign for promoting this message.

LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY

Increased participation in the local food economy means greater demand for local food and increases capacity for producers. The Minister would be responsible for setting goals, increasing public sector participation and increasing access under the Local Food Act.

Existing organisations, through strategies like the central coast local food security strategy, are leading the way in establishing clusters and hubs for local food but an extension of this state wide would be beneficial.¹¹ The Local Food Unit would provide statewide leadership in this space.

"Food 4U" is an initiative of the Ravenswood Child and Family centre which offers an opportunity for donations and sharing of surplus produce to an area which has been identified as having become a fresh food desert.

The Local Food Unit would be tasked with determining the structure of appropriate financial incentives to ensure that surplus is donated to projects like Food 4U, and would be guided by the provision that it would not cost more than \$500,000 per year.

AGRIBUSINESS AND AGRITOURISM

Local food networks increase returns to the farmer by facilitating direct sales through local markets and hubs. The advantage to the producer is that the supply chain is controlled, overheads relatively fixed with information directly shared with the customer.

Customers are able to verify the provenance of the produce and form a relationship with the producer. This is especially useful to customers who care about sustainability and farming practises.

International commodity markets favour large producers. Local food economies can facilitate on island consumption in Tasmania and open further niche market opportunities.

The Tasmanian Visitor Survey found that 346,896 visitors engaged with the Tasmanian agribusiness sector last year, an increase of 9.55% on the previous year. The opportunities to further stimulate this sector of the visitor economy are ripe.

URBAN AGRICULTURE

The Tasmanian Local Food Supply Project identified a number of Tasmanian communities with little or no access to fresh, healthy food. Normalising the growth of food plants in urban landscapes as a matter of course introduces fresh food into everyday lives.

The common areas in our cities and suburbs, such as nature strips and parks, have ample opportunity to become food forests. There are increase opportunities to share surplus through the online space, community centres and local food hubs.

We need to ensure that council regulations consider food landscapes and foster food in our communities. The Local Food Unit will review local and state policies, practices and regulations on an ongoing basis with a view towards reducing barriers.

INNOVATION CLUSTERS

Innovation clusters bring together those brokers who are able to connect people and know-how, linking various disparate groups to produce a greater opportunity for all.

The innovation cluster model has been successful in driving advanced manufacturing, premium wines and craft beers and specialty products. Ferment Tasmania understands this and leads the way, linking all producers of fermented foods to cement Tasmania's place as an innovator.¹²

A Local Food Act and corresponding Local Food Unit can determine trends and offer new opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Fruit and vegetable farms in the US selling into local and regional markets employ 13 full-time workers per \$US1 million in revenue earned, for a total of 61,000 jobs in 2008. In comparison, fruit and vegetable farms not engaged in local food sales employed 3 full-time workers per \$US1 million in revenue.¹³

Between 2016 and 2017 29% of visitors visited local food producers, 20% visited wineries, and 17% visited breweries and distilleries. these agritourism activities have seen some of the strongest growth in visitor participation since 2013.¹⁴

As tourism continues to grow and as Tasmania's food and beverage offerings stay in the spotlight, a Local Food Act will strengthen already established markets.

INITIATIVE COST

Initiative Investment (\$m)	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year
Local Food Unit	0.74	0.75	0.77	0.78
Education Campaign	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Northern School Gardens	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Surplus Produce Grants	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Total	1.99	2.00	2.02	2.03

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