



# FOOD SECURITY & COMMUNITY GARDENING

in the Ashburton, Ashwood &  
Chadstone Neighbourhood  
Renewal Area

## PROJECT REPORT



Jess Davis  
Project Officer  
Advancing Food Security &  
Community Gardens Project  
MonashLink Community Health  
Service Ltd

Revised May 2010

# Executive Summary

Food security means that all people can obtain healthy, affordable, culturally acceptable, and safe foods regularly without the need to resort to emergency relief. In contrast, food insecurity suggests irregular access to nutritionally adequate and culturally acceptable food.

The *Advancing Food Security and Community Gardens* project aimed to develop a strategic approach to improving food security and supporting community gardening in the Neighbourhood Renewal areas of Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone, with particular attention to the needs of low income households. This project was funded by the Department of Health (Eastern Region) and is a joint collaboration between the Department of Health, City of Boroondara, City of Monash, Inner East Community Health Service, MonashLink Community Health Service and Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre.

Using key stakeholder interviews, a Community Food Security Forum, focus groups, demographic data and literature reviews, the project revealed that food insecurity is a very real challenge facing many residents in this Neighbourhood Renewal area. Key challenges to local food security include: lack of affordable and accessible food outlets; inadequate public transport to shops and lack of car ownership; lack of knowledge or skill related to healthy eating; lack of financial resources and financial management skills; lack of time or poor time management; lack of prioritization of healthy eating; barriers to growing your own food; and poor quality housing and homelessness.

Research indicates that anybody can have times in their life when they are vulnerable to food insecurity. However, key stakeholder interviews suggest that some groups of residents in this Neighbourhood Renewal area are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. These groups include low income earners, public housing residents, those with a disability or chronic illness, the frail elderly, international students and residents from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, amongst others.

Despite (or perhaps because of) these challenges, the project area is home to a wealth of community gardening and food security activities supported and driven by knowledgeable and passionate community and organisational champions. Through consultation with these champions, we have identified simple, concrete steps that organisations and residents can take to create the right environment for food security and optimal health and wellbeing. Opportunities for action include both strategies for increasing the supply and availability of food – such as strategies for ensuring affordable and nutritious food is available for purchase and increasing local food production – and increasing residents' access to that food – such as through education initiatives, improving public transport, cycle paths and improving walkability, and greater employment and income-generating activities.

While this project has revealed substantial challenges to food security in the Neighbourhood Renewal areas of Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone, it has also revealed a wealth of community food security initiatives and outlined tangible steps that all stakeholders can take to further support residents' access to a nutritious diet. The project partners are committed to building food security and supporting community gardens in this area and we urge other stakeholders to work collaboratively with us and with others in addressing this important issue.

# Index

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 What is food security?	5
1.2 Why is food security important?	5
1.3 What are the determinants of food security?	7
1.4 Who is vulnerable to food insecurity?	8
1.5 Is food security an issue in Australia?	8
1.6 Policy Context	9
1.7 Background to this project	10
<b>2. Project goal and objectives</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. Method</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4. Results</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1 Review of demographic data	14
4.2 Previous surveys of food security in the project area	18
4.3 What are the barriers to accessing nutritious and affordable food in this area?	21
<i>Insufficient number of food outlets and location of food outlets</i>	21
<i>Affordability of food outlets</i>	21
<i>Availability and quality of food in outlets</i>	22
<i>Transport to shops</i>	22
<i>Lack of knowledge and skills related to healthy eating</i>	24
<i>Lack of financial resources</i>	24
<i>Lack of financial management skills</i>	24
<i>Lack of time or poor time management</i>	25
<i>Lack of prioritization of healthy eating and/or bigger life issues</i>	25
<i>Barriers to growing your own food</i>	25
<i>Poor quality housing or homelessness</i>	25
<i>Funding and co-ordination of food security projects</i>	25
4.4 Who is vulnerable to food insecurity in this area?	27

continued next page...

	<b>Page</b>
4.5 What food & gardening activities are currently running in this area?	28
4.6 What more can we do to improve food security in the area?	29
<i>Ensure affordable, nutritious food is available for purchase near people's homes</i>	29
<i>Increase local food production</i>	31
<i>Support community meals &amp; community kitchens</i>	33
<i>Provide school meals, healthy snacks and healthy lunchbox education</i>	35
<i>Offer cooking and healthy eating skills workshops</i>	37
<i>Improve public transport, cycle paths and walkability</i>	38
<i>Beautify neighbourhoods, celebrate community and instil public pride</i>	39
<i>Support employment and income generating activities</i>	40
<i>Increase information sharing, co-ordination of food security activities &amp; co-ordination of funding opportunities</i>	41
<i>Supporting emergency relief programs to include fresh produce</i>	42
<i>Community leadership, consultation and participation</i>	42
<b>5. Food security toolbox</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>6. Recommendations</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>7. Conclusion</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Appendix 1. Local food security and community gardening activities</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Appendix 2. Community Food Security Forum summary</b>	<b>62</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is food security?

Food security means that all people can obtain healthy, affordable, culturally acceptable, and safe foods regularly *without* the need to resort to emergency relief.<sup>1</sup> Food security is achieved when there is adequate food available in the community and households have the necessary skills and resources to acquire and use that food.<sup>2</sup>

Central to this concept, is the idea that people should be able to obtain food in a manner that upholds human dignity, that a person should not need to seek emergency food relief or food via socially unacceptable means such as scavenging. Food security also means that the ways in which food is produced and distributed is environmentally sustainable.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, food *insecurity* suggests irregular access to safe, nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable food from non-emergency sources.

## 1.2 Why is food security important?

Having adequate food to eat is a basic human right<sup>4</sup>. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to a decent life, including enough *food*, clothing, housing, medical care and social services.

Access to sufficient quality and quantities of food is also essential for healthy eating, which in turn is a key building block to good health.<sup>5 6</sup> In order to meet nutritional requirements, people need to consume a wide variety of foods on a regular basis.<sup>7</sup> Inadequate access to the appropriate volume and different types of food needed for healthy eating (food insecurity) places individuals at risk of poor physical and mental health.<sup>8</sup> A nutritious diet plays an important role in preventing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and dental disease.<sup>9 10</sup> The World Health Organization puts low fruit and vegetable intake in the top 10 risk factors related to mortality.<sup>11</sup>

Children suffer particularly from poor nutrition. Studies by the Tufts University School of Nutrition and the University of Minnesota Office of Population Research have found that, during critical stages of development, poor nutrition can result in permanent cognitive deficiencies. Children that are not well fed will not learn and will not develop into healthy and productive adults.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Community Food Security Coalition 1995, *Community Food Security Empowerment Act*, Venice, California

<sup>2</sup> NSW Health 2003, *Food Security Options Paper: A planning framework and menu of options for policy and practice interventions*, NSW Department of Health, Sydney.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation 2009, Food Security website, accessed at [www.who.org](http://www.who.org) on 10 July 2009.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations 1948, Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25, paragraph 1

<sup>5</sup> VicHealth 2007, *Food Security Fact Sheet*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>6</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council 2003, *Dietary Guidelines for Australians*, Australian Government Publishing Services, Canberra.

<sup>7</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council 2003, *Dietary Guidelines for Australians*, Australian Government Publishing Services, Canberra.

<sup>8</sup> VicHealth 2007, *Food Security Fact Sheet*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organization 2003, *Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases*, Report of a WHO/FAO Expert Consultation, Geneva.

<sup>10</sup> Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance (SIGNAL) 2000, *Eat Well Australia: An Agenda for Action for Public Health Nutrition*, National Public Health Partnership, Melbourne.

<sup>11</sup> World Health Organization Commission on Social Determinants of Health 2007, *Achieving health equity: From root causes to fair outcomes*, WHO, Geneva.

<sup>12</sup> Tufts School of Nutrition: Preliminary Report on Cognitive Deficiencies and Prenatal Nutrition 1993, *University of Minnesota Office of Population Research: Poverty, Nutritional Status, Growth, and Cognitive Development of Children in the United States*, Tufts University, Boston.

Studies have further demonstrated a link between food insecurity and overweight and obesity.<sup>13</sup> This may be in part because it is perceived to be cheaper and easier to eat foods with high fat, salt and sugar content.<sup>14</sup> Vegetables and fruit provide relatively little energy, and so food insecure households may buy 'cheap' calories in the form of foods high in fat or sugars in order to meet their energy needs. Moreover, foods high in fat, salt and sugar are perceived to be more palatable and more accepted by family members.<sup>15</sup> However, these energy dense foods are generally not dense in micro-nutrients compared with vegetable and fruit. For this reason, poor people can suffer from both obesity and deficiency of micro-nutrients. Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly may be most affected.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, food insecurity is also a form of social exclusion that can result in depression and other mental health problems.<sup>17</sup>

Food security can also play an important role in the social and cultural lives of individuals and communities. Purchasing, preparing, eating and the enjoyment of sharing meals can contribute to the social connectedness of families, friends and communities. The ingredients, methods of preparation, preservation techniques, and types of food eaten are often an important part of cultural practice and identity. Conversely, it is reasonable to assume that food insecurity and an inability to obtain particular foods could have social and cultural consequences for communities.

Community food security is likely to become a more pressing issue in the face of global climate change and increasing scarcity of non-renewable resources such as oil and coal. In a recent study by the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES), the average distance of road transportation required to get an average Australian food basket to consumers (roughly 21,073 kilometres) was almost the same distance as the entire length of our coastline (25,760 km).<sup>18</sup> When added together, the total distance travelled by each item in the food basket (roughly 70,803 km) was approximately equivalent to travelling nearly twice around the circumference of the Earth (40,072km). The total greenhouse gas emissions estimate for trucks transporting the road-transported food items over the total road transport distance was 11,327 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, equal to 2,832 cars driving for one year. These findings clearly indicate that the current food system is both environmentally unsustainable and ultimately financially unsustainable as we adjust to the challenges of climate change and non-renewable resource shortages.

Research has demonstrated that temperatures in urban areas have increased significantly over the last 100 years and that green spaces – including backyard food production, community gardens, urban farms and shady trees – can offset or reverse this concentration of heat.<sup>19</sup> It has further been shown that urban green spaces can be effective in reducing city temperatures, ameliorating the effects of heat stress and providing comfortable outdoor places for people during periods of heat.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, food security activities that focus on preserving and increasing urban agricultural land can play an important role in reducing the effects of rising city temperatures.

---

<sup>13</sup> Burns C 2004, *A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>14</sup> See above citation.

<sup>15</sup> See above citation.

<sup>16</sup> World Health Organisation 2001, *Urban and Peri-Urban Food And Nutrition Action Plan*, WHO, Geneva.

<sup>17</sup> Stuff J, Casey P, Szeto K, Gossett J, Robbins J, Simpson P 2004, 'Household food insecurity is associated with adult health status', *J Nutr*, no. 134, pp. 2330-5.

<sup>18</sup> Gaballa S, Abraham A B 2008, *Food Miles in Australia: A preliminary study of Melbourne, Victoria*, CERES Community Environment Park, Melbourne.

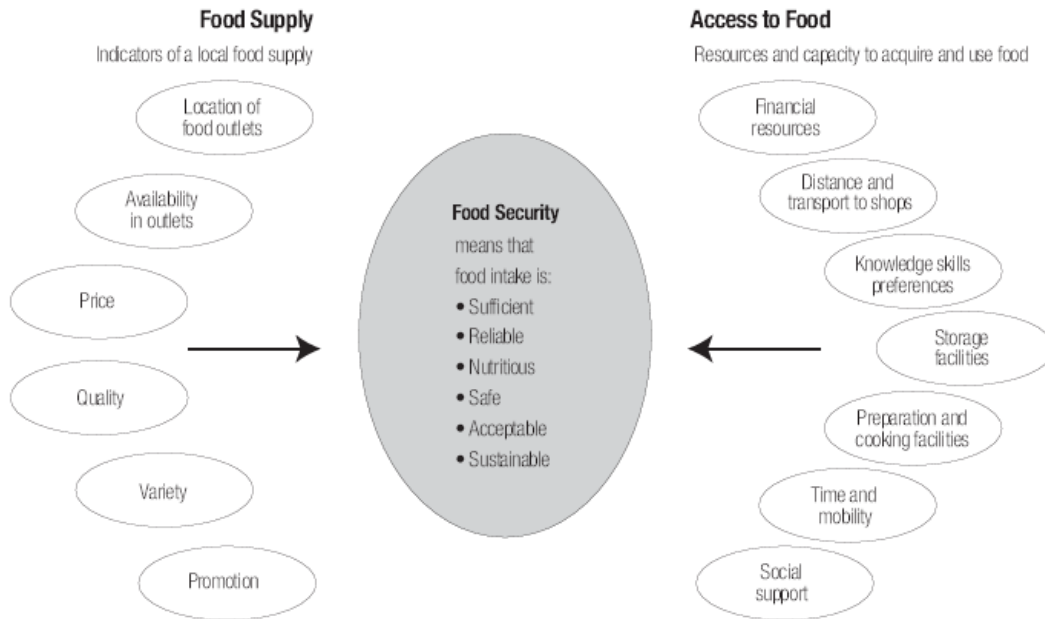
<sup>19</sup> Akbari H, Pomerantz M, Taha H 2001, 'Cool surfaces and shade trees to reduce energy use and improve air quality in urban areas', *Solar Energy*, vol. 70, no. 3, pp. 295-310.

<sup>20</sup> Laforteza R, Carrus G, Sanesi G, Davies C 2009, 'Benefits and well-being perceived by people visiting green spaces in periods of heat stress', *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 97-108.

### 1.3 What are the determinants of food security?

Many factors impact on individual or household food security (refer Figure 1). Food supply (or availability) and access are pre-requisites for the consumption of a healthy diet. Food supply is influenced by a wide range of factors, including demand, transport and storage, taxes levied on foods, shop management, urban development and food policies.<sup>21</sup> Food access is determined by many factors but some of the most important ones are physical access (e.g. access to food outlets, time and mobility), financial resources, education, cooking ability and personal circumstances.<sup>22 23</sup>

**Figure 1. Determinants of food security<sup>24</sup>**



<sup>21</sup> Branca F, Nikogosian H, 2006 *The Challenge of Obesity in the WHO European Region: Strategies for a response*, WHO, Denmark.

<sup>22</sup> Meedeniya J, Smith A, Carter P 2000, *Food Supply in Rural South Australia: A Survey on Food Cost, Quality and Variety*, Eat Well South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>23</sup> Hitchman C, Christie I, Harrison M, Lang T 2002, *Inconvenience Food*, Demos, London.

<sup>24</sup> Rychetnik L, Webb K, Story L, Katz T 2003, *Food Security Options Paper. A planning framework and Menu of option for policy and practice interventions*, NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition, NSW Health Department, Sydney.

## 1.4 Who is vulnerable to food insecurity?

Anybody can have times in their life when they are vulnerable to food insecurity<sup>25</sup>. In Australia, several population groups have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to food insecurity<sup>26</sup>, including:

- low income earners or people who are unemployed;
- people who suffer from disabilities, chronic illness or mental illness;
- frail elderly;
- people who are homeless;
- people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background;
- people with drug and alcohol abuse problems;
- people with limited formal education; and
- people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

In particular, food insecurity is known to be particularly pronounced in low-income households, such as those headed by adults who are either unemployed or receiving a low wage. When money is scarce, food choices can be changed or consumption reduced, unlike fixed expenses such as rent and utility bills. Indeed, studies have shown that food is often the first item to be sacrificed when cash is scarce, with households reducing or substituting meals (particularly for adults) in order to free up cash to pay utility bills, medical costs or meet other financial obligations. Research also suggests that low-income families are frequently unable to access the most affordable healthy foods in their area because of a lack of transport and storage facilities.<sup>27 28</sup>

There is also a strong association between socio-economic status and quality of diet.<sup>29</sup> For example, it has been shown that households of low socio-economic status tend to report higher consumption of potatoes, meat and meat products, visible fats, coffee and soft drinks, but lower consumption of fruit and vegetables than those from high socio-economic status. When compared to high socio-economic groups, socio-economically disadvantaged individuals have been found to have dietary profiles that are least consistent with recommended daily intakes and dietary guidelines.<sup>30</sup>

## 1.5 Is food insecurity an issue in Australia?

Many Australians do not have ready access to nutritious and affordable foods, despite Australia being one of the world's wealthiest countries.<sup>31</sup> The 1995 National Nutrition Survey found that food insecurity was experienced by 5% of respondents over the age of 16, who had indicated that there had been a time in the previous 12 months in which they had run out of food and couldn't afford to buy more.<sup>32</sup> This figure was 12.8% in low income earners reporting fair or poor health, and 16.5% in persons on low income aged 16 to 24 years. More recently, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (reported by VicHealth<sup>33</sup>) has revealed that 60,000 Australians in low income families go without meals or are food insecure each year.

<sup>25</sup> VicHealth 2007, *Food Security Fact Sheet*, VicHealth, Melbourne

<sup>26</sup> Wood B, Wattanapenpaiboon N, Ross K, Kouris-Blazos A. 2000 *1995 National Nutrition Survey: All persons 16 years of age and over and all persons 16 years of age and over, by food security*. Monash University, Melbourne.

<sup>27</sup> Burns C, 2004 *A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>28</sup> Bray R 2001, *Hardship in Australia: An Analysis of Financial Stress Indicators in the 1998-99 Australian Bureau of Statistics Household Expenditure Survey*, Department of Family and Community Services, Commonwealth of Australia Canberra.

<sup>29</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000, *Household Expenditure Survey 1998-99*, Cat No. 6535.0, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>30</sup> Hulshof K F, Brussaard J H, Kruizinga A G, Telman J, Löwik M R H 2003, 'Socio-economic status, dietary intake and 10 y trends: the Dutch National Food Consumption Survey', *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 128-137.

<sup>31</sup> VicHealth 2008, *VicHealth warns food insecurity a growing concern – In our own backyard*. VicHealth, press release accessed 10 March 2008 at [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au).

<sup>32</sup> Wood B, Wattanapenpaiboon N, Ross K, and Kouris-Blazos A 2000, *1995 National Nutrition Survey. All persons 16 years of age and over by Food Security*, Monash University, Melbourne.

<sup>33</sup> VicHealth 2005, *Position Statement on Healthy Eating*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

Research further suggests that between 7-20% of the total burden of chronic disease in Australia is directly related to poor diet<sup>34 35</sup>. In 2003, the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance found that increasing fruit and vegetable consumption in Australia by just one serve per day would save between \$8.6 and \$24.4 million per year in direct health care costs relating to cancer and an additional \$150 million in direct health costs relating to cardiovascular disease.<sup>36</sup>

## 1.6 Policy Context

In Australia, as in many developed countries, there has to date been little public awareness and attention to the issue of food insecurity. For this reason, resources to address food security issues have been somewhat limited and frameworks or models to address the problem have been unavailable<sup>37</sup>. Despite this, understanding of food security issues is growing and food insecurity is recognised as being a public health priority at national, state and local levels. National policy frameworks have been put in place, including the development of the 1992 Food and Nutrition Policy<sup>38</sup> and Eat Well Australia<sup>39</sup>. At a state level, the VicHealth *Food for All* program promotes a whole of government approach to supporting food security in Victoria's most disadvantaged areas<sup>40</sup>.

The *Environments for Health Municipal Public Health Planning Framework*<sup>41</sup> is based on an awareness of how social, economic, natural and built environments impact on health and wellbeing. It aims to improve community health and wellbeing by integrating Municipal Public Health Plans as an essential component of municipal corporate planning. This framework has recently been developed into a Rapid Assessment Process for assessing municipal food security and identifying opportunities for action.<sup>42</sup> The *Environments for Health* framework will be drawn upon in this project.

---

<sup>34</sup> Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) 2004, *Chronic Illness: Australia's Health challenge – The Economic Case for Physical Activity and Nutrition in the Prevention of Chronic Disease*, ACDPA, Melbourne.

<sup>35</sup> Food Standards Australia New Zealand 2002, *Costing a one-year delay to the introduction of mandatory labeling*, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, accessed 10 August 2009 at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au).

<sup>36</sup> Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) 2004, *Chronic Illness: Australia's Health challenge – The Economic Case for Physical Activity and Nutrition in the Prevention of Chronic Disease*, ACDPA, Melbourne.

<sup>37</sup> VicHealth 2008, *Food for all (how local government is improving access to nutritious food)*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>38</sup> Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services 1992, *Food and nutrition policy*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

<sup>39</sup> SIGNAL (Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance) 2000, *Eat Well Australia: An agenda for action for Public Health Nutrition 2000-2010*, SIGNAL, Melbourne.

<sup>40</sup> VicHealth 2008, *Food for all (how local government is improving access to nutritious food)*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>41</sup> Department of Human Services Victoria 2002, *Environments for Health: Municipal Public Health Planning Framework*, Department of Human Services Victoria, Melbourne.

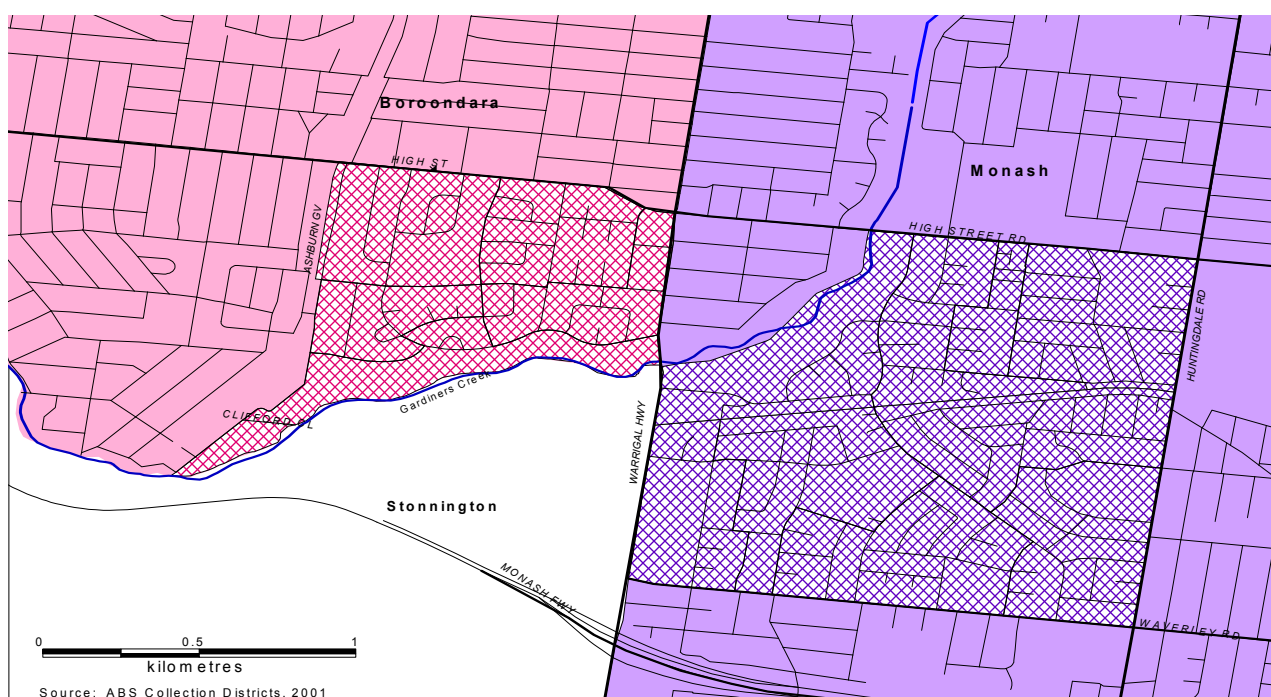
<sup>42</sup> Wood B 2008, *Municipal Food Security, Dimensions and Opportunities: Summary report of the trial RAP Survey RAP*, Victorian Local Governance Association, Melbourne.

## 1.7 Background to this project

The *Advancing Food Security and Community Gardens across Ashwood, Ashburton and Chadstone* project aims to support community gardening and improve access to fresh and healthy food in the suburbs of Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone. This project is funded by the Department of Health (Eastern Region) and operates in the Neighbourhood Renewal (an initiative that brings together residents, government, business, community groups and agencies to strengthen the local community) areas of these suburbs (refer Figure 2).

In order to build upon the work of local community groups, schools, non-government organisations (NGOs), Councils, community health services and State Government, this project was designed and a dedicated 0.6EFT Project Officer appointed for the period from February 2009 to November 2009.

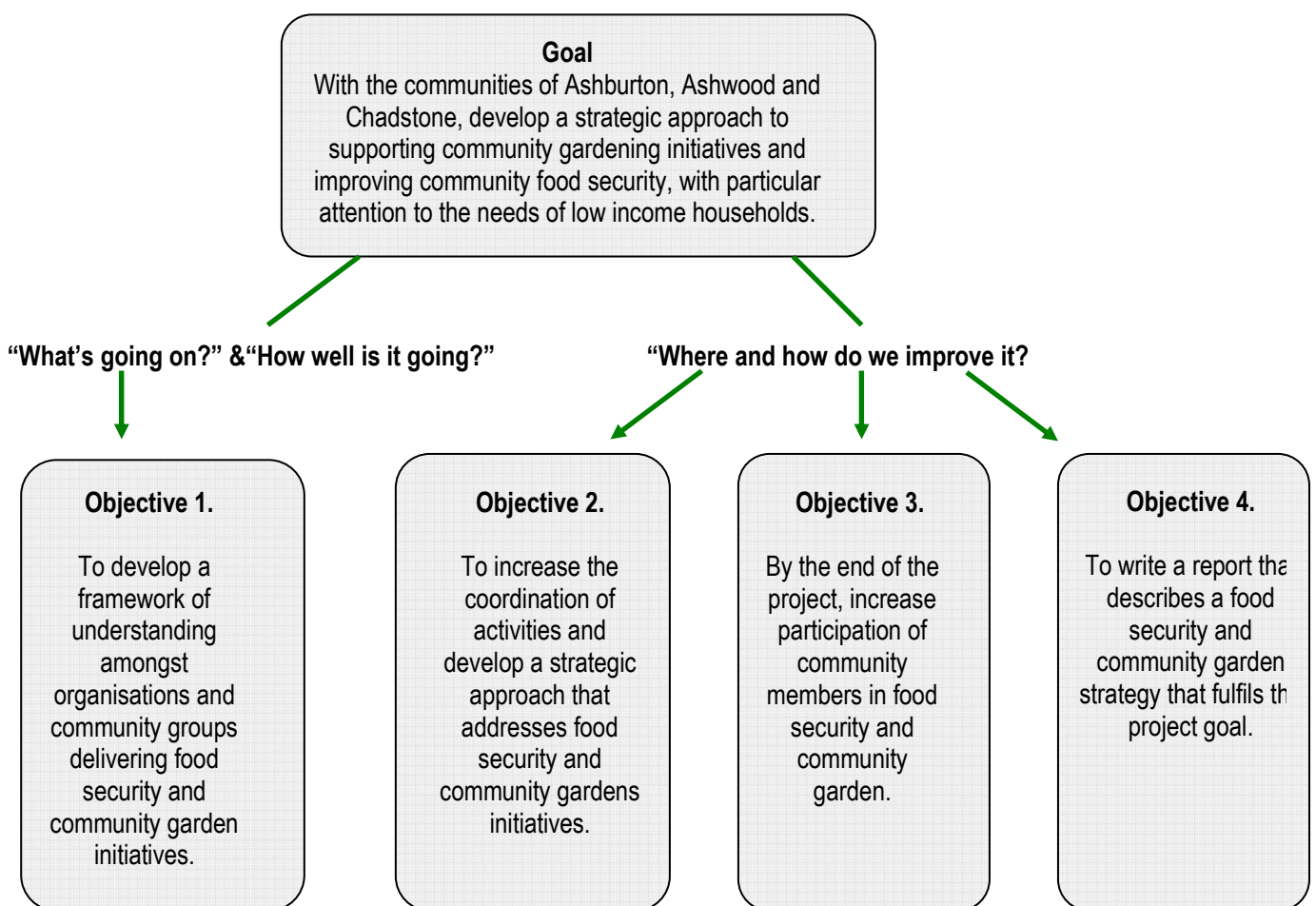
**Figure 2. Neighbourhood Renewal area of Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone.**



## 2. Project goal & objectives

The goal and objectives of this project (refer Figure 3 below) were agreed upon by the main organisational stakeholders in facilitated planning sessions prior to formation of the Steering Committee and appointment of a Project Officer.

**Figure 3. The goal and objectives of the Advancing Food Security and Community Gardens in Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone project**



## 3. Method

The methods employed in this project draw heavily on methods used in food security projects undertaken in both the City of Port Phillip<sup>43</sup> and City of Moreland<sup>44</sup>.

**Objective 1. To develop a framework of understanding amongst organisations and community groups delivering food security and community garden initiatives.**

The methods used to meet Objective 1 included:

- Undertaking a literature review of available information on food security and gardens in the project area and beyond.
- Analysis of demographic characteristics of the Neighbourhood Renewal area, including the CENSUS and Neighbourhood Renewal community surveys.
- Supporting food security mapping of the project area.
- Finalisation and distribution of a survey of the cost of purchasing food for a healthy diet for different household compositions (using the Victorian Healthy Food Basket tool). This includes collected data on different types of food outlets in the project area.
- Conducting a review of public transport routes to food outlets.
- Conducting stakeholder interviews regarding food security and community gardening, including challenges and potential strategies for improving food security and supporting community gardens. Stakeholder interviews included individual interviews with community workers and group sessions with residents.
- Identification of local food security and gardening initiatives.
- Where requested, assistance with evaluation of local food security activities using an appropriate evaluation process.
- Organisation of a Community Food Security Forum to seek community input into a local food security strategy and to highlight local food and gardening initiatives.
- Dissemination of project findings to all interested parties through a project report and the *Fresh Food & Community Gardening News* newsletters and a Community Food Security Forum.

**Objective 2. To increase the coordination of activities and develop a strategic approach that addresses food security and community gardens initiatives.**

Activities that contribute to meeting this objective included:

- Formation of a Steering Committee of key stakeholders, including development of Steering Committee Terms of Reference, schedule of meetings developed, and administration of a partnership evaluation tool to evaluate partnerships between steering committee member organisations.

---

<sup>43</sup> See Wood B and Streker P 2005, *Food security in the City of Port Phillip. Report Part V: Municipal food security. Executive Summary of dimensions, opportunities, and new ideas*. City of Port Phillip, Melbourne. See [http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Municipal\\_Food\\_Security\\_Part\\_V.pdf](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Municipal_Food_Security_Part_V.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> McCluskey K 2009, *Food Security in Moreland: A needs Assessment*, Moreland Community Health Service, Melbourne.

- Organisation of a Community Food Security Forum to raise awareness of food security issues in the project area, highlight local food security and community gardening activities, and discuss workable strategies for further improving food security and supporting community gardening.
- Provide support and resources where identified or necessary, e.g. information regarding referral pathways for food insecurity, information on free/cheap eats, or other identified need.
- Distribution of the *Fresh Food & Community Gardening News* newsletters to all interested parties.

### Objective 3. To increase participation of community members in food security and community garden activities.

In order to achieve this objective, the project:

- Identified and, where possible, attempted to address the strengths, enablers, drivers and barriers to food security across existing community programs.
- Hosted two informal food gardener's morning teas to identify strategies for supporting community and home gardening.
- Ran a *Food Security & Community Gardens Grant* round and apportioned funding to projects that improved food security or supported community gardening.

### Objective 4. To write a report that describes a food security and community garden strategy that fulfils the project goal.

The project:

- Has produced this final report, which will be disseminated to stakeholders.
- Will report on funding received.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Review of demographic data

- **Population**

The Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone Neighbourhood Renewal area is home to some 8,047 residents living in 3125 households.<sup>45</sup> This population includes relatively high proportions of residents that fall into known categories of those at risk of food insecurity including: low income earners or people who are unemployed; people with a disability, chronic illness or mental illness; frail elderly; homeless people; people with drug and alcohol abuse problems; people with limited formal education; and people from non-English speaking backgrounds (refer to Figure 4).

- **Low-income households**

Research demonstrates that the burden of food insecurity falls disproportionately on those with the lowest incomes.<sup>46 47</sup> Evidence suggests that when money is scarce, food consumption is often reduced in low-income households.<sup>48</sup> There is also a strong association between socio-economic status and quality of diet<sup>49 50 51</sup>, with low-income households tending to consume more potatoes, meat, fats, coffee and soft drinks, but less fruit and vegetables than high-income households<sup>52</sup>. When compared to high socio-economic groups, the diets of low-income individuals are least consistent with recommended dietary guidelines.<sup>53 54 55</sup>

*Proportion of families living below the poverty line...*

*Ashburton NR area: 21.6%*  
*Ashwood & Chadstone NR area: 22.5%*

**- 2006 CENSUS data**

This project area has significantly higher unemployment rates than the broader local government areas within which it falls. In Ashwood and Chadstone, unemployment has been measured at 8.7% compared to 5.6% across the City of Monash. A similar difference can be seen between the Ashburton Neighbourhood Renewal area (6.8%) and the broader City of Boroondara (3.9%).<sup>56</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>46</sup> Wood B, Wattanapenpaiboon N, Ross K, and Kouris-Blazos A 2000, *1995 National Nutrition Survey. All persons 16 years of age and over by Food Security*, Monash University, Melbourne.

<sup>47</sup> Foley W, Carter P, Coveney J and Avery J 2008, *Social Determinants of Food Insecurity in South Australia: An Ecological Analysis*. Flinders University Department of Public Health and SA Health, Adelaide.

<sup>48</sup> Turrell G, Hewitt B, Patterson C, Oldenburg B, Gould T 2002, 'Socioeconomic differences in food purchasing behaviour and suggested implications for diet-related health promotion', *J Hum Nutr Diet*, no. 15, pp. 355-364.

<sup>49</sup> Turrell G, Hewitt B, Patterson C, Oldenburg B, Gould T 2002, 'Socioeconomic differences in food purchasing behaviour and suggested implications for diet-related health promotion', *J Hum Nutr Diet*, no. 15, pp. 355-364.

<sup>50</sup> Burns C 2004, *A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>51</sup> Wick R, Trevena L and Quine S 2006, 'Experiences of Food Insecurity among Urban Soup Kitchen Consumers: Insights for Improving Nutrition and Well-Being', *J Am Diet Assoc.*, no. 106, pp. 921-924.

<sup>52</sup> Smith A 2002, *Improving healthy eating and food security in disadvantaged families – what do we know? Eat Well South Australia Report*, Womens and Childrens Hospital, Adelaide.

<sup>53</sup> Giskes K, Turrell G, Patterson C and Newman B 2002, 'Socio-economic differences in fruit and vegetable consumption among Australian adolescents and adults' *Pub Health Nutr*, vol 5, issue 5, pp. 663-669.

<sup>54</sup> Mishra G, Arbuckle J, Crawford D 2002, 'Dietary patterns of Australian adults and their association with socio-economic status: results from the 1995 National Nutrition Survey', *Eur J Clin Nutr*, vol. 56, pp. 687-693.

<sup>55</sup> Turrell G, Hewitt B, Patterson C, Oldenburg B, Gould T 2002, 'Socioeconomic differences in food purchasing behaviour and suggested implications for diet-related health promotion', *J Hum Nutr Diet*, no. 15, pp. 355-364.

<sup>56</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Canberra.

The 2006 Census revealed that roughly 21.6% of families in the Ashburton Neighbourhood Renewal area were living below the poverty line, compared to 7.7% of families in Boroondara as a whole. In the Ashwood and Chadstone part of the project area a similarly high proportion of families (22.5%) are living below the poverty line compared to the proportion of families (13.9%) living in the City of Monash.<sup>57</sup>

- **Disability**

According to 2006 CENSUS data, 5.1% of Ashwood and Chadstone Neighbourhood Renewal residents needed help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of: self-care; mobility; and communication because of a disability, long term health condition (lasting six months or more), or old age.<sup>58</sup> In Ashburton this figure is 8.7%. Core Activity Need for Assistance is used to measure the number of persons with a profound or severe disability, defined as those people needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication.<sup>59</sup>

- **Sole parent families**

Sole or single parent households may be at greater risk of food insecurity due to limited economic resources with which to meet all basic living costs. Single or sole parents may also find it more difficult to provide nutritious meals consistently due to increased pressures on a parent's time and energy.

In this Neighbourhood Renewal area, the percentage of sole parent households is 2 to 3 times higher than in the surrounding local government area.<sup>60</sup> In Ashwood and Chadstone this figure is 25.3% of households compared to 10.6% in the City of Monash as a whole. In Ashburton, 25.4% of households are headed by a sole parent, compared to 9% in Boroondara.<sup>61</sup>

- **Car access**

Access to a car can impact upon food security in areas where walking to food outlets is unfeasible, where public transport is limited, or in cases where residents have limited mobility. One study indicated that for Melbournians, lack of a car can reduce food access by 50%.<sup>62</sup> CENSUS data reveals that the Neighbourhood Renewal area has a higher percentage of households without a car, compared to the broader Local Government Areas. In Ashwood and Chadstone, 17.3% of households (or 355 households) do not own a car, compared with 8.0% in the City of Monash. In Ashburton, this figure is 20.7% or 190 households compared to 9.3% for Boroondara.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>58</sup> See above citation.

<sup>59</sup> See above citation.

<sup>60</sup> See above citation.

<sup>61</sup> See above citation.

<sup>62</sup> Burns C and Inglis A 2006, 'The relationship between the availability of healthy and fast food and neighbourhood level socio-economic deprivation: A case study from Melbourne, Australia.', *Obes Rev.*, vol. 7 (supp 2), p. 39.

<sup>63</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Canberra.

- **Cultural diversity**

In the Ashburton Neighbourhood Renewal area, 32.1% of residents were born overseas, compared with 27.1% for Boroondara, with the top 5 countries of origin being China, UK, India, Greece and Malaysia<sup>64</sup>. In the Ashwood and Chadstone Neighbourhood Renewal area, 42.7% of residents were born overseas, compared with 42.1% for Monash. The top five countries of origin were China, UK, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and New Zealand (37% of total).<sup>65</sup>

The proportion of residents aged 15 years and above that speak a language other than English at home is similar in both of the NR areas with 38% in Ashburton (most common languages are Chinese languages, Greek, Vietnamese and Italian) and 40% of Ashwood and Chadstone (most common languages are Chinese languages, Greek, Vietnamese, Sinhalese and Hindi).<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>65</sup> See above citation.

<sup>66</sup> See above citation.

**Figure 4. Demographic characteristics assessed and their relationships to food insecurity<sup>67</sup>**

Demographic characteristic	Relationship to food insecurity <sup>68</sup>	Indicator	Data for Neighbourhood Renewal Areas of Ashburton, Ashwood & Chadstone	Compared with Local Government Area
Low income	Limited financial resources to purchase food and meet other basic needs and the related effects of low-income such as limited transport or inadequate housing, storage and food preparation area.	Median <b>household</b> income per week  Median <b>family</b> income in, compared with  Families living below the poverty line compared with Local Government Areas <sup>69</sup>	\$967 per week Ashburton \$813 per week in Ashwood & Chadstone  \$1,193 per week in Ashburton \$1,048 per week in Ashwood & Chadstone  21.6% of families in Ashburton 22.5% of families in Ashwood & Chadstone	\$1,517 in Boroondara \$1,108 in Monash  \$2,007 in Boroondara \$1,277 in Monash  7.7% of families in Boroondara 13.9% of families in Monash.
Public housing	Limited personal and/or financial resources	Number of residents in public housing	506 Ashburton NR residents live in 265 public housing dwellings (20% of total population; 28% of occupied dwellings)  1,063 Ashwood & Chadstone NR residents live in 522 public housing dwellings (19% of total population; 24% of occupied dwellings)	
Unemployment	Limited financial resources, similar to the 'low income' measure (above).	Unemployment rate	6.8% for Ashburton NR 8.7% for Ashwood & Chadstone	3.9% for Boroondara 5.6% for Monash
Single parent households	Limited financial resources and possibly limited time and/or mobility for shopping and food preparation tasks.	Proportion of sole parent families  Percentage of sole parent families that earn less than \$500 per week	25.4% of Ashburton NR area 25.3% of Ashwood & Chadstone NR area  42% of sole families in Ashburton NR are 36% of sole families in Ashwood & Chadstone NR area	9% for Boroondara 10.6% for Monash  17% in Boroondara 21% in Monash
Lone person households	Limited financial resources as above.	Proportion of single households, and older singles in public housing	45% in Ashburton (of these 71% or 85 households were older singles)  51% in Ashwood & Chadstone (of these 62% or 165 households were older singles)	25% in Boroondara 20% in Monash
Residents born overseas or speaking languages other than English at home	People from non-English speaking backgrounds (particularly refugees and those who have recently moved to Australia) may face a range of challenges that contribute to food insecurity such as low income, difficulty locating and traveling to shops, difficulty in finding desired foods and purchasing, lack of knowledge about preparing new foods, and problems sourcing traditional ingredients.	Percentage of residents born overseas  Percentage of residents aged 15 years and above that speak a language other than English at home	32.1% in Ashburton 42.7% of Ashwood & Chadstone  38% of Ashburton 40% of Ashwood & Chadstone	27.1% for Boroondara 42.1% for Monash
Lack of car ownership	Limited ability to get to food outlets beyond walking distance, particularly in areas underserved by public transport).	Percentage of households without a car	20.7% (or 190 households) in Ashburton 17.3% (or 355 households) in Ashwood & Chadstone	9.3% for Boroondara 8.0% for Monash

<sup>67</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>68</sup> Adapted from McCluskey K 2009, *Food Security in Moreland: A needs Assessment*, Moreland Community Health Service, Melbourne.

<sup>69</sup> Calculated based on: \$425 per week after tax for couples; \$609 per week after tax for couples with children; and \$452 per week after tax for sole parent families. Refer Street Ryan & Associates 2008, *Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone Neighbourhood renewal Employment and learning Data analysis and projected need*, Street Ryan & Associates, Melbourne.

## 4.2 Previous surveys of food security in the project area

In 2003, a study using community surveys found that of 46 Ashburton residents surveyed, 26% were food insecure: 11% had experienced mild food insecurity, 10% moderate food insecurity and 5% severe food insecurity at some stage within the previous 12 months.<sup>70</sup> In the same study, local health promotion workers suggested that Ashburton public housing residents, in particular residents from Markham Avenue Public Housing Estate, were the most vulnerable population group in Ashburton.

In 2007, further research into the food security situation faced by residents of the Markham Avenue Public Housing Estate in Ashburton confirmed that a large proportion of residents were food insecure.<sup>71</sup> The main determinants causing food insecurity amongst this population appeared to relate to food access and cost. The study further indicated that although a variety of food security activities and emergency food relief services operated in the Ashburton area, many did not specifically target the most vulnerable community members. In particular, there were few programs that addressed the needs of males and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) subgroups. Moreover, there were emergency food relief services that met immediate food needs, but a lack of activities aimed at addressing the underlying determinants of food insecurity. The study particularly noted that there was a lack of programs with a population focus, which aim to encourage community action and create supportive settings and environments to improve food security.

In 2008, Inner East Community Health Service and City of Boroondara undertook an extensive food security mapping exercise throughout the local government area.<sup>72</sup> Figure 5 shows mapping of the Ashburton area, which overlays SEIFA scores (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, a measure of relative disadvantage and advantage) with transport routes and food outlets. This exercise reveals a large 'food desert', i.e. further than 500 metres from a food outlet, throughout much of the most disadvantaged parts of Ashburton, particularly the 1<sup>st</sup> decile of SEIFA scores (most disadvantaged), where Markham Public Housing Estate lies, and parts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> decile. It is also worth noticing that much of the most disadvantaged area is not directly accessible via public transport. This study also assessed availability and affordability of nutritious food using the Victorian Healthy Food Basket Survey<sup>73</sup>, and found that supermarkets in this project area were amongst the most expensive of those surveyed (this is discussed further in 'Affordability of food outlets' on p. 19 of this report).

In 2008, the affordability of nutritious foods available to Ashwood and Chadstone residents was assessed using the Victorian Healthy Food Basket Survey.<sup>74</sup> This study suggested that a large food desert existed in these suburbs, in which there were no fresh food outlets that were easily accessible by residents. The study further revealed that the main supermarket in Ashwood was a cheaper place to shop than some other major supermarkets that residents may use, including supermarkets in Oakleigh and Mount Waverley. This finding seems to contradict the popular view amongst residents (author's personal observations) and must be looked at in conjunction with Victorian Healthy Food Basket Survey results from City of Boroondara (refer p. 19 for more detail).<sup>75</sup>

And finally, in 2009 City of Monash undertook a food security mapping exercise (refer Figure 6). This exercise also revealed a large food desert throughout much of Ashwood and Chadstone, including those areas in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> decile of SEIFA scores (most disadvantaged).

---

<sup>70</sup> Survey area was bounded by Warrigal Road, Fakenham Road/Elanor Street, Gardiners Creek and Winston/Munro Avenue/Tower Hill Road. Note that this area includes only 40% of the Ashburton postcode.

<sup>71</sup> Orchard R, Gloury P 2007, An Assessment of the Food Security Status of Markham Avenue Public Housing Estate Residents and a Review of Strategies Addressing Food Security in Ashburton, Inner East Community Health Service, Melbourne.

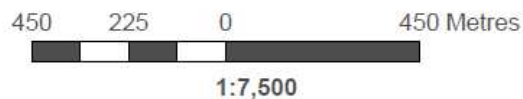
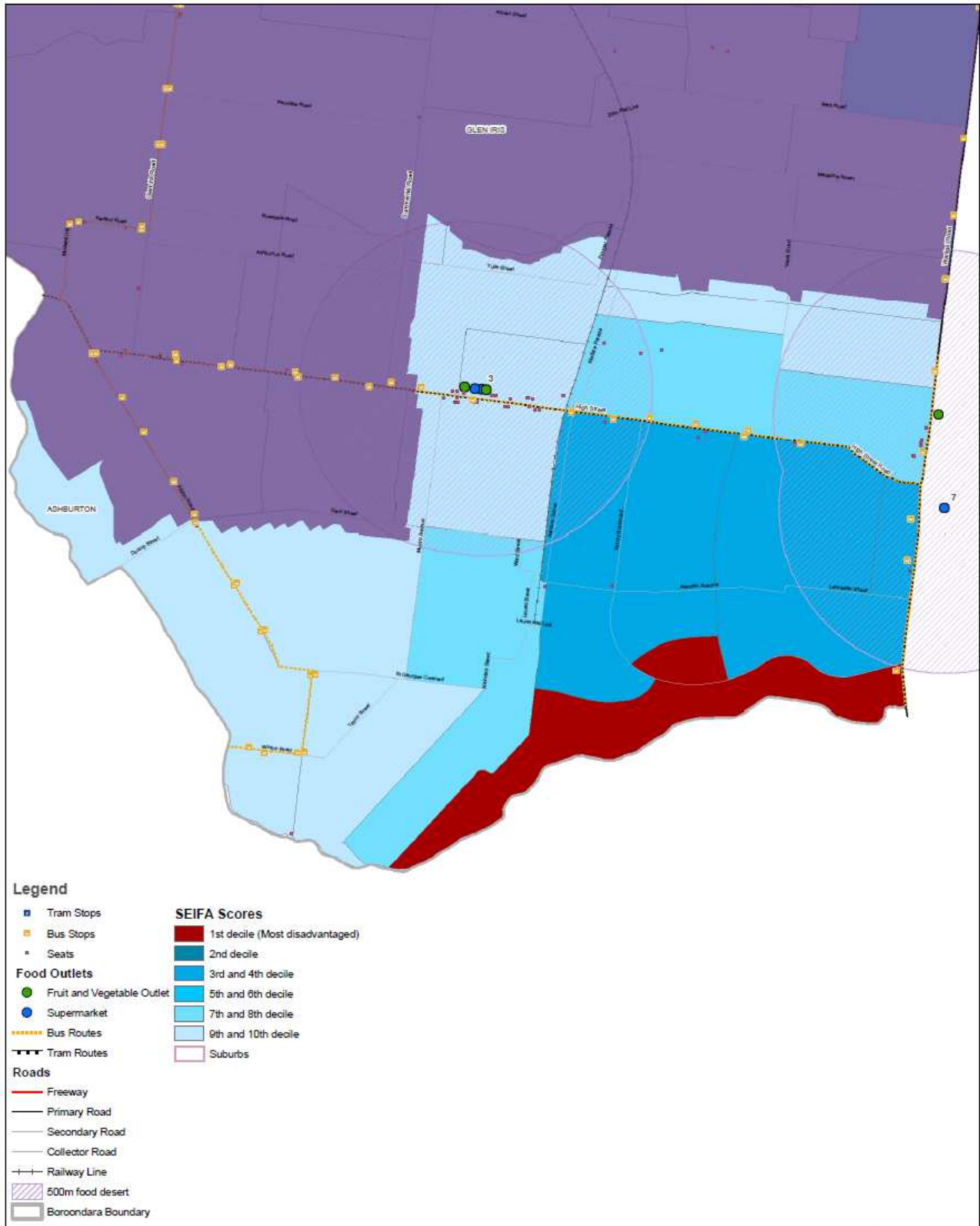
<sup>72</sup> City of Boroondara and Inner East Community Health Service 2008 Food Access in the City of Boroondara, City of Boroondara and Inner East Community Health Service, Melbourne.

<sup>73</sup> Palermo C, Wilson A 2009, 'Development of a Healthy Food Basket for Victoria', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 360-363.

<sup>74</sup> Khamphouk N, Hanna, L 2008, *Food Security In The Neighbourhood Renewal Areas Of Ashwood And Chadstone: Determining financial and physical access to nutritious foods, and strengthening links between food security support services*, Deakin University and MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd, Melbourne.

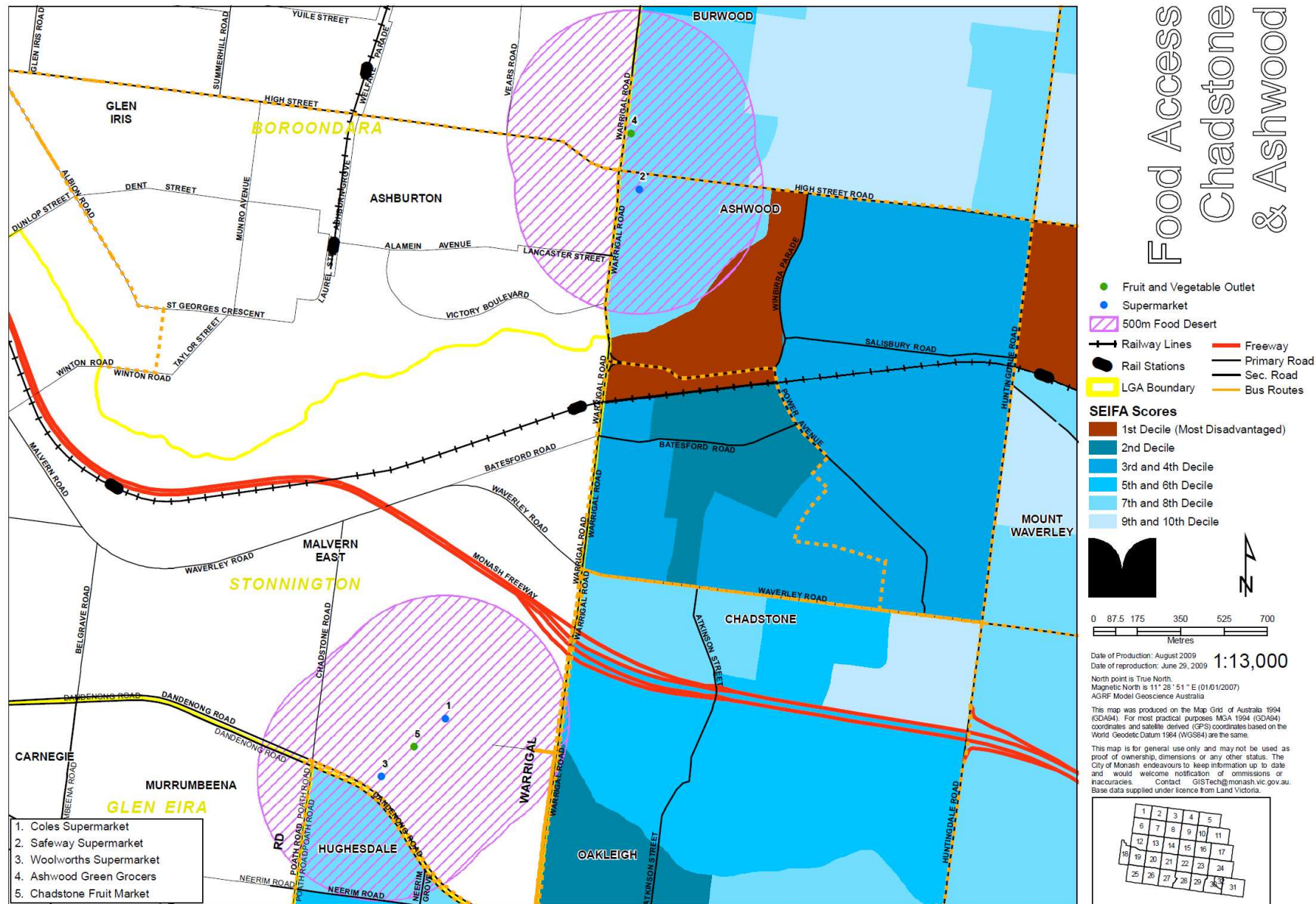
<sup>75</sup> See above citation.

Figure 5. Food Access in the City of Boroondara (Ashburton)<sup>76</sup>



<sup>76</sup> Note that the area marked as '500m food desert' covers those areas that are not in a food desert, i.e. those areas within 500m from a food outlet. All other areas (beyond 500m from a food outlet) can be classified as 'food deserts'.

Figure 6. Food Access in the City of Monash (Ashwood & Chadstone) <sup>77</sup>



<sup>77</sup> Note that the area marked as '500m food desert' covers those areas that are not in a food desert, i.e. those areas within 500m from a food outlet. All other areas (beyond 500m from a food outlet) can be classified as 'food deserts'.

### 4.3 What are the barriers to accessing nutritious and affordable food in this area?

Results from key stakeholder interviews and feedback from the Community Food Security Forum highlighted the following barriers to local community food security.

- **Insufficient number of food outlets and location of food outlets**

Few outlets selling nutritious food, food outlets clustered in one part of the project area and accessibility of food outlets were identified as barriers to food security by many of the key stakeholders interviewed. Much of this Neighbourhood Renewal area is a 'food desert', i.e. it is further than 500 metres from a food outlet. This tells us that residents must have a reasonable degree of mobility to purchase food. Distance to travel on a shopping outing was highlighted by key stakeholders as a particular issue for those with a disability, the elderly (particularly in mid-summer and mid-winter when weather is not conducive to travel), those that are ill and others with limited mobility (e.g. parent with more than one young child). In addition, the major supermarket in the project area is located in the northern-most part of the project area on the cross-roads of two major roads, and at the top of a steep hill, making it very difficult to access on foot and from the other extremes of the project area.

This perception that travel by foot is difficult in this project area is supported by website [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com), which gives suburbs a score out of 100 for its walker-friendliness by counting the number of parks, shops and schools within walking distance of residential hubs. The suburbs of Ashburton (68/100), Ashwood (60/100) and Chadstone (60/100) were all rated as somewhat walkable. This rating stemmed from the assessment that some stores and amenities are within walking distance, but many everyday trips still require a bike, public transportation, or access to a car. To get some perspective, these can be compared to Kew (92/100, a 'walkers' paradise'), Hawthorn (77/100 or very walkable) or Glen Waverley (82/100, very walkable).<sup>78</sup>

*"It is easy to be isolated in these suburbs."*

**- Key stakeholder interview**

- **Affordability of food outlets**

There is a perceived lack of affordable fruit and vegetables and other nutritious food options in this Neighbourhood Renewal area, affecting the ability of low income earners to eat well and to feed their families.

Interestingly, the major supermarket in this project area was the cheapest supermarket involved in a recent Healthy Food Basket Survey of food outlets in the City of Monash, which included outlets in Ashwood, Chadstone, Oakleigh and Mount Waverley.<sup>79</sup> However, another recent Healthy Food Basket Survey of the City of Boroondara found that supermarkets in Ashwood and Ashburton were among the more expensive supermarkets.<sup>80</sup> For a 'typical' family (44-year old male and female, 18 year old female and 8-year old male), Safeway Ashwood and IGA Ashburton were ranked fifth and seventh out of eight on a scale of least expensive to most expensive. For a family receiving Government allowances, healthy food baskets at these outlets equated to 42.8% (Safeway Ashwood) or 43.3% (IGA Ashburton) of the family's allowance. At \$395, a fortnightly healthy food basket was far more affordable at Safeway Kew than the \$430 same food basket at Safeway Ashwood.

*In July 2008, a fortnightly healthy food basket for a 'typical' family cost:*

- \$395 at Safeway Kew
- \$430 at Safeway Ashwood.

<sup>78</sup> Walkscore 2009, *Suburb Walkability*, accessed at [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com) on 20 July 2009.

<sup>79</sup> Khamphouk, N and Hanna, L 2008, *Food Security In The Neighbourhood Renewal Areas Of Ashwood And Chadstone: Determining financial and physical access to nutritious foods, and strengthening links between food security support services*, Deakin University and MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd, Melbourne.

<sup>80</sup> City of Boroondara and Inner East Community Health Service 2008 *Food Access in the City of Boroondara, City of Boroondara and Inner East Community Health Service*, Melbourne.

This tells us that the cost of food is more in the Neighbourhood Renewal area than some of the relatively advantaged suburbs in City of Boroondara such as Kew, but comparatively cheaper compared to nearby suburbs in the City of Monash.

- **Availability and quality of food in outlets**

Availability of most basic fresh, healthy foods in food outlets in the project area as a whole has been assessed positively, with a good range of fruit, vegetables and nutritious food items available in supermarkets and green grocers.<sup>81</sup> However, stakeholders revealed a community perception that variety is limited and fresh produce was of poor quality in this area.

- **Transport to shops**

For those with access to a car and the ability to drive, food outlets in the project area are readily accessible and parking is available. However, the hilly terrain of the project area, particularly in the area surrounding the supermarkets and food outlets, make it infeasible for many residents to walk to food outlets.

On the whole, public transport to shops is reasonable within this Neighbourhood Renewal area. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, buses run along all the major roads in the project area, namely Warrigal Road, Huntingdale Road, Waverley Rd, High St Road and High St, with one bus route cutting across the Ashwood/Chadstone side of the project area along Power avenue (refer Figure 7). From these major roads buses can be used to access Safeway Ashwood, Ashburton IGA and Coles Chadstone.

The Alamein and Ashburton train stations run to Melbourne city via Camberwell and The Holmesglen and Jordanville stations are on the Glen Waverley to Melbourne city train line. Within the project area, Alamein, Ashburton, Holmesglen or Jordanville can all be used to access Queen Victoria Markets in Melbourne City (less than 40 minutes travel time each way, 1 or two trains depending on station). For the able bodied person with plenty of time this would be an option. Train stations are not a viable option for accessing Dandenong Markets or Chadstone Shopping Centre.

Despite these public transport links, it is a concern that many parts of this area are not accessible by public transport at all. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, a large proportion of the most disadvantaged areas in these communities (shown in red and the darkest blue) are not directly accessible via public transport.

Key stakeholders consistently raised concerns regarding residents that are unable to do their shopping on public transport, due to physical or mental disability, age, or child-care responsibilities. A frail elderly person may be able to use public transport to get to the shops, but may have trouble carting the heavy shopping back home. A single parent with kids may struggle to transport the shopping and their kids safely to and from the shops via public transport. This finding is consistent with research into food access in other parts of Australia.<sup>82</sup> Many residents of risk of food insecurity may also not be aware of affordable home delivery services and therefore continue to struggle to reach food outlets.

---

<sup>81</sup> Khamphouk, N and Hanna, L 2008, Food Security In The Neighbourhood Renewal Areas Of Ashwood And Chadstone: Determining financial and physical access to nutritious foods, and strengthening links between food security support services. Deakin University and MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd.

<sup>82</sup> Coveney J, O'Dwyer L A 2009, 'Effects of mobility and location on food access', *Health & Place*, vol. 15, pp. 45–55.

**Figure 7. Public transport links within the Ashburton, Ashwood & Chadstone Neighbourhood Renewal area**

Bus route/ train line	Description of route within Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) area	Days of operation	Hours of operation	Frequency of service
623	<p>Direct route into NR area along Princes Highway to Middle Road (Coles Chadstone).</p> <p>Runs along Warrigal Road, and stops at cnr Power Avenue and Waverly Road (access to Community Kitchen, Breakfast club and Emergency food relief with 3-4 min walk).</p> <p>Route runs out of NR area along Waverly road.</p>	Mon-Sun	<p>6:30am-9:45am Mon-Fri</p> <p>6:50am-9:45pm Sat</p> <p>9:20am-8:45pm Sun</p>	<p>20-40 mins, then every hour from 7:20pm Mon-Fri</p> <p>Every hour Sat-Sun</p>
624	<p>Direct route into NR area along Princes Highway to Middle Road (Coles Chadstone). Runs along Warrigal Road, where there is access to grocery stores and food outlets. Then runs along Power Avenue where there is access to Community Kitchen, and along Euroka and Bolwarra Streets, where there is access to Community Kitchen, Emergency food relief and Breakfast Club. Route runs out of NR area along Waverly and Huntingdale Roads.</p>	Mon-Sun	<p>6:50am-9:40pm Mon-Fri</p> <p>7:45am-8:40pm Sat</p> <p>8:45am-8:40pm Sun</p>	<p>15-40 mins Mon-Fri</p> <p>Every hour Sat-Sun</p>
734	<p>Direct route into NR area along High street, stopping at cnr Munro Avenue (IGA Ashburton). Continues along High street, stopping at Ashburton Railway station. Stops cnr Warrigal and High streets (Safeway Ashwood). Runs out of NR area along High street.</p>	Mon-Sun	<p>6am-9:48pm Mon-Fri</p> <p>8am-9:24pm Sat</p> <p>9am-9:24pm Sun</p>	<p>20-40 mins Mon-Fri</p> <p>Every hour Sat-Sun</p>
767	<p>Direct route into NR area along Poath Road, stopping at Middle Road (Coles Chadstone).</p> <p>Runs along Warrigal road into Waverly road, stopping at Amaroo and Baradine Streets (access to emergency food relief, and community kitchen).</p> <p>Runs along Huntingdale Rd, stopping at Jordanville station, and High street.</p> <p>Runs out of NR area along Huntingdale road.</p>	Mon-Sun	<p>6am-10:30pm Mon-Fri</p> <p>7:50am-10:15pm Sat</p> <p>9am-10:05pm</p>	<p>20-45 mins Mon-Sat</p> <p>30-40 mins Sun</p>
Alamein  (NR area includes Ashburton and Alamein stations)	<p>Route from Flinders street to Alamein station.</p> <p>Alamein and Ashburton stations can be used to access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen Victoria Markets in Melbourne City (approx. 35 minutes, one train + 270 metre walk).</li> <li>Dandenong markets (approx. 1 hr 50 mins travel time with more than three connections).</li> </ul>	Mon-Sun	<p>5am-1am Mon-Sat</p> <p>7:40am-midnight Sun</p>	15-30 mins
Glen Waverly  (NR area includes East Malvern, Holmesglen and Jordanville stations)	<p>Route from Flinders street (or city loop) to Glen Waverley station.</p> <p>Holmesglen stations (border of Malvern East and Ashburton) or Jordanville (Ashwood) station can be used to access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen Victoria Markets in Melbourne City (approx. 35 minutes, one train + 270 metre walk).</li> <li>Dandenong markets (over 1 hr travel time with multiple connections).</li> </ul>	Mon-Sun	<p>5:15am-1:40am Mon-Sat</p> <p>8am-midnight Sun</p>	10-30 mins

- **Lack of knowledge and skills related to healthy eating**

There are many people in the local community that don't have sufficient knowledge about healthy eating or don't have the cooking skills to feed themselves and their families a nutritious diet.

Stakeholder interviews revealed that many kids go to school without breakfast or with inadequate or inappropriate lunches. Their parents may not have the knowledge and skills required to give their kids a healthy diet, they may be quite time-poor, or they may have very little money for food. School staff further noted that the behavior of peers heavily influenced children's eating habits, and that in such cases simply knowing what constitutes a healthy diet is not enough to make kids eat well.

Poor knowledge of healthy eating was a consistent theme in key stakeholder interviews. This is reinforced by a lack of knowledge about how to shop cheaply (particularly for small households) and how to store foods to make it last. Key stakeholders also suggested that many residents on a low income favor bulky, heavy foods that make you 'feel full' over the variety of foods required for a healthy diet.

Insufficient cooking skills among groups vulnerable to food insecurity have been identified as contributing to poor diets. Of particular concern, parents without knowledge and skills to prepare healthy meals for children, single people not sure how to cook cheaply for one, those with a mental or physical disability or chronic health issue that do not have the skills to source and prepare healthy meals, and those that have experienced ongoing transience or are overcoming difficult personal circumstances.

- **Lack of financial resources**

Lack of sufficient income, particularly for those on a Government allowance and students, was identified as a major challenge to food security by many of the key stakeholders interviewed. The overwhelming view was that Government allowances do not allow residents to live a full and healthy lifestyle in the long-term, and that food is often the first item to be sacrificed when other unavoidable costs such as rent and utility bills need to be paid. As noted earlier in Section 4.3, in a typical family of four, a healthy food basket can take up to approximately 45% of that family's income. Key stakeholders also noted that relatively high rates of transience in public tenant households, including long-term 'visitors', and caring for grandchildren or children for which no Government benefits are received also contributes to stretched budgets and food insecurity amongst public housing tenants. Those that suffer from a disability, chronic health issue or mental illness may also struggle to balance food and other bills against the cost of medical treatments.

International students have also been identified as vulnerable to food insecurity, due to limited funds. Some stakeholders noted that international students have very little money, are often supporting family at home, and can't access services. Many students work part-time (visa requirements place restrictions on the number of hours worked), however this may be used to pay for study related costs, leaving little money for food.

- **Lack of financial management skills**

Financial management skills are even more important for residents on a tight budget. Poor budgeting skills and a lack of non-emergency financial support were highlighted as important factors contributing to food insecurity. Research tells us that low-income households spend a greater proportion of their income on food<sup>83</sup>, requiring greater financial management and household management skills. Because of the broad range of pressures associated with living on a low income, household and financial management skills are likely to be important in determining food security in low-income households<sup>84</sup>. Conversely, the absence of the required planning and organisational skills is likely to negatively impact upon household diets.

---

<sup>83</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000, *Household Expenditure Survey 1998–99*, Cat No. 6535.0, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>84</sup> Crotty P, Rutishauser I, Cahill M 1992, 'Food in low income families' *Aust J Public Health*, no. 16, pp.168–174.

- **Lack of time or poor time management**

Lack of time, especially in families where both parents work, has been identified as a challenge to healthy eating. Lack of time amongst those that work, when considered along-side the lack of financial resources in those that work limited hours or are unemployed, present a difficult environment for those trying to address food insecurity in this area.

- **Lack of prioritisation of healthy eating and/or bigger life issues**

Stakeholders also noted that for some residents poor eating habits stem from a lack of motivation to cook or prepare healthy meals (often due to social isolation and withdrawal) and prioritising other activities over shopping and cooking healthy meals, particularly among lower socio-economic groups.

Often, residents may legitimately feel that they are facing far more important issues (such as unemployment, insufficient income, drug and alcohol problems, violence, debt etcetera) than what to eat for the next meal. As a consequence, healthy eating is not the priority and a poor diet results. In such cases, many residents may simply eat to feel full and to abate short-term hunger.

*“People [who] are just trying to survive...and don't experience that sense of ease or comfort, have much bigger issues than healthy eating”*

**- Key stakeholder interview**

- **Barriers to growing your own food**

Key stakeholder interviews, feedback from the Community Food Security Forum and food gardeners' focus groups revealed considerable barriers to growing food in the project area. For community gardeners, these obstacles included financial barriers to setting up and maintaining a garden, lack of funding, lack of land, the relatively high cost of permits to keep chickens and other animals, water restrictions and ensuring garden security. For home gardeners, challenges included lack of space, lack of gardening knowledge and skills, not knowing where to find assistance, the high cost of materials and municipal bylaws and regulations regarding planting on nature strip.

- **Poor quality housing or homelessness**

Key stakeholders noted that very small or particularly old and poorly maintained housing was a problem facing some public housing tenants in the area. While poor quality housing and poor storage and cooking facilities, may not pose a major barrier by itself, when coupled with lack of knowledge about healthy eating and cooking skills and difficulty accessing fresh and nutritious produce, can pose a major barrier to residents making nutritious home-cooked meals. Several stakeholders believed that the DHS Home Wise appliance and infrastructure grants – which assist pensioners, those with a disability or health care card holders to repair or replace essential appliance or essential household infrastructure – had made a positive impact in this respect.





Homelessness, and therefore a lack of resources and facilities to store and prepare food, was also identified by stakeholders as an issue facing residents of this area, particularly among unemployed, low-income earners and students.

- **Funding and co-ordination of food security projects**

Lack of opportunities to coordinate and work with other local food security activities, and lack of a coordinated source of funding were highlighted as a point of stress and frustration for local activity managers.

Based on key stakeholder interviews, feedback from the Community Food Security Forum and food gardeners' morning teas, a list of barriers to local food security and community gardening has been compiled and divided into those which relate to the natural, the built, the economic or the socio-cultural environments for health (refer Figure 8).<sup>85</sup>

**Figure 8: Barriers to food security in the Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone area**

<b>NATURAL</b> 	<b>BUILT</b> 	<b>ECONOMIC</b> 	<b>SOCIO-CULTURAL</b> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient food grown and produced locally.</li> <li>• Water restrictions and restrictions on use of grey water affect ability to grow food.</li> <li>• High cost of essential garden items such as mulch, seeds and tools.</li> <li>• Cost of licenses to keep chickens and other live-stock impedes food self-sufficiency and adds cost to community gardens.</li> <li>• Municipal bylaws and regulations regarding planting on nature strip.</li> <li>• Public garden security.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient number of food outlets and location of food outlets (centralised fresh food and meal outlets).</li> <li>• In some areas, inadequate public transport to local food supplies.</li> <li>• In some areas of public housing, poor quality of housing and surrounding grounds contributing to lack of motivation and making it more difficult to prepare food at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High food cost (partly due to limited competition).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Location and source of cheap food outlets and home-delivery options unknown to some residents.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lack of variety and, in some cases, poor quality of fresh food in outlets.</li> <li>• Lack of financial resources.</li> <li>• Lack of financial management skills.</li> <li>• Homelessness.</li> <li>• Inability of some emergency relief providers to include fresh produce (because can't store it for long and people don't donate fresh food).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High proportion of at risk groups.</li> <li>• Lack of skills and knowledge regarding healthy eating and cooking.</li> <li>• Lack of motivation to lead a healthy lifestyle generally, and specifically to eat well.</li> <li>• Lack of household management skills.</li> <li>• Lack of time (e.g. when parents are working or caring for many children) or time management skills.</li> <li>• Social isolation and lack of engagement with basic services (e.g. due to long-term unemployment, low income, age, frailty, mental or physical disability, mental health issues or chronic health problems, or among young people) contributing to lack of motivation and resources to lead a healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>• Difficulty reaching most vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• Onerous food safety regulations for charitable organisations, community groups and schools increases the human and financial cost in running cooking classes, food groups and fundraising activities.<sup>86</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>85</sup> Department of Human Services Victoria 2002, *Environments for Health: Municipal Public Health Planning Framework*, Department of Human Services Victoria, Melbourne.

<sup>86</sup> Note that current reforms to food safety regulations may reduce this burden for community groups. See: [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/regulatory\\_info/legislation/food\\_safety\\_reform/index.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/regulatory_info/legislation/food_safety_reform/index.htm).

## 4.4 Who is vulnerable to food insecurity in this area?

Anybody can have times in their life when they are vulnerable to food insecurity.<sup>87</sup> However, key stakeholder interviews suggest that the following groups are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity:

- Low income earners or people who are unemployed
- Those in public housing or those on Government allowances
- People who suffer from a mental or physical disability, chronic illness or mental illness
- Frail elderly
- People who abuse drugs or alcohol
- People with limited formal education
- Children
- International students
- Parents, especially single/sole parents
- Single people
- People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds

The particular groups of residents identified above are relatively consistent with those identified as vulnerable to food insecurity at the national level.<sup>88</sup> However, as discussed in Section 4.1, this project area has relatively high proportion of these groups of residents.

---

<sup>87</sup> VicHealth 2007, *Food Security Fact Sheet*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>88</sup> Wood. B, Ross. K, Kouris-Blazos A 2000, *1995 National Nutrition Survey: All persons 16 years of age and over and all persons 16 years of age and over, by food security*, Monash University, Melbourne.

## 4.5 What food & gardening activities are currently running in this area?

Even the most cursory examination of this project area reveals a wide variety of community gardening and food security-related activities supported and driven by an array of knowledgeable and passionate community and organisational champions (activity details at Appendix 1).

Activity managers frequently reported that their food security activities were having some (generally small) positive impacts on participants' lives: from school gardening and cooking programs that taught children the value of nutritious food and developed gardening skills, to cooking groups that allow participants to eat one or two nutritious meals for the week while also developing cooking skills. Although most evaluations of local projects are unstructured and very informal assessments by activity managers, a few recent external evaluations have supported the view that some programs are having incremental positive impacts on the food security of local residents.<sup>89 90 91</sup>

However, activity managers also commonly reported a range of challenges in implementing successful and effective programs including: difficulty in reaching and engaging the most vulnerable members of the community; a lack of serious impact on the diets of those most vulnerable to food security; difficulty accessing funding; lack of skills and human resources for data collection and evaluation; and insufficient opportunities for collaboration and co-ordination with other community programs. Activity managers also highlighted the need for Council, State Government and Community Health Services to create a policy environment that enables and supports food security activities.

Recent evaluations have also highlighted a need for community programs to employ an Asset Based Community Development approach.<sup>92 93</sup> This approach explicitly acknowledges, celebrates and builds upon community capacities in overcoming the challenges that residents face. In adopting this approach, service providers must actively engage local residents in program planning and implementation.

*"We had (a dietician from the community health service) give a presentation to parents on what to put in a healthy lunchbox and what to feed kids for other meals...this had a real effect on parents...and teacher's noticed the difference in the food students were bringing to school.."*

**- Key stakeholder interviewed**

*"This [cooking] program is very successful, people attend for many reasons, we have had men who have lost the wives and have never had to cook, people who like the social aspect of the group, a percentage of those in attendance have a disability and enjoy the social interaction, they get to take home a meal for the evening after the class, some people who live alone and perhaps don't cook much for themselves, we use fresh produce and the main idea behind the program was to teach people that it is easier and cheaper to cook a good meal than invest in take away food."*

**- Key stakeholder interviewed**

*"The garden definitely improves access to healthy and fresh food. There's no way we would eat a tomato bought in the shops. The freshness and quality of the produce is an important part of community gardening. It's also a place for gentle (physical) activity although doesn't feel (so gentle) after we've been digging for a few hours... Another benefit is the learning, talking to each other. We have had some pretty raw recruits over the years but the good thing is that there is always someone around with experience (to help them out)."*

**- Key stakeholder interviewed**

<sup>89</sup> Kipsaina C, McCormick J, Keleher H 2009, *Evaluation of the Inner East Community Health Service Health Promotion Priority Area: Mental Health and Wellbeing – Public Housing 2006-2009 Health Outreach Project*, Department of Health Social Science, Monash University, Melbourne.

<sup>90</sup> Davis J, *Informal evaluation of the Ashburton Neighbourhood & Learning Centre Community Garden* (unpublished data), MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd, Melbourne,

<sup>91</sup> Healthy Families in Monash 2009, *Evaluation results from workshop 1 and 2*, Healthy Families in Monash, personal communication, 29 June 2009.

<sup>92</sup> Kipsaina C, McCormick J, Keleher H 2009, *Evaluation of the Inner East Community Health Service Health Promotion Priority Area: Mental Health and Wellbeing – Public Housing 2006-2009 Health Outreach Project*, Department of Health Social Science, Monash University, Melbourne.

<sup>93</sup> Davis J, *Informal evaluation of the Ashburton Neighbourhood & Learning Centre Community Garden* (unpublished data), MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd, Melbourne.

## 4.6 What more can we do to improve food security in this area?

- **Ensure affordable, nutritious food is available for purchase near people's homes**

Key stakeholder interviews revealed a clear need to increase the availability of fresh and nutritious foods in the project area. Research shows that neighbourhoods of lower socio-economic status tend to have fewer grocery stores and markets, forcing residents to rely on smaller stores with less healthful options.<sup>94 95</sup> Because this project area includes pockets of disadvantage within broader suburbs of relative advantage, residents in this area may also face higher prices in some outlets.<sup>96</sup>

The availability and price of food are known to affect the consumption of fruit and vegetables, particularly among low-income households.<sup>97 98 99 100</sup> In areas such as this Neighbourhood Renewal area, where key stakeholders have revealed that lack of financial resources and low motivation to shop and cook are impeding residents' access to a healthy diet, we must ensure that healthy food options are readily available in the immediate vicinity of resident's homes and that fresh, nutritious produce is more readily accessible than fast food.

Key stakeholder and participants in the Community Food Security Forum proposed strategies such as a food co-op<sup>101</sup> or affordable fruit and vegetable markets (which could take the form of either fixed location shops or stalls, or mobile carts<sup>102</sup>) to increase availability of affordable fresh produce in the area (refer to the summary of the Community Food Security Forum at Appendix 2). Research shows that each of these strategies can be effective in increasing access to fruit and vegetables for low-income food insecure households.

In one recent US study<sup>103</sup>, it was found that despite initial skepticism from organisational partners about whether residents really had difficulty accessing available food outlets, community consultations revealed that many residents did not have access to private transport and public transport was inadequate to link many residents to affordable food outlets. In this situation, an activity to bring farmers markets and community garden produce to disadvantaged sections of the community succeeded in increasing fruit and vegetable consumption.<sup>104</sup>

Research conducted in Canada also tells us that the introduction of a farmers' market in an underserved urban food desert can significantly reduce grocery prices (in the case of one study, by almost 12% over 3 years).<sup>105</sup> In order to determine whether community programs are impacting on the availability and price of fresh produce, ongoing monitoring (e.g. using the Victorian Healthy Food

---

<sup>94</sup> Mikkelsen L, Erickson C S, Nestle M 2007, 'Creating healthy food environments and preventing chronic disease.' In L. Cohen V. Chavez, & S. Chehimi (Eds.), *Prevention is primary: Strategies for well-being*, pp. 287-296. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

<sup>95</sup> Ball K, Timperio A, Crawford C 2009, 'Neighbourhood socioeconomic inequalities in food access and affordability', *Health & Place*, vol. 15, pp. 578-585.

<sup>96</sup> See above citation.

<sup>97</sup> Cassady D, Jetter K, Culp J 2007, 'Is price a barrier to eating more fruits and vegetables for low-income families?' *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, vol. 107, pp.1909-1915.

<sup>98</sup> Morland K, Wing S, Diez R 2002, 'The contextual effect of the local food environment on residents' diets: The atherosclerosis risk in community study'. *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 92, pp.1761-1768.

<sup>99</sup> Kamphuis C B M, Giskes K, de Bruijn G J, Wendel-Vos W, Brug J, van Lenthe F J 2006, 'Environmental determinants of fruit and vegetable consumption among adults, a systematic review', *British Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 96, pp. 620-635.

<sup>100</sup> Kumanyika, S. & Grier, S. 2006, 'Targeting interventions for ethnic minority and low-income populations', *Future of Children*, vol. 16, pp. 187-207.

<sup>101</sup> Food co-ops, short for food co-operatives, are member owned food enterprises and typically centre around buying particular types of food, such as affordable, local, organic and/or sustainably produced food.

<sup>102</sup> For example, see <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/11/nyregion/11carts.html>

<sup>103</sup> Cyzman D, Wierenga J, Sielawa J 2009 'A community response to the food environment.' *Health Promot Pract.* Vol. 10, no. 2 Suppl, pp. 146S-155S.

<sup>104</sup> In this study, an evaluation revealed that: 100% of those attending farmers markets would come again; 100% appreciated the opportunity to access affordable fruit and vegetables; 85% gained knowledge about healthy eating through greater consumption of fruit, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products; and most shoppers learned new recipes and tip for food preparation. It is noteworthy that this study also found that changing local food environments takes time and requires comprehensive and sustained public health programming that both builds knowledge and skills regarding healthful eating, improves the availability of fresh produce and addresses underlying determinants of food security.

<sup>105</sup> Larsen K & Gilliland J 2009, 'A farmers' market in a food desert: Evaluating impacts on the price and availability of healthy food', *Health & Place*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 1158-1162.

Basket survey and food security mapping) will be required. Councils and Community Health Services can (and do) play an important role in this respect.

In Melbourne, the *Braystone Fruit & Veg Project* provides another good example of the potential impact of community-driven fresh produce outlets on low-income, food insecure Australian households. The *Braystone* project trained and employed people with a disability and included both a community shop and a home delivery service for people living in public housing. Evaluation of this project showed that it had improved access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate meals by making food available where people live, decreasing social isolation and increasing awareness of healthy eating among some users.<sup>106</sup>

Whatever the approach taken to improving the availability of fresh and affordable produce, the emphasis should be on ensuring that this produce is available as close to residents' homes as possible and that community members are involved in planning and implementation of any such activities.

PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support activities that improve local availability of fresh and healthy food, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Farmers markets.</li> <li>○ Food co-ops.</li> <li>○ Mobile markets.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council State Government Community Health Services Community Gardens Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure town planning supports access to affordable and nutritious food for all residents.</li> </ul>	State Government Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to monitor local access to affordable fresh produce (e.g. using the Victorian Healthy Food Basket survey method and food security mapping).</li> </ul>	Council Community Health Services

<sup>106</sup> VicHealth 2006, *Food for All: Lessons from two community demonstration projects*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

- **Increase local food production**

Increasing local food production was frequently highlighted by key stakeholders and participants in the Community Food Security Forum as a necessary step in increasing food security and community resilience. Local food production can be increased by supporting and enabling community gardens, school gardens, home fruit and vegetable gardening (including nature strip planting) and city farms.

Research shows that urban agriculture can support community food security by providing an affordable, fresh, culturally appropriate source of fruit, vegetables and other staples and providing a forum for donation or swapping of excess produce.<sup>107 108</sup> It takes a surprisingly small space to grow enough fruit and vegetables for the average family. In a study conducted in New Jersey (with a 130-day temperate growing season), USA, researchers found that it takes only a 10 metre by 10 metre plot to provide most of a household's total yearly vegetable needs.<sup>109</sup> In Victoria, the Digger's Club – a commercial garden club championing heritage fruit and vegetable varieties – conducted trials using highly productive fruit and vegetable varieties and found that it takes only a 2 metre by 10 metre plot to produce enough fruit and vegetables to satisfy the average consumption of an average sized family.<sup>110</sup>

Furthermore, urban agriculture (including city farms, community gardens and home gardens) provides a reason and a space for physical activity, an opportunity to get out in the fresh air, and sites of community engagement that can be a valuable economic, social and cultural resource for the community.<sup>111</sup> Community gardens in particular can contribute to neighbourhood improvement, a sense of community and social connectedness as well as a good way to learn general life skills, build social support, and construct social norms, all thought to be important to achieving household food security.<sup>112 113</sup> In a study of large-scale urban gardening in New Jersey, USA, gardeners reported extensive benefits due to gardening: 40% percent reported that the fresh vegetables consumed improved their diet; 31.3% developed new friendships; 29% assisted others in the garden; 14.5% shared produce; and 13.1% indicated gardening activity improved the neighbourhood. Moreover, the program successfully engaged a broad spectrum of residents from diverse backgrounds, reaching participants from over 30 ethnic groups.<sup>114</sup> Research also confirms that by bringing agricultural processes out into the open and making it accessible to everyone, urban agriculture also begins to educate citizens about the production of real food and connects residents to their food source.<sup>115</sup> Lastly, studies suggest that the creation of self-sufficient and sustainable urban food systems - including urban agriculture, food processing initiatives and food markets – can dramatically increase local paid employment.<sup>116</sup>

We know that by improving the availability of fresh produce, and providing impetus for exercise and social interaction, urban agriculture can be an extremely useful tool for addressing the underlying determinants of food insecurity. The diversity of urban agriculture models also means that it can be specifically tailored to the local environment and community.

This Neighbourhood Renewal area contains 5 community gardens and various school gardens (refer Appendix 1). To date, all of the community gardens that have individual plots (Alamein Neighbourhood

---

<sup>107</sup> WinklerPrins A, de Souza P 2005, 'Surviving the city: urban home gardens and the economy of affection in the Brazilian Amazon', *Journal of Latin American Geography*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 107–26.

<sup>108</sup> Nelson. 1996.Toni, Closing the nutrient loop: Using urban agriculture to increase food supply and reduce waste, *World Watch*, vol. 9, p. 10-17.

<sup>109</sup> Patel I C 1996, Rutgers urban gardening: A case study in urban agriculture, *Journal of Agriculture and Food Information*, vol 3, no. 3, pp. 35-46.

<sup>110</sup> Digger's Club 2009, *Digger's Mini Plot Plan*, downloaded from [www.diggers.com.au](http://www.diggers.com.au) on 23 June 2009.

<sup>111</sup> Dixon J, Donati K, Pike L, Hattersley L 2009, 'Functional foods and urban agriculture: two responses to climate change-related food insecurity', *NSW Public Health Bulletin*, vol. 20, pp. 14-18.

<sup>112</sup> Hannah A K, and Oh P 2000, 'Rethinking Urban Poverty: A look at Community Gardens'. *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 207-216.

<sup>113</sup> Teig E, Amulya J, Bardwell J, Buchenau L, Marshall M, Litt J A, Jill S 2009, 'Collective efficacy in Denver, Colorado: Strengthening neighborhoods and health through community gardens.' *Health Place*. Vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 1115-22

<sup>114</sup> Patel I C 1996, Rutgers urban gardening: A case study in urban agriculture, *Journal of Agriculture and Food Information*, vol 3, no. 3, pp. 35-46.

<sup>115</sup> Dixon J, Donati K, Pike L, Hattersley L 2009, 'Functional foods and urban agriculture: two responses to climate change-related food insecurity', *NSW Public Health Bulletin*, vol. 20, pp. 14-18.

<sup>116</sup> Dixon J, Omwega A, Friel S, Burns C, Donati K, Carlisle R 2007 'The Health Equity Dimensions of Urban Food Systems', *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, vol. 84, No. 1, p119-127.

and Learning Centre, Waverley Community Gardens and the new Ashburton Community Gardens) are full to capacity and some have waiting lists, suggesting that individual garden space is in demand. In addition to a lack of available garden space, local community gardeners noted considerable challenges to starting up and maintaining a garden. These included: obtaining suitable land, getting seed funding, adhering to water regulations and obtaining licenses to keep chickens and other animals.

State Government, Councils and community health services can play an important role in increasing local food production. In particular, Local Government can assist by identifying additional land for garden space, supporting the establishment of new gardens and providing policy, funding and in-kind support. At all levels, stakeholders can support urban agriculture by encouraging local organisations to source local produce for their activities.

<b>PRIORITIES &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage community gardens and ‘city farms’:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make land available and provide funding.</li> <li>○ Ensure enabling policies and regulations regarding water use (grey-water, rain water and mains water) and keeping animals.</li> <li>○ Other in-kind support (mulch, topsoil etc).</li> <li>○ Encourage community participation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council State Government Community Gardens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and expand school gardens.</li> </ul>	State Government Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase food production in public areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In public parks and around public facilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council Community Health Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase food production in home gardens:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gardening workshops, low-cost mulch and composting bins, improved water policy (grey-water, rainwater &amp; mains water).</li> <li>○ On nature strips.<sup>117</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council Community Gardens Community Health Services Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support programs that allow residents and groups to share fresh produce, knowledge, seedlings, mulch etc.</li> </ul>	Council Community Gardens Community Health Services Neighbourhood Houses Schools

<sup>117</sup> See, for example, City of Whitehorse Naturestrip Planting Guidelines at <http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Naturestrip-Planting-Guidelines.html>.

- **Support community meals & community kitchens**

Community meals or an affordable community café were also highlighted as important measures in ensuring residents had access to the occasional nutritious and affordable meal. Stakeholders felt that community meals were also able to demonstrate to participants that healthy food can be easy and affordable, while also improving healthy eating knowledge and cooking skills and reducing social isolation by allowing participants to eat in a social environment

Many stakeholders suggested greater support for community meals, community cafes and/or community kitchens (member-organised and driven meals) to address local food insecurity, with the aim of having coordinated, frequent and regular meals spread across a range of locations in the local area and inclusive of all residents. This approach is supported by research which demonstrates that both community meals<sup>118</sup> and community kitchens<sup>119 120</sup> are important tools for addressing food insecurity.

Interviews with key stakeholders in the project area indicate that while current community meals can be effective in addressing food access issues at the individual or household level, there may be opportunities to increase the amount of fresh produce used and to involve attendees in the kitchen to build cooking skills and confidence. We should try to further support and expand (where feasible) community meal programs to include after school meals or dinners. This requires focused support from all involved. Community meal providers should, where possible, work with local health service dieticians in devising menus and should seek to use locally grown produce.

*“We desperately need more programs to promote enthusiasm in food.”*

**- Key stakeholder interviewed**

A community kitchen usually involves a small group of people meeting regularly to cook and eat healthy food in a social and safe environment. Community kitchens can run anywhere there is an adequate kitchen not being used to capacity. It is worth noting that community kitchens are very different to emergency food relief and cooking classes.

Participants often purchase food themselves and there is no formal nutrition or cooking education component. Importantly, kitchen members have ownership over the activities and directions of the group. Community kitchens can be very effective as food security interventions because they are able to directly address some of the root causes of food insecurity in low-income households, including lack of cooking and storage facilities and poor availability and physical access to healthy food.

---

<sup>118</sup> Wick R, Trevena L and Quine S 2006, 'Experiences of Food Insecurity among Urban Soup Kitchen Consumers: Insights for Improving Nutrition and Well-Being' *J Am Diet Assoc.* no. 106, pp. 921-924.

<sup>119</sup> Tyminski S, Flynn M 2004, 'Evaluation of a collective kitchens program - Using the population health promotion model.' *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 72-80.

<sup>120</sup> Engler-Stringer R, Berenbaum S 2007, 'Exploring social support through collective kitchen participation in three Canadian cities.' *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health.* vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 91-105.

An evaluation of the impact of a community kitchen in Calgary, Canada, found that most participants had positive experiences of the program: 73% of participants reported improvements in their life as a result of the program; 81% thought they had learned to feed their families healthier foods; and the proportion of participants eating five or more serves of fruit and vegetable per day increased from 29% at the start of the program to 47% at the time of final survey.<sup>121</sup> In addition to improving knowledge, skills and consumption of healthy foods, community kitchens can have positive social impacts, including helping participants to build friendships, reduce social isolation and meaningfully engage in community life.<sup>122</sup>

PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support community meals, community café or community kitchens that engage, educate and enable participants in preparing and consuming fresh, healthy and (where possible) local produce.</li> </ul>	Council State Government Community Health Services Neighbourhood Houses, other non-government organisations and community groups

<sup>121</sup> Tyminski S, Flynn M 2004, 'Evaluation of a collective kitchens program - Using the population health promotion model.' *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 72-80.

<sup>122</sup> Engler-Stringer R, Berenbaum S 2007, 'Exploring social support through collective kitchen participation in three Canadian cities.' *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*. vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 91-105.

- Provide school meals, healthy snacks and healthy lunchbox education

Many key stakeholders felt that school meals and snacks could play an important role in educating children and families about healthy eating while assisting those children that do not have access to healthy eating at home. This approach is supported by the literature which provides broad evidence that school meals (usually breakfasts) and healthy school snacks can be valuable in addressing food insecurity and improving education outcomes in children. Research indicates that many school children do not eat breakfast and that this can have serious consequences for their nutrition.<sup>123 124 125</sup> Children that eat breakfast have better memory, better cognitive function and better concentration and problem solving skills than peers that did not eat breakfast.<sup>126 127</sup> Breakfast eaters also responded better to frustration<sup>128</sup> and were less likely to be obese<sup>129 130</sup>.

A recent Cochrane Collaboration systematic review found that school breakfast programs can have positive impacts on participating children.<sup>131</sup> This review based conclusions on evidence from two randomised controlled trials, six controlled before-after studies and two interrupted time series studies in developed countries. Benefits include: improved weight, height, attendance, behaviour and success in performing mathematical tasks. The review further concluded that the greatest benefits of school breakfast programs are to be had by those most in need. However, the literature also indicates that a universal school breakfast program, in which breakfast is available to all students regardless of income, has a beneficial effect on the entire school, increasing participation, attendance, and academic results.<sup>132 133</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Wilson NC, Parnell WR, Wohlers M, Shirley P 2006, 'Eating breakfast and its impact on children's daily diet.' *Nutrition & Dietetics*, vol. 63, pp.15-20.

<sup>124</sup> Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metzler JD 2005, 'Breakfast Habits, Nutritional Status, Body Weight, and Academic Performance in Children and Adolescents.' *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, vol. 105, pp. 743-760.

<sup>125</sup> Affenito SG, Thompson DR, Barton BA, Franko DL, Daniels SR, Obarzanek E, Schreiber GB, Striegel-Moore 2005, 'Breakfast Consumption by African-American and White Adolescent Girls Correlates Positively with Calcium and Fiber Intake and Negatively with Body Mass Index.' *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, vol. 105, pp. 938-945.

<sup>126</sup> Bellisle F 2004, 'Effects of diet on behaviour and cognition in children.' *British Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 92 (Suppl 2), pp. S227-S232.

<sup>127</sup> See above citation.

<sup>128</sup> See above citation.

<sup>129</sup> Barton B A, Elderidge A L, Thompson D, Affenito S G, Striegel-Moore R H, Franko D L, Albertson A M, Crockett S J 2005, 'The relationship of breakfast and cereal consumption to nutrient intake and body mass index: the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Growth and Health Study', *Journal of the American Heart Association*, vol. 105, no. 9, pp.1383-1389.

<sup>130</sup> See above citation.

<sup>131</sup> Kristjansson E, Robinson V, Petticrew M, MacDonald B, Krasevec J, Janzen L, Greenhalgh T, Wells G, MacGowan J, Farmer A, Shea B J, Mayhew A and Tugwell P 2007, 'School feeding for improving the physical and psychosocial health of disadvantaged students.' *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2007*, Issue 1, accessed 11 March 2009.

<sup>132</sup> McLaughlin JE, Bernstein LS, Crepinsek MK, Daft LM, Murphy JM 2002, *Evaluation of the School Breakfast Program Pilot Project: Findings from the First Year of Implementation*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Report No. CN-02-SBP.

<sup>133</sup> Murphy JM, Pagano M, Bishop SJ 2001, *Impact of a Universally Free, In-Classroom School Breakfast Program on Achievement; Results from the Abell Foundation's Baltimore Breakfast Challenge Program*, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.

School breakfast and healthy snack programs should be a priority for funding and investment of human resources. Schools require funding support and assistance with food handling certificates in order to implement these activities.

Previous lunchbox education in this project area has received excellent feedback from parents and should also be a priority for further support. An external evaluation of healthy eating workshops conducted in local schools (including one school in this project area) by the Healthy Families in Monash project revealed that many participants had made positive changes in their families' diet as a direct result of the workshops.<sup>134</sup>

PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support school breakfast and healthy snack programs</li> <li>• Provide healthy lunchbox/nutrition education for parents and students</li> </ul>	Schools Community Health Services State Government Non-government organisations

---

<sup>134</sup> Healthy Families in Monash 2009, *Evaluation results from workshop 1 and 2*, personal communication, 29 June 2009.

- Offer cooking and healthy eating skills workshops

Nutrition education (including cooking classes and workshops) has long been the staple of urban community food security projects in Australia. Key stakeholders to this project noted that such activities can be effective in supporting healthy eating among those most vulnerable to food insecurity – including children, low income earners, single people, men and young parents. Stakeholders further noted that adults in food-insecure households often had a strong interest in improving their knowledge of how to create healthy and affordable family meals (a view-point that has been supported by formal Australian research<sup>135</sup>).

Research also supports cooking and healthy eating education as an effective means of addressing food insecurity. For example, in a study conducted in the US, food insecure households that participated in a nutrition education short-course experienced significant improvements in food security compared to those that had not participated.<sup>136</sup> It is worth noting here, however, that research has also demonstrated that the efficacy of nutrition education is enhanced when education modules are specifically tailored to the needs and characteristics of the participants.<sup>137</sup>

Stakeholder support for, and the demonstrated success of, nutrition education activities indicate that these should play a key role in a food security strategy for this area.

PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support cooking skill and healthy eating courses specifically aimed at vulnerable groups, including children, low income earners, single people, and young parents.</li> </ul>	Council Community Health Services Neighbourhood Houses, other non-government organisations and community groups Schools

<sup>135</sup> Nolan M 2006, 'Food insecurity in three socially disadvantaged localities in Sydney, Australia.' *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 247-254.

<sup>136</sup> Eicher-Miller HA, Mason AC, Abbott AR 2009, 'The Effect of Food Stamp Nutrition Education on the Food Insecurity of Low-income Women Participants' *Journal of nutrition education and behaviour*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 161-168.

<sup>137</sup> Gans KM, Risica PM, Strolla LO 2009, 'Effectiveness of different methods for delivering tailored nutrition education to low income, ethnically diverse adults'. *International Journal of behavioural nutrition and physical activity*, vol. 6 (online), accessed at [www.ijbnpa.org](http://www.ijbnpa.org) on 20 October 2009.

- **Improve public transport, cycle paths and walkability**

Improved public transport, footpaths and bike paths, and ensuring that planning regulations encourage de-centralisation of food outlets were frequently proposed by key stakeholders as necessary steps in addressing food insecurity. A review of public transport routes should focus on ensuring that routes link the most disadvantaged parts of the community with basic services and food outlets. Similarly, planning regulations should focus on encouraging food outlets in those neighbourhoods where residents are least able or likely to commute to alternative shopping centres.

*“Public transport routes need to be looked at and revised, not just the routes but also the times of operation. We need to match this with need.”*

**- Key stakeholder interviewed**

PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review public transport routes, and if inadequate modify routes and/or provide supplementary community buses.</li> </ul>	State Government Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve bike path network and general walkability to make it easier for people to get around and to shops on a bicycle or on foot.</li> </ul>	State Government Council

- **Beautify neighbourhoods, celebrate community and instil public pride**

Many stakeholders noted that they felt poor eating and an inability to access food was often closely linked to a general malaise, a lack of a real sense of community, and a feeling that authorities “did not care” about disadvantaged households. Investing in gardens and public spaces in disadvantaged neighborhoods was often suggested as an approach to instilling public pride and increasing motivation around healthy lifestyle choices.

Similarly, building strong community links was suggested as an approach to building public pride and inspiring residents to make positive lifestyle choices. Food, community pride and beautification sit well together from a program point of view. We know that community kitchens, for example, build relationships while improving food security<sup>138</sup> and we know that community gardens build food security while beautifying the neighbourhood and literally building communities.<sup>139 140</sup>

If poor lifestyle choices, including healthy eating habits are linked to a general lack of motivation compounded by poor quality of housing and local facilities (as believed by many stakeholders), then efforts to improve local food security need to address a much broader set of objectives than simple access to healthy food. We need to think about public pride and participation, beautifying the local surrounds and improving local facilities.

PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where needed, upgrade facilities in and around public housing, including kitchens and cooking facilities, but also general housing facilities and recreation facilities.</li> </ul>	State Government Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise activities that celebrate community and build public pride.</li> </ul>	All

<sup>138</sup> Engler-Stringer R, Berenbaum S 2007, 'Exploring social support through collective kitchen participation in three Canadian cities.' *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*. vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 91-105.

<sup>139</sup> Hannah A K, and Oh P 2000, 'Rethinking Urban Poverty: A look at Community Gardens'. *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 207-216.

<sup>140</sup> Patel I C 1996, Rutgers urban gardening: A case study in urban agriculture. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Information*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 35-46.

- **Support employment and income generating activities**

Key stakeholders suggested the provision of employment and income generating activities as a way of improving food security. Lack of income, including due to unemployment, and lack of financial resources is a known determinant of food insecurity amongst low-income Australian households.<sup>141 142 143 144</sup> Food security interventions should therefore seek to include employment promotion components wherever possible. As noted previously in this report, research suggests that large-scale employment opportunities would be created with the development of sustainable food production practices and self-sufficient local food systems.<sup>145</sup> Employment would be generated in a wide range of fields including urban agriculture, food processing and distribution centres, food shops and markets.

Key stakeholders have further highlighted that Government allowances are currently insufficient to allow residents to lead a healthy lifestyle in the long-term. Although advocacy to increase Government allowances is unlikely to see immediate results, we should be aware of the link between financial stress and food insecurity amongst those receiving such allowances, and should not miss future opportunities to advocate on behalf of these residents.

As unemployment and low income have been repeatedly highlighted as a source of food stress in this Neighbourhood Renewal area, efforts to increase local employment opportunities and provide income generating activities could positively impact upon food security.

<b>PRIORITIES &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts to increase local employment opportunities and income generating activities.</li> <li>• Advocacy related to increasing Government allowances.</li> </ul>	State Government Council Non-government organisations

<sup>141</sup> Burns C 2004, *A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

<sup>142</sup> Turrell G, Hewitt B, Patterson C, Oldenburg B, Gould T 2002, 'Socioeconomic differences in food purchasing behaviour and suggested implications for diet-related health promotion', *J Hum Nutr Diet*, no. 15, pp. 355-364.

<sup>143</sup> Wick R, Trevena L and Quine S 2006, 'Experiences of Food Insecurity among Urban Soup Kitchen Consumers: Insights for Improving Nutrition and Well-Being' *J Am Diet Assoc*. no. 106, pp. 921-924.

<sup>144</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000, *Household Expenditure Survey 1998-99*, Cat No. 6535.0, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>145</sup> Dixon J, Donati K, Pike L, Hattersley L 2009, 'Functional foods and urban agriculture: two responses to climate change-related food insecurity', *NSW Public Health Bulletin*, Vol. 20, pp. 14-18.

- **Increase information sharing, co-ordination of food security activities & co-ordination of funding opportunities**

Stakeholders also noted the need for increased information sharing and coordination amongst community food programs, and a consolidated source for funding opportunities for food security and community gardening activities

In order to facilitate information sharing and provide opportunities for coordination, stakeholders saw value in a regular get together, such as a local food security network, which involved food and gardening activity managers, policy makers and donors. It is further recommended that in order to encourage information sharing amongst organisations and residents, we develop an updated guide to cheap food outlets and food security activities in the local area.

Diverse funding sources, and the associated differences in criteria and application processes, take a large toll on the human resources of local organisations addressing food security, highlighted the need for consolidated resource for funding opportunities. Longer funding cycles and longer lead-up to grants closing and longer commitments for funding are also desirable. Where feasible, funders should strive to ensure that the administrative burden associated with funding is minimised. Furthermore, greater information sharing around funding opportunities would assist local organisations.

<b>PRIORITIES &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase information sharing and coordination in food security programming via a Food Security Network.</li> </ul>	Community Health Services Council Schools Neighbourhood Houses NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheap Eats guide for Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone. This should include: emergency relief; community lunches; supermarkets and fruit stores and how to get there.</li> </ul>	Community Health Services Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase co-ordination of funding opportunities to assist activity managers searching for funding. Where possible, grants should be for longer periods (e.g. multi-year funding).</li> </ul>	All donors Council Community Health Services

- **Supporting emergency relief programs to include fresh produce**

Some providers of emergency relief within the area lamented their inability to include fresh produce in emergency relief packages (because they did not have funding to purchase perishables, an inability to store fresh produce, or because fresh produce was not donated to the service). One possible approach – and a method employed by some relief providers in this area – is to provide fresh produce indirectly by making supermarket vouchers available to those in need of assistance. Another approach is to link relief providers with community gardens, such that residents in need of food receive some fresh produce from gardens. Alternatively, relief providers can install their own small kitchen garden to supplement relief packages.

PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support emergency relief and strategies to increase fresh produce in emergency relief packages.</li> </ul>	All emergency relief providers Community Gardens Community Health Services Council

- **Community leadership, consultation and participation**

Irrespective of the program options employed to address food insecurity in this Neighbourhood Renewal area, community engagement and participation will be the key to success. Research tells us that if we are to successfully alter the way communities think, behave and live, community involvement and leadership are vital.<sup>146</sup> Research also tells us that best-practice evidence and lesson learned in food security programming, such as those outlined above, can be transferred to other new or existing programs, provided the community concerned is involved in planning and implementation.<sup>147</sup>





PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful community engagement in priority setting and program planning and implementation.</li> </ul>	All

<sup>146</sup> Cyzman D, Wierenga J, Sielawa J 2009, 'A community response to the food environment.' *Health Promot Pract.* Vol. 10, no. 2 Suppl, pp. 146S-155S.

<sup>147</sup> See above citation.

Based on key stakeholder interviews, feedback from the Community Food Security Forum and the food gardeners' morning teas, the following strategies to improve food security and support community gardens are proposed.

**Figure 9: What can we do about it? How do we improve local food security and further support community gardens?**

<b>NATURAL</b> 	<b>BUILT</b> 	<b>ECONOMIC</b> 	<b>SOCIO-CULTURAL</b> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage community gardens and 'city farms':               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make land available.</li> <li>○ Supply funding.</li> <li>○ Ensure supportive policies and regulations relating to water and animal-keeping.</li> <li>○ Other in-kind support (mulch, topsoil etc).</li> <li>○ Encourage community participation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure gardening programs in every school.</li> <li>• Increase food production in public areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In public parks, on nature strips and around public facilities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage growing &amp; sharing of food from home gardens:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harvest groups.</li> <li>○ Low-cost mulch and composting bins and other materials.</li> <li>○ Improved water policy (grey-water, rainwater &amp; mains water).</li> <li>○ Allow gardening on nature strips.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support gardening and sustainability education and promotion:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gardening workshops (e.g. basic gardening skills, potted gardening for those with little space, water management).</li> <li>○ Support a local eco hub.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure affordable basic food needs (milk, bread, fruit etc) are available within a reasonable distance of residents' homes, including through food security monitoring.</li> <li>• Review public transport routes – if insufficient then add new routes, revise routes or supplement with community bus to affordable food outlets.</li> <li>• Improve bike path network and general walkability to make it easier for people to get around and to shops on a bicycle or on foot.</li> <li>• Integrate food security concerns into design of suburban areas, particularly public housing (e.g. new developments approval should require incorporation of garden space).</li> <li>• Upgrade facilities within and around public housing, including public spaces, to promote public pride, increase safety and promote a healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>• Reduce household bills and energy use (e.g. by improving insulation).</li> <li>• Improve drainage (storm water management)/creeks options for water supply infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support activities that improved local availability of fresh and healthy food, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Farmers markets.</li> <li>○ Food co-ops.</li> <li>○ Mobile markets.</li> <li>○ Community gardens.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support affordable community meals, community café and/or community kitchens open to all (including kids).</li> <li>• Deliver financial skills workshop (need to be readily accessible by residents).</li> <li>• Support local employment/income generating activities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Link these with food security activities (e.g. employment in community cafes, markets or gardens).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strengthen and improve knowledge of existing options:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fruit and veg delivery from local sources.</li> <li>○ IECHS market bus trips and HACC services.</li> <li>○ Produce a guide to local affordable food outlets including emergency relief; community lunches; supermarkets, fruit stores and transport.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support emergency relief and strategies to increase fresh produce in emergency relief packages.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Share information regarding how to donate food.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support school meals, including breakfast clubs and school snacks and healthy lunchbox workshops.</li> <li>• Increase social and food connectedness activities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meeting place established for young people (e.g. talking space/"fire circle").</li> <li>○ Activities that bring people together to share meals.</li> <li>○ Community gardening.</li> <li>○ Film festivals.</li> <li>○ Increase environmental awareness.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage activities that teach cooking and healthy eating skills and motivate participants to eat well.</li> <li>• Support the development of household/time management skills.</li> <li>• Ongoing support for efforts to engage most disadvantaged with basic services.</li> <li>• Facilitate and encourage community leadership, consultation and participation.</li> <li>• Increase information sharing, coordination of food security activities &amp; coordination of funding opportunities.</li> </ul>

## 5. Food security toolbox

The information presented in previous sections of this report, along with input gathered at the Community Food Security Forum (refer Appendix 2), has been drawn together to suggest a range of approaches that organisational actors in this Neighbourhood Renewal area may wish to support in order to improve local food security.

### How this toolbox should be used

The activities suggested in this section are intended as a general guide to activities that could contribute to improving local community food security. Importantly:

- Organisations should consider the suggested activities and assess which of those activities they have the capacity, resources and mandate to support.
- There are many ways that organisations can support the activities outlined in this section, including: direct implementation, funding support, in-kind support (e.g. provision of materials, use of a venue, providing advice to implementers) or policy support (making the activity easier for other organisations to implement).
- This section is intended to feed into broader consultation processes that form part of organisational planning and does not bind any organisations to supporting all or any of the activities outlined.
- It should be noted that many organisations are already implementing activities outlined in this section.
- This section is not exhaustive. As the context changes, organisations will identify other opportunities for improving local access to food.

### Finding out how specific organisations address food security

For specific information on how State Government, Councils and Community Health Services are addressing food security and plan to support food security in the future please contact the organisations directly (refer contact details below). For further information on activities implemented by Neighbourhood Houses and community groups, and for the relevant contact details, please refer to Appendix 1.

Organisation	Online resources	Contact
City of Boroondara	Website: <a href="http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au">www.boroondara.vic.gov.au</a>	Switchboard Ph: 9278 4444
City of Monash	Website: <a href="http://www.monash.vic.gov.au">www.monash.vic.gov.au</a>	Switchboard Ph: 9518 3555
MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd	2009-2012 Health Promotion Strategic Plan: <a href="http://www.monashlink.org.au/reports">www.monashlink.org.au/reports</a>	Switchboard Ph: 1300 552 509
Inner East Community Health Service	2009-2012 Integrated Health Promotion Plan: <a href="http://www.iechs.com.au/health_promotion.php">www.iechs.com.au/health_promotion.php</a>	Health Promotion Team Ph: 9818 6703
Department of Health	Website: <a href="http://www.health.gov.au">www.health.gov.au</a>	Switchboard Ph: 02 6289 1555
Neighbourhood Renewal	Website: <a href="http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au">www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au</a>	Ashwood, Ashburton & Chadstone Office Ph: 9807 5841

## How can COUNCILS support food security & community gardens?

### ***Improve the supply and availability of affordable, fresh and healthy food***

1. Encourage and support community gardens and 'city farms' (e.g. see CERES model, see [www.ceres.org.au](http://www.ceres.org.au)).
  - a. Identify suitable land and possibilities for expansion of existing community gardens.
  - b. Review policies and regulations.
  - c. Supply funding and in-kind support (mulch, topsoil etc).
  - d. Encourage community participation.
  - e. Investigate the use of public areas for food production, including public parks, nature strips and around public facilities.
2. Encourage growing and sharing of food from home gardens, schools and organisations by supporting harvest and gardening groups, composting bins and other materials, and encourage water wise practices.
3. Support gardening and sustainability education and promotion. This might include providing gardening workshops (e.g. basic gardening skills, potted gardening for those with little space, water management) or supporting a local eco hub.
4. Support other activities that improve local availability of fresh and healthy food, including farmers markets, food co-ops and mobile markets.
5. Monitor availability of affordable produce (e.g. using the Victorian Healthy Food Basket survey and food security mapping).

### ***Improve access to affordable, fresh and healthy food***

6. Encourage access to affordable and nutritious food for all residents through town planning (eg increasing 'walkability').
7. Review community bus routes, progressively improve bike path networks, and improve general 'walkability'.
8. Support affordable community meals, community cafe and/or community kitchens open to all (including kids).
9. Support local employment/generating activities.
10. Improve knowledge of existing affordable options (this may include producing a guide to local affordable food outlets including emergency relief; community lunches; supermarkets, fruit stores and transport).
11. Where needed, advocate for upgrades to facilities in public housing to build public pride and encourage healthy life choices.
12. Where needed, seek to improve recreation and leisure facilities around public housing to build public pride and encourage healthy life choices.
13. Increase social connectedness (eg through activities that bring people together, break down social divides and build community pride, enable participation in community gardens, increase environmental awareness).

### ***Building relationships and more effective partnerships***

14. Ongoing support for efforts to engage most disadvantaged with basic services.
15. Facilitate and encourage community leadership, consultation and participation.
16. Increase information sharing, support coordination of food security activities and support coordination of funding opportunities.

## How can COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES support food security & community gardens?

1. Ensure all relevant Community Health Service policies and plans support and enable community food security.

### ***Improve the supply and availability of affordable, fresh and healthy food***

2. Encourage community gardens, school gardens and 'city farms' (e.g. see CERES model, see [www.ceres.org.au](http://www.ceres.org.au)).
  - o Funding, policy and advocacy support and encouraging community participation.
3. Support food production in public areas, including public parks, on nature strips and around public facilities, through advocacy and program support.
4. Encourage growing & sharing of food from home gardens by supporting harvest and gardening groups etc.
5. Support gardening and sustainability education and promotion. This might include providing gardening workshops (e.g. basic gardening skills, potted gardening for those with little space, water management) or supporting a local eco hub.
6. Support other activities that improve local availability of fresh and healthy food, including farmers markets, food co-ops and mobile markets.
7. Monitor the availability of affordable, fresh and healthy produce (e.g. using the Victorian Healthy Food Basket Survey and food security mapping).

### ***Improve access to affordable, fresh and healthy food***

8. Support local employment/income generating activities and, where appropriate, link these with food security activities (e.g. employment in community cafes, markets or gardens).
9. Support school meals, including breakfast clubs and school snacks and healthy lunchbox workshops.
10. Support affordable community meals, community café and/or community kitchens open to all (including kids).
11. Encourage activities that teach cooking and healthy eating skills and motivate participants to eat well.
12. Improve knowledge of existing affordable options (this may include producing a guide to local affordable food outlets including emergency relief; community lunches; supermarkets, fruit stores and transport).
13. Support emergency relief and strategies to increase fresh produce in emergency relief packages, and share information regarding how to donate food.
14. Increase social and food connectedness (e.g. through activities that bring people together to share meals, break down social divides and build community pride, enable participation in community gardens, increase environmental knowledge).
15. Support the development of household/time/financial management skills.
16. Where needed, upgrade facilities in and around public housing to build public pride and encourage healthy life choices.

### ***Building relationships and more effective partnerships***

17. Ongoing support for efforts to engage most disadvantaged with basic services.
18. Facilitate and encourage community leadership, consultation and participation.
19. Increase information sharing, support coordination of food security activities and support coordination of funding opportunities.
20. Ensure that systems are in place to enable all staff to appropriately refer food insecure clients.

## How can SCHOOLS support food security & community gardens?

### ***Improve availability and access to affordable, fresh and healthy food***

1. Ensure that every school and kindergarten has a school vegetable garden and a nutritious cooking program.
2. Support school meals, including breakfast clubs and school snacks and healthy lunchbox workshops.
3. Support access to affordable food and increase social and food connectedness through activities such as community cooking workshops, community meals, harvest groups of community markets.
  - o Celebrate multicultural aspects of food and cuisine, different types of food, cooking and eating, in order to break down barriers. Food is one common thing amongst all cultures and a way to build mutual understanding.
4. Support community gardening and sustainability education.

### ***Building relationships and more effective partnerships***

5. Encourage recognition of schools as a central focus for the community.
6. Continue efforts to engage the most disadvantaged residents with education and other services.
7. Facilitate and encourage community leadership, consultation and participation.
8. Increase information sharing, support coordination of food security activities and support coordination of funding opportunities.

## How can NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES, OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS support food security & community gardens?

### ***Improve the supply and availability of affordable, fresh and healthy food***

1. Encourage community gardening.
2. Encourage growing & sharing of food from home gardens by supporting harvest and gardening groups etc.
3. Support food production in public areas, including public parks, on nature strips and around public facilities, through advocacy and program support.
4. Promote and support gardening and sustainability education and promotion. This might include providing gardening workshops (e.g. basic gardening skills, potted gardening for those with little space, water management) or supporting a local eco hub.
5. Promote and support other activities that improve availability of fresh food, including farmers markets, food co-ops and mobile markets.

### ***Improve access to affordable, fresh and healthy food***

6. Promote and support affordable community meals, community café and/or community kitchens open to all (including kids).
7. Where appropriate, support local employment/income generating activities and, where appropriate, link these with food security activities (e.g. employment in community cafes, markets or gardens).
8. Improve knowledge of existing affordable options (this may include producing a guide to local affordable food outlets including emergency relief; community lunches; supermarkets, fruit stores and transport).
9. Share information regarding emergency relief and strategies to increase fresh produce in emergency relief packages, and share information regarding how to donate food.
10. Where appropriate, increase social and food connectedness (e.g. through activities that bring people together to share meals, break down social divides and build community pride, enable participation in community gardens, increase environmental).
11. Encourage activities that teach cooking and healthy eating skills and motivate participants to eat well.
12. Where appropriate, support the development of household/time/financial management skills.

### ***Building relationships and more effective partnerships***

13. Ongoing support for efforts to engage most disadvantaged with basic services.
14. Facilitate and encourage community leadership, consultation and participation.
15. Increase information sharing, support coordination of food security activities and support coordination of funding opportunities.

## How can STATE GOVERNMENT support food security & community gardens?

1. Ensure all planning and other policies support and enable community food security.
  - o Integrate food security concerns into design of suburban areas, particularly public housing (e.g. new developments approval should require incorporation of garden space).

### ***Improve the supply and availability of affordable, fresh and healthy food***

2. Encourage community gardens and 'city farms':
  - o Make land available (e.g. in public housing).
  - o Supply funding.
  - o Ensure supportive policies and regulations (e.g. relating to water).
3. Ensure gardening programs in every school.
4. Increase food production in public areas, including public parks, on nature strips and around public facilities.
5. Ensure affordable basic food needs (milk, bread, fruit etc) are available within a reasonable distance of residents' homes, including through food security monitoring.
6. Review public transport routes, improve bicycle paths and increase 'walkability'.
7. Where needed, upgrade facilities within and around public housing, including public spaces, to promote public pride, increase safety and promote a healthy lifestyle.
8. Support other activities that improve local availability of fresh and healthy food, including farmers markets, food co-ops and mobile markets.

### ***Improve access to affordable, fresh and healthy food***

9. Review public transport routes, improve bike path network, and improve general 'walkability'.
10. Support school meals, including breakfast clubs and school snacks and healthy lunchbox workshops.
11. Support affordable community meals, community café and/or community kitchens open to all (including kids).
12. Support local employment/income generating activities and, where appropriate, link these with food security activities (e.g. employment in community cafes, markets or gardens).
13. Support emergency relief and strategies to increase fresh produce in emergency relief packages, and share information regarding how to donate food.
14. Support activities that:
  - o Teach cooking and healthy eating skills and motivate participants to eat well.
  - o Increase social and food connectedness (e.g. through activities that bring people together to share meals, break down social divides and build community pride, enable participation in community gardens, increase environmental).
  - o Support the development of household/time management skills.
  - o Improve knowledge of existing affordable options (this may include producing a guide to local affordable food outlets including emergency relief; community lunches; supermarkets, fruit stores and transport).

### ***Building relationships and more effective partnerships***

15. Ongoing support for efforts to engage most disadvantaged with basic services.
16. Facilitate and encourage community leadership, consultation and participation.
17. Increase information sharing, support coordination of food security activities and support coordination of funding opportunities.

## 6. Recommendations

The project makes the following two recommendations:

- That organisational stakeholders consider adopting those activities outlined in the Food Security Toolbox that are relevant to their organisation.
- That all parties, including residents, continue to work together to increase coordination between, and collaboration on, food security and community gardening activities.

## 7. Conclusion

Food insecurity is a very real challenge facing many residents of Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone. Demographic data reveals that this Neighborhood Renewal area contains high proportions of those at increased risk of food insecurity. Key stakeholder interviews have confirmed that many residents within this area do not have access to a nutritious diet, but have also identified many simple, concrete steps that all actors involved in this area can take to create the natural, built, economic, and socio-cultural environments necessary for food security and optimal health and wellbeing.

Access to a sufficient food for a healthy life is a basic human right. Moreover, poor diet is linked to a range of adverse health and wellbeing outcomes and, when experienced by children over a long period, can have serious consequences for cognitive development. The benefits of improving the availability of, access to and consumption of nutritious foods are enormous. They include improved physical and mental health and sense of wellbeing, enhanced community cohesion and social inclusion, as well as direct economic benefits through improved employment prospects for residents with better health and food growing skills. Indirect economic benefits of local food production stem from education, recreation and stress reduction, use of under-used resources such as roadsides and water, economic diversity and stability, and possible multiplier effects such as attracting new businesses like input services or restaurants, local shops and markets. Environmental benefits are also rife with improved waste management and therefore avoiding costs of waste disposal, improved water supply, air quality, incremental improvements to the carbon dioxide balance, biodiversity, and energy-savings through local production.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> World Health Organisation 2001, *Urban and Peri-Urban Food And Nutrition Action Plan*, WHO, Geneva.

## References

- Affenito SG, Thompson DR, Barton BA, Franko DL, Daniels SR, Obarzanek E, Schreiber GB, Striegel-Moore 2005, 'Breakfast Consumption by African-American and White Adolescent Girls Correlates Positively with Calcium and Fiber Intake and Negatively with Body Mass Index.' *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, vol. 105, pp. 938-945.
- Akbari H, Pomerantz M, Taha H 2001, 'Cool surfaces and shade trees to reduce energy use and improve air quality in urban areas', *Solar Energy*, vol. 70, no. 3, pp. 295-310.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000, *Household Expenditure Survey 1998-99*, Cat No. 6535.0, ABS, Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000, *Household Expenditure Survey 1998-99*, Cat No. 6535.0, ABS, Canberra.
- Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) 2004, *Chronic Illness: Australia's Health challenge – The Economic Case for Physical Activity and Nutrition in the Prevention of Chronic Disease*, ACDPA, Melbourne.
- Ball K, Timperio A, Crawford C 2009, 'Neighbourhood socioeconomic inequalities in food access and affordability' *Health & Place*, vol. 15, pp. 578-585.
- Barton B A, Elderidge A L, Thompson D, Affenito S G, Striegel-Moore R H, Franko D L, Albertson A M, Crockett S J 2005, 'The relationship of breakfast and cereal consumption to nutrient intake and body mass index: the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Growth and Health Study', *Journal of the American Heart Association*, vol. 105, no. 9, pp.1383-1389.
- Bellisle F 2004, 'Effects of diet on behaviour and cognition in children.' *British Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 92 (Suppl 2), pp. S227-S232.
- Branca F, Nikogosian H, 2006 *The Challenge of Obesity in the WHO European Region: Strategies for a response*, WHO, Denmark.
- Bray R 2001, *Hardship in Australia: An Analysis of Financial Stress Indicators in the 1998-99 Australian Bureau of Statistics Household Expenditure Survey*, Department of Family and Community Services, Commonwealth of Australia Canberra.
- Burns C 2004, *A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.
- Burns C and Inglis A 2006, 'The relationship between the availability of healthy and fast food and neighbourhood level socio-economic deprivation: A case study from Melbourne, Australia.', *Obes Rev.*, vol. 7 (supp 2), p. 39.
- Cassady D, Jetter K, Culp J 2007, 'Is price a barrier to eating more fruits and vegetables for low-income families?' *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, vol. 107, pp.1909-1915.
- City of Boroondara and Inner East Community Health Service 2008 *Food Access in the City of Boroondara*, City of Boroondara and Inner East Community Health Service, Melbourne.
- Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services 1992, *Food and nutrition policy*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

- Community Food Security Coalition 1995, *Community Food Security Empowerment Act*, Venice, California.
- Coveney J, O'Dwyer L A 2009, 'Effects of mobility and location on food access', *Health & Place*, vol. 15, pp. 45–55.
- Crotty P, Rutishauser I, Cahill M 1992, 'Food in low income families' *Aust J Public Health*, no. 16, pp.168–174.
- Cyzman D, Wierenga J, Sielawa J 2009 'A community response to the food environment.' *Health Promot Pract*. Vol. 10, no. 2 Suppl, pp. 146S-155S.
- Davis J, *Informal evaluation of the Ashburton Neighbourhood & Learning Centre Community Garden* (unpublished data), MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd, Melbourne,
- Department of Human Services Victoria 2002, *Environments for Health: Municipal Public Health Planning Framework*, Department of Human Services Victoria, Melbourne.
- Digger's Club 2009, *Digger's Mini Plot Plan*, downloaded from [www.diggers.com.au](http://www.diggers.com.au) on 23 June 2009.
- Dixon J, Donati K, Pike L, Hattersley L 2009, 'Functional foods and urban agriculture: two responses to climate change-related food insecurity', *NSW Public Health Bulletin*, Vol. 20, pp. 14-18.
- Dixon J, Omwega A, Friel S, Burns C, Donati K, Carlisle R 2007 'The Health Equity Dimensions of Urban Food Systems', *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, vol. 84, No. 1, p119-127.
- Eicher-Miller HA, Mason AC, Abbott AR 2009, 'The Effect of Food Stamp Nutrition Education on the Food Insecurity of Low-income Women Participants' *Journal of nutrition education and behaviour*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 161-168.
- Engler-Stringer R, Berenbaum S 2007, 'Exploring social support through collective kitchen participation in three Canadian cities.' *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*. vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 91-105.
- Foley W, Carter P, Coveney J and Avery J 2008, *Social Determinants of Food Insecurity in South Australia: An Ecological Analysis*. Flinders University Department of Public Health and SA Health, Adelaide.
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand 2002, *Costing a one-year delay to the introduction of mandatory labelling*, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, accessed 10 August 2009 at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au).
- Gaballa S, Abraham A B 2008, *Food Miles in Australia: A preliminary study of Melbourne, Victoria*, CERES Community Environment Park, Melbourne.
- Gans KM, Risica PM, Strolla LO 2009, 'Effectiveness of different methods for delivering tailored nutrition education to low income, ethnically diverse adults'. *International Journal of behavioural nutrition and physical activity*, vol. 6 (online), accessed at [www.ijbnpa.org](http://www.ijbnpa.org) on 20 October 2009.
- Giskes K, Turrell G, Patterson C and Newman B 2002, 'Socio-economic differences in fruit and vegetable consumption among Australian adolescents and adults' *Pub Health Nutr*, vol 5, issue 5, pp. 663-669.
- Hannah A K, and Oh P 2000, 'Rethinking Urban Poverty: A look at Community Gardens'. *Bulletin of Science, Technology and & Society*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 207-216.
- Healthy Families in Monash 2009, *Evaluation results from workshop 1 and 2*, Healthy Families in Monash, personal communication, 29 June 2009.
- Hitchman C, Christie I, Harrison M and Lang T 2002, *Inconvenience Food*, Demos, London.

Hulshof K F, Brussaard J H, Kruizinga A G, Telman J and Löwik M R H 2003, 'Socio-economic status, dietary intake and 10 y trends: the Dutch National Food Consumption Survey', *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 128–137.

Kamphuis C B M, Giskes K, de Buijn G J, Wendel-Vos W, Brug J, and van Lenthe F J 2006, 'Environmental determinants of fruit and vegetable consumption among adults, a systematic review' *British Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 96, pp. 620-635.

Khamphouk, N and Hanna, L 2008, *Food Security In The Neighbourhood Renewal Areas Of Ashwood And Chadstone: Determining financial and physical access to nutritious foods, and strengthening links between food security support services*, Deakin University and MonashLink Community Health Service Ltd, Melbourne.

King T, Jolley K, Turrell D and Crawford G 2005, 'Weight and place: a multilevel cross-sectional survey of area level social disadvantage and overweight/obesity in Australia', *International Journal of Obesity*, pp. 1-7.

Kipsaina C, McCormick J and Keleher H 2009, *Evaluation of the Inner East Community Health Service Health Promotion Priority Area: Mental Health and Wellbeing – Public Housing 2006-2009 Health Outreach Project*, Department of Health Social Science, Monash University, Melbourne.

Kristjansson E, Robinson V, Petticrew M, MacDonald B, Krasevec J, Janzen L, Greenhalgh T, Wells G, MacGowan J, Farmer A, Shea B, Mayhew A and Tugwell P 2007, 'School feeding for improving the physical and psychosocial health of disadvantaged students.' *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2007, Issue 1, accessed 11 March 2009.

Kumanyika S and Grier S 2006, 'Targeting interventions for ethnic minority and low-income populations', *Future of Children*, vol. 16, pp. 187-207.

Lafortezza R, Carrus G, Sanesi G and Davies C 2009, 'Benefits and well-being perceived by people visiting green spaces in periods of heat stress', *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 97-108.

Larsen K and Gilliland J 2009, 'A farmers' market in a food desert: Evaluating impacts on the price and availability of healthy food', *Health & Place*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 1158-1162.

McCluskey K 2009, *Food Security in Moreland: A needs Assessment*, Moreland Community Health Service, Melbourne.

McLaughlin JE, Bernstein LS, Crepinsek MK, Daft LM and Murphy JM 2002, *Evaluation of the School Breakfast Program Pilot Project: Findings from the First Year of Implementation*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Report No. CN-02-SBP.

Meedeniya J, Smith A and Carter P 2000, *Food Supply in Rural South Australia: A Survey on Food Cost, Quality and Variety*, Eat Well South Australia, Adelaide.

Mikkelsen L, Erickson C S and Nestle M 2007, 'Creating healthy food environments and preventing chronic disease.' In L. Cohen V. Chavez, & S. Chehimi (Eds.), *Prevention is primary: Strategies for well-being*, pp. 287-296, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Mishra G, Arbuckle J and Crawford D 2002, 'Dietary patterns of Australian adults and their association with socio-economic status: results from the 1995 National Nutrition Survey', *Eur J Clin Nutr*, vol. 56, pp. 687-693.

Morland K, Wing S and Diez R 2002, 'The contextual effect of the local food environment on residents' diets: The atherosclerosis risk in community study'. *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 92, pp.1761-1768.

Murphy JM, Pagano M and Bishop SJ 2001, *Impact of a Universally Free, In-Classroom School Breakfast*

*Program on Achievement; Results from the Abell Foundation's Baltimore Breakfast Challenge Program*, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.

National Health and Medical Research Council 2003, *Dietary Guidelines for Australians*, Australian Government Publishing Services, Canberra.

Nelson T 1996, Closing the nutrient loop: Using urban agriculture to increase food supply and reduce waste, *World Watch*, vol. 9, p. 10-17.

Nolan M 2006, 'Food insecurity in three socially disadvantaged localities in Sydney, Australia.' *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 247-254.

NSW Health 2003, *Food Security Options Paper: A planning framework and menu of options for policy and practice interventions*, NSW Department of Health, Sydney.

Orchard R and Gloury P 2007, *An Assessment of the Food Security Status of Markham Avenue Public Housing Estate Residents and a Review of Strategies Addressing Food Security in Ashburton*, Inner East Community Health Service, Melbourne.

Palermo C and Wilson A 2009, 'Development of a Healthy Food Basket for Victoria', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 360-363.

Patel, I C 1996. Rutgers urban gardening: A case study in urban agriculture. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Information*, vol 3, no. 3, pp. 35-46.

Pickford F, Hawthorne K and Deane-Johns L 2003. A needs assessment to determine food security status in the "Ashburton area" and a feasibility study into a proposed strategy, Inner East Community Health Service, Melbourne.

Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J and Metz J 2005, 'Breakfast Habits, Nutritional Status, Body Weight, and Academic Performance in Children and Adolescents.' *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, vol. 105, pp. 743-760.

Reidpath D, Burns C, Garrard J, Mahoney M and Townsend, M 2002, 'An ecological study of the relationship between social and environmental determinants of obesity', *Health and Place: an International Journal*, vol. 8, pp. 141-145.

Rychetnik L, Webb K, Story L and Katz T 2003, *Food Security Options Paper. A planning framework and Menu of option for policy and practice interventions*, NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition, NSW Health Department, Sydney.

SIGNAL (Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance) 2000, *Eat Well Australia: An agenda for action for Public Health Nutrition 2000-2010*, SIGNAL, Melbourne.

Smith A 2002, *Improving healthy eating and food security in disadvantaged families – what do we know?* *Eat Well South Australia Report*, Womens and Childrens Hospital, Adelaide.

Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance (SIGNAL) 2000, *Eat Well Australia: An Agenda for Action for Public Health Nutrition*, National Public Health Partnership, Melbourne.

Stuff J, Casey P, Szeto K, Gossett J, Robbins J and Simpson P 2004, 'Household food insecurity is associated with adult health status', *J Nutr*, no. 134, pp. 2330-5.

Teig E, Amulya J, Bardwell J, Buchenau L, Marshall M, Litt J A and Jill S 2009, 'Collective efficacy in Denver, Colorado: Strengthening neighbourhoods and health through community gardens.' *Health Place*. Vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 1115-22

Tufts School of Nutrition: Preliminary Report on Cognitive Deficiencies and Prenatal Nutrition 1993, *University of Minnesota Office of Population Research: Poverty, Nutritional Status, Growth, and Cognitive Development of Children in the United States*, Tufts University, Boston.

Turrell G, Hewitt B, Patterson C, Oldenburg B, Gould T 2002, 'Socioeconomic differences in food purchasing behaviour and suggested implications for diet-related health promotion', *J Hum Nutr Diet*, no. 15, pp. 355-364.

Tyminski S and Flynn M 2004, 'Evaluation of a collective kitchens program - Using the population health promotion model.' *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 72-80.

United Nations 1948, Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25, paragraph 1

VicHealth 2005, *Position Statement on Healthy Eating*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

VicHealth 2006, *Food for All: Lessons from two community demonstration projects*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

VicHealth 2007, *Food Security Fact Sheet*, VicHealth, Melbourne

VicHealth 2008, *Food for all (how local government is improving access to nutritious food)*, VicHealth, Melbourne.

VicHealth 2008, *VicHealth warns food insecurity a growing concern – In our own backyard*. VicHealth, press release accessed 10 March 2008 at [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au).

Walkscore 2009, *Suburb Walkability*, accessed at [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com) on 20 July 2009.

Wick R, Trevena L and Quine S 2006, 'Experiences of Food Insecurity among Urban Soup Kitchen Consumers: Insights for Improving Nutrition and Well-Being', *J Am Diet Assoc.*, no. 106, pp. 921-924.

Wilson NC, Parnell WR, Wohlers M and Shirley P 2006, 'Eating breakfast and its impact on children's daily diet.' *Nutrition & Dietetics*, vol. 63, pp.15-20.

WinklerPrins A and de Souza P 2005, 'Surviving the city: urban home gardens and the economy of affection in the Brazilian Amazon', *Journal of Latin American Geography*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 107–26.

Wood B 2008, *Municipal Food Security, Dimensions and Opportunities: Summary report of the trial RAP Survey RAP*, Victorian Local Governance Association, Melbourne.

Wood B and Streker P 2005, *Food security in the City of Port Phillip. Report Part V: Municipal food security. Executive Summary of dimensions, opportunities, and new ideas*. City of Port Phillip, Melbourne. See [http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Municipal\\_Food\\_Security\\_Part\\_V.pdf](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Municipal_Food_Security_Part_V.pdf).

Wood B, Ross K and Kouris-Blazos A 2000, *1995 National Nutrition Survey: All persons 16 years of age and over and all persons 16 years of age and over, by food security*, Monash University, Melbourne.

Wood B, Wattanapenpaiboon N, Ross K and Kouris-Blazos A 2000, *1995 National Nutrition Survey. All persons 16 years of age and over by Food Security*, Monash University, Melbourne.

World Health Organisation 2001, *Urban and Peri-Urban Food And Nutrition Action Plan*, WHO, Geneva.

World Health Organisation 2009, Food Security website, accessed at [www.who.org](http://www.who.org) on 10 July 2009.

World Health Organization 2003, *Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases*, Report of a WHO/FAO Expert Consultation, Geneva.

World Health Organization Commission on Social Determinants of Health 2007, *Achieving health equity: From root causes to fair outcomes*, WHO, Geneva.

# Glossary

<b>Food security</b>	<p>Means that all people can obtain healthy, affordable, culturally acceptable, and safe foods regularly <i>without</i> the need to resort to emergency relief.</p> <p>Food security is achieved when there is adequate food available in the community and households have the necessary skills and resources to acquire and use that food</p>
<b>Food desert</b>	<p>Includes any area further than 500 metres from a food outlet. A food desert indicates that residents must have a reasonable degree of mobility to purchase food.</p>
<b>SEIFA scores (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas)</b>	<p>A measure that indicates the level of social and economic well-being in a community or region.</p>
<b>Neighbourhood Renewal</b>	<p>A State Government initiative that brings together residents, government, business, community groups and agencies to narrow the gap between disadvantaged communities and the rest of the State.</p> <p>See: <a href="http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au">www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au</a></p>
<b>Victorian Healthy Food Basket Survey</b>	<p>A tool used to measure the variety of nutritious foods available to a community and the cost of a nutritious diet for a range of different family compositions.<sup>149</sup></p>

---

<sup>149</sup> See Palermo C, Wilson A 2009, 'Development of a Healthy Food Basket for Victoria', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 360-363.

# Appendix 1. Local food security and community gardening activities

## Community Gardens

Location/Name	Description	Cost & eligibility	Contact
<b>Alamein Neighbourhood &amp; Learning Centre Garden</b> 49 Ashburn Grove, Ashburton	Well established community garden with elevated garden plots for growing vegetables and flowers.	Annual cost is \$10 for single bed plots and \$20 for double bed plots.	Reception Email: <a href="mailto:alameincc@bigpond.com">alameincc@bigpond.com</a> Ph: 9885 9401 Hours (Mon-Fri): 9am-3pm or 9:30am-2:30pm during school holidays.
<b>Ashburton Community Garden</b> Markham Avenue, Ashburton	New community garden with well-defined garden beds (including some raised gardens).	Annual fee is \$60	John Niarchos (President) Ph: <a href="mailto:johnnacs@bigpond.com">johnnacs@bigpond.com</a>
<b>Ashwood College</b> 50 Vannam Drive, Ashwood	Large school and community garden managed by parents and volunteers culture Melbourne. Currently the garden consists of fruit trees (apples, strawberries), utilises chickens to assist with cultivating the soil and uses a large water tank to water the garden.	Free. The entire school is welcome to use and access the garden, and volunteers are welcome to join in on Saturday mornings to assist.	Mariette Touhey Ph: 9807 1333
<b>Amaroo Neighbourhood House</b> 34 Amaroo St, Chadstone	Small community garden growing a range of fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs.	No eligibility criteria, all are welcome.	Eileen Mosden or Richard Ramser Ph: 9807 2625 Hours (Mon-Fri): 10am-4pm Hours (Sat): 9am-12pm
<b>Waverly Community Gardens</b> Jamboree Lane, Ashwood	Well established community garden with individual plots for fruit, vegetables and herbs.	Contact garden.	Elias Kokatsourakis Plot Coordinator Ph: 9560 5805
<b>Power Neighbourhood House</b> 54 Power Ave, Ashwood	Very small community garden growing vegetables mainly in containers and fruit boxes.	Program targets residents with a disability.	Carol Berger Ph: 9807 3589 Hours (Mon-Fri): 9:30am-3pm
<b>CooRondo Supported Accommodation</b> 597 Warrigal Rd, ASHWOOD 3147	Raised fruit/vegetable beds gardened communally by residents. Garden also includes a mobile chicken 'tractor' and plans for further seating and water tanks etc.	Garden is only for CooRondo Supported Accommodation residents.	Reception Ph: 9885 5790 Fax: 9885 2176
<b>Chadstone Baptist Church</b> 17-19 Margot St, Chadstone	Small, fairly new community garden.	Free. All welcome.	Ph: 9830 8240

## Gardening groups and workshops

Location	Description	Cost & eligibility	Contact
<b>Alamein Neighbourhood &amp; Learning Centre Garden</b> 49 Ashburn Grove, Ashburton	<b>Gardening Club</b> Informal meetings for people to discuss gardening ideas or problems and includes guest speakers and outings. Runs on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except during school holidays).  <b>Horticulture course</b> Pre-accredited course - Certificate 1 in Horticulture teaches the basics to using tools in the garden, planting techniques including propagation, and involves some gardening.	HACC-eligible residents (those over 55, the frail, or those with a disability and their permanent carers). Cost is \$3 (extra for outings) and an extra \$2 for transport to the centre.  No eligibility criteria. For specific costs and hours of the course, please contact the co-ordinator (although note that the course is free for Neighbourhood Renewal residents with a	Reception Email: <a href="mailto:alameincc@bigpond.com">alameincc@bigpond.com</a> Ph: 9885 9401 Hours (Mon-Fri): 9am-3pm and 9:30am-2:30pm during school holidays.
<b>Amaroo Neighbourhood House</b> 34 Amaroo St, Chadstone	<b>Plant the Seed</b> A gardening and cooking program for children and their parents.	Free.	Eileen Mosden or Richard Ramser Ph: 9807 2625 Hours (Mon-Fri): 10am-4pm Hours (Sat): 9am-12pm

## Food Co-op

Name	Description	Cost & eligibility	Contact
<b>Ashwood Food Co-op (working title)</b> No fixed address	Group of residents joined together to source local, organic, non genetically modified and affordable food that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimises their contribution to greenhouse gases through farming practices, processing and transport;</li> <li>• Supports local food producers;</li> <li>• Is socially responsible; and</li> <li>• Promotes local resilience and sense of community.</li> </ul>	No eligibility criteria, everyone welcome.  No membership fee yet.	Email: <a href="mailto:damper-creek-coop@googlegroups.com">damper-creek-coop@googlegroups.com</a>

## Community Lunches

Location	Description	Cost & eligibility	Contact
<b>Alamein Neighbourhood &amp; Learning Centre Garden</b> 49 Ashburn Grove, Ashburton	Lunch is held on the second Wednesday of each month from 12:30-2pm, with every lunch having a different theme.	Everyone can come. Cost is \$5 and includes a main meal plus dessert.	Reception Email: alameincc@bigpond.com Ph: 9885 9401 Hours (Mon-Fri): 9am-3pm and 9:30am-2:30pm during school holidays.
<b>Amaroo Neighbourhood House</b> 34 Amaroo St, Chadstone	Focuses on social connectedness and involves groups of between 2-6 people.	Cost is \$5.50 for a 2 course meal prepared by volunteers.  No eligibility criteria, all are welcome.	Eileen Mosden Ph: 9807 2625 Hours (Mon-Fri): 10am-4pm Hours (Sat): 9am-12pm
<b>Power Neighbourhood House</b> 54 Power Ave, Ashwood	Run once a month focusing on social connection.	Cost is \$5 for a three course meal  No eligibility criteria, all are welcome.	Carol Berger Ph: 9807 3589 Hours (Mon-Fri): 9:30am-3pm
<b>Chadstone Baptist Church</b> 17-19 Margot St, Chadstone	Every Sunday.	Free. All welcome.	Ph: 9830 8240

## Cooking classes and groups

Location	Description	Cost & eligibility	Contact
<b>Alamein Neighbourhood &amp; Learning Centre</b> 49 Ashburn Grove, Ashburton	None at the moment but have various courses from time to time – call the Centre for more details.		Reception Email: alameincc@bigpond.com Ph: 9885 9401 Hours (Mon-Fri): 9am-3pm and 9:30am-2:30pm during school holidays.
<b>Craig Community Health Service</b> 7 Samarinda Ave, Ashburton	<b>Mum's Group" &amp; Community Kitchen</b> Program is currently aimed at young mothers with children aged between 6 months and 2 ½ years and involves a range of activities including cooking, art and singing.  The program runs every Monday from 10:30am-12:30pm, with every second Monday involving cooking in the community kitchen.	No eligibility criteria, however the program at present is aimed particularly at young mothers.  Cost is free.	Health Promotion Team Ph: 9885 6822  Hours (Mon-Fri): 8:30am-5pm

<p><b>Amaroo Neighbourhood House</b> 34 Amaroo St, Chadstone</p>	<p><b>Cooking Classes/Men's classes</b> Program involves individuals in preparing their own meals for a cost of \$4.00 which they are also allowed to take home.</p> <p>Groups catering for up to 14 people are run every Tuesday from 1-3pm.</p> <p><b>Plant the Seed for a Healthy Life</b> Coking class for 4-12 year old children and their parents to learn about growing basic foods, cooking and eating in a social environment.</p>	<p>No eligibility criteria, all are welcome however interested individuals should contact the Centre in advance to enquire about attending.</p> <p>Free. Aimed at 4-12 year olds and their parents.</p>	<p>Eileen Mosden Ph: 9807 2625 Fax: 9888 1867 Hours (Mon-Fri): 10am-4pm Hours (Sat): 9am-12pm</p> <p>Richard Ramser Ph: 9807 2625</p>
--	---	---	---

### Emergency Relief

Location	Description	Eligibility	Contact
<p><b>CAMCARE</b> 4 Y St, ASHBURTON 3147</p>	<p>Provide food vouchers ('Essentials cards') in a range of sizes depending on the household size. Food parcels and Christmas hampers are available once voucher allocation is exceeded.</p> <p>Food close to expiry date may be left at the front desk for individuals to take including fresh bread from local bakery every Tuesday (you may want to call first).</p> <p>Camcare can also assist eligible clients with NILS (No Interest Loan Schemes) loans, which provide eligible households with credit for essential household goods without the burden of high interest charges.</p>	<p>Individuals must live in the City of Boroondara and must also be receiving Centrelink benefits.</p>	<p>Reception Ph: 9885 0366 Hours (Mon-Thurs): 9am-5pm</p>
<p><b>St Vincent de Paul Society</b> 252 High St, ASHBURTON 3147</p>	<p>Individuals may be eligible to receive food vouchers and parcels ranging for a range of values, depending on their individual circumstances.</p> <p>Individuals are assessed by two members from the St Vincent de Paul Society in their own homes.</p>	<p>Individuals must contact the St Vincent de Paul Society's to arrange an assessment.</p>	<p>St Vincent de Paul Society Ph: 1300 305 330 Hours (Mon-Fri): 9am-3pm</p>
<p><b>Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre</b> 34 Amaroo St, Chadstone</p>	<p>Free bread on Friday and emergency food cupboard donated by volunteers.</p>	<p>Free bread is available to all and emergency food is reserved for people in desperate need.</p>	<p>Eileen Mosden Ph: 9807 2625 Hours (Mon-Fri): 10am-4pm Hours (Sat): 9am-12pm</p>

## School programs

Location	Description	Eligibility	Contact
<b>St Michael's Primary School</b> 268 High St, ASHBURTON 3147	<b>School Vegetable Garden</b> Students participate in gardening classes which involve preparing, planting and harvesting the food grown in the gardens.	The school garden is available to the school community (students, parents and teachers attending the school).	Geraldine Dalton (Principal) Email: principal@stmlash.melb.catholic.edu.au Ph: 9885 3105
<b>St Mary Magdalen's Primary School</b> Bolwarra St, Chadstone	<b>School Vegetable Garden</b> The entire school is involved in preparing, planting, harvesting, cooking and sharing food from the vegetable garden.  <b>Breakfast Club</b> Runs every Wednesday morning before school.	The school garden is not open to the local community out of school hours; however parents and volunteers are most welcome to help out with gardening and classes when they are run.  All students attending the school are welcome.	Reception Ph: 9807 0315
<b>Ashwood College</b> 50 Vannam Drive, Ashwood	<b>School Vegetable Garden</b> Large school garden run by school parents and volunteers from who meet every Saturday morning. There is also a school garden club which allows students to enjoy the garden during the school day. Currently the garden consists of fruit trees, vegetables, herbs, ponds and utilises chickens to assist with cultivating the soil.  <b>Breakfast Club</b> Coming soon.	The entire school is welcome to use and access the garden, and volunteers are welcome to join in on Saturday mornings to assist.	Mariette Touhey Ph: 0414 588 821
<b>Parkhill Primary School</b> Parkhill Drive, Ashwood	<b>School Vegetable Garden</b> An established vegetable garden program included in the school curriculum, in which students are able to prepare, plant, harvest, cook and share food from the garden. Students participate in lessons with a garden educator, their class teacher and a team of volunteers. A limited number of individual plots for households in the school community are also coming soon.	The garden is open to all sectors of the school community.	Kay Edwards or Andrew Wood Email: parkhill.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au Ph: 9807 2239

## Shopping trips and food delivery

Location	Description	Cost & eligibility	Contact
<b>Craig Community Health Service</b> 7 Samarinda Ave, Ashburton	Weekly bus trips to Dandenong market where participants can buy fruit and vegetable and other basic foods.	Open to all. Free.	Sarah or Anthony Ph: 9810 3070  Hours (Mon-Fri): 8:30am-5pm
<b>Alamein Neighbourhood &amp; Learning Centre</b> 49 Ashburn Grove, Ashburton	<b>HACC-Funded Bus Trips</b> For shopping, appointments and recreational needs. The bus operates each Friday (travelling to Ashburton and Chadstone Shopping Centre) and Monday (to Forest Hill Chase).	HACC eligible residents only (55years and over or those with a disability).  Cost is \$3.00.	Reception Email: comprograms@alameinnlc.com.au Ph: 9885 9401 between 9am and 2pm on the Thursday Prior.
<b>City of Monash Services</b>	<b>Community Transport</b> Offers opportunities for people who are physically independent but do not drive to be transported by bus to activities such as shopping and senior citizens clubs.  <b>Domestic Shopping Program</b> Service to support clients who are frail or have a disability in their own home by purchasing food or essential supplies for clients.  <b>Monash Meals (Meals on Wheels)</b> To assist people who are unable to prepare Meals for themselves due to frailty, ill health or disability. One meal per day provided to clients homes.	HACC eligible residents only (55years and over or those with a disability).	City of Monashlink Community Health ServicePh: 03 9518 3553
<b>City of Boroondara/ Ashburton Support Services</b> 296 High Street Ashburton	<b>Meals on Wheels</b>		City of Boroondara, Meals on Wheels Duty Officer Ph: 9278 4444.

## Appendix 2. Community Food Security Forum Summary

### Ashwood, Ashburton & Chadstone Community Food Security Forum

On 19 August 2009, local residents and representatives from local schools and kindergartens, community groups, health services, Council, State Government and State Parliament gathered at Parkhill Primary School in Ashwood for the *Ashburton, Ashwood & Chadstone Community Food Security Forum*. This document is a report on the evening.

#### Participants

NAME	ORGANISATION
Andrea Lomdahl	City of Boroondara
Andrew Woods	Cultivating Community & Parkhill Primary School
Anne Symonds	Parkhill Primary School
Anthony Bernardi	Inner East Community Health Service
Bob Stensholt	State MP for Burwood
Chiann Lim	Monashlink Community Health Service
Claire Palermo	Monash University
Damien Mulroy	St Vincent De Paul Conference
Fiona Sherlock	Ashwood Children's Centre
Jeff Herd	Department of Human Services
Jess Davis	Monashlink Community Health Service & Neighbourhood Renewal
Jodie Hally	Ashwood Children's Centre
Jono Long	Resident
Katie Greaves	Resident
Kay Edwards	Parkhill Primary School
Kerrie Croft	Ashwood College
Kerry Bratby	St Mary Magdalen's Primary
Linda Fiddes	Monashlink Community Health Service
Margaret Smith	Alamein Community Garden
Mariette Tuohey	Ashwood College Permaculture Food Garden
Mary Boyle	St Vincent De Paul Conference
Michelle Hollingworth	Department of Health
Nicole Meinig	City of Monash
Petra Kahle	Permaculture Melbourne
Richard Ramser	Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre
Roger Stevenson	Waverley Community Gardens
Roger Taylor	Canterbury Rotary
Tara Godbold	City of Boroondara
Yvonne Kyriakos	Craig Family Centre

### **Agenda Item 1. Welcome**

Bob Stensholt, MP for Burwood and Chair of Neighbourhood Renewal Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone, opened the forum. Key points:

- The Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone Neighbourhood Renewal area is home to many groups of residents known to be vulnerable to food insecurity.
- There is real concern amongst those of us working in these communities regarding the ability of some residents to access food to feed themselves and their families a healthy diet.
- Thankfully, there are many groups and individuals putting enormous effort into local food and gardening activities. For example, the new Markham Victoria Reserve Community Garden, a joint initiative of the City of Boroondara, Canterbury Rotary and Neighbourhood Renewal, the Ashwood College Permaculture Food Garden, the Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre Community Garden and their Plant the Seed program, and the many school gardens and associated cooking and healthy eating activities, including the Parkhill Primary School garden.
- While these activities contribute enormously to food security in the area, there is more that stakeholders at every level can do to support local initiatives and build upon their successes in community gardening and food security.

### **Agenda Item 2. Background to the project**

Jeff Herd, Manager of Ashburton, Ashwood & Chadstone Neighbourhood Renewal, Department of Human Services. Key points:

- The project grew out of a concern that many residents did not have access to a healthy diet.
- The project is a joint collaboration between the City of Monash, MonashLink Community Health Service, City of Boroondara, Inner East Community Health Service, Department of Human Services (now Department of Health) Health Promotion, Neighbourhood Renewal and Amaroo Neighbourhood House. We can thank the Department of Health for funding this project.

### **Agenda Item 3. Key finding of *Advancing Food Security & Community Gardens* project**

Jess Davis (Advancing Food Security & Community Gardens Project Officer, MonashLink Community Health Service) presented initial findings of this project. This presentation (attached) focused on local challenges for food security and a draft strategy for how we can address these challenges.

### **Agenda Item 4. Workshop 1: Summary of discussions**

Participants gathered in small groups, and for each of the natural, built, economic and social-cultural environments, discussed:

- Is anything missing from the proposed strategy?
- How can our various organisations or groups contribute to improving this environment for food security?

Key points from this workshop session were taken from the work of each group and are presented in the tables below.

# What are the challenges for food security and community gardening in this area and how do we overcome them?



## The natural environment

CHALLENGES	PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<b>PROPOSED STRATEGY</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited food grown locally.</li> <li>Water restrictions and restrictions on use of grey water affect ability to grow food.</li> <li>High cost of essential garden items such as mulch, seeds and tools.</li> <li>Cost of licenses to keep chickens and other live-stock impedes food self-sufficiency and adds cost to community gardens.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for community gardens:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>policy support regarding water and keeping animals.</li> <li>in-kind support (mulch, topsoil, land).</li> <li>funding support.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Policy and funding support for programs encouraging edible planting in public areas.</li> <li>Programs supporting growing &amp; sharing of food from home gardens (water policy, grey-water and water restrictions, gardening clubs, gardening workshops, low-cost mulch and composting bins).</li> </ul>	
<b>INPUT FROM FORUM</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal bylaws and regulations regarding planting on nature strip.</li> <li>Public garden security.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support programs that allow residents and groups to share seedlings, fresh produce, knowledge, garden cuttings for mulch etc. Could use community gardens to produce seedlings, organise regular maintenance of fruit trees. Need mechanisms to manage this.</li> </ul>	Council Libraries (information sharing) Community Health Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small community farm including fruit trees, veggie gardens, aquaponics, mushrooms, bees (following CERES model, see <a href="http://www.ceres.org.au">www.ceres.org.au</a>).</li> </ul>	Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More community garden space.</li> </ul>	Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve household access to (free) mulch and other gardening materials:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery to community gardens and residents at mulch 'dump areas'.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding potted gardens for those resident's with little space.</li> <li>Catching water in soil (water management), rain-water capture and grey water usage.</li> <li>Sustainability (local eco-hub?).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council Neighborhood Houses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campaign to make gardening sexy again (this will need to happen eventually with cost increases).</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure direct involvement of vulnerable/disadvantaged residents on strategy development.</li> </ul>	Community Health Services Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that there are veggie patches in every school and kindergarten. Link with "Go for your life" program.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School permablitz (see <a href="http://www.permablitz.net">www.permablitz.net</a>), micro/school farms and farm education.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Schools State Government
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permablitzes (see <a href="http://www.permablitz.net">www.permablitz.net</a>) in public housing with meaningful engagement.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy Descent Action Plan: climate change and increasing oil prices will increase food costs therefore need to increase local fresh food production (e.g. food mile labels as an educational tool).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better integrated or holistic design of suburban areas to support local food production (e.g. permaculture), maximising production of every site.</li> </ul>		



## The built environment

CHALLENGES	PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<b>PROPOSED STRATEGY</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralised fresh food outlets.</li> <li>Centralised dining and meal outlets.</li> <li>Higher density of unhealthy food options, including take-away shops, than healthy eating options.</li> <li>In some areas, inadequate public transport to local food supplies.</li> <li>In some areas of public housing, poor quality of housing and surrounding grounds contributing to lack of motivation and making it more difficult to prepare food at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that outlets of affordable basic food needs (milk, bread, fruit etc) are within reasonable distance for all residents.</li> <li>Review of public transport routes – if insufficient then add new routes, revise routes or supplement with community bus to affordable food outlets.</li> <li>Where needed, upgrade facilities within and around public housing, including public spaces, to promote public pride, increase safety and promote a healthy lifestyle.</li> </ul>	/
<b>INPUT FROM FORUM</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve bike path network to make it easier for people to get around and to shops on a bicycle or on foot.</li> </ul>	Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building knowledge around food security in our planning:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food production considered when constructing public housing.</li> <li>Education of planners/developers/council staff to plan better and use existing resources better.</li> <li>Analyse planning guidelines using a food production focus, rather than a beautification focus.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	State Government
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen and improve knowledge of existing services:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruit and veg delivery from local sources.</li> <li>IECHS market bus trips</li> <li>Council HACC services.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council Neighbourhood Houses Community Health Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in conjunction with existing facilities and resources.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use land around and near sporting facilities for food production.</li> <li>Utilising road reservations/nature strips for food.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community buses – Boroondara and Monash:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include young families and not just HACC eligible.</li> <li>Linking all key residential areas to affordable food outlets.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Council Neighbourhood Houses Community Health Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need local community hubs with a food outlet (e.g. food co-op or community fruit and veggie stall).</li> </ul>	Council Schools Community Health Service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking with Monash and Deakin Uni – bus routes and info, mini markets on campus.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting place established for young people (e.g. talking space/“fire circle”.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to improve insulation in old concretes (there are examples) – package insulation and food program together for networking.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve drainage (storm water) management)/creeks options for water supply infrastructure</li> </ul>	Community organisations South East Water Authority

## \$ The economic environment

CHALLENGES	PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<b>PROPOSED STRATEGY</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited competition in food supply.</li> <li>High food cost.</li> <li>Low food variety and, in some cases, poor quality fresh food.</li> <li>Location of cheap food outlets unknown to some residents.</li> <li>Lack of financial resources.</li> <li>Lack of financial management skills.</li> <li>Homelessness.</li> <li>Inability of some emergency relief providers to include fresh produce (because can't store it for long and people don't donate fresh food).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for cheap community meals and/or community kitchens open to all (including kids) and where feasible, for dinners as well as lunches.</li> <li>Support for school breakfast clubs and healthy snacks that aim to improve the diet of the most vulnerable students.</li> <li>Support for affordable food outlets (e.g. support for food co-op or affordable food market).</li> <li>Delivery of accessible financial skills workshop (need to be readily accessible by residents).</li> <li>Support for emergency relief and strategies to increase fresh produce in emergency relief packages.</li> <li>Promotion of affordable home delivery options for nutritious foods.</li> <li>Wherever possible, support local employment opportunities.</li> </ul>	/
<b>INPUT FROM FORUM</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people who are feeling powerless (how to engage them through/in food-related activities?).</li> <li>How to identify and reaching the vulnerable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food co-op, buying group and or community market stall.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need space (Warrigal Rd, Holmesglen TAFE? Batesford Reserve Hub?) and a fridge.</li> <li>Linking residents with limited mobility with a 'buddy', who can drop off their purchases.</li> <li>Education about how to use the produce.</li> <li>Market needs to be at a regular time and place.</li> <li>Health centres have fresh fruit and veg sales – look at what other services are doing well and duplicate (cheap prices for health care card holders, community bus available, single person box, family box, buddy system for elderly etc, access to recipe cards – ideas for using fruit/veg in an easy and quick meal.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Community Health Services</p> <p>Cultivating community has expertise in markets (see <a href="http://www.cultivatingcommunity.org.au/cc">www.cultivatingcommunity.org.au/cc</a>)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community meals and/or kitchens:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A moveable community meal with vans/cheap food? '                   </li> <li>'Pay what you think it's work' café.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Council</p> <p>Community Health Service</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasonably priced outlets identified and publicised.</li> </ul>	<p>Community Health Service</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing information regarding food donation options: where when, what, appropriate times for donations.</li> </ul>	<p>Community Health Services</p> <p>Camcare &amp; Monash equivalent</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of "vouchers" to introduce fresh food into emergency relief.</li> </ul>	<p>Emergency relief providers</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve employment opportunities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify qualifications that will be available via these activities (e.g. disability training).</li> <li>Run a café/city kitchen. Work with TAFE to use city kitchens as a training practice ground e.g. CERT III</li> <li>Convert a hobby into a marketable skill</li> <li>Value the skills of volunteers – identify these skills and acknowledge them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	



## The socio-cultural environment

CHALLENGES	PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES	WHICH ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED (in addition to residents)?
<b>PROPOSED STRATEGY</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High proportion of at risk groups.</li> <li>• Low skills and knowledge regarding healthy eating and cooking.</li> <li>• Lack of motivation to lead a healthy lifestyle generally, and specifically to eat well.</li> <li>• Lack of time and household management skills.</li> <li>• Lack of time generally when parents are working or caring for many children.</li> <li>• Social isolation and lack of engagement with basic services (e.g. due to long-term unemployment, low income, age, frailty, mental or physical disability, mental health issues or chronic health problems) contributing to lack of motivation and resources to lead a healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>• Onerous food safety regulations for charitable organisations, community groups and schools increases the human and financial cost in running cooking classes, food groups and fundraising activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for activities that promote healthy eating (e.g. healthy lunchbox workshops for parents, school breakfasts/snacks, and community healthy eating workshops).</li> <li>• Support for activities that teach cooking skills and motivate participants to eat well.</li> <li>• Support for other social and food connectedness activities, including community lunches and community gardening.</li> <li>• Ongoing support for efforts to engage most disadvantaged with basic services.</li> </ul>	/
<b>INPUT FROM FORUM</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support activities that bring people together to share meals:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Celebrate multicultural aspects of food and cuisine, different types of food, cooking and eating, in order to break down barriers. Food is one common thing amongst all cultures and a way to build mutual understanding. In schools, children from CALD families celebrate their cultural foods.</li> <li>○ Recognition of schools as a central focus for the community.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Schools (Parkhill proposed new kitchen facility to be available for shared lunches – needs another layer of community to help manage and co-ordinate this).</p> <p>Community Health Service</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community gardens:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Different models of community gardens, e.g. Asian, Indian gardens (specific groups may already have that knowledge)</li> <li>○ Promote and encourage value-add activities e.g. garden art, theatre, sculpture, play spaces (e.g. Ian Potter Garden), new sports (e.g. Parkur, scrambling etc).</li> <li>○ Publicity and Promotions → Community garden/City farming – collaborative, creative, cross-generational, gender, language, cuisine.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Council</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local film festival and film festival party</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education programs that increase knowledge of permaculture and peak oil.</li> </ul>	

## Priorities & opportunities (arranged by organisation)

The priorities and opportunities for action in the tables above have been re-organised and grouped under the organisations that should be involved (see tables below). These lists of priorities and opportunities are not exhaustive.

Wherever possible, food security and community gardening activities should be led by residents and community groups with support from the organisations listed below. Where this is not possible, participating organisations must ensure that residents and community groups are meaningfully engaged, consulted and encouraged to participate.

### How can COUNCIL support food security & community gardens?

1. Support programs that allow residents and groups to share seedlings, fresh produce, knowledge, garden cuttings for mulch etc.
  - Could use community gardens to produce seedlings, organise regular maintenance of fruit trees. Need mechanisms to manage this.
2. Small community farm including fruit trees, veggie gardens, aquaponics, mushrooms, bees (following CERES model, see [www.ceres.org.au](http://www.ceres.org.au)).
3. More community garden space.
4. Improve household access to (free) mulch and other gardening materials.
  - Delivery to community gardens and residents at mulch 'dump areas'.
5. Education:
  - Regarding potted gardens for those resident's with little space.
  - Catching water in soil (water management), rain-water capture and grey water usage.
  - Sustainability (local eco-hub?).
6. Improve bike path network to make it easier for people to get around and to shops on a bicycle or on foot.
7. Strengthen and improve knowledge of existing services:
  - Fruit and veg delivery from local sources.
  - IECHS market bus trips
  - Council HACC services.
8. Work in conjunction with existing facilities and resources.
  - Use land around and near sporting facilities for food production.
  - Utilising road reservations/nature strips for food.
9. Community buses – Boroondara and Monash:
  - Include young families and not just HACC eligible.
  - Linking all key residential areas to affordable food outlets.
10. Need local community hubs with a food outlet (e.g. food co-op or community fruit and veggie stall).
11. Community meals and/or kitchens:
  - A moveable community meal with vans/cheap food? '
  - 'Pay what you think it's worth' café.

### How can COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES support food security & community gardens?

1. Strengthen and improve knowledge of existing services:
  - Fruit and veg delivery from local sources.
  - IECHS market bus trips
  - Council HACC services.
2. Community buses – Boroondara and Monash:
  - Include young families and not just HACC eligible.
  - Linking all key residential areas to affordable food outlets.
3. Need local community hubs with a food outlet (e.g. food co-op or community fruit and veg stall).
4. Food co-op, buying group and or community market stall.
  - Need space (Warrigal Rd, Holmesglen TAFE? Batesford Reserve Hub?) and a fridge.
  - Linking residents with limited mobility with a ‘buddy’, who can drop off their purchases.
  - Education about how to use the produce.
  - Market needs to be at a regular time and place.
  - Health centres have fresh fruit and veg sales – look at what other services are doing well and duplicate (cheap prices for health care card holders, community bus available, single person box, family box, access to recipe cards – ideas for using fruit/veg in an easy and quick meal.
5. Community meals and/or kitchens:
  - A moveable community meal with vans/cheap food? ‘
  - ‘Pay what you think it’s worth’ café.
6. Reasonably priced outlets identified and publicised.
7. Support activities that bring people together to share meals:
  - Celebrate multicultural aspects of food and cuisine, different types of food, cooking and eating, in order to break down barriers. Food is one common thing amongst all cultures and a way to build mutual understanding. In schools, children from CALD families celebrate their cultural foods.

### How can SCHOOLS support food security & community gardens?

1. Ensure that there are veggie patches in every school and kindergarten.
  - Link with “Go for your life” program.
  - School permablitz (see [www.permablitz.net](http://www.permablitz.net)), micro/school farms and farm education.
2. Need local community hubs with a food outlet (e.g. food co-op or community fruit and veg stall).
3. Support activities that bring people together to share meals:
  - Celebrate multicultural aspects of food and cuisine, different types of food, cooking and eating, in order to break down barriers. Food is one common thing amongst all cultures and a way to build mutual understanding. In schools, children from CALD families celebrate their cultural foods.
  - Recognition of schools as a central focus for the community.

### How can NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES support food security & community gardens?

1. Education:
  - Regarding potted gardens for those resident's with little space.
  - Catching water in soil (water management), rain-water capture and grey water usage.
  - Sustainability (local eco-hub?).
2. Strengthen and improve knowledge of existing services:
  - Fruit and veg delivery from local sources.
  - IECHS market bus trips and Council HACC services.
3. Community buses – Boroondara and Monash:
  - Include young families and not just HACC eligible.
  - Linking all key residential areas to affordable food outlets.

### How can STATE GOVERNMENT support food security & community gardens?

1. Building knowledge around food security in our planning:
  - Food production considered when constructing public housing.
  - Education of planners/developers/council staff to plan better and use existing resources better.
  - Analyse planning guidelines using a food production focus, rather than a beautification focus.
2. Ensure that there are veggie patches in every school and kindergarten. Link with "Go for your life" program.
  - School permablitz (see [www.permablitz.net](http://www.permablitz.net)), micro/school farms and farm education.

#### Agenda Item 5. Workshop 2

Participants re-arranged into groups based on whether they were local residents or the types of organisation they represented (e.g. Councils, community health services, schools etc.). For each of the **natural, built, economic and social-cultural** environments these groups discussed.

- Based on discussions in your previous groups, what are the key ways that your organisation type can contribute to improving food access?
- What are some of the enablers and challenges you face?

To promote open and honest discussion, this workshop was not recorded in any way.

#### Agenda Item 6. Thank you and conclusion

Claire Palermo, MC for the evening and Lecturer in Nutrition and Dietetics, Monash University thanked everyone for participating, noting that it is very exciting that the communities of Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone are taking the important first step of coming together to map out a strategy for addressing food security issues. Key points:

- We've identified important opportunities for improving food security across each of the natural, built, economic, and socio-cultural environments.
- Final report/food security strategy will be available late November 2009.
- Evaluation forms will be handed out. We are asking you to write down 3 things you will do differently or follow-up as a result of this evening. Please include your email address and these will be emailed to you in three months time.
- Thank you: to Parkhill Primary School for hosting; to Ashwood Children's Centre for preparing the food; to Ashwood College Permaculture Food Garden & Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre Community Garden for supplying fresh produce; and to Sarah Di Pietro (MonashLink volunteer) & Sam Brazzale (IECHS student) for helping tonight.