

Local Food Policy 2020

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DEFINITIONS

Food System	The food system includes everything from farming, food processing, transporting and selling food, through to how food is purchased, enjoyed and disposed of. Everyone has an influence on the food system through what they choose to eat and where they obtain it. The food system influences the way that food is eaten through the types of food available, its cost and the way it is marketed. A strong local food system supports diverse employment and training opportunities, beautiful landscapes and a healthy, sustainable environment. A strong local food system actively addresses the drivers of, and helps mitigate against, climate change.
Food Security	Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. ¹
Food Literacy	An individual's food knowledge and skills. The awareness of healthy eating, seasonal availability, where to access healthy food choices, competence in preparing healthy foods and the impacts different food choices have on individual and family health, the environment and society generally.
Nutritious Food	Nutritious food refers to a wide variety of food in accordance with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, balanced against individual's requirements for growth, metabolism and physical activity across the life stages, consumed regularly and consistently without periods of over-consumption or severe restriction. ²

¹ Food and Agriculture Organisation (2009) World Summit on Food Security

² National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian Dietary Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Indigo Shire Council recognises that how food is grown, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of are all aspects of the food system. Council recognises that the food system is a key driver of local economic diversity, employment, opportunity and resilience; public health and wellbeing; engagement with the natural environment and sustainable use of ecosystem resources; rural amenity; tourism; social equity and cultural identity.

Indigo Shire is home to many diverse food producers and manufacturers, as well as connectors in the local food chain including retailers, farmers, markets and cooperatives. These contribute to the Shire's quality of life for residents and visitors through economic engagement, employment opportunities, education and the enhancement of Indigo Shire's tourism offer. Challenges associated with the local food system include regulatory constraints, small business profitability, scale-appropriate logistics, agricultural pressures such as water use and climate change impacts, land affordability, healthy food affordability and increasing calls on emergency relief, increasing rates of overweight and obesity and other diet-related diseases.

Everyone influences the food system through the choices they make about what they eat, where they obtain it and how it is grown. The food system also influences what is eaten through the types of food available, their cost and the way some foods are marketed.

Indigo Shire Council recognises its role in local food policy in the following areas:

- building and strengthening partnerships
- advocacy and leadership
- education and community development
- regulatory oversight and reform
- public health promotion

Council also acknowledges that many local food policy actions will be reinforced through regional partnerships with neighbouring local governments and undertakes to advocate for regional food policy actions through relevant forums.

By implementing this Policy, Council supports the views and efforts of many local residents expressed through community consultations previously undertaken for the strategic documents listed below:

REFERENCE TO CURRENT OR PREVIOUS LEGAL /COUNCIL PLAN / POLICY

The Indigo Shire Council Local Food Policy aligns with the following strategic documents:

Indigo Shire Council - Council Plan 2017 -2021

3.1.1 Develop and implement a local food policy and support initiatives that strengthen the local food system and improve access to healthy food e.g. Beechworth Food Co-op, farmers' markets and produce swaps.

Indigo Shire Council - Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

- 1.2 Develop and Implement local food policy
- 1.6 Support local projects that strengthen the local food system

North East Local Food Strategy 2018-2022

1.2 Local Councils have policies and strategies that aim to strengthen the local food system.

Destination Game Changer 2023 – Indigo Shire Council Tourism Strategy

23. Work with Tourism North East on delivery of a regional agri-tourism project that deals with improving supply chains.

Indigo Shire Council Economic Development Strategy

Strategy 5.3 Play a leadership role in supporting the agrifood sector

Activity 3 – Develop and Implement a Local Food Policy

Indigo Shire Council Waste Management Strategy

Objective 3: Engage the Community to achieve behavioural change that reduces waste generation and increases resource recovery.

Objective 4: Reduce total volume of waste disposed of to landfill.

Indigo Shire Council Climate Change Policy 2019

Indigo Shire Council Municipal Emergency Management Plan³

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all council staff, Councillors, contractors and volunteers working for Indigo Shire Council.

This Policy applies to Council operations and Council-managed events⁴, including but not limited to, official functions, civic events, community forums, listening posts, workshops, meetings, training events and parties.

PURPOSE

The Local Food Policy formalises Council's commitment to supporting and strengthening local food systems across the Shire. The Policy outlines Council's commitment to local food actions across areas of health and wellbeing, the local economy, agriculture and the environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council will take a leadership role in supporting and strengthening the local food system. Council recognises the importance of strong local food systems in helping to:

- support the continued and sustainable use of the farmed landscapes to reduce the impacts of climate change
- strengthen and diversify local and regional economic benefits and employment opportunities
- address agricultural and food industry challenges, particularly for small operators
- address population health concerns relating to overweight, obesity and other diet-related health issues
- address food insecurity issues, especially in times of emergency management
- strengthen the level of food literacy in the community.

POLICY DETAILS

To meet this Policy, Indigo Shire Council commits to the following initiatives under the following themes:

³ Currently the Municipal Emergency Management Plan does not reference emergency food relief; this Local Food policy recognises the need for an amendment to this plan to recognise food availability and distribution needs during an emergency.

⁴ I.e Council Events supported via Indigo Shire Council Community Event Grants.

Healthy food choices for all (Health and Wellbeing)	
Action Area	Council's Role
Prioritise healthy local catering at Council-led events ⁵ , meetings and functions.	Leadership and Advocacy
Develop systems to support healthy catering and the use of locally grown food and locally-owned food businesses at Council-led events, meetings and functions.	Leadership and Advocacy
Encourage and support community gardens in local open public spaces.	Community Engagement / Land use planning
Encourage and support community programs that focus on shopping, storing, planning and preparing healthy fresh meals.	Community Engagement
Assist communities to develop their own solutions to increase access to affordable, healthy food.	Community Engagement
Provide advocacy and grant application assistance to support local food initiatives with a health and wellbeing focus.	Leadership and Advocacy
Plan for access to affordable healthy food in emergency situations.	Leadership and Advocacy
A thriving local food economy (Economy)	
Action Area	Council's Role
Support initiatives that build the local food economy and strengthen the local food system.	Leadership and Advocacy
Support capacity building opportunities for producers, community entities (i.e. local food market coordinators) and food businesses.	Community Engagement
Advocate for relevant planning scheme and food regulation amendments to strengthen the local food system.	Regulation and Advocacy
Provide advocacy and grant assistance to support local food initiatives with an economic development focus.	Leadership and Advocacy
Support agricultural business's emergency planning to build resilience and improve response capacity following disasters.	Community Engagement
Celebrate and support local food business via Council media channels.	Community Engagement
A sustainable and resilient food system (Environment)	
Action Area	Council's Role
Support organisations that reclaim and redistribute food waste.	Leadership and advocacy

⁵ Including all events supported via Council's Community Event Grants

Develop and support strategies to reduce food waste across communities and within the Council workplace.	Leadership and advocacy / Workforce
Provide advocacy and grant assistance to support local food initiatives with an environmental focus.	Leadership and Advocacy

STAKEHOLDERS / PARTNERS

The following are potential stakeholders / partners with the expertise to assist in achieving this policy's objectives:

- North East Catchment Management Authority
- Local Landcare Groups
- Agriculture Victoria
- Regional Development Victoria
- Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning
- North East Local Food Strategy Working Group
- Local Health Services (Beechworth Health Service, Indigo North Health, Yackandandah Health, Gateway Health)
- Local schools / TAFES / education institutes
- North East Agricultural Group
- Community Market Coordinators
- Local Chambers of Commerce and Industry Groups (i.e. Alpine Valleys Dairy, Ovens Murray Ag Biz Alliance)
- Albury Wodonga Food Share
- Open Food Network
- Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance
- Local retailers
- Emergency Relief providers
- Neighbourhood Houses
- Local service groups

ADVOCACY

Council will advocate to regional, State and Commonwealth forums and committees where appropriate around the themes of this document including small-scale agricultural industry support, regulatory reforms, environmental regulatory reforms including climate change, public health and wellbeing opportunities and food insecurity issues.

COMMUNICATION

This Policy is communicated to all Indigo Shire staff, via the online learning management system. The Policy is also made available on Council's website and publicised via multiple communication channels to increase awareness of the policy and the effective implementation of key action areas.