



A community based alliance promoting healthy food for all

food fairness illawarra

Illawarra over the next 20 years: Discussion Paper

Response from Food Fairness Illawarra

Food Fairness Illawarra is a community based alliance, of over 100 members, committed to ensuring good food for all. By good food we mean fresh, nutritious, safe and sustainable food. We take an interest in anything that affects access to good food in our area, including:

- How we use our fertile land
- Farming which looks after the natural environment
- The cost of putting good food on the table
- The availability of and access to shops and markets that sell good food
- Good food as part of celebrations and community
- Supporting organisations that work with people experiencing food insecurity
- Raising community awareness about access to good food for all
- Sharing skills and knowledge about growing and eating good food

FFI recognises that the Illawarra faces both challenges and opportunities for local food security and food system sustainability in to the future. New land release areas in particular, present a complex range of issues arising from land use changes and new residential development.

The Growth Plan should assist in providing a framework for incorporating an awareness of the importance of access to good food, alongside other core urban design principles which support health, amenity and wellbeing. The impact of land use changes in new land release areas should be understood in terms of food security and the Growth Plan should identify options for food production within new urban areas.

The following submission contains recommendations which support community food security, health and wellbeing.

Housing our growing population

- Ensure land use zoning provides flexibility to allow for active living and healthy eating principles e.g. linked infrastructure for walking and cycling, retaining agricultural land.
- New housing plans should be focussed around public transport infrastructure
- Compact development in town centres and along transport corridors would support a reduction in car dependency and commute times. Ideally housing should be located within a 30 minute commute to major employment facilities.
- Enact rate frameworks which protect prime agricultural land from housing development.

- Establish a quality framework for developments that require the provision of open spaces, including the need for accessible passive and active recreation
- Ensure inclusion of Universal Design principles in homes to ensure ageing in place and consideration for disabled members of the community.
- Develop guides for new housing development that enable provision of recreational facilities, shade, open space and active transport infrastructure and food producing areas
- NSW Government should be more actively involved in the provision of affordable housing opportunities for households on low and moderate incomes
- Facilitate social integration of new development communities with existing communities by community gardening , food rescue and waste programs
- Housing plans should ensure that they **discourage** car dependency and provide transport infrastructure for access to employment, schools, recreation
- Ensure provision of parks accommodate shade, seating and adequate amenity such as drinking water to areas of highest density living.
- Community gardening provide opportunities for ‘selective’ interactions between residents
- In existing areas, consider using school grounds for local farmers markets on weekends
- Support councils to develop policies to enable community gardens, edible street trees, fruit tree groves on public land
- Support councils to clear and encouraging guidelines for responsibly keeping chickens, bees, other poultry in backyards
- Pursue changes to planning mechanisms to limit proliferation of unhealthy food outlets
- Establish targets for urban vegetation (including edible species) and develop strategies to achieve them

Providing job and economic opportunities

- The Illawarra region has higher unemployment rates than the NSW state average, 7.1% compared with 5.1% with some localities in the region significantly higher (*DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets, March 2008 –June 2012 (12 month averages)*).
- The need for adaptability and diversity within the types of employment opportunities in the Illawarra region has been recognised and investment in the area of peri-urban agriculture and horticulture, and the community food movement would present an alternative employment stream as well as making a positive impact on local food security. Suggestions include social enterprise food initiatives, supporting the establishment of farmers markets, farm gate sales and cooperatives, promoting regional food.
- Smaller scale, diversified local food production on various land types is a community aspiration and emerging economic opportunity
- The report has identified the significance of centres as a focus for employment growth – Food Fairness Illawarra would like to advocate for the provision of healthy eating outlets within these centres.
- Opportunities exist to establish the Illawarra as an “Active Travel” destination – promoting the bike track which stretches from Sandon Point to Lake Illawarra, the beaches, escarpment walks etc etc

- Encourage training to be aligned with current and projected employment needs in the local area and region
- Require places of education to be located in close proximity to employment centres and residential areas, as well as public transport nodes
- Ensure employment training facilities are universally accessible and designed to be inclusive
- Ensure child care is available for use by participants of employment training
- Aim to provide access to a range of employment opportunities within a 30 minute commute of where people live
- Ensure that public transport serves employment centres
- Support employment located in employment centres or clusters close to homes to support more active forms of transport
- Develop incentives for employees to utilise public transport and active transport for journeys to work
- Support and incentives for home based employment
- Design centres to be mixed use (including providing employment, residential, education and training facilities)
- Encourage places of employment which include amenities that encourage people to walk or cycle to work (such as showers and bicycle park)
- Encourage access to a variety of employment opportunities in different job sectors, for different levels of skill
- Encourage places of employment include, or are near to, stress relieving and health improving features such as places to have a break, places for social interaction and networking, exercise equipment, open space and quiet areas, and access to healthy food and snacks.
- For employee health, employment should include the option of staircases to access multiple levels of the work place

Providing efficient transport networks

- Ensure the plan considers transport and distribution systems to move food within the Region
- Ensure that efficient and sustainable transport of agricultural inputs and outputs is considered in all transport and infrastructure planning
- Pursue integration of transport systems that connects people to local and regional commercial and retail centres where fresh food is available
- Ensure transport options for older, and transport disadvantaged people are actively promoted and available
- Ensure plan emphasises active transport between activities, encouraging walking and cycling
- Ensure pedestrian and bicycle pathways link with regional networks and key destinations such as supermarkets, community gardens
- Retail and commercial areas where fresh food is available should be linked to public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks

- Encourage streetscapes designed to be attractive, interesting and welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists, including by providing edible street trees, appropriate amenities such as water and shelter from the weather.
- FFI supports the plan for light rail as a preferable and cost effective option for travel down south from Wollongong to Shellharbour

Providing the Infrastructure We Need

Transport Infrastructure

- Ensure transport systems are integrated and connect community members to local and regional retail centres where fresh food is available.
- Develop transport and distribution systems to move food and commodities within the region.
- Prevent physical structures such as main roads, rail lines or industrial estates that will create barriers to movement and sever connectivity between communities
- Develop transport and distribution systems to move food and commodities within the region.

Waste infrastructure

- Each year Australians send around \$7.8 billion worth of uneaten food to landfill, and food waste makes up to almost 40% of the average garbage bin. Food waste in landfill produces greenhouse gas emissions, causes leaching, and is a huge concern for regional Councils. Investing in the establishment of a food waste collection service in the Illawarra – diverting food waste from landfill to a commercial composting centre – would create employment whilst having a positive effect on the environment and local economy. Please see <http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resource-centre/publications/food-waste/VALUING%20OUR%20FOOD%20WASTE.pdf>

Providing access to a great lifestyle

Neighbourhood Planning for Access to healthy food

- Ensure that the neighbourhood planning includes identifying key assets in the local food system and grow a Regional Food Culture
- Develop regional events which showcase local food and educate consumers about regional food availability and seasonality
- Ensure the plan works towards making fresh drinking water available in all public spaces

- Ensure there are provisions for increasing access to culturally appropriate food for people of all needs
- Develop practical skills training to support backyard, school and community food production
- Ensure resources are available to provide regionally relevant information on edible gardening
- Provide sustainable food education including practical themes such as cooking, preserving, keeping
- Create and promote a directory of local producers, providores, retailers, stallholders, caterers, distributors and other businesses focussed on local, traditional and bush foods
- Create and promote , farm gate trails, markets
- Facilitate food redistribution projects including wild and roadside harvesting, food swaps
- Consider good food as a focal point for enlivening public spaces and bringing people together
- Facilitate social integration of new development communities with existing communities
- Ensure vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (such as low income households, single parent families, unemployed people, recently arrived immigrants and refugees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability, older people) have fair and equitable access to services and facilities including access to fresh food , employment opportunities and transport
- Provide a range of facilities that enhance recreational usage of public spaces such as community gardens and create active recreation opportunities for all in the community
- Food planning should be an integral part of the Illawarra Discussion Paper with consideration for: mapping to identify food outlets and transport interfaces; use of vacant community land for food production; well-located supermarkets, fresh food outlets and community food services; food aid and rescue and food waste diversion.
- Ensure planning guides enable the creation of flexible zoning to allow food retail outlets in residential areas.
- Enact mechanisms to actively encourage the provision of fresh drinking water in all communities e.g. fountains and drink refill stations
- Promote and permit affordable access to fruit and vegetables such as markets
- Control development of unhealthy food outlets particularly around schools including fast food outlets, service stations and small stores
- Clarify definition for 'community garden' and 'urban agriculture' and include as exempt from development assessment.

Neighbourhood Planning for Physical Activity & Walkability

- Ensure plan includes access to green space and natural areas in its objectives, considering the projected population growth and nature of demand and the potential for wider regional use. Most new homes should be within a reasonable walking distance (approximately 400-500 metres) of a park, playground or other form of useable public open space.
- New developments should preserve or enhance access to green space and natural areas and be connected via a network of footpaths, trails, and public transport

- Planning should support opportunities for active and passive recreation, reflection, learning, play, adventure, gathering, and celebration.
- Public open spaces should be sufficiently buffered from traffic in terms of noise, fumes and pedestrian safety
- Design features of centres and new developments should encourage activity on streets such as street trees, landscaped nature strips and street furniture
- Promote equitable access through distribution, design and management of social infrastructure.
- Ensure social infrastructure is considered as an important part of the community in the physical planning process. The plan provides an opportunity to physically integrate community facilities into the proposed urban fabric of new communities and developments.
- The plan should be anticipatory to strategically plan for social infrastructure provision and not assume that provision of facilities and services will necessarily follow development
- Major developments should be accompanied by some form of community planning study that considers the social infrastructure.
- Include well designed interpretive signage in all development
- Maximise the efficient use of resources, for instance through shared or co-located facilities and multiple use agreements
- Social infrastructure should be as multipurpose as possible and provide for a range of services, activities and programs
- Ensure flexibility in facility design and use so they can respond and change to meet evolving community needs.
- Whenever possible locate facilities adjacent to open space to allow for overflow activities such as children's play, festivals and markets

Protecting our environment and building resilience to natural hazards

Biophysical strategic agricultural land

- Mapping of biophysical strategic agricultural land (BSAL) is welcome, however the scope is limited by definition of BSAL as identifying 'rare' lands which are intrinsically best quality for agriculture and have a minimum area.
- It is essential to protect remnant large areas of prime agricultural land from the impacts of development, resource extraction
- There are many competing uses for fertile land, not all of which can be identified as BSAL, quarantined from residential or other development
- Food production and agriculture currently happens on a range of lands, but due to land use pressure and the changes to the agricultural industry in general will increasingly need to take place on land with less 'rare' biological features and of smaller area. It's likely for example that new forms of regenerative agricultural activity will take place on degraded lands, rural land that is currently not productive, smaller lots, in transient or moveable settings, and be integrated into urban/peri urban environments
- There are effectively no 'no-go' zones for SSD resource extraction

- Support that BSAL recognises the inherent value of the land itself, rather than existing agricultural activity
- No BSAL has been identified in Wollongong: however there are still significant parcels of viable food producing land (see above), and other lands which support a range agriculture-related and affiliated activities
- BSAL land represents only 3.5% of NSW land area
- Equine and Viticulture industries quarantined from CSG: food growing areas should have same protection

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Gateway Process

- Flawed process
- No option for panel to refuse to issue a Gateway Certificate: all projects that pass through this process will be given a certificate with or without conditions
- Additional scrutiny by Gateway panel only applies to land mapped as BSAL or to Critical Industry Cluster
- No land is deemed a 'no-go' zone
- Conditions imposed by committee must be addressed in EIS and extent of compliance considered in determining whether to grant SSD consent – but are not referred back to committee

Aquifer Interference Policy

- Inadequate protection, unacceptable risks remain

Agricultural Impact Statements

- Support requirement for all SSD proposals as part of REF, regardless of whether or not they are on land mapped as BSAL.
- Assessed by DPI and Office of ASFS
- Should consider whole-of-food system impacts

Land and Water Commissioner

- Supported. Supervises access arrangement and negotiations, advocacy role

Strengthening the Region's Cultural Heritage

- The Illawarra has a rich Aboriginal and multicultural community. Opportunities exist to harness the cultural food heritage and wisdom in supporting regional Aboriginal and multicultural events, education opportunities, workshops showcasing cultural dishes etc
- Encourage and support bush tucker growing and usage
- Conduct food activities and celebrations at cultural sites /heritage sites
- Ensure plan include a public art strategy which reflects local community identity
- Ensure natural areas of significance been identified and protected through the proposed planning controls

Maximising the productivity of rural and resource lands

- The Regional Growth Plan needs to clarify what role agricultural land will have in the future. It is important that key agricultural and food production lands within the region are identified and preserved.

- Approximately 70% reduction in rural land (RU1, RU2) in Wollongong LGA since 1938 LEP (1a, 1b)
- 195 properties currently Farmland Rating, equivalent number but not necessarily correlated properties are CLHPA rated (>10ha)
- Need to better understand activities defined in LEP dictionary which are relevant to food system as they relate to land use tables
- Assessment of the value of land for current and future food production should be extended to include a variety of land types, including smaller lot sizes, those lands adjacent to urban centres, land which supports affiliated industries, and community land
- Need to clearly define difference between agricultural versus natural resource land. What are the differences in the terms?
- How do definitions relate to the land use table in the Standard LEP, and things like urban agricultural uses such as enterprises on community land, market gardens etc which occur on other lands
- Need to clarify what role agricultural land will have in the Wollongong LGA i.e. Transition of West Dapto from agricultural land to urban land.
- If there is a reduction of Agricultural land in WLGA this needs to be recognised, and therefore we need to acknowledge the surrounding Agricultural and food production lands in other LGA and their importance.
- Support undertaking strategic processes to identify regional approaches to rural, agricultural and productive land opportunities

Alternative Energy

- Support the alternative energy initiative and would like to see a stronger focus on building it into the planning system.
- 1. What specific mechanisms should be included in the Plan to manage the potential for coal and coal seam gas exploration and/or extraction in the Illawarra?**
 - Coal seam mining should be referred back to Council's position adopted on 10/10/2011
<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/gipa/Lists/Position%20Register/DispForm.aspx?ID=3>
 - Council's position is summarised in the submission to the Coal Seam Gas Inquiry held on 9 December 2011
<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/meetings/BusinessPapers/Coal%20Seam%20Gas%20Inquiry%20Submission.pdf>
 - If appropriate the discussion paper could recommend guidelines relating to environment and amenity protection in relation to the transportation of coal via rail and road.
 - 2. Should the Plan encourage a closer examination and identification of where important agricultural resources are located?**
 - The plan should encourage closer examination on how to determine the importance and location of these lands however given limited resources in Council it may

require the State to provide a starting point such as general guidelines to ensure consistent approach and assessment from everyone involved in decision making.

- Support is required to define terms such as 'important agricultural resources' and to identify opportunities to enhance the resilience of the sector within the constraints

3. What mechanisms other than land use planning could the Plan employ to protect food and fibre producing land?

- As an example WCC has an endorsed regional food strategy refer to link below.
<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/meetings/BusinessPapers/Illawarra%20Regional%20Food%20Strategy.pdf>

which looks at 4 key themes where Council may support regional food security and food system sustainability, including supporting food producers, access to healthy food and community initiatives such as co-ops, community gardens etc.

Connecting with other regions

- Support undertaking strategic processes to identify regional approaches to rural, agricultural and productive land futures
- Local regional food systems should be supported to achieve resilience, growth and diversification in order to deliver health, economic and environmental outcomes for the whole community
- Reduction of rural lands in WCC means increased significance of BSAL and other productive land in adjacent regional areas (Kiama, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Wingecarribee, Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly, western Sydney)

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Making it better – Together