VicHealth Local Government Partnership
Core Module

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities

This module covers:

Impact Streams

- Creating thriving local food systems
- Embedding healthy food and drink options in council owned and operated places
- Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities
- Enabling healthy partnerships

Overview

VicHealth has created this module to support Victorian councils to set our kids up for their best possible future by creating communities where children and young people grow up in healthy, sustainable and secure food environments.

Local governments can play a critical role in driving healthier food environments by improving access to healthy food and drink options, promoting healthy sponsorship and partnerships, and building local food systems to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people in their communities. Increasing access to healthy food and drink options positively impacts children and young people's diets and supports their mental wellbeing and development. Creating positive change in the local food system also presents wider health, social, economic and environmental sustainability benefits for the whole community.

The food system is a complex web of supply chain activities from paddock to plate. Today's food system sees children and young people disconnected from how their food is produced while also increasingly bombarded by unhealthy food and drink marketing. Unhealthy food marketing and environments influence children and young people's food preferences, attitudes and consumption and can normalise diets that include excess unhealthy food and drinks.

Urgent action is required to assist our future generations to become active food citizens. This can be achieved by creating local and healthy food systems and giving children and young people opportunities to actively engage in the issues and solutions.

Food systems span multiple areas of responsibility for local governments. While food systems are influenced by a number of factors, including state and federal governments, local governments have various powers to shape the natural, built, economic and social environments within their communities. In Victoria, many councils are well progressed on this journey. This module draws from a rich history of experience and action within local governments across the state. VicHealth first supported this effort with the Food for All initiative, subsequently the Victorian Government released and supported Healthy Food Connect from 2014, a model for councils to influence and activate local food system change.

This module further builds and provides best practice and evidence-informed actions for councils to increase access to healthy food options, address unhealthy food and drink sponsorship and partnerships, and create local food systems that support healthy, sustainable and equitable diets. Alongside this, the module will support councils to strengthen the capacity of children and young people to achieve better health through active engagement in locally led initiatives.

What are the benefits for Council?

This module will support your council to:

- align your Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan actions with the 'increasing healthy eating' and 'tackling the health impacts of climate change' focus areas outlined in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023
- strengthen the capacity of the community to make positive changes to their local food system
- create opportunities to involve children and young people in conversations around their local food system
- provide healthy food retail environments in council-owned facilities frequented by children and young people
- lead the way in creating spaces and places frequented by young people that are free from unhealthy food and alcohol sponsorship and marketing
- ensure council-owned places and spaces are supportive of breastfeeding as part of a healthy start to life
- develop strategies to address food security to help meet targets set under municipal COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Plans
- contribute to a thriving local food economy, distinguished by greater connections between producers and consumers and increased opportunities for local small business enterprises
- ensure all residents enjoy their basic human right of physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food at all times.

Partners

We would like to thank our development partner for co-authoring this module:

SUSTAIN the Australian food network

We would like to thank our development partners for contributing to this module:

VIC KIDS EAT WELL

Nutrition Australia

VICTORIA State Government

Healthy Eating Advisory Service

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Impact Stream:
Creating thriving local food systems

This impact stream requires councils to undertake a strategic policy approach to create a sustainable and healthy local food system, ensuring community members can access healthy and secure options at any stage of life.

Complex health issues such as obesity and food insecurity require food system solutions founded in a common vision and direction, promotion of learning and innovation, and collective action. While many councils already play a role in many parts of the food system, a lack of strategic and multi-sectoral planning can result in disjointed policy and programs. A standalone food system strategy that adopts a whole-of-council approach can provide the necessary actions, measures, indicators and targets to build a local healthy sustainable and fair food system for all.

A whole-of-council approach ensures the strategy informs, aligns with or complements the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan as well as other policies and strategies including those for sustainability, local planning, street landscapes, waste and litter, human rights and urban heat island effects. Councils should consider opportunities to integrate these polices and strategies when they are up for review.

Young people are particularly affected by many fundamental challenges facing the food system right now. Less than 5% eat enough vegetables[1] and 1 in 4 young people are overweight or obese. A healthy diet remains vital to supporting young people's mental and physical development and has long-term benefits as eating patterns established in childhood continue into adulthood. In addition to being consumers of food, many young people are also actively engaged in food as farmers and community garden volunteers.

Consistent with the Leading the Way – Engaging young voices for change foundation module, councils play an important role in elevating and facilitating young people's thoughts, ideas and knowledge on issues that affect them, particularly during the development of local food system policy, program and event design.

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- co-design local food solutions with and for children and young people in the community
- address food security and foster social connectedness
- build a local and thriving food system
- design and deliver healthy and more sustainable local food procurement.

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020. **Australia's children**. Cat. no. CWS 69. Canberra: AIHW

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Creating thriving local food systems', councils will have:

- ☐ documented council's goals for the identified implementation action, including a priority focus on:
  - food security
  - food at all stages of life, including breastfeeding and first foods
  - healthy, sustainable and locally sourced foods
- ☐ established partnerships with key stakeholders in the local food system
- ☐ demonstrated activities to involve members of the community, including children and young people, in working toward the goals of the activity
- ☐ demonstrated support from council and local leadership to work toward the goals of the impact stream, for example, endorsement or alignment of policies
- ☐ demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

The quick win

Deliver a community food festival or forum

One of the greatest strengths of councils is their capacity to bring the community together. Local food harvest festivals, urban agriculture activities (e.g. garden tours and workshops) and local food forums enable **local food leaders** to build community connections and demonstrate how their work contributes to a healthy and sustainable environment.

Food festivals or forums are a great way to connect residents and local food producers, raise awareness of the benefits of local, seasonal, and sustainably produced foods, and increase consumption of those foods.

The scale of the events you deliver will depend on internal capacity and (if required) external funding and sponsorships. Start small. Select an achievable range of activities to deliver with key local partners. This will create a foundation that can be built upon annually.

Ensure your activities reflect how local food in the municipality is grown, produced, processed, accessed, consumed, redistributed and disposed of. Involve local growers and gardeners. Ensure the event is healthy, inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.

Quick definitions

Food festivals typically combine a collection of food-based activities that appeal to different segments of the community, are organised over a few days to weeks, and are about celebrating local, seasonal and sustainably produced foods.

Food forums are usually held on one day and are focused on exchanging ideas, problem-solving local food system challenges, and exploring ways to expand and strengthen collaborations by bringing local leaders and champions together for a concentrated burst of activity.

How-to guide to:
Deliver a community food festival or forum

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, economic development and events.

Planning the festival or forum provides an opportunity for you to engage with local food leaders and children and young people with an interest in healthy, sustainable food systems.

Plan

Conceptualise and scope the event

Convene a working group of council officers from a range of teams/departments. Develop an event outline to determine the parameters of your local food festival or forum, including:

- goals and objectives of the event; examples can be found in the **Food Forum: Program details template**
- event evaluation – what is your criteria for success? e.g. number of participants (especially children and youth) and degree to which the community is represented at and participates in the event
- event themes (see below)
- event management experience and capacity within council and local partners
- available budget and resources, including opportunities for grants and healthy local sponsors

Crossover Opportunity

For information on how to create events and a council landscape that promotes healthy sponsors see the '**Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities**' impact stream.

Conceptualise and scope the event cont.

- how the event can be environmentally sustainable e.g. don't provide single-use plastics, demonstrate alternatives to sending food waste to landfill
- location: consider child and youth friendly places e.g. schools, libraries.

Expand on the event plan in the design step.

Hot Tip!

Consider when seasonal produce grown in your municipality is harvested and a date/time that is convenient for families and young people.

Assess

Use themes as a way of gaining cross-department engagement

Themes for the festival or forum can be an effective way to demonstrate how the event cuts across several council departments and can help you gain cross-department engagement. For example, in the following table, the theme 'protecting land to grow food' directly relates to council's responsibility for land use planning.

Draw on the community's skills, capabilities and interests. Ask individuals, organisations and/or businesses to participate in the event and contribute their knowledge about succession planning, co-operative farming and/or urban agriculture etc.

Suggested theme	Relevant council department/ responsibility	Examples of relevant topics
Protecting land to grow food	Land use planning	Barriers and enablers in local planning schemes for diversified and small-to-medium scale farming, succession planning for local farms and how to support the next generation of farmers, co-operative farming models, urban agriculture potential, accessing public land for community gardens
Enhancing food skills, knowledge and culture	Health, community cohesion	Healthy food for all ages, cooking demonstrations for children and young people, reconnecting with food
Sustainable food: water, waste and space	Sustainability, waste management	Protecting resources for future generations, school-based kitchen garden models, water-wise gardening, circular economy models
Growing a vibrant local food economy	Economic development, tourism	Supporting potential of young and aspiring farmers, distributors, artisanal and craft makers, chefs, restaurateurs and agri-tourism

Establish a community reference group

A community reference group is a great way to include local food leaders and young people in the event's design. Community reference groups foster community ownership and engagement, build local community capacity and ensure activities are relevant and embedded.

Consider sending invitations to join the reference group to **multi-sectoral community leaders** and young people who represent how local food in the municipality is grown, produced, processed, accessed, consumed and disposed of.

Invite representatives from existing council youth groups to be involved and/or get in touch with young food leaders in the municipality. Contact the **Youth Food Movement Australia** and identify if there are any local young people they could refer.

Design

Formulate the event type, format and activities

Consider what types of activities will best bring local food leaders, organisations and residents together to share their work, stories of success and challenges, and plan how they can make their local food system more healthy, equitable and sustainable.

If a community reference group is already established, ask them what type and format of activities would be meaningful to them.

Event activities to consider:

- **A 'future of local food' workshop** where businesses, community organisations, individuals, youth leaders and local government officers can discuss the future of local food in your municipality. This session should be hosted by council and include:
    - a brief presentation from council outlining the opportunity
    - time for residents to share/discuss concerns and priorities
    - identification of appropriate people/organisations for the Local Food Coalition.
- **Food swaps** at youth service or early childhood services where residents can swap excess homegrown produce such as fruit, vegetables, eggs or seedlings. This may also extend to workshops on gardening tips and seasonal recipes.
- **Cooking demonstrations** with/by children and young people featuring healthy, tasty, affordable meals that children and young people can replicate. Where practicable, children should have the opportunity to 'cook along' with their families.
- **Truth telling** by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders where residents can learn about the pre-colonial history of food in your region and ongoing connections to Country. Contacting local Aboriginal organisations and Elders in the community is a good starting point for respectful engagement.
- **Composting and worm farming workshops** where children and young people can learn alongside their parents about the basics of alternative methods of food waste disposal to landfill, including vermiculture and the fascinating world of worms.
- **Presentations** from local food leaders, where they share their work, stories of success and explain how young people can get involved. This could be delivered in person or virtually.

Hot Tip!

Be sure to start any communcation with Aboriginal organsations and Elders as early as possible in the process to build trust and ensure meaningful consultation. Local land councils and heritage corporations may be able to assist in connecting council with local Aboriginal organisations and Elders.

Develop an event plan

To ensure compliance with council regulations and other related policies at your event, check any existing guidelines.

Consider the following elements when planning your event (not all will be required):

- runsheet (see next page)
- MC and facilitators
- guest speakers
- photographer
- audio visual hire
- public liability insurance
- signage and site plan
- infrastructure and facilities list
- local and healthy food and drink vendors
- food safety compliance
- pedestrian and traffic management
- waste management.

A template **Food Forum Project Plan** has been developed for your convenience

Consider how you will provide healthy food and drink options and how you will make the event child and family friendly. For example, to make it breastfeeding-friendly, provide comfortable seating for nursing parents and a play area for young children accompanying them.

A key part of the planning process is the development of an event runsheet, with detailed timings for each moment of the day (or week in the case of a festival) together with who is responsible.

See this **sample runsheet from Day 1 of the 2021 Urban Agriculture Forum** which will help you with your event planning and delivery.

Deliver

Run the event and build on the interest in healthy and sustainable food systems

The event is a great opportunity for council to connect and engage with the community and learn about how they see the challenges and opportunities for creating a healthier local food system.

Consider:

- **Surveying attendees** with a questionnaire to understand how the community engages with the local food system and learn about local food networks.
- **Informal or structured conversations** to get to know the challenges and opportunities facing local food procedures and consumers.
- **Asking event staff and volunteers to record** the themes and topics of interest that emerge through their conversations at the event.
- **Preparing to build a basic food system map** by capturing information about people, groups, organisations and resources that make up the local food system.

Review and embed

Evaluation

Ask participants to complete an **evaluation survey**, toward the end of the event or in the days after if registrations were required.

- Meet with the community reference group to evaluate the event. Some considerations:
- What went well and what challenges were experienced?
- Did the event meet its goals and objectives?
- Were there any barriers to delivering an environmentally sustainable event? Can these be overcome?
- Were the resources and capacity required appropriate for the outcomes?

Refer to the evaluation section in 'Evaluating and Monitoring' for further guidance on conducting the evaluation and embedding this activity.

Recommended resources

Food Forum: Program Details – includes examples of suitable goals and objectives for a food forum, as well as suggested order of proceedings.

Food Forum: Project Plan – a place to document key requirements for your event including the scope and purpose of your event, project schedule, funding sources and responsibilities for (as appropriate) MC and facilitators.

Food Forum: Runsheet – event delivery from Day 1 of the 2021 Urban Agriculture Forum (delivered online).

Food Forum: Evaluation Survey – example questions to include in a participant survey post-event.

Case study - Cardinia Food Forum

The 2017 Cardinia Food Forum was a celebration of the wonderful things happening in food and farming across Cardinia Shire, and also an opportunity for the community to come together and respond to local food system challenges.

The event was a grassroots community effort. Food network members played a key role in organising and delivering all aspects of the day, from program design and set up to registrations and pack down.

The event was funded through a philanthropic grant from a regional funding collaboration, as well as an allocation from the annual budget of the Cardinia Food Circles project, financed by council. The approximate cost was $10,000 including catering, venue and staffing.

More than 100 teachers, farmers, chefs, business owners, health workers, local residents, community workers, local government officers and landcare networks attend the event, which featured:

- **international and local speakers** who built a shared understanding of the local context and challenges and opportunities facing the local food system
- **workshops** where attendees learned about the great work being done locally and opportunities to get involved
- **roundtable discussions** where new connections were formed across and between attendees and speakers, growing and strengthening the work many people are doing.

For more ideas, take inspiration from the 2021 Urban Agriculture Forum events held across Australia.

The step up
Create a local food coalition

Councils, in partnership with businesses, community organisations and individuals, have a role to play in creating thriving, equitable, healthy and sustainable food systems.

The establishment of a Local Food Coalition (also referred to as a Local Food Assembly or Local Food Alliance) is one way that councils can facilitate and lead change through coordinating action at a local level.

A key factor for success of a Local Food Coalition is a strong authorising environment. This can be achieved by having the right decision-makers at the table who can actively contribute their involvement and resources[2].

Local Food Coalitions serve as forums for discussing food issues, help develop a common language and understanding about the strengths and challenges of the local food system, foster coordination and collaboration between different sectors in the food system, evaluate and influence policy, work to mobilise resources and funding, and launch or support programs and services that address local needs. Councils should aim to have a strategic, multi-sectoral focus that is relevant to their local food system.

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, economic development and events.

Establish a Youth Food Council

Consider supporting the establishment of a Youth Food Council or Coalition – either as a standalone initiative or as a youth-led working group of the Local Food Coalition.

A great example is the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council. The City of Toronto is renowned internationally as a leader in healthy and sustainable food systems policy. The Toronto Food Policy Council was established in 1991 under the auspices of the City's Board of Health. The need for a strong youth voice was identified by the end of the 1990s; however, it wasn't until 2009 that the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council was established explicitly as the 'youth arm' of the Food Policy Council itself.

The Youth Food Policy Council now meets and operates as its own entity, supporting youth leadership and engagement with the food system. It also has 2 seats on the Toronto Food Policy Council, ensuring a strong youth presence in important food policy dialogue and decision-making.

2. Healthy Food Connect, Department of Health 2014

How-to guide to:
Create a local food coalition

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, economic development and events.

Planning the festival or forum provides an opportunity for you to engage with local food leaders and children and young people with an interest in healthy, sustainable food systems.

Plan

Identify Local Food Coalition members

Coalition members will lead all sectors of the community in partnership with council to address the complex social problem of unhealthy and unsustainable food systems.

Membership of the coalition should be selected through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process and aim for representation from relevant council departments and all sectors of the community, including producers, business, community services, faith and cultural groups, youth, health, education and sporting associations.

A suggested membership list for the group can be found **here**.

Structures and governance should be clearly outlined to ensure the coalition can function with greatest potential impact. Regardless of the size of the council, this will involve secretariat responsibilities of the coalition being held by council staff and drawing on the skills and knowledge of community leaders.

Hot Tip!

See page 21 for further information about how to design and facilitate a Local Food Coalition with the Collective Impact and Asset Based Community Development methodologies.

Crossover Opportunity

One option for establishing a Local Food Coalition is to extend targeted invitations to local food sector leaders to join the coalition. Another option is to build on community engagement at a local food event (see '**The quick win: Deliver a community food festival or forum**').

Identify Local Food Coalition members cont.

Young people's participation in the coalition should be prioritised and can be facilitated by:

- including a representative from existing council Youth Reference Groups
- extending invitations to aspiring and active young farmers and/or producers
- engaging with young rural and urban farmers through **Young Farmers Connect**
- engaging with young people passionate about food systems through the **Youth Food Movement**
- engaging with young people through the **Youth Affairs Council of Victoria** and/or the **Koorie Youth Council**.

The formation and inclusion of a core body of cross-department or inter-disciplinary council officers to support and form part of the Local Food Coalition will ensure that breaking down silos and working across them is an established practice within council.

Together, these council officers should form an internal subcommittee that meets monthly to progress actions agreed to in coalition meetings. Departments and teams represented should include those with responsibility for health and wellbeing, community strengthening and development, economic development, statutory and strategic planning and land use, environment, sustainability and waste management, education and youth, and climate change.

Design

Collaboratively develop terms of reference

Build on council's standard terms of reference processes and consider the following inclusions for your Local Food Coalition. Ensure all members are involved in the development process.

- Mode and frequency of contact (bi-monthly meetings are recommended).
- Membership and key roles (see **suggested membership**).
- Secretariat responsibilities (these should be held by the VicHealth-funded council officer).
- Objectives of the coalition, for example: discuss and develop a shared agenda for policy developments, collaborative projects, sustainable investment and planning for local food systems. See the **Template Terms of Reference** for a Local Food Coalition to assist in defining the purpose and structure of the Coalition.

Sign the Urban & Regional Food Declaration and/or create your own

By signing the **Urban & Regional Food Declaration** a council declares that it stands with dozens of signatories from councils, organisations and individuals united by a shared vision for a healthy, sustainable, resilient and fair food system for all residents and for all Australians. The Food Declaration is a good starting point for identifying potential projects and action items across the community and within council.

Alternatively, or in addition, a Local Food Coalition can create its own declaration based on local food system priorities. As an example **The Latrobe Valley Food Declaration** outlines a vision for a strong local food system that is safe, secure, fair, sustainable and connected for all residents of the Latrobe Valley.

Assess

Undertake a local food system needs assessment

This section has been adapted from the Healthy Food Connect resource. For further information about undertaking a local food system needs assessment, collation and presentation of findings, and prioritisation of actions, contact the Victorian Department of Health at prevention@health.vic.gov.au to access the Healthy Food Connect resource, including the complete Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities tool (developed by the Victorian Local Government Association).

It is important to have local evidence on current trends, practices and policies across the 4 environments for health that have an impact on community food access: natural, built, economic, socio-cultural.

Undertaking a local food system needs assessment will support the development of effective initiatives that reflect the needs and priorities of the community.

When undertaking your needs assessment, consider the following:

- Keep the process short and set yourself a timeframe within which to complete it – for example, allow a maximum of 3 months.
- Develop a broad understanding of the food environment in your municipality first, then decide on what area(s) you will focus on.
- Determine what information about local food access/systems has already been collected.
- Identify any gaps and whether any of this needs to be repeated.
- Ensure all information collected is integrated and considered as part of your broader system inventory.
- Identify and engage relevant stakeholders to actively participate in the data collection process.
- Use the municipal food security dimensions and opportunities table as a framework to collect your data.

Hot Tip!

This tables promotes a food system scanning process that uses the 4 'environments for health' to frame local opportunities to food access and availability.

Environments for health

Natural

Local food growers - primary producers

Economic

Local retail outlets that provide home deliveries

Mobile food vans that offer healthy food choices (i.e. at community events)

Review of contractual arrangements, regulations and fees applicablt to foodservice outlets, local markets and mobile food vans (to explore opportunities to incentivise healthy food options)

Built

Local food retail, food markets and vending machines, water fountains in public places

Socio-cultural

Community programs and services - for social food and connectedness

Undertake a local food system needs assessment cont.

Hot Tip!

An example of a local food system needs assessment that has used 'environments for health'.

Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities

Health & Wellbeing

What are the demographic factors? What are the indices of disadvantage?
Are there infants, children, youth and women of child bearing age who are at risk of food security problems?
What are the food and nutrition risk factors for the population?
Who are considered to be the most vulnerable?

Opportunities	Natural	Built	Economic	Socio-cultural
Local Food Chain System Food produced	Are there any food growers (primary producers) Are there any community gardens used for growing local food? Are any programs encouraging edible planting in public areas?	Are there any local food factories/ processors/distributors? Are there any local supermarket food outlets? Are there any other local retail food outlets? Are there any local retail food markets? Are there any retail local dining and meal outlets? Are there any local liquor outlets?	Are there any characteristics of retail food outlets that are economic barriers to food access? Does the cost of transport affect ability of residents to access food?	Are there any emerging cultural groups who require access to culturally appropriate food? Are there infant, child, youth, and aged support and activities for social and food connectedness?
Food available for distribution Food available for purchase	Are any programs supporting growing & sharing of food from home gardens? Are local water restrictions in place? What are the effects of water restrictions on growing food in these gardens?	Are daily basic food needs (milk, bread,fruit) within reasonable distance for all residents? What amenities are provided for bicycle transport? Does public transport connect households to retail food supplies, dining and meal outlets?	Are there any local retail food outlets that provide home food deliveries? Are there any local retail food outlets that provide online food shopping with delivery?	Are there any 'breast feeding welcome here" locations? Are there community programs and activities for social and food connectedness?
Food purchased Food eaten	Is any assistance available for water conservation and recycling? How is food and water safety, food waste and packaging waste addressed?	Are there essential (maintained) amenities on walking routes and in public spaces? How many households have cars? Are Baby Change Room facilities readily available? Is there any community transport connecting households to food supplies, dining and meal outlets?	Are there any community dining and meal outlets? Do any community food outlets provide take-home or home food delivery? Are there any community kitchens?	Are there any barriers (natural, built, economic) to food access for cultural groups and at-risk groups? Are there any barriers (natural, built, economic) to physical activity for cultural groups and at-risk groups?
Social benefit Health status outcomes	Are there any local environmental initiatives	Are there minimum standards for food storage and preparation in community housing?	Are there any emergency relief food outlets?	Are there any identified community resilience factors that can be built on to improve food security?

Assess the food security of your community

Having conducted the local food system needs assessment, conduct an assessment of the strength of the local food system in terms of the extent to which the community – and in particular the most vulnerable members of the community – do or do not enjoy food security.

Consider the following questions in making your assessment:

- To what extent do the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community enjoy secure and affordable access to culturally appropriate and healthy food at all times?
- If they do not enjoy such access, what are the principal barriers, and how might they be addressed? At what level (local/regional/national/global) do the barriers exist?
- Are any existing groups, organisations and/or institutions taking action to address those barriers? If so, what actions are they taking? How effective have they been?

Assess the food security of your community cont.

Use your findings to identify and prioritise actions. This information will also serve as a conversation starter within local government, the local food coalition or the community more broadly.

Hot Tip!

For more information on Food Security please see Topic in Focus on page 62.

Deliver

Develop an action plan

After undertaking a local food system needs assessment, the Local Food Coalition should lead the development of an action plan to address the key gaps and opportunities identified.

Through the action plan, the coalition will:

- develop a common language and understanding about the strengths and challenges of the local food system
- set targets for the coalition for 12 months/3 years
- include time for reflective/planning workshops at 6-month intervals to track progress
- foster coordination and collaboration between different sectors in the food system, with a particular focus on the voice of children and youth
- evaluate and influence policy
- work to mobilise resources and funding
- launch or support programs and services that address local needs – again with a particular focus on children and youth.

Councils should consider prioritising 1 or 2 key actions. As part of this, councils may wish to consider 'quick win' actions to help generate enthusiasm and support. Examples of policy and program actions councils should consider include:

- developing a comprehensive food system strategy
- exploring food distribution gaps and opportunities including a food hub feasibility study
- Providing healthy food and drink in community facilities and at events
- exploring how the community can support and enable community school garden/farm initiatives
- mapping vacant urban land for food growing.

Example action plans and further examples of policy and program actions can be found under recommended resources.

Review and embed

Develop an evaluation framework to monitor progress

Continuous evaluation of the Local Food Coalition against the Terms of Reference (including core coalition membership) and Action Plan is required to ensure it is meeting its objectives.

The best way to do this is to develop an evaluation framework that details the measures, process, and reporting requirements of the Coalition. Refer to the Evaluation section for more information.

Recommended resources

Local Food Coalition

Terms of Reference template to help councils define the purpose and structure of their Local Food Coalition.

Expression of Interest (EOI) for a position on the Local Food Coalition

Healthy Food Connect – a model for local food system change from the Victorian Government.

Benalla Food Security Scan: Scoping Healthy Food Access in Benalla

Mildura VLGA Food Scan Report

Examples from other councils

Cardinia Community Food Strategy and Action Plan 2018–26

Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020–2030

City of Melbourne Food policy discussion paper

Darebin City Council Food security discussion paper

Moreland Community Health Service Food security in Moreland: a needs assessment

HealthWest Healthy foods for healthy communities: issues of food access and availability in the west

Examples of policy and program actions

The People's Food Plan – contains specific proposals for goals, targets and actions that local governments can take to realise a fair, diverse and democratic food system for the benefit of all Australians.

North East Victoria Local Government Food Policy & Strategy Discussion Paper – explores opportunities for local governments to develop food policy and strategies that will benefit communities and the environment.

VicHealth Food For All – 10 resource sheets and short videos designed to support local governments in advancing a food security agenda.

Partnership between the Neighbourhood Project, the Fawkner Bowling Club and Moreland Council to establish the Fawkner Food Bowls urban farm.

City of Monash's support for 3000 Aches Olive Harvest Festival

Toronto Youth Food Policy Council

Case study - Latrobe Valley – Food for All

The local food coalition, known as **Food For All Latrobe Valley**, was established in October 2018 in response to high rates of food insecurity within the municipality. The Coalition is an initiative of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone, and is supported by the Latrobe Health Assembly, Central West Gippsland Primary Care Partnership and many other organisations and community members.

Food For All Latrobe Valley's main goal is to increase access to fresh nutritious food across Latrobe Valley. To do this, the Coalition strengthens local partnerships and works collaboratively to support local organisations, community groups and community members to deliver effective, place-based solutions.

Food For All Latrobe Valley is currently implementing the **Food For All Latrobe Valley Action Plan 2020**–2021, which outlines the Coalition's vision and objectives, and includes 45 specific and measurable actions.

The ambitious one

Implement a healthy and sustainable food system strategy

Growing numbers of Victorian councils are developing, adopting and implementing food system strategies. Food system strategies provide a framework and mandate for local government that guides actions to support and strengthen local food systems in order to achieve key health and wellbeing, sustainability and community development objectives.

It is critical that the food system is designed for the whole community. Consider breastfeeding and early years nutrition, and focus on members of First Nations, as well as young people and members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people who have reduced opportunity to experience a healthy and secure food system.

Consistent with the principles underpinning local government action in the Local Government Act 2020 (see Topic in focus on page 61), the strategy should be founded on an inclusive and participatory approach with multisectoral involvement from within the community and across council departments. The strategy should clearly identify tangible actions with specific measures, indicators and targets, and be accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Hot Tip!

As you embark on your food system strategy priorities, think about how they can align with the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Council Plan and other strategic documents. This will ensure support from key internal stakeholders and decision-makers across the organisation and coordination between any priority population groups identified in those other plans, such as children and young people.

How-to guide to:
Implement a healthy and sustainable food system strategy

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, community strengthening, economic development and events.

Ideally, the strategy will be developed by a key working group from a local food coalition (see '**The step up: Create a local food coalition**') or by a similar group of people working to achieve healthy food system goals. If a coalition is not currently in formation at your council, make sure the working group includes a range of food system actors and perspectives, especially those experiencing food insecurity and/or other forms of disadvantage, and youth members.

Plan

Convene a food system strategy working group

This working group will guide the process and provide governance oversight and support.

It should integrate closely with the established cross-department internal council officer sub-committee.

Depending on council size and capacity, 2 or 3 council officers from the sub-committee should attend and support meetings of the working group. This is critical to continue building capacity, confidence and understanding of food systems issues and opportunities broadly across council.

Develop a food system strategy plan

The plan to develop the strategy should be scoped out over a period of 18 months to 3 years, depending on council capacity and timelines, on a month-by-month basis, with specific responsibilities and reporting allocated to key staff and partners.

The working group should determine the goals of the plan. For example, a healthy and sustainable food system strategy could include:

- multisectoral actions to support the adoption of sustainable farming practices and food production enterprises
- healthy food policies in local government-owned settings (see the 'Embedding healthy food and drink options in council owned and operated places' impact stream on page 30) and healthy food procurement
- provision for the consideration of health and social impacts of land use planning
- supporting and empowering children and youth to understand where their food comes from and the impacts it has on their health and wellbeing as well as the natural environment (food literacy)
- improving availability and accessibility of nutritious and culturally appropriate food for all, including vulnerable groups
- celebrating the diversity of local production and economic opportunities.

Design

Build capacity of the working group with the collective impact methodology

Collective impact is a valuable method to guide the development and implementation of a food system strategy. Reasons for this include the multi-dimensional nature of the food system, which means that change requires the collaborative efforts of many different organisations and partners working together, over an extended period, around a shared agenda for change, with mutually aligned and reinforcing actions, and agreed measures to monitor progress.

These are all key characteristics of the collective impact approach, which has been used successfully to guide the development and implementation of other council food strategies. The **Community Food Strategy in Cardinia Shire** as well as the **Food System Strategy of the City of Greater Bendigo** are 2 strong examples.

Build capacity of the working group with the collective impact methodology cont.

For an outline of this methodology see Figures 1 and 2 below; and see here for further resources.

Familiarity and confidence with this methodology is vital to the successful development and implementation of the food system strategy. It is suggested that each council seek appropriate training as required for working group members.

The 5 Conditions of Collective Impact

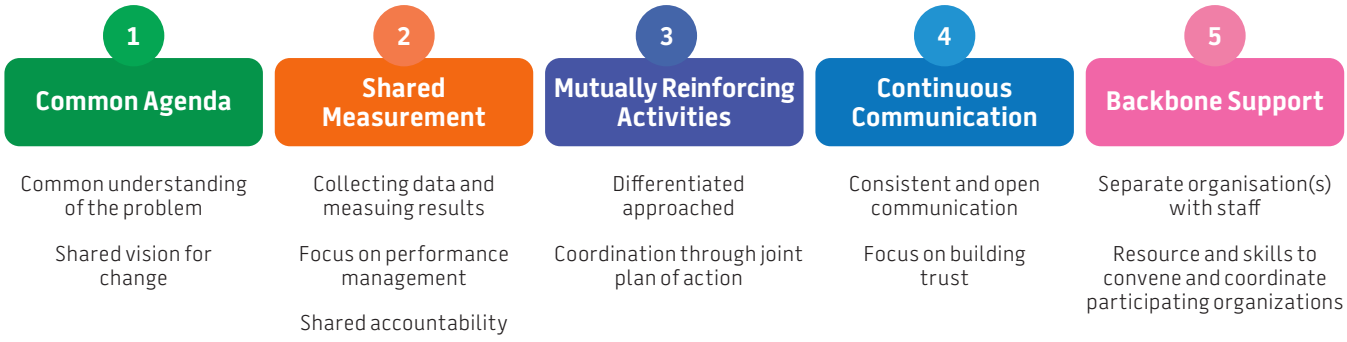


FIGURE 1: The 5 Conditions of Collective Impact[3]

Collective Impact Efforts Tend to Transpire Over 4 Key Phases

Components for Success	Governance & Infrastructure	Strategic Planning	Community Involvement	Evaluation & Improvement
Phase 1 Generating Ideas and Dialogue	Convene community stakeholders	Hold dialogue about issues, community context, and available resources	Facilitate community outreach specific to goal	Determing if there is consensus / urgency to move forward
Phase 2 Initiate Action	Identify champions and form cross-sector group	Map the landscape and use data to make case	Facilitate community outreach	Analyze baseline data to ID key issues and gaps
Phase 3 Organise for Impact	Create infrastructure (backbone and processes)	Create common agenda (common goals and strategy)	Engage community and build public will	Establish shared metrics (indicators, measurement, and approach)
Phase 4 Sustain Action and Impact	Facilitate and refine	Support Implementation (alignment to goals and strategies)	Continue engagement and conduct advocacy	Collect, track, and report progress (process to learn and improve)

FIGURE 2: The 4 Key Phases of Collective Impact[4]

3. Inspired by www.fsg.org/blog/navigating-collective-impact
4. Inspired by www.dmeforpeace.org/media_gallery/me-thursday-talk-the-evolution-of-collective-impact/

Develop a detailed community engagement plan

Refer to your council's existing community engagement framework or guidelines. Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest, or affiliation or identity, to address issues affecting their wellbeing.

In 2016 the City of Greater Bendigo published their **Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit** – a useful resource for community engagement processes by local government in Victoria. The guidelines outline the techniques and tools for engagement at levels outlined in Figure 3 below.

Hot Tip!

This phase should not be shorter than 6 months and, ideally, should last for at least 12 months. While this timeframe is considerably longer than a standard online and/or survey-based consultation process, it is recommended given the cross-cutting nature of the food system, as well as the diverse range of community members and organisations that need to be engaged to achieve the development and successful implementation of the food system strategy.

Hot Tip!

It may be helpful to review the case study on the City of Greater Bendigo on **page 27**.

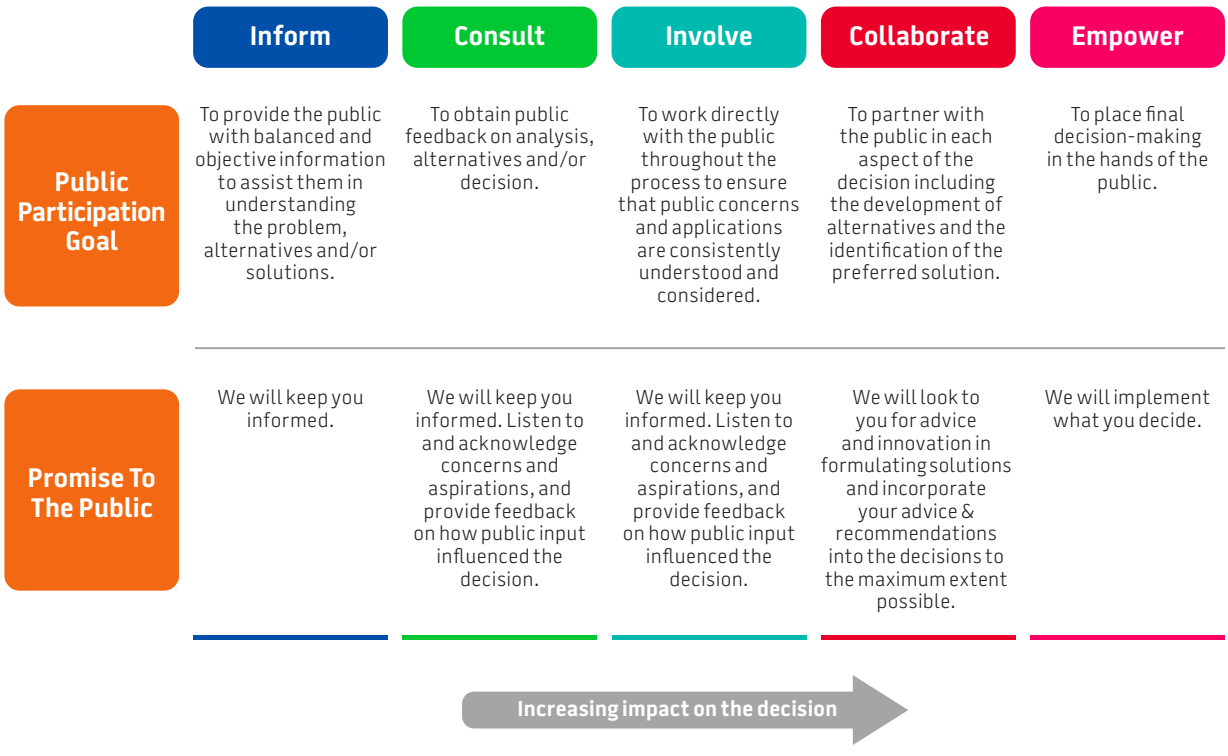


FIGURE 3: Spectrum of community engagement and public participation[5]

5. Source: IAP2 Foundation, Canada **www.iap2canada.ca/foundations/**

Develop a detailed community engagement plan cont.

The goals of community engagement in the development of a food systems strategy should focus on 'involve, collaborate and empower'.

Recommendations:

- Gather information, data and facts about the community's experiences of their local food system.
- Gather a range of perspectives and opinions from the community about the strengthens and weaknesses of their local food system.
- Understand better the opportunities and concerns of the community about the local food system.
- Build alliances and relationships for the future to strengthen the local food system, as well as to guide and implement actions (e.g. through the formation of a Local Food Coalition).
- Bring different groups in the community together for a common outcome e.g. around the shared vision and agenda for a healthy, sustainable and fair local food system[6]

Hot Tip!

This step could also be consistent with the Collective Impact and Assets-based approach to community development outlined on **page 61**.

Ensure that the community engagement plan is developed with community members, including all members of the working group. It should be as inclusive as possible. Invite the participation of a broad representation of the community, e.g. representatives of youth networks, early years centres and maternal and child health services, First Nations representatives, primary and secondary schools, food relief agencies, farmer groups, community gardeners and others, and local organisations representing people experiencing homelessness or food insecurity.

Ensure that:

- community networks and groups are fully briefed and included in the process as early as possible so that they can encourage their members and networks to participate
- adequate time is planned for the community engagement process to allow the conversation to unfold at the community level, for ideas and suggestions to circulate and for levels of understanding (food systems literacy) to build.

Hot Tip!

In terms of engaging with and involving people who have direct lived experience of food insecurity, the **Council to Homeless Persons Peer Education Support Program** offers a facilitated process for local government to raise awareness about homelessness and related issues (including food insecurity and family violence).

6. Bendigo Community Engagement Policy, p21.

Deliver

Implement the engagement plan

To support the implementation of the engagement plan, ensure that:

- all facilitators receive adequate briefings and training about facilitation techniques such as active and respectful listening
- a range of participation and engagement methods are made available, including community meetings, kitchen table talks, focus groups, online surveys, listening posts, pop-up stalls at markets and brief phone interviews
- the engagement process is supported by a social media campaign and website resources.

Collect responses in a central location and organise the information in a way that it can be processed, reviewed and is informative to the working group.

Record feedback and close the loop

Read through the feedback received during the engagement plan. Communicate the findings and common themes in a discussion document that summaries and synthesises the information. Present this to the working group and, later, the community. Share this widely through all available channels and networks, and invite further comment and feedback.

Produce a high-level draft

Draft the strategy with the working group. It should distil the 4 or 5 key themes that have emerged during the consultation and engagement, as well as the top 4 to 6 key priority actions. Share this widely through all available channels and networks, and invite further comment and feedback. Convene 1 or 2 key partner and stakeholder workshops to test the draft strategy.

Further refine the draft strategy

With the working group, refine the final draft that is to be signed off by council for public exhibition and comment.

Review and embed

Obtain endorsement by council

When the public exhibition period has ended, work through feedback with the working group and relevant council leaders to adopt changes where appropriate. Follow council processes for formal council endorsement of the strategy.

Celebrate with a public launch!

Organise an event to showcase the council's and community's hard work. This will help to create a sense of community ownership and build the social glue that facilitates future collaboration. If budget permits, produce a video to use as a public communications tool.

Recommended resources

Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020–2030 and launch video

Cardinia Community Food Strategy – launched at a Food Forum in February 2019 and captured on the Cardinia Food Movement website

City of Moreland Food System Strategy

NorthEast Local Food Strategy

Food-sensitive planning and urban design (Heart Foundation/Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab)

Case study - City of Greater Bendigo Food System Strategy – Community engagement

During the council's 3-month community engagement process, staff spoke with more than 1,000 community members and groups using the following methods:

- online survey
- stakeholder workshop
- face-to-face meetings
- telephone interviews with farmers and producers
- listening posts
- engagement stalls
- focus groups
- community sessions.

The benefits of effective community engagement (as outlined in the Greater Bendigo Community Engagement Guidelines, Toolkit and Policy) include:

- improved quality of the policy being developed – in this case, a food system strategy
- more resilient relationships with the community
- enhancement of council's reputation (and ability to check that council is meeting local needs)
- increased understanding of community issues and concerns
- better shared partnerships and networks
- enhanced capacity to deal with complex and emerging issues
- opportunities for diverse voices to be heard – especially among vulnerable and marginalised members and sectors of the community
- communities identifying priorities themselves and owning the solutions.

Specific efforts were made to include the voices of children and youth, for example through the involvement of the University Student Association. The key partners and stakeholders included over 30 local partners, all of whom committed to specific actions as part of the implementation of the food system strategy, consistent with the Collective Impact approach.

Following the conclusion of the initial phase of consultation, council staff drafted an Issues and Opportunities Report. That report was circulated with key partners and stakeholders, which then led to an action planning workshop with representatives of those groups. Feedback from that workshop informed the development of the draft strategy. The draft strategy was then released for public comment and further revised.

Case study - Cardinia Community Food Strategy – Community engagement

The community engagement for Cardinia's food strategy was based on Kitchen Table Talks, a participatory process undertaken for the creation of **A People's Food Policy for Canada**.

The Cardinia Food Circles team recruited a team of community food animators and scribes to host kitchen table talks and document the discussions. The Food Circles team synthesised this information into key findings and recommendations, which in turn formed the draft of the strategy. The kitchen table talks were complemented by an Ideas Harvest campaign that included stalls at community events and other listening posts.

This engagement informed 4 key themes of the Cardinia Community Food Strategy:

1. a healthy food system that promotes the health of people and enhances the natural environment
2. a sustainable food system that strengthens our local economy and builds the capacity and resilience of our communities
3. a delicious food system that nourishes, celebrates and enjoys a diverse range of local food and cultures
4. a fair food system that makes nutritious food accessible and affordable to everyone across our communities.

The strategy had 4 priority action areas to guide its implementation, corresponding to the 4 themes above:

1. protect and use fertile land as a source of fresh food for current and future generations
2. grow a vibrant local food economy that supports growers and enables people to access locally produced food
3. enhance food knowledge, skills and culture within schools, workplaces, clubs and the wider community
4. reduce and divert food waste from landfill and reuse water to grow food.

Some of the principal resources may be useful for councils undertaking similar work:

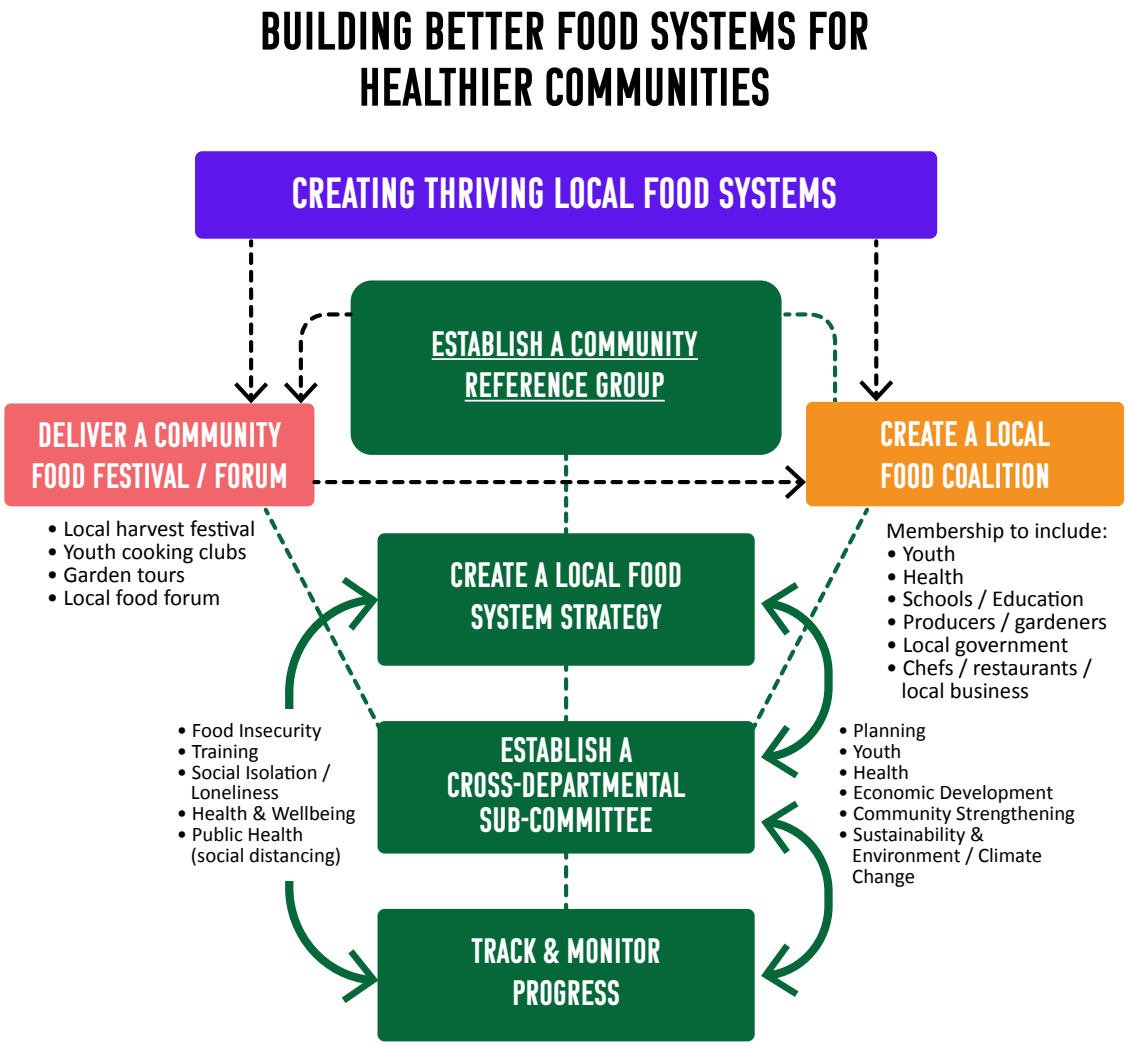
Cardinia Kitchen Table Talks Discussion Paper – Overview of the process

Cardinia Kitchen Table Talks – Handbook for animators

Cardinia Kitchen Table Talks – Guide for scribes

Hot Tip!

For councils keen to expand beyond one activity, the above recommended activities can work together to build on and complement each other for a strong food system.



Impact Stream:
Embedding healthy food and drink options in council owned and operated places

Local governments can lead by example in creating healthy food retail environments across council-owned facilities to support the health and wellbeing of their community. Creating healthy food retail environments can drive positive change in the local food system by encouraging community demand for healthier food and drink options.

Current food environments are saturated with the supply and promotion of unhealthy food and drinks, and this is having a significant impact on children and young peoples' preferences, food purchasing and what products they pester their parents for. Victorian children are consuming up to 40% of their daily intake from discretionary choices like biscuits, cakes, confectionery, ice cream, pastries and soft drinks[7].

These foods and drinks are often heavily promoted and easily available in places that children and young people frequent, such as sports and recreation facilities, cultural and community arts centres, libraries and sports clubs, normalising their consumption and contributing to poor diets.

This impact stream supports councils to implement policies and practices to provide healthy food retail environments in council-owned facilities. Victorian local governments have access to a range of dedicated support to create healthier food and drink environments through a range of programs, campaigns and support services, developed by nutrition experts specifically for the Victorian context. While working through the processes outlined in this impact stream, councils can identify the programs and support services highlighted in the guides and additional resources sections that best match their needs of the local community and the goals they want to achieve.

Quick note

In this impact stream, the Quick Win implementation action encourages councils to start out by focusing on drinks, while the Step Up implementation actions encourages councils to focus on food. The implementation actions are presented in this way to offer options that suit councils of different capacity and can help to focus and simplify the key messages, stakeholders and suppliers required to complete the action. Councils could combine these actions as one if there is great appetite for change by the community and facilities.

Hot Tip!

Healthy food and drinks in early years services

While this impact stream focuses on retail environments in council-owned facilities, early childhood services are also important places to provide healthy food environments for children. Detailed support to address healthy eating and oral heath in early years services is available through the Achievement Program.

7. Department of Health. Victoria's health: The Chief Health Officer's report 2014. 2016. https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/cho-report-2014

Quick note

This activity refers to a number of additional resources:

- Vic Kids Eat Well is designed to help community settings to provide healthier food environments for children and young people. It is delivered by Cancer Council Victoria's Achievement Program and Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Advisory Service. Register for support at vickidseatwell.health.vic.gov.au
- The Healthy Eating Advisory Service's tool FoodChecker, which uses the Victorian Government's Healthy Choices Guidelines to identify foods and drinks that are considered best choice (green), those that should be chosen carefully (amber) or should be limited (red).
- The Healthy Eating Advisory Service 'For organisations with vending machines' resource
- VicHealth's Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets
- VicHealth's Provision of drinking water fountains in public areas resource

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- increase children and young peoples' access to healthy food and drink options in council-owned facilities
- increase community desire and expectations for healthy food retail environments, making it the norm in spaces frequented by children and young people
- build connections with local producers, suppliers and caterers to support the local economy
- increase commitment to sourcing and purchasing more local and sustainable food.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Embedding healthy food and drink options in council owned and operated places', councils will have:

- ☐ identified the council owned and managed spaces frequented by children and young people that will be the focus of change
- ☐ met the healthy food and/or drink environment changes relevant to the selected implementation action
- ☐ adopted a new policy/ies that ensure improvements to council food environments achieved through this impact stream are sustained
- ☐ demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

The quick win

Create healthy drinks environments in council settings

Focusing on healthy drinks environments can be a good way for councils to make changes that benefit children and young peoples' health and wellbeing. Sugary drinks have no place in children and young peoples' diets as they provide no nutritional value and are a key driver of high sugar intake and dental caries. By reducing the availability and promotion of sugary drinks across the municipality, councils can support children and young people to opt for water as the drink of choice.

For this implementation action, councils should aim to increase the availability of free drinking water and healthy 'green' drink options like bottled water, and reduce the availability and promotion of sugary 'red' drinks in council-owned facilities frequented by children and young people. This may include sports and recreation facilities, libraries, cultural and community arts centres, and sports clubs.

It is strongly recommended that councils work progressively towards meeting the Healthy Choices Guidelines standards for drinks in priority settings. Vic Kids Eat Well is designed to help settings improve their food environments and meet the Healthy Choices Guidelines by offering support, incentives and recognition along the way. Alongside this, councils should create a plan to continue implementing healthy drinks environments across all council-owned settings, including council catering for staff and visitors, and aim to incorporate this as standard council practice. The healthy habits of parents, carers and adults can be a strong influence on the habits of children and young people, meaning the proliferation of healthy drinks environments will have health benefits for the wider community.

By bringing together the relevant partners and raising community awareness of the value of creating healthy drinks environments, councils can garner momentum and support to create healthy food environments.

How-to guide to:
Create healthy drinks environments in council settings

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include health planning and promotion, family and youth services, and facility and asset management. Councils should also include representatives from the identified facilities.

Community-facing activities provide robust opportunities to work with children, young people and their families as well as community partners with similar goals, such as community health services.

Plan

Hot Tip!

Register for Vic Kids Eat Well and get support (via phone or in-person) to help you assess your drinks environment.

VIC KIDS EAT WELL

Involve council departments

Form a working group that brings together council staff from diverse areas including health promotion, procurement, environmental sustainability, children and youth services and departments overseeing the target settings (for example, the sports and recreation facility). The working group will be responsible for developing a strategic, phased approach to implementing healthy drinks changes across all council-owned settings.

Agree on a goal for this work and develop an implementation plan that sets out how the working group will:

- integrate this work into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- develop internal council policies and procedures
- engage councillors by using an infographic template to demonstrate the need/issue for healthy drinks environments
- develop relationships with retailers and local catering and food businesses
- prioritise long-term maintenance planning to sustain the healthy changes made in council-owned settings.

Identify priority settings

Prioritise the following settings, facilities and spaces. Set targets for the number or type of settings you will work on during the course of the action, relevant to the needs in your community.
Think about settings such as:

- council owned, operated or managed settings that sell food and drinks to children and young people, e.g. sport and recreation facilities, community centres
- settings with food retail outlets
- settings with drink supplier contracts in place
- settings with retail outlet employees.

Engage with champions to support change

Early on, build relationships with key people in the priority facilities identified. Meet with relevant managers or leaders with responsibility for the facility and communicate the project goals, rationale and strategic context.

Identify key staff or volunteers who can support the activity as champions. Also identify children and young people in the community who can act as champions. They should frequent the food retail outlet regularly and be on board with the goals of the activity.

Assess

Analyse capacity for change

Understand the setting's capabilities to make changes by using Table 1.4 of the VicHealth **Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets**.

Assess the existing drink environment

Before making any changes, use **Resource 2: Step-by-step photo audit** and **Resource 3: Food and drink environment audit** to audit the current drink environment. This includes understanding the drinks available for sale in the retail outlet/s and any vending machines on site.

Input relevant data about the current drinks fridges into **FoodChecker** to understand the baseline starting point.

Hot Tip!

FoodChecker is a free online tool that supports individuals and businesses to classify their products, recipes and menus. You will receive a report showing the proportion of 'green', 'amber' and 'red' items in your outlet based on the Victorian Government Healthy Choices Guidelines.

Design

Engage community participants

Communicating with customers and staff during implementation and asking for feedback may also help them feel part of the change and gain their support.

From the VicHealth toolkit use **Resource 5: Customer and staff surveys** to understand customer and staff perspectives.

Surveying customers with a questionnaire or informally speaking with them can be a valuable way to understand the perspectives of those who purchase drinks from the setting. Prioritise children and young people – this is a good opportunity to seek their views and bring them along on the journey.

Findings can be used to demonstrate support for healthy food retail environments to council and the retail outlet's management.

Use the VicHealth toolkit **Resource 6: Survey results infographic template** to help communicate results. Findings from the survey can inform the type of changes to drinks the outlet will make.

Deliver

Trial initial changes

Now that the context in which the food retail outlet operates and their current drinks offerings is understood, begin to make changes. Start by trialing small 'easy wins' as these are unlikely to have any significant negative impact on revenue:

- ensure free drinking water is easily available and promoted
- place 'green'/healthier drinks at eye-level for children and young people
- place 'red'/sugary drinks out of sight of children and young people, e.g. behind the counter
- cover all 'red'/sugary drinks with a healthy drinks promotional poster
- only promote 'green'/healthier drinks and brands featuring 'green'/healthier drinks.

Use **Resource 4a: Drink fridge traffic light strip labels** and **Resource 4c: Water promotion poster**.

Collaborate with young community members to promote the changes

Engage with the children and young people who attend the setting to design posters that can be used for promotion or as fridge decals to cover red drinks in the retail outlets. For example, contact local early childhood services and primary schools, run a local competition or reach out to sports and recreation facility groups that children and young people frequent.

Build capacity of staff within the setting

Work with food retail outlet staff to identify opportunities to provide training and supporting resources to increase their knowledge and understanding about healthy drinks. Basic training in the Healthy Choices Guidelines will support this and help sustain long-term change.

Tailored training that meets the goals and objectives of the specific outlet will enhance the session. Use **Resource 8: Retail outlet training template** to guide this training.

Direct staff and volunteers operating the retail outlet to the **Healthy Eating Advisory Service**'s online training modules for **retail outlet staff**. **Vic Kids Eat Well** can also connect you to trained health promoters who can offer one-on-one support and may have access to localised training opportunities.

Involve local suppliers

Working with drinks suppliers to make changes can be valuable. Councils should encourage the retail outlet manager or champion to notify the supplier that the outlet will be making changes to the drinks offered and request they provide a fridge planogram that promotes their healthier options.

When working with multiple retail outlets, encourage the outlets to create a cooperative buyers' group to reduce the costs of healthier drink orders. A buyers' group enables outlets to demonstrate demand and purchase products in bulk, often at a discounted rate.

Seek advice from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service if support is required in engaging suppliers. Open communication with the supplier, including a brief overview of the Healthy Choices Guidelines, will help the supplier understand what food and/or drinks to supply to the outlet. Use **Resource 9: Email template to supplier**.

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate

Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of changes is important to:

- determine whether the changes have been successfully implemented
- identify ways to improve the changes
- justify the use of resources
- allow the changes to be adapted.

In the early stages, more frequent and intensive monitoring, for example every 2 weeks, can ensure early identification of any concerns. However, as the setting begins to implement changes, councils should opt for less frequent monitoring, for example every 6 months.

Use **Resource 2: Step by step photo audit** to collect data to support monitoring and maintenance of changes and the **FoodChecker** to classify drink products.

Celebrate

Recognise the achievements and progress of individual outlets towards providing healthier drinks. Acknowledge their efforts with awards and a formal thank-you from leadership, or use council websites and social media to highlight the changes.

Contact VicHealth and the Healthy Eating Advisory Service to see if they can promote the changes via their social media channels. Register for **Vic Kids Eat Well** to receive incentives and toolkits to help you celebrate.

Recommended resources

See page 7 of the toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets.

Case study – Greater Shepparton KidsTown reduce sugary drinks

Case study – Gippsland Regional Sport Complex

See the Healthy Eating Advisory Service case studies of **Winchelsea Swimming Pool** and **Lara Pool Kiosk** for examples of engaging children in healthy changes to retail outlets.

The step up

Create healthy food retail environments in council-owned settings

Councils should ensure healthy food environments are provided in council-owned facilities so that children and young people's health and wellbeing is supported when they are out and about in the community. Commonly, unhealthy food options are readily available in council settings, which undermines activities provided by councils to support physical activity, social connection and mental wellbeing. Providing healthy food environments in council-owned facilities sends a strong message that council is committed to promoting healthy diets in the community.

For this implementation action, councils should aim to build on the changes made to drinks in 'The quick win' action by establishing healthy food retail environments as the norm in council-owned settings. This is done by increasing access to healthy 'green' food options and reducing the availability of unhealthy 'red' foods from retail outlets in council-owned settings that are commonly used by children and young people.

Councils should aim to work progressively towards meeting the Healthy Choices Guidelines standards for food. Vic Kids Eat Well is a key resource councils can use. It is designed to help settings improve their food environments and meet the Healthy Choices Guidelines by offering support, incentives and recognition along the way.

Alongside this, councils should create a plan to continue implementing healthy food retail environments across all council-owned settings, including catering for staff and visitors, and incorporate this as standard council practice. The healthy habits of parents, carers and adults can be a strong influence on the habits of children and young people, meaning the proliferation of healthy food retail environments will have health benefits for the wider community.

How-to guide to:

Create healthy food retail environments in council-owned settings

Quick note

The steps outlined below are similar to 'The quick win: Create healthy drinks environments in council settings'. If you have already implemented healthy drinks changes in settings, continue to work with those facilities on increasing access to healthy food options before moving onto additional settings.

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include health planning and promotion, family and youth services, facility and asset management, and representatives from the facilities identified.

Community-facing action provides robust opportunities to work with children, young people and their families as well as community partners with similar goals, such as community health services.

Involve council departments

Form a working group that brings together council staff from diverse areas including health promotion, procurement, environmental sustainability, and the target required to implement the changes. The working group will be responsible for developing a strategic, phased approach to implementing healthy food changes across all council-owned settings.

Plan

Develop an implementation plan

Hot Tip!

Register for **Vic Kids Eat Well** and get support (via phone or in-person) to help you assess your drinks environment.

VIC KIDS EAT WELL

The implementation plan should set out strategies to:

- integrate into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- develop internal council policies and procedures
- engage councillors
- develop relationships with local retailers, caterers, suppliers and food businesses
- prioritise long-term maintenance planning to sustain the healthy changes made in council-owned settings.

Identify priority settings

If you have already implemented healthy drinks changes in facilities, you should continue to work with them on increasing access to healthy food options before moving onto additional settings.

Identify which council settings, facilities or spaces to prioritise. Set a target for the number or type of facilities that are relevant to the needs in the community.

Councils should prioritise:

- council owned, operated or managed settings that sell food and drinks to children and young people, e.g. sport and recreation facilities, community centres
- settings with food retail outlets
- settings with drink supplier contracts in place
- settings with retail outlet employees.

Engage with champions to support the change

Build relationships with key people in the facilities early in the change process. Meet with relevant managers or leaders with responsibility over the council settings that have been identified and communicate the goals, rationale and strategic context for the project.

Identify key staff or volunteers who can support the activity as a 'champions'. Also identify children and young people in the community who can act as champions. They should frequent the food retail outlet regularly and be on board with the goals of this activity.

Assess

Analyse capacity for change

Understand the setting's capabilities to make changes by using Table 1.4 of the VicHealth **Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets**.

Assess the existing food environment

Before making any changes, use **Resource 2: Step by step photo audit** and **Resource 3: Food and drink environment audit** to audit the current food retail environment.

This includes understanding the foods available for sale in the retail outlet/s and any vending machines on site. Input relevant data about the current food and drinks available into

FoodChecker to understand the baseline starting point.

Hot Tip!

FoodChecker is a free online tool that supports individuals and businesses to classify their products, recipes and menus. You will receive a report showing the proportion of 'green', 'amber' and 'red' items in your outlet based on the Healthy Choices Guidelines.

Design

Engage community participants

Communicating with customers and staff during implementation and asking for feedback may also help them feel part of the change and gain their support.

Use **Resource 5: Customer and staff surveys** to understand customer and staff perspectives. Surveying customers with a questionnaire or informally by speaking with them can be a valuable way to understand the perspectives of those who purchase food and drinks from the setting.

Prioritise children and young people when surveying customers – this is a good opportunity to seek their views and bring them along on the journey.

Findings can be used to demonstrate support for healthy food retail environments to council and the retail outlet's management. Use **Resource 6: Survey results infographic template** to help communicate results. Findings can also help inform the type of changes to food and drinks the outlet will make.

Deliver

Trial initial changes

Now that the context in which the food retail outlet operates and their current food offerings is understood, begin to make changes. Start by trialing small 'easy wins' as these are unlikely to have any significant negative impact on revenue:

- remove confectionery from point-of-sale and place it in a less visible area (e.g. behind the counter)
- place 'green' foods in prominent locations: at point-of-sale, the main entrance and eye-level on shelves
- if supplying 'red' foods and drinks, supply smaller sizes where possible
- increase the price of 'red' foods and drinks to subsidise a decrease in price of 'green' foods and drinks
- only promote 'green' foods and drinks and brands featuring 'green' foods and drinks (see **Resource 4a: Drink fridge traffic light strip labels**, **Resource 4b: Traffic light food labels** and **Resource 4c: Water promotion poster**)
- remove branding and promotional materials featuring 'red' foods and drinks
- remove specials and meal deals featuring 'red' foods and drinks and only offer those featuring healthier options.

For additional suggestions, see page 7 of the VicHealth **Toolkit** for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets.

Collaborate with young community members to promote the changes

Engage children and young people to design promotional posters in the retail outlet. Contact local early childhood services and primary schools, run a local competition or reach out to sports and recreation facility groups that children and young people frequent.

Build capacity of staff within the setting

Work with food retail outlet staff to identify opportunities for training and provide resources to increase their knowledge and understanding about healthy food. Basic training in the Healthy Choices Guidelines will support this and help sustain long-term change.

Tailored training that meets the goals and objectives of the specific outlet will enhance the session.

Use **Resource 8: Retail outlet training template** to guide this training. You could also direct staff to the **Healthy Eating Advisory Service**'s online training modules for **retail outlet staff**.

Vic Kids Eat Well can also connect your to trained health promoters who can offer one-on-one support and may have access to localised training opportunities.

Involve local food suppliers

Working with food suppliers to make changes can be useful. Encourage the retail outlet manager or champion to notify the supplier that the outlet will be making changes to the foods offered. Open communication with the supplier, including a brief overview of the Healthy Choices Guidelines, will help the supplier understand what food and/or drinks to supply to the outlet (see **Resource 9: Email template to supplier**).

When working with multiple retail outlets, encourage the outlets to create a cooperative buyers' group to reduce the costs of healthier food orders. A buyers' group enables outlets to demonstrate demand and purchase products in bulk, often at a discounted rate.

Expand support to other settings

Establish a local community of practice to share and build new knowledge, resources and support among community food retail outlets within your local government and surrounding areas.

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate

Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of changes is important to:

- determine whether the change has been successfully implemented
- identify ways to improve the change
- justify the use of resources
- allow the change to be adapted.

In the early stages, more frequent and intensive monitoring, for example every 2 weeks, can ensure early identification of any concerns. However, as the setting begins to implement changes, councils should opt for less frequent monitoring, for example every 6 months.

Use **Resource 2: Step by step photo audit** to collect data to support monitoring and maintenance of changes, and **FoodChecker** to classify food products.

Celebrate

Recognise the achievements and progress of individual outlets towards providing healthier food and drinks. Acknowledge their efforts with awards and a formal thank-you from leadership, or use council websites and social media to highlight the changes. Vic Kids Eat Well offers support, incentives and recognition along the way to celebrate achievements.

Contact VicHealth and the Healthy Eating Advisory Service to see if they can promote the changes via their social media channels.

Recommended resources

See the Healthy Eating Advisory Service case studies of **Winchelsea Swimming Pool** and **Lara Pool Kiosk** for examples of engaging children in healthy changes to retail outlets.

The ambitious one

Adopt a healthy food policy approach for council

This action focuses on the development of a healthy food policy to ensure long-term sustainability of healthy food environments in council-owned facilities, settings and places. A healthy food policy will ensure that food and drinks provided and sold in council-owned facilities, settings and places are healthy and that local food procurement and sustainability measures are prioritised. If council is adopting a healthy and sustainable food systems strategy through the 'Promoting healthy food policy in council practice' impact stream, aim to embed or link the healthy food policy to this strategy.

Local healthy food procurement represents a significant opportunity to support and drive local food production and availability in your area. Councils demonstrating leadership and commitment to locally sourced foods will also contribute to building community awareness of the importance of local and healthy food systems. Embedding sustainability measures such as banning single-use plastics will not only support community and environmental health but also the Victorian Government's commitment to ban single-use plastics by February 2023.

The healthy food policy approach should emphasise the position of council to reinforce community health and wellbeing at all stages of life.

The policy/ies should:

- identify clear priority facilities, settings and places required to provide or sell healthy food and drinks
- include a commitment to healthy and more sustainable food procurement for council catering and events
- include a focus on adoption of healthy food and drink provision in council-owned early childhood services and supporting breastfeeding-friendly environments
- outline how future tenders, contracts and/or lease agreements for facilities will incorporate healthy food and drink provision
- include consideration of collective buying of food and drinks for facilities
- be developed in partnership with the community, including children and young people
- have the endorsement of council leaders
- be developed and operationalised across the organisation, for example through a cross-council implementation plan
- include consideration of sustained council oversight and governance for facilities to maintain healthy food retail environments.

How-to guide to:
Adopt a healthy food policy approach for council

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include representatives from council facilities with food retail and provision, health planning and promotion, procurement and contracts, environmental sustainability, family and youth services, and facility and asset management.

Council leaders and decision-makers can provide guidance and support for the implementation of food policy and should be engaged through the process.

Children and young people's right to healthy environments will be at the forefront of the policy development, and planning should identify when and how to include children and young people's voices and priorities in the process.

Plan

Involve council departments

Form a policy working group that brings together council staff from diverse areas including health promotion, procurement, and environmental sustainability, as well as local community food leaders, food businesses and caterers.

The working group will be responsible for a strategic, phased approach to developing the healthy food policy.

Develop an implementation plan

The implementation plan should set out:

- how the policies will be integrated into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and other relevant strategies
- timing for policy development, community engagement and implementation
- development of internal council policies and procedures to support the policy
- engagement of councillors, community and local food businesses and leaders
- development of relationships with retailers and local catering/food businesses.

Assess

Identify the existing policy context to determine how council policies and procurement agreements touch on or intersect with food provision, such as the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Council Plan, healthy and sustainable food systems strategy, sustainability, food waste and recycling, economic development strategies, contracts with food vendors and suppliers.

Identify if the policies conflict with or support the goals of the healthy food policy, and how these could be reviewed or addressed as part of this activity.

Design

Develop healthy food policy/ies

Depending on the level of council influence on food and drink provision, a one-size-fits-all policy may not suit the council's needs. A tiered policy approach can allow for different expectations depending on factors such as local government influence and capabilities.

A tiered approach may include the below categories, which should be tailored based on the type of community food retail outlets at the council.

Tier 1 settings may have a high level of council oversight as well as a high level of complexity, including accountability, corporate responsibility, community safety, compliance, and/or quality standards implications. For example, council-managed facilities including sports and recreation, early childhood services, cultural settings and community hubs and council-run events.

Tier 2 settings may have a lower level of council influence, and complexity/risk than Tier 1. For example:

- council venues and services where food and beverages are provided, available for purchase, or used as a means of program delivery by council personnel
- council's community grants programs wherever food or beverages are directly supplied to grant recipients
- food-focused promotional activities, programs and events funded (or co-funded) by council.

Tier 1 and 2 settings would be required to develop a procedure outlining how they will implement and monitor the healthy food policy in their setting.

Tier 3 settings may be council owned or managed premises that are leased to external parties or partner agencies (although operating at arm's length from council) and typically used for their own purposes. For example:

- council's sport and recreation facilities managed by community, volunteer or semi-professional sports clubs or commercial entities
- commercially operated cafes, restaurants or function centres, operating from a council owned or managed property
- casual hire of council owned or managed venues or facilities, for self-catered events.

These settings would be encouraged to implement the policy, but it would not be enforced.

Additional things to consider including in your healthy food policy/ies:

- offering financial incentives for adoption and maintenance of healthy food and drink provision, such as fee exemptions for healthy food outlets; eligibility for funding and/or grants; and/ or a reduction in rent for user groups
- monitoring healthy food and drink provision alongside routine site monitoring (e.g. incorporating a healthy food and drink check with regular food safety audits).

Engage your community and incorporate feedback

Prioritise children and young people so their input is included. Consider engaging local schools or community groups to support engagement with children and young people. Collate and share your findings with the community, including people who contributed. Incorporate feedback the community provided into the draft policy.

Crossover Opportunity

The **Kids Co-Designing Healthy Places toolkit** is part of the *Leading the Way – Engaging young voices for change* foundation module. It provides resources to engage, audit and co-design solutions for healthy places with and for children and young people in your community.

Deliver

Endorse and adopt the policy

The draft policy is now ready for council approval. Management may request that this policy is made available for public input a second time. Once you have obtained council approval, progress to final endorsement and sign-off.

Review and embed

Communicate and celebrate!

While the policy is going through the approval processes, develop a communications plan that covers internal and external promotion of the policy. Include the rationale, benefits and scope of the policy and communicate it to all council staff and across the community.

Recommended resources

Healthy Eating Advisory Service's **Organisational healthy food and drink policy template**

The **Achievement Program** (see Extra Implementation Support Resources) can support you to implement healthy food policies in your council and in council-owned facilities and early childhood services. You can also gain Victorian Government recognition as a healthy early childhood service or workplace. Victorian Government recognition is also available through the Achievement Program to promote the adopted policy where it applies to council facilities including libraries, sports facilities, community centres and early childhood services.

Impact Stream:
Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities

Many community organisations, groups, clubs and venues have sponsorship arrangements with brands and companies who profit from products that harm health and wellbeing, including alcohol and unhealthy food and drink ('harmful industries'). These arrangements result in the advertising and promotion of unhealthy and harmful products to children and young people through, for example, sponsorship, venue naming rights and product giveaways.

The distribution of fast-food vouchers for use as rewards in sport is rife. Among 500 Victorian parents surveyed in 2020, half said their children had received a voucher from a large fast-food company at their sports club, and 42% had received one for a local fast-food outlet. Fast food companies use vouchers to draw families into their restaurants, making them a lot of money at the expense of children's health.

These practices exploit children's vulnerabilities by creating positive norms around the consumption of unhealthy food and drink. Rewarding children with vouchers for fast food during sport or promoting unhealthy food and drink products and brands at venues and events builds powerful brand associations at a young age and contributes to poor health, now and into adulthood.

Sponsorship arrangements that promote harmful industry brands and products at council-run events or in council-owned public spaces directly undermine council obligations under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipal district. Councils are also uniquely positioned to enable, encourage and support grassroots clubs and other organisations to involve children and young people in sports, cultural activities or the arts in an active and healthy way, free from the promotion of unhealthy products.

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- reduce the exposure of unhealthy food, drink and alcohol marketing to children and young people
- ensure that council-run community initiatives aren't undermined by engagement with companies that produce and promote products that are harmful to health and wellbeing
- see a reduced reliance by community groups on incentives from unhealthy food and drink providers
- offer support to grassroots clubs and other organisations to celebrate children's involvement in sports, cultural activities or the arts in an active and healthy way.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Using healthy awards and sponsorships in community activities', councils will have:

- ☐ identified local high-impact settings, spaces or policy opportunities to focus on for the chosen intervention
- ☐ increased healthy rewards and/or sponsorships or decreased unhealthy rewards and/or sponsorships in those settings, spaces or policies
- ☐ demonstrated change in settings, spaces or policy that centre around children and young people
- ☐ demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

The quick win

Implement a healthy rewards program

This implementation action aims to phase out unhealthy food vouchers in children and young people's community activities. To constitute successful completion, council will provide healthy rewards for use by local not-for-profit clubs and organisations who provide recreation, arts or cultural opportunities for children and young people.

Vouchers can include free or discounted access to sport, leisure, arts or cultural facilities and events – anything that provides the opportunity to celebrate children and young people's achievements in an active, engaging and healthy way.

How-to guide to:
Implement a healthy rewards program

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, family and youth services, and managers of council facilities.

Ideally, such rewards will be made available to a range of not-for-profit organisations (recreation, arts, cultural) such as sporting clubs, community art, theatre or dance organisations. As a starting point, councils can provide healthy rewards for one category of organisation and then expand this over time.

Rewards and vouchers should provide free or discounted access to sport, leisure, arts or cultural facilities and events. This could span both council-owned and non-council owned facilities. These should be age-appropriate and continue the goal of promoting local opportunities for children and young people to be healthy and connected. Such vouchers could include:

- pools, gym, fitness class, court hire, inflatable play equipment, rock climbing or trampoline session
- arts centres, concerts or events
- museums and galleries
- school holiday programs offered through libraries, arts venues, youth services
- Freeza and other youth-oriented events
- kids traffic school/traffic school birthday parties.

Plan

Obtain vouchers from facilities or venues

Identify facilities to approach by talking to relevant council departments. There may be existing arrangements already in place between council and local facilities to provide vouchers that council can use. If there are no existing arrangements or if the facility is not council-owned you will need to meet with the facility/business manager to discuss the project and negotiate vouchers.

The vouchers should:

- provide free or discounted access to the facility
- include as many facilities as possible so you can provide rewards to as many children as possible
- be recorded by the facility when used so you can follow-up and assess popularity.

Rural councils should consider facilities in surrounding local government areas if there are limited options within the municipality.

Design

Promote healthy rewards to local organisations

Create a webpage that provides an overview of healthy rewards and allows clubs and community groups to submit their expression of interest or request access to vouchers.

Develop communications about healthy rewards to the local organisations you are targeting. In the case of sport, this could include approaching local associations to send an email or social media post to clubs. Having these communication channels set up also reinforces council's priority of fostering healthier relationships and demonstrates leadership action.

Set some basic criteria in order for organisations to access vouchers. For example, they must:

- be a not-for-profit entity
- demonstrate they provide recreation, cultural or arts opportunities for children and young people
- provide opportunities within the local government area.

Depending on the number of vouchers available, councils could apply an expression of interest closing date.

Deliver

Provide healthy rewards

Expressions of interest may be assessed on a first-come, first-serve basis. When deciding on the number of vouchers to provide to organisations, council may want to take into consideration the number of clubs or groups and participants.

Lower value rewards (e.g. player of the day) could be provided in higher volumes and higher value rewards (e.g. player of the year) in lower volumes.

The rewards may be in the form of a council-branded template, or simply vouchers provided by the facility or owner.

Recommended resources

(see also the Implementation Templates at the end of this document)

- Sample script for approaching facilities
- Sample expression of interest template
- Sample communications
- Sample voucher
- Media release for VicHealth's healthy sports rewards launch

The step up

Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events

This action aims to protect children and young people from advertising that alcohol and unhealthy food and drinks companies use to promote harmful products at council-run events. To constitute successful completion, council should develop and implement a healthy sponsorship policy to not engage unhealthy food and drink or alcohol sponsors for council-run events where families, children or young people are present. If suitable, the policy could be integrated into an existing council policy such as an events policy.

This would **not include vendor retail relationships** e.g. sale of food or alcohol at events where the vendor could advertise at point-of-sale (immediate service area) only.

How-to guide to:
Create healthy drinks environments in council settings

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, family and youth services, and festivals and events. Seek in-principle support for the approach from leaders of relevant teams.

Below are some key considerations to take into account when developing the healthy sponsorship policy. Consult widely with the relevant teams in your council and with trusted partners to come up with an approach that will work.

Plan

Determine your healthy sponsorship policy scope

Is the policy standalone or will be the principles be integrated into existing policies, including:

- procurement policy
- sponsorship policy
- children and youth strategy
- Council Plan (this would allow high-level endorsement).

Allow for retail arrangements whereby alcohol or unhealthy food vendors can sell products and advertise at the immediate point-of-sale, but not be sponsors of the event/s (noting that the sale of alcohol products at events primarily targeting children isn't appropriate).

It would also only be relevant to a sponsorship arrangement between the council and a company and wouldn't include existing semi or permanent advertising at event venues and spaces.

There are 2 options that council can consider for defining harmful industries.

Broad	Limited
Include all food, beverage and alcohol industries. For example in the case of alcohol, all producers (brands on alcohol products, brewers, wineries), alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise), retailers (bottle shops) and on-premise providers (pubs, clubs). And then apply a risk or principles-based approach to decision-making (see below).	Include only industries associated with the most harm and whose sole or predominant activity is the sale of alcohol or unhealthy food and drink. For example: • Alcohol producers (brands which produce alcohol products), alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise) and retailers (bottle shops). This would not include on-premise providers (pubs, clubs) or broader retailers who also sell alcohol (supermarket chains). • All types of confectionery (including lollies and chocolate) and sugar-sweetened drink (including soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks with less than 99% fruit, cordials and energy drinks) brands and fast food/ chain food businesses[8].This may not include other processed food brands (cereals) or local businesses such as a pizza shop.

FIGURE 4: Defining harmful industries

8. A chain food business (fast food outlet) is a food premises that sells at least 1 standard food item (ready-to-eat that is standardised for size and content) available in at least 2 chain food premises. A chain food business has 20 or more outlets in Victoria, or 50 or more outlets nationally, including at least one outlet in Victoria.

Determine your healthy sponsorship policy scope cont.

Articulate what events the policy applies to. For example, it may apply to all council-run events (including festivals, exhibitions, markets, music concerts) or council may limit the scope to include only those events that are targeted primarily towards families, young people or children (i.e. exclude certain exhibitions or music concerts targeting those aged over 18 years).

Applying it across all council-run events provides a consistent approach. However, it may be easier to get buy-in by framing the policy specific to family, children and youth events.

Develop your decision-making process

If choosing a limited definition about which harmful industries are included in the policy scope (as per Figure 4 above), apply a black-and-white decision-making approach that the council will not enter into sponsorships with those companies for any events primarily targeting families, young people or children that are run or commissioned by the council.

If choosing a broad definition (as per Figure 4 above), develop a decision-making guide. This can be approached using principles, risk assessments and/or matrixes.

Some examples of different approaches:

- Healthway Co-sponsorship **Policy** and **Procedure**
- Southern Metro Junior Football League **Healthy Sponsorships Guidelines**
- VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement **policy**

Design & Deliver

Write and implement the policy

Write up your healthy sponsorship policy (see the handy template at the end of this document) and progress the approval and implementation of the policy.

Consider alternative sponsors

Seek sponsorship for council-run events from companies that do not seek to profit from products that are harmful to health and wellbeing. These include:

- health service providers (e.g. physiotherapy, dental services, allied health)
- gardening or trades businesses (e.g. building, plumbing, landscaping)
- sport, homeware, furniture, clothing, equipment retailers
- sports/recreation centres
- banks, real estate.

If council has an approved provider list, consider adding these types of companies and removing harmful industries.

The ambitious one

Phase out alcohol and unhealthy food advertising on council owned or run assets and spaces

This action involves 'The step up: Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events', plus phasing-out alcohol and unhealthy food and drink advertising on council owned and operated public spaces such as sporting grounds and council land. When a council-owned facility is leased, licensed or hired, the applicant tenant must abide by conditions set by the council in regard to alcohol and unhealthy food and drink advertising.

This would **not include advertising at the point-of-sale** such as the immediate service area at canteens or a bar.

How-to guide to:
Phase out alcohol and unhealthy food advertising on council owned or run assets and spaces

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, public health, family and youth services, local laws, facilities and asset, and festivals and events. Seek in-principle support from leaders of relevant teams.

Below are some key considerations to take into account. Consult widely with relevant business units within council and with trusted partners to come up with an approach that will work.

Assess

Determine your policy scope

Identify the council-owned facilities or spaces where council has sufficient ownership or oversight to implement the changes. This could include a public space that is owned or controlled by the council but has private operators who own the infrastructure where advertising may appear (e.g. permanent signage at a football ground). Where council is unable to renegotiate private infrastructure arrangements, these may need to be excluded from scope.

Some variations in these agreement types:

- council owns the building or facility and oversees operation of all services
- council owns the building or facility and contracts another organisation to operate services
- contracted organisations may subcontract additional suppliers to operate certain aspects of the services, e.g. onsite food retail and/or catering, allied health services, sessional education
- council owns the building/facility and leases to different tenants seasonally (e.g. summer and winter sports clubs)
- council participates on the management committee of crown assets or manages other non-council-owned assets.

Determine your policy scope cont.

Where council does have control of the advertising infrastructure and space, there may be existing agreements with private companies ¬or organisations who are leasing the spaces may have such arrangements. These may need to be honoured until those agreements expire.

As council will have already implemented 'The step up: Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events' it may make most sense to apply the same approach in terms of the policy scope outlined at Figure 4: Defining harmful industries.

Deliver

Develop your decision-making process

In terms of decision-making process (principles, risk-based), it makes sense to apply the same approach as 'The step up: Implement a healthy sponsorship for council-run events'.

Write and implement the policy

Draft your healthy sponsorship policy. Consider the timeframe required to fully phase out harmful advertising at council owned and operated spaces. Progress the approval and implementation of the policy in line with the usual processes.

Recommended resources

Sample policy relating to alcohol advertising on council owned or leased land that can be adapted to also include unhealthy food

Case study: City of Mandurah (Western Australia) banned outdoor advertising for unhealthy products in the areas it controls

Impact Stream:
Enabling healthy partnerships

This impact stream requires councils to undertake action to guide community organisations and grant applicants toward healthier partnerships such as sponsorship deals, contracts and donations.

Brands and companies who profit from products that harm health and wellbeing, including alcohol and unhealthy food ('harmful industries'), often seek partnerships with community organisations, groups, clubs and venues. This allows them to promote harmful products to children and young people and drive sales through proven marketing tactics such as sponsorship, advertising and product giveaways. And it works – research has shown that the marketing of these products influences people's consumption, attitudes and behaviours. It also makes these harmful brands and products much more recognisable across the community.

Councils are leaders in the community, and through a policy approach, can set a higher standard and create an environment where community organisations and grant applicants seek healthier partnerships, increasing local demand for healthy options in all areas of life.

It is also important for councils to be able to assess and manage the risks that grant recipient partnerships with harmful industries pose in terms of undermining council obligations under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipal district.

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- make community organisations and grant applicants more aware of the negative attitude towards, and harms caused by, harmful industry partnerships in the community
- ensure that community organisations and grant applicants prioritise healthy partnerships over harmful industry partnerships
- develop and start to implement a harmful industry funding policy that allows council to take into account applicant partnerships with harmful industries when assessing community grant applications or all grant applications across council.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Enabling healthy partnerships', councils will have:

- ☐ identified and outlined the scope, key settings/space, partners and audience to address through the relevant implementation action
- ☐ engaged with, and received endorsement from, the relevant council and community leaders who oversee the identified settings/space or partners to complete the implementation action (e.g. the leader participates in the communication effort or the council endorses the relevant policy/ies)
- ☐ prioritised change in settings, spaces or policy that centre around children and young people
- ☐ demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

The quick win

Build awareness of healthy partnerships

Local community activities and facilities support people to be active, healthy and socially connected. Yet many community organisations, groups, clubs and venues providing these activities have partnerships with alcohol and unhealthy food industries. Councils can play a role in supporting these community organisations, groups, clubs and venues to strengthen the health and wellbeing of their members, participants and community by prioritising healthy partnerships.

This action builds awareness among your community partners such as sports clubs, arts and cultural organisations, and community venues about the benefits of not engaging in alcohol and unhealthy food industry partnerships and the resources available to them to support this.

How-to guide to:
Build awareness of healthy partnerships

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, community development, family and youth services, economic development, and festivals and events.

Plan

Identify a target sector

Focus your awareness-building on a particular sector within the local community. Identify a sector that has existing harmful industry partnerships in the community or prioritise a sector that has strong reach within the community or which exposes children and young people or those most vulnerable to harms.

For example:

- sports clubs
- arts and cultural facilities (e.g. galleries)
- community groups and clubs (e.g. youth groups)
- kindergartens and early childhood programs.

Deliver

Develop an engagement and communication plan

Plan how to best engage and communicate with the identified sector. Consider the sector's current attitudes towards harmful industry partnerships. Tailor the initial communications accordingly, and work with any council teams or staff with an existing relationship with the sector.

What mechanisms are already available to communicate with that sector and how can you leverage these? Where there are few existing mechanisms, consider other strategies and incentives to engage clubs and community groups from the sector.

We recommend using at least 2 approaches to ensure good reach:

- publish an article in your newsletters or send emails to the sector
- host a webinar
- dedicate time during one of your scheduled meetings with the sector
- develop a resource page on your council website
- promote content via your council's social media channels.

Develop or adapt content

Develop new material or adapt existing content to communicate to the sector via the channels identified in the engagement and communication plan.

Aim to:

- raise awareness about harms and community attitudes
- show links between harmful industry advertising/promotion and harm to children and young people
- share existing research to show that the Victorian community generally has negative attitudes towards harmful industry partnerships
- undertake and share locally relevant research or polls on community attitudes or concerns about harmful industry partnerships.

Recommended resources

- Sample newsletter item
  (see the **Templates section** at the end of this document)
- Evidence summary – the prevalence, impact and community perceptions of alcohol and unhealthy food partnerships (see Topic in focus on **page 61**)
- **VicHealth's position on healthy sport sponsorship**

Enhance and encourage partnerships with non-harmful industries

Encourage sectors to seek alternative partnerships from companies that do not seek to profit from products that are harmful to health and wellbeing. These include:

- health services, e.g. physiotherapy, dental services or allied health providers
- sport, fitness or recreation providers
- sport, homeware, furniture or clothing retailers

local businesses such as real estate agents, accounting/legal firms, gardening supplies or trades

Useful resources and case studies:

- Healthy Sports Rewards
- VicHealth's position on healthy sport sponsorship
- VicSport Promoting Health Eating

The step up

Support healthy partnerships through community grants programs

Harmful industries are prevalent across many of the sectors councils work with including sports, arts and culture. Councils risk having their health promotion efforts undermined when partners align with harmful industries that simultaneously promote harmful products, boosting and normalising their consumption in the community.

This action involves seeking declarations from applicants about partnerships they hold with the alcohol or unhealthy food industry that result in the promotion of harmful products to children and young people, when running community grant programs. This will allow council to assess and manage the risks that grant recipient partnerships with harmful industries pose in terms of undermining council obligations under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

The process of accepting declarations will also support applicants to become more aware of the risks involved when partnering with harmful industries. They may consider such partnerships more carefully and prioritise healthier partnerships. Depending on how the policy is implemented, this can be done without eliminating applicants with existing harmful industry partnerships.

How-to guide to:
Support healthy partnerships through community grants programs

The policy development process will vary widely depending on your council's internal procedures. This how-to guide focuses on the considerations for council in determining the policy scope to apply to the community grants process.

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include community development and grants, family and youth services, economic development, festivals and events, those who have responsibility for procurement and risk, and trusted partners.

Below are some key considerations when developing your harmful industry funding policy.

What grants will the policy cover?

Options include:

- All community grants
- Apply a financial threshold, e.g. policy only applies to grants over a certain amount (e.g. $10,000)
- Policy covers only certain types of grants, e.g. health promotion grants

What relationships do applicants need to declare?

Define 'partnerships' under this policy by articulating:

- the timeframe of relationships to be considered, e.g. current and planned partnerships only, past 12-month partnerships, past 5-year partnerships?
- whether the policy applies only to organisational partnerships or if it extends to personal relationships. (e.g. applying organisation has a volunteer who also works for an alcohol company)
- if retail partnerships are excluded, recognising that many of the applying organisations will sell alcohol products, food and sugary drinks at venues or events including vending machines.

How will the council assess declarations?

Options include:

- black-and-white (i.e. assess if there is a partnership or no partnership)
- principles-based (i.e. assess the level of risk based on certain principles).
- See the **VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement policy** for examples.

How will assessment of the declaration impact which grants council will fund?

Options include:

- Eliminate applicants if they have any high-risk harmful industry partnership. Given the prevalence of harmful industry partnerships among community partners, this approach may only be feasible if you have a narrower definition of harmful industries (e.g. chain food businesses).
- Prioritise applicants who do not have any high-risk partnership and/or downweigh applicants with any high-risk harmful industry partnerships.

Recommended resources

VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement policy

VicHealth harmful industry relationships declaration form

Healthway Co-sponsorship Policy and Process

South Metro Junior Football League Healthy Sponsorships Policy, Guidelines

The ambitious one

Create healthy partnerships through grants – a more comprehensive approach

This action involves seeking declarations from applicants about relationships they have with the alcohol and unhealthy food industry that result in the advertising and promotion of unhealthy and harmful products to children and young people when running **all council grant programs**.

How-to guide to:
Create healthy partnerships through grants – a more comprehensive approach

See 'The step up: Support healthy partnerships through community grants programs' for guidance on how to develop a harmful industry funding policy. Take each of the key considerations into account.

To then build on your harmful industry funding policy, councils should extend the policy from community grants to also include council grants. Outlined below are some extra considerations to guide the process of extending the policy to all council grants.

Determine if there will be different considerations based on the type of grant

Options include:

- the policy applies the same way across all types of council grants
- different considerations (e.g. criteria or thresholds) apply to different types of grants (e.g. business, community).

For example, VicHealth considers the following types of funding differently under its policy:

1. Funding for health promotion purposes (e.g. health promotion projects, research)
2. Services to support VicHealth's operating environment (e.g. IT, legal, systems)

Where funding is for health promotion purposes, VicHealth will eliminate applicants with a current, planned or past 5-year tobacco industry partnership. We would also consider any food, alcohol and gambling partnerships more high risk.

Where funding is for supporting VicHealth's operating environment, VicHealth will consider applicants with a current, planned or past 5-year tobacco industry partnership. We may also consider any food, alcohol and gambling partnerships lower risk.

See the VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement policy for further details.

Topic in focus:
Guiding principles for developing better food systems

The starting point for local governments engaging with communities about food systems is the principles underpinning the Local Government Act 2020, described as '**Moving from a prescriptive to a principles-based approach**'.

The Act stipulates 5 key principles according to which local governments should operate, namely:

1. Community engagement – ensure that all Victorians have the opportunity to engage with their council on the future of their community.
2. Strategic planning – ensure that communities are involved in strategic planning and decision-making.
3. Financial management – undertake responsible spending and investment that ensures financial, social and environmental sustainability.
4. Public transparency – strive for openness, accountability and honesty, which are essential to build high levels of accountability and trust among citizens and which enable fully informed engagement in the democratic process.
5. Service performance – ensure that councils deliver services to the community that are equitable, accessible, good value and meet the needs of their diverse communities.

All these principles are directly relevant to local government actions and policy development in healthy, sustainable and fair food systems.

Where better food systems are being led by council, Collective Impact, Asset Based Community Development and Appreciative Inquiry methodologies provide ways for councils to facilitate co-design processes with the community for food system policy and program development and delivery.

Collective Impact frameworks build on local governments' strengths in building connections between stakeholders. They also drive collaboration between stakeholders from talk into actions that are mutually aligned around a shared agenda and have measures to track progress. Used in collaboration with Collective Impact frameworks, **Asset Based Community Development** seeks to recognise and build upon a community's unique set of skills and capacities and channel them for community development. In a similar vein, **Appreciative Inquiry** is a strategic method of evaluation that does not take deficits and problems as its starting point, focusing instead on enhancing the strengths of the community.

Recommended resources

Find out more about these methodologies to increase your capacity to develop the local food system with and for your local community:

Collective Impact

Asset Based Community Development

Appreciative Inquiry

Topic in focus:
Local government policy and program approaches to food security

The term food security can have many different meanings. Food security is talked about in local, national and global contexts. In relation to the Healthy Food Connect resource, food security is referred to as: consistent and equitable access (availability, affordability) to healthy, culturally appropriate foods (including fruit and vegetables) for all communities.

Food insecurity is a significant public health issue. When people are food insecure, they are more likely to have poor mental and physical health, diminished learning ability, reduced capacity to work and increased risk of chronic disease.[9]

Food insecurity negatively impacts young people in the short and long-term affecting their academic ability and contributing to health issues including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease .

Although emergency food relief (for example, redistributed food, food banks and soup kitchens) is critical in addressing hunger, it does not target the underlying causes of food insecurity, such as lack of financial security and physical access to nutritious food. Similarly, food programs such as community gardens can raise awareness and empower people to make healthier food choices, but in isolation, they do not guarantee food security in the longer term[10].

Local government has a statutory function to ensure the public health and wellbeing of the community under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. Local government has various powers across the 4 environments for health to support increasing the supply of healthy foods and decreasing the supply of unhealthy foods across the municipality[11]. This may involve simple regulatory amendments that facilitate roadside/farm gate sales or more complex changes such as applying contractual conditions around healthy food and drink provision through retail outlets in public facilities. By supporting, facilitating and leading initiatives, local planning can be influential in improving healthy food access as shown in Figure 5[12].

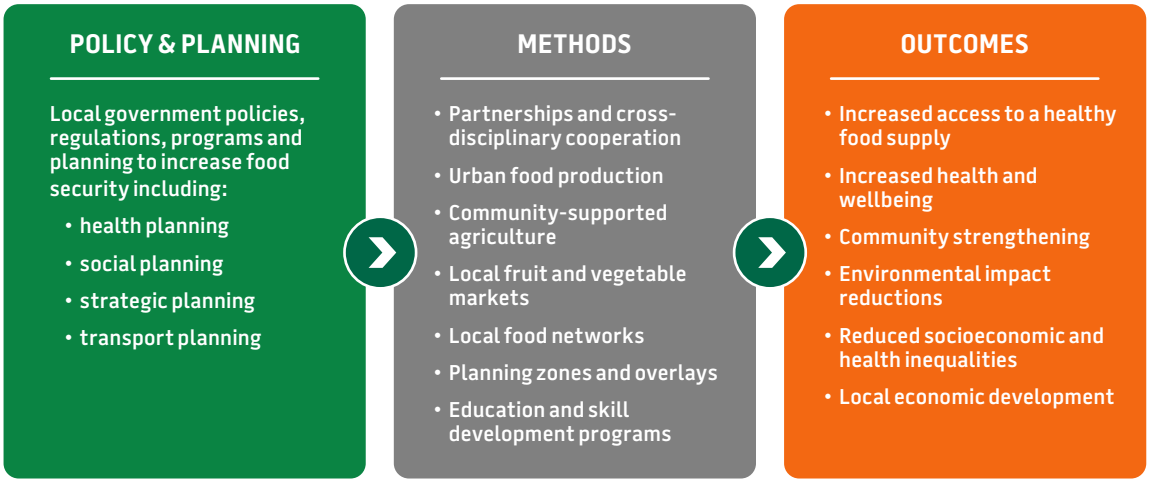


FIGURE 5: Increased community food availability and access through local government policy and planning

9. Rosier K. Food insecurity in Australia: What is it, who experiences it and how can child and family services support families experiencing it? 2011. Australian Institute of Family Studies.
10. The Right to Food Coalition. Submission to Moreland City Council on the Moreland Food System Strategy. 2017.
11. Healthy Food Connect. Department of Health 2014.
12. Healthy Food Connect. Department of Health 2014.

Local government policy and program approaches to food security cont.

Community food security – consistent and equitable access to healthy, culturally appropriate food – has many determinants and sits within a broader regional, state, national and global food system. Local government has limited power to address all the determinants of healthy eating and it is important to be mindful of the additional factors that local government may find more challenging to influence. These include rising food, water and fuel costs.

Legislative powers of local government are shaped by state legislation and state planning frameworks, and the interaction between them is complex[13].

Depending on the information you collect as part of your local food needs assessment and the key themes that emerge during the consultation and engagement steps of 'The ambitious one: Implement a healthy and sustainable food system strategy' you may consider these examples of how local governments can address food security:

- maintain platforms that direct members of the community to emergency food relief providers in their local area (e.g. **Moreland City Council Food Access and Security** webpage)
- provide community transport to get people (particularly the elderly and those with limited mobility) to and from local shops or markets that sell fresh food
- adopt requirements for developers to undertake social or health impact statements that incorporate food access issues before development plans are approved
- consider how development contributions can be used for improving food security, such as investing in new community gardens, food hubs or other food-related infrastructure for the community.

Recommended resources

Consult VicHealth's **Food for All resource sheets and short videos** designed to support local governments in advancing a food security agenda.

Learn how the **The Community Grocer** is increasing social, economic and physical access to fresh food through markets and programs.

Learn how Moreland City Council is working collaboratively with Jesuit Social Services through the **Ecological Justice Hub** to provide **food relief during the COVID-19 pandemic** and promote community-based waste conversion, composting and seasonal food planting, harvest and cooking.

13. Healthy Food Connect, Department of Health 2014

Topic in focus:
Evidence summary – the prevalence, impact and community perceptions of alcohol and unhealthy food partnerships

We all want our children to grow up in an environment surrounded by positive messages about health and wellbeing. However, alcohol and unhealthy food brands often seek partnerships and sponsorship arrangements with community organisations, groups, clubs, venues and events where children and young people socialise, play, learn and create. This allows brands to promote unhealthy and harmful products to children and young people and drive sales through proven marketing tactics such as vouchers, product giveaways and displaying logos on uniforms and equipment.

By bringing awareness to community organisations about the harms caused by alcohol and healthy food sponsorships, we can start to make healthy community sponsorship the norm across Victoria.

Prevalence of the problem

There is extensive research showing that alcohol and unhealthy food sponsorship is prevalent across community sport in Australia and Victoria[14,15,16]. A 2020 audit of 216 Victorian junior community sports clubs showed 37.5% of clubs across all sporting codes accepted at least one unhealthy sponsorship from gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food brands. This was highest for football clubs at 70%. Clubs in lower socioeconomic and regional areas were also more likely to be affiliated with harmful sponsors[17].

Outside sport, many unhealthy food and drink brands have corporate social responsibility arms that provide community grants, often targeted at children and young people[18,19]. This allows these brands to promote their products to children and young people in other community settings and events.

Marketing through community sponsorships may take many forms, including:

- naming rights of events, competitions or clubs
- branding on uniforms and equipment – particularly in children's sport
- banners and signage displayed across the facility/ground/stadium
- extensive branding on website, social media and communication materials (e.g. newsletters)
- access to club databases for direct marketing to members
- distribution of branded merchandise, free unhealthy products, vouchers or incentives.

14. Watson W et al. Sponsorship of junior sport development programs in Australia. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2016. 40(4): p.326-8.
15. Martino F et al. A state-wide audit of unhealthy sponsorship within junior sporting clubs in Victoria, Australia. Public Health Nutrition. 2021: p.1-21.
16. Kelly B et al. Food and drink sponsorship of children's sport in Australia: who pays? Health Promotion International. 2010. 26(2): p.188-195.
17. Backholer K, Martino F & Zorbas C. Unhealthy sponsorship of Victorian junior community sports. 2021. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by the Global Obesity Centre and the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University: Melbourne, Victoria.
18. The Coca Cola Foundation. Eligibility criteria for 2021 employee connected grants. n.d. [cited June 2021; Available from: https://ccaf.smartygrants.com.au/s/site/cocacola/files/Eligibility_Criteria_for_2021_Employee_Connected_grants.pdf
19. McDonald's Australia. Macca's in the Community. 2021 [cited June 2021; Available from: https://mcdonalds.com.au/learn/responsibility/maccas-community/get-sponsored

Impact of marketing

Marketing tactics work – it's the reason the unhealthy food and alcohol industry spends billions of dollars on them every year. Children and young people are a target for companies' marketing tactics because of their own spending ability, their influence on parent spending and because it fosters lifelong brand loyalty[20].

Research shows that the marketing of unhealthy food to children results in them preferring, buying more and eating more unhealthy food[21]. Similarly, exposure to alcohol marketing in teenagers is linked to an earlier onset of drinking for non-drinkers and increased drinking among those already drinking[22].

The harms of unhealthy food and alcohol marketing has been shown in sports sponsorship specifically. An Australian study of children participating in community sport has shown that children have a high level of recall of their club's sport sponsors and a majority reported liking these sponsors[23]. Increased drinking in school children has also been linked to sport sponsorship[24].

Community perceptions

Australian studies, which have focused on community sport, consistently show the majority of the community have negative attitudes towards harmful sponsorship and support policies to restrict such sponsorship. These attitudes are present across parents of junior club members, adult club members, club officials and the Victorian community at large[25][26].

A 2020 representative survey of Victorians found 65% agreed with the statement 'Community sport should prioritise or opt for healthier sponsors instead of sponsorship by industries who market alcohol, gambling or unhealthy food and sugary drink products'. The level of concern about these sponsorships was shared by both people involved in community sport and those who are not[27].

Another 2020 survey of 500 Victorian parents of junior club members found that 66% agreed that they wanted their children's sports club to restrict alcohol sponsorship and 58% wanted the same for large food and drink company sponsorship[28].

20. Story M & French S. Food Advertising and Marketing Directed at Children and Adolescents in the US. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. 2004. 1(1): p.3.
21. Cairns G, Angus K & Hastings G. The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: A review of the evidence to December 2008. 2009. World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland.
22. Anderson P et al. Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. Alcohol and Alcoholism. 2009. 44(3): p. 229-243.
23. Kelly B et al. Food company sponsors are kind, generous and cool: (Mis)conceptions of junior sports players. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. 2011. 8(1): p.95.
24. Brown K. Association Between Alcohol Sports Sponsorship and Consumption: A Systematic Review. Alcohol and Alcoholism. 2016. 51(6): p.747-755.
25. Donaldson A & Nicholson M. Attitudes of sports organisation members to junk food sponsorship. Public Health. 2020. 185: p.212-217.
26. Kelly B et al. Restricting unhealthy food sponsorship: Attitudes of the sporting community. Health Policy. 2012. 104(3): p.288-295.
27. Intuitive Solutions. Sponsorship of community sport by unhealthy industries: Feedback from the Victorian community. 2020. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by Intuitive Solutions: Melbourne, Victoria.
28. Backholer K, Martino F & Zorbas C. Unhealthy sponsorship of Victorian junior community sports. 2021. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by the Global Obesity Centre and the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University: Melbourne, Victoria.

Extra implementation support resources

Achievement Program

The Achievement Program supports Victorian workplaces, schools, early childhood services and community organisations to create healthy places for working, learning and living. Supported by the Victorian Government and delivered by Cancer Council Victoria, the Achievement Program is a free resource that supports health and wellbeing across a range of health areas including healthy eating. It provides support, targets to work towards and free tools and resources such as policy templates and how to guides. The Achievement Program can also acknowledge your healthy eating efforts and offer Victorian Government recognition to help you to celebrate your hard work and achievements.

More support can be found at: **www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au/**

Healthy Eating Advisory Service

The Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) supports early childhood services, outside school hours care, schools, workplaces, hospitals, sport and recreation centres, tertiary education and parks to provide healthier foods and drinks in their menus and through catering, food outlets and vending. HEAS can also support food industry, food outlets, caterers, and suppliers.

HEAS can help you:

- take the steps to make healthy changes in your organisation
- understand how to apply government policies and guidelines
- train your cooks, chefs, food service and other key staff
- discover healthier recipes, food ideas and other helpful resources
- provide healthier menus and products.

HEAS is delivered by experienced nutritionists and dietitians at Nutrition Australia Vic Division, with support from the Victorian Government.

More support can be found at: **https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/**

INFANT

INFANT is an evidence-based program that shows we can, through supportive education and skills development, positively influence healthy eating and active play behaviours in both parents and their children across the first 5 years of life.

INFANT consists of 4 face-to face or online group sessions for first-time parents with content reinforced via a mobile app for parents called My Baby Now. These 4 age-appropriate 90-minute sessions are run every 3 months until the infant is 12 months old. INFANT sessions aim to cover the 3 topic areas of nutrition/feeding; active play and limiting sedentary behaviour; and parents own lifestyle behaviours (diet, physical activity and sedentary time).

Traditionally maternal and child health nurses (MCHN) and dietitians facilitated the INFANT group sessions, individually or jointly. Both groups are well placed to facilitate INFANT given their knowledge base and expertise. However, other staff may be relevant to deliver INFANT, including health promotion officers, family support officers, midwives and welfare officers to name a few.

For more information go to: **www.infantprogram.org/** or to get started see: **www.infantprogram.org/getting-started/#firststeps**

Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Sustain is a national sustainable **food systems membership-based organisation**, with a growing reputation for thought and practice leadership in urban agriculture, food policy and food system transformation. Sustain works with and alongside government, producers, business and community stakeholders as a local, state and national advocate for the development of healthy, ethical and sustainable food systems. Sustain's mission is to design and build better food systems: better for human health and wellbeing, better for ecological integrity, and fairer for farmers and food workers, realised through food systems events, research, network-building and consultancy services.

In 2021, Sustain launched a Local Government Food Systems Networking Forum. This is a facilitated peer-to-peer network for local government staff working on food system-related areas to share their work, celebrate successes, troubleshoot challenges, learn from each other and access new and specialised research through the network and its research and academic partners. Councils involved include those that have already developed and are implementing food system strategies, so it provides a valuable structured learning and exchange forum to build confidence and capacity.

Vic Kids Eat Well

Vic Kids Eat Well is an exciting new state-wide movement that's focused on transforming the food and drink environments in schools and other community organisations where kids spend their time. Vic Kids Eat Well is delivered by Cancer Council Victoria's Achievement Program, in partnership with Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Advisory Service the initiative sets clear actions, provides simple steps to better food environments, combined with comprehensive toolkits, support and incentives to achieve the healthy eating actions.

Vic Kids Eat Well draws on the experience and expertise of Cancer Council Victoria's Achievement Program and Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Advisory Service to help create healthier communities. The initiative is supported by the Victorian Government and in underpinned by the Victorian Government Healthy Choices Guidelines, developed to ensure healthy food and drinks are available and promoted in a variety of settings.

Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice will be provided to fast-track councils working through the health promotion modules, giving them the opportunity to share with, learn from and support each other through implementation. Together, councils with expert partners and young people will share experiences and insights about the suggested activities within the core modules. They will also look at topics related to the VicHealth Local Government Partnership more broadly and the development and adoption of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans 2021–25.

Council staff interested in finding out more about participating in the Communities of Practice and the VicHealth Local Government Partnership health promotion modules can get in touch with our team at lgp@vichealth.vic.gov.au.

Implementation templates

Here are a number of templates that will help you implement the 'Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities' and 'Enabling healthy partnerships' impact streams.

- Expression of Interest form for a Healthy Rewards program
- Letter/phone script for introducing a Healthy Rewards program
- Healthy Rewards program – communications example
- Healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events
- Harmful Partnerships initiative – communications example

Template
Expression of Interest form for a Healthy Rewards program

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities | VicHealth Local Government Partnership
Core Module

[Council Name] Healthy Rewards program: Expression of Interest

Children and families should be able to enjoy community activities free from the advertising that unhealthy food companies use to promote harmful products.

[Council name] is committed to supporting **[relevant setting e.g. sporting clubs, arts and cultural settings]** in our community to be places that are active, healthy and socially connected. **[relevant setting e.g. sporting clubs, arts and cultural settings]**, for children and young people particularly, should be free from unhealthy food and sugary drink sponsorship. That's why **[Council name]** is taking a stand to put the health and wellbeing of our children first with the Healthy Rewards program.

Healthy Rewards offers an alternative to the unhealthy food vouchers often presented to **[relevant group, e.g. junior sporting club players, members]**. The vouchers will offer **[free or discounted]** **[activity relevant to your Council's program, e.g. entry to local sports and recreation]** and are a great way to recognise the achievement of **[relevant group, e.g. junior sporting club players, members]** in your club!

To qualify for Healthy Rewards, your group must: **[eligibility criteria, for example:**

- **be a not-for-profit entity**
- **demonstrate that you provide recreation, cultural or arts opportunities for children and young people**
- **provide opportunities within the local government area.]**

Please note that all organisations/clubs who comply with the above criteria are eligible, regardless of any existing sponsorship arrangements. If your organisation/club is interested in receiving Healthy Rewards to give to your junior players, please complete the short expression of interest form **[insert link to form – questions below]** by **[closing date]**.

Healthy Rewards are limited, so be quick to express your interest.

For further information, please contact **[contact name]** at **[number/email]**.

[Signature]

Expression of Interest form for a Healthy Rewards program cont.

The following questions can be adapted and used in an electronic form (e.g. JotForm, Google Form) for organisations/clubs completing an EOI process for the VicHealth Healthy Rewards program.

ORGANISATIONS/CLUB INFORMATION

Name of organisations/club:
Address:
Main **sport/activity**:
Total **participants/members**:
Number of junior **teams/groups**:
Number of active junior **participants/members**:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of organisation/club representative:
Organisation/club representative phone number:
Organisation/club representative email address:

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Does your organisation/club have any current sponsorship arrangements? (Yes/No)

If yes, list and describe your organisation/club's current top 5 sponsors.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Does your organisation/club currently provide vouchers to participants as reward or recognition **(e.g. best in show, player of the match)**? (Yes/No)

If yes, briefly describe the type of voucher/s your club provides and how often they are provided to participants **(e.g. every game/show, once per season)**.

(Please limit to 100 words)

Briefly describe how your club will use Healthy Rewards.

(Please limit to 100 words)

Thank you! **[contact name]** will be in touch with you shortly.

Template
Letter/phone script for introducing a Healthy Rewards program

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities | VicHealth Local Government Partnership
Core Module

Use this when approaching facilities and organisations about providing vouchers for a Healthy Rewards program.

Dear **[insert name]**,

[introduce yourself]

[Council name] is currently developing a new program called Healthy Rewards.

At the moment in **[area]**, we know that **[relevant sector/s e.g. junior clubs, arts and cultural groups]** offer vouchers for fast food to children as rewards when participating in children's **[relevant sector/s e.g. sport, arts and cultural activities]**. We're concerned about this because these vouchers are very common and are a form of advertising used by fast food companies to build brand loyalty among consumers at a young age. They also draw families into their restaurants or encourage them to buy more products, making companies a lot of money at the expense of children's health.

Healthy Rewards offers kids a fun and active alternative to the unhealthy food vouchers. The vouchers offer free or discounted **[activity relevant to your Council's program, e.g. entry to local sports and recreation]** and are a great way to recognise **[relevant group, e.g. junior sporting club players, members]** as well as promote the fantastic activities available for families in our community.

We're looking for organisations/facilities like yours who would be willing to contribute vouchers for free or discounted **[activity relevant to facility/organisation, e.g entry to local sports and recreation]**.

Some of the benefits for your organisation/facility to contribute are:

- **[let them know if council is able to make a financial contribution or offer a subsidy]**
- acknowledgement of your organisation/facility on council's website and in promotion about the Healthy Rewards program
- exposure of your organisation/facility, to children and families, increasing the likelihood of return visits
- **[insert the following statement where you will not be offering vouchers for supervising parents and siblings. Note your council will need to consider the equity of this approach in your area (i.e. even if child has a free voucher, supervising parent may not able to afford admission)]** financial benefit where accompanying family members to the child receiving a voucher will pay for admission/participation.

We are open to discussing with you how many vouchers you can reasonably provide, or a trial period if needed, to see how well the vouchers are used.

If you're interested in joining Healthy Rewards and teaming up to create a healthier place for our kids to grow, let us know. We'd love to discuss your involvement in this program.

Many thanks,

[insert name]

Template
Healthy Rewards program – communications example

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities | VicHealth Local Government Partnership
Core Module

[Council] project halts junk food vouchers in kids' **[insert sector, e.g. sport and arts]**

[Insert sectors e.g. junior clubs, youth theatre] in [local government area] can take part in the Healthy Rewards program and replace vouchers for fast food and takeaway with fun and active options for **[insert arrangements, e.g. free or discounted access to a local pool or tennis court]**.

[Council] is launching a new Healthy Rewards program in a bid to phase out unhealthy food vouchers in kids' **[insert sector, e.g. sport and arts activities]**.

The Healthy Rewards program allows participating **[insert sectors e.g. junior clubs, youth theatre]** to replace vouchers for fast food and takeaway with healthy and fun activities, like **[insert arrangements, e.g. free or discounted access to a local pool or tennis court]**.

[insert following paragraph if program covers sporting clubs] This much-needed program responds to VicHealth and Deakin University research, showing that 2 in 3 parents think kids' sports rewards should be healthy. Among the 500 Victorian parents surveyed, half (51%) said their children had received a voucher from a large fast-food company at their sports club, and 42% had received one for a local fast-food outlet.

Rewarding children and young people with vouchers for fast food builds powerful brand associations at a young age. It draw families into their restaurants and encourages them to buy more products, making companies a lot of money at the expense of children's health.

We all want children and young people to grow up **[select all applicable: socialising, playing, learning and creating]** in healthy environments. This is a fantastic opportunity for **[Council]** and **[insert sectors e.g. junior clubs, youth theatre]** to team up and protect children and young people from advertising, and put health and wellbeing of children and young people above junk food company profits.

[If applicable insert relevant quotes or case studies from parents, children, young people, participating organisations and/or leaders within Council]

How to get involved

If your organisation is interested in joining the Healthy Rewards program, please contact **[insert name and details]**.

Template
Healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities | VicHealth Local Government Partnership
Core Module

Policy objective

This policy aims to reduce the negative health and social impacts of unhealthy food and alcohol marketing to children and young people by not accepting sponsorships from unhealthy food and alcohol companies for council-run events.

Policy rationale

Council has a responsibility to provide for the health and wellbeing of its municipal community. Children and young people in our community deserve to grow up in an environment that supports their healthy growth and development and protects them from marketing of harmful products.

Children and young people are targets of marketing because of their own spending ability, their influence on parent spending, and because it fosters their lifelong brand loyalty[29].

Alcohol and unhealthy food brands seek sponsorship arrangements with community events where children and young people socialise, play, learn and create. This allows brands to promote harmful products to children and young people and increase product sales. And it works – research shows that marketing unhealthy food to children results in them preferring, buying more and eating more unhealthy food[30].

Similarly, exposure to alcohol marketing in teenagers is linked to an earlier onset of drinking for non-drinkers and increased drinking among those already drinking[31].

This policy will reduce children and young people's exposure to harmful products such as unhealthy food and alcohol, and contribute to protecting their health, safety and wellbeing. Furthermore, this policy aligns with the objectives outlined in the **[Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan/Council Plan]** to support the health and wellbeing of our community including **[list relevant objectives here, e.g. reduced obesity rates, promote healthy eating, reduced harm from alcohol, improved mental wellbeing, increased community safety]**.

Policy scope

This policy applies to unhealthy food and alcohol brand/company sponsorship (harmful sponsorship) of **[specify types of events, for example, it may apply to all council-run events (including festivals, exhibitions, markets, music concerts) or only those events that are targeted primarily towards families, young people or children (may not include certain exhibitions or music concerts targeting those aged over 18 years)]**. It does not include vendor retail relationships e.g. sale of food or alcohol at events where the vendor could advertise at point-of-sale (immediate service area) only.

Sponsorship is where companies support an event financially in exchange for brand exposure and promotion to attendees.

29. Story M & French S. Food Advertising and Marketing Directed at Children and Adolescents in the US. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. 2004. 1(1), p.3. doi:10.1186/1479-5868-1-3
30. Cairns G, Angus K & Hastings G. The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: A review of the evidence to December 2008. 2009. World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland.
31. Anderson P, de Bruijn A, Angus, K et al. Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. Alcohol and Alcoholism. 2009. 44(3), 229-243. doi:10.1093/alcalc/agn115

Healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events cont.

[Choose from broad or limited definition below or devise your own]

[Example of broad definition]

Council will assess the potential harm of all food and beverage industries seeking to sponsor council events using [insert description of your risk or principles-based approach to decision-making outlined in the 'sponsor' approval process section of the module].

In the case of alcohol, all producers are considered harmful sponsorship, e.g. brands shown on alcohol products, brewers, wineries, alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise), retailers (bottle shops) and on-premise providers (pubs, clubs).

[Example of limited definition]

Harmful sponsorship is defined as marketing activities by food, beverage and alcohol industries associated with the most harm and whose sole or predominate activity is the sale of alcohol or unhealthy food and drink. This includes: **[include from list or determine own]**

- **Alcohol producers (brands that produce alcohol products), alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise) and retailers (bottle shops). This would not include on-premise providers (pubs, clubs) or broader retailers who also sell alcohol (supermarket chains).**
- **All types of confectionery (including lollies and chocolate), processed food brands (cereals) and sugar-sweetened drink (including soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks with less than 99% fruit, cordials and energy drinks) brands and fast food/chain food businesses.[4]**
- **This does not local businesses (such as a pizza shop).**

Policy application

[Outline your council's administrative process for assessing and approving sponsors, including the key decision-makers]

[If council is using a limited definition of harmful sponsorship in the policy scope]

Where potential sponsors meet the definition of a harmful sponsor (as defined in the policy scope), Council will not enter into a sponsorship arrangement with them.

[If council is using a broad definition of harmful sponsorship in the policy scope]

Where potential sponsors meet the definition of harmful sponsorship, the Council's risk assessment is applied and Council will not enter into a sponsorship arrangement with a high-risk sponsor.

[Outline if the are other types of sponsorships that council will proactively seek, which may include a focus on healthy, local, ethical or other business types]

4. A chain food business (fast food outlet) is food premises that sells at least one standard food item (ready-to-eat that is standardised for size and content) available in at least 2 chain food premises. A chain food business has 20 or more outlets in Victoria, or 50 or more outlets nationally, including at least one outlet in Victoria.

Template
Harmful Partnerships initiative – communications example

Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities | VicHealth Local Government Partnership
Core Module

[3] things [insert sector, e.g. sporting clubs] can do to improve the health of your [community/members]

We all want children and young people in **[name of area]** community to grow up in an environment that supports their health and development and protects them from harmful products. However, alcohol and unhealthy food brands often seek sponsorships with **[insert sector, e.g. sporting clubs]** where children and young people **[select all applicable: socialise, play, learn and create]**.

This allows brands to promote harmful products to children and young people and drive sales through proven marketing tactics such as vouchers, product giveaways and displaying logos on uniforms and equipment **[or add/remove marketing tactics as applicable to your chosen sector]**. And it works – research shows that marketing these products results in children and young people eating more unhealthy food and drinking more alcohol products. It also makes these harmful brands and products much more recognisable across the community.

What's more, communities want their local events to be free from unhealthy food and alcohol sponsors. A 2020 study of Victorian parents of junior sport club members showed 63% prefer that sporting clubs are only affiliated with sponsorship that aligns with good health[32] **[or insert community polling data on attitudes towards unhealthy food and alcohol sponsorship if available]**

Your **[organisation/club/venue]** can set a higher standard and show your **[community/members]** that you stand to protect their health, safety and wellbeing by limiting sponsorship arrangements with unhealthy food and alcohol brands. Below are 3 ways you can get started.

Top tips [remove those not applicable]

1. Swap to healthy rewards

Swap out participation or achievement rewards from harmful brands (e.g. unhealthy food and drink vouchers, alcohol prizes) for healthy rewards by joining our Healthy Rewards program. **[provide detail of the program if you have actioned 'The quick win: Implement a healthy rewards program' under the 'Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities' impact stream]**

2. Consider healthier sponsors

Look for healthier sponsors next time your sponsorship arrangements are up for review and prioritise organisations and brands that do not profit from products that harm health and wellbeing, for example:

- health services, e.g. physiotherapy, dental services or allied health providers
- sport, fitness or recreation providers
- sport, homeware, furniture or clothing retailers
- local businesses such as real estate agents, accounting/legal firms, gardening supplies or trades

32. Backholer K, Martino F & Zorbas C. Unhealthy sponsorship of Victorian junior community sports. 2021. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by the Global Obesity Centre and the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University: Melbourne, Victoria.

Harmful Partnerships initiative – communications example cont.

3. Place boundaries on harmful sponsors

If unhealthy food and alcohol sponsors are already in place, think about how you can put some boundaries in place to reduce their harm, for example:

- not activating harmful brands during junior events
- acknowledging harmful brands verbally or by text-only, rather than displaying their logo or product.

Further information

To find out more, check out these resources: **[include if applicable]**

- Healthy Sports Reward program
- VicHealth's position on healthy sport sponsorship
- **[include links to any other relevant council resources you have developed, e.g. webpage]**

Further Information
Stay up to date with the VicHealth Local Government Partnership.

Visit: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/local-government-partnership

For further information or enquiries, contact our Local Government team at lgp@vichealth.vic.gov.au or phone on 03 9667 1333.

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VicHealth is committed to health equity, which means levelling the playing field between people who can easily access good health and people who face barriers, to achieve the highest level of health for *everyone*.

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VicHealth acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future.