

Land use planning

Influence land use, business mix and the built environment

Information Sheet Series: Ten ways local government can act on food security



What is Food for All?

VicHealth's *Food for All* program funded Victorian local governments to take a lead in addressing the problem of food insecurity by improving access to healthy food. Councils developed practical and long-lasting strategies to tackle food insecurity, particularly within disadvantaged communities.

This information sheet is one in a series of ten, designed to assist local government in advancing a food security agenda.

Local government has a number of mechanisms available to support food security initiatives by influencing the local, built and natural environments. Land use planning is one of the most challenging in which to embed food security thinking.

The *Food for All* program demonstrated that intensive consultation and awareness-raising to council planners of the link between land use planning and food security, is essential.

The following resources can be useful in working with planners to incorporate food security into planning decisions (see the further reading list at the end of this information sheet):

- Heart Foundation's *Healthy by Design* guidelines
- Planning Institute of Australia's *Healthy Spaces and Places*
- VicHealth's *Leading the Way*.

How can local government implement this recommendation?

Local government can explore the following strategies:

- influence zoning decisions to ensure the development of accessible, local activity centres in new and existing neighbourhoods
- influence zoning decisions to protect existing land used for food production and support initiatives that increase food production
- influence the walking and cycling infrastructure to increase access to activity centres for those without cars, and lobby to ensure investment in public transport for residents
- adopt requirements for developers to undertake social or health impact statements that incorporate food access issues before development plans are approved
- insist that developers provide a specific amount of space for community gardens, water collection and storage systems to facilitate food growing.

For more information about VicHealth's work on food security go to www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/foodforall

Food for All program examples

Wodonga Council has made considerable progress in this area. Specifically, its Strategic Planning Area has put a lot of work into looking at how the city and neighbourhoods are structured and what changes can be made to increase amenities for residents. Actions have included:

- re-zoning some land to facilitate the development of shopping centres in areas away from the centre of town, resulting in two new supermarkets, making it much easier for local residents to buy fresh food
- a public/private partnership medium-density residential development that includes land for community gardens and community activity areas. Council has worked closely with developers to raise awareness of good urban design through training, tours and 'hands-on' intensive assistance in planning developments
- creating statements which support food security in the Municipal Strategic Statement. These do not include the words 'food security' or 'health' specifically, but mention the need to develop activity centres with easy walking and cycling access.

The **City of Greater Dandenong** partnered with VicUrban—the Victorian Government's sustainable urban development agency—developing an innovative strategy to support food growing. Council is collecting a \$200 levy rate per ratepayer in the new VicUrban Meridian development. This will be used by Council for the maintenance of an 'urban orchard' or, if residents prefer, the funds will be given to the Neighbourhood Association to support projects such as community gardening by paying contractors or by running gardening workshops for residents. It is reported that this levy has not affected the willingness of people to buy into the area.

View the *Food for All* micro-movies at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/foodforall

Further reading

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