



Hungry for Change:

shaping food policies that are fair and sustainable

A Declaration from the events of the NSW Food Summit, 2009.

Food Policy Council

Concerned community members and agencies call for the formation of an independent Food Policy Council (FPC) with state-wide responsibility. The Food Policy Council to be responsible for implementing the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

The Hungry for Change Food Summit calls on the New South Wales government to adopt an integrated whole of government approach to planning around food systems.

1. **Plan for food**
 - 1.1. All policy areas need to place a priority on the food system to enable provision of a safe, adequate, culturally appropriate and affordable food supply.
 - 1.2. Water policy needs to ensure equitable and sustainable access for food production and ecosystems.
 - 1.3. Minimise and recycle food and food production waste.
 - 1.4. Empower and resource local governments to support regional food systems.
 - 1.5. Listen, involve and achieve solutions with communities, including those seldom heard, such as indigenous Australians.
2. **Ensure sustainable food production and distribution systems**
 - 2.1. Protect rural and urban land for sustainable food production.
 - 2.2. Ensure resource management strategies are focused on protecting and retaining the economic viability of sustainable food production.
 - 2.3. Reward food producers for growing local and sustainable food, including organic.
 - 2.4. Ensure food producers receive a fair and equitable return for their produce.
 - 2.5. Develop and support structures and strategies that encourage local food distribution systems.
3. **Secure Access to Good Food for All**
 - 3.1. Support strategies for affordable, healthy and safe food for all.
 - 3.2. Resource creative, local initiatives in sustainable food production and distribution.
 - 3.3. Provide targeted support for disadvantaged groups to access good food.
4. **Safeguard Future Food and Future Health**
 - 4.1. Reduce the ecological footprint of food production and distribution.
 - 4.2. Drive corporate and social responsibility within the food systems.
 - 4.3. Support appropriate technology, training and workforce development for the food system.
 - 4.4. Apply precautionary principles to the adoption of new technologies in the food system.
 - 4.5. Develop and support regional food enterprise.
 - 4.6. Public food procurement contracts and accreditation guidelines predominantly require quality, wholesome food.
5. **Ensure quality food in society**
 6. Include information on food and food systems in both school education and community-based programs.
 7. Food labelling and marketing support healthy and sustainable food choices.
 8. Celebrate cultural and social aspects of food diversity.
 9. Protect and retain the landscape value and environmental services of agricultural land for health and social amenity.

Executive Summary:

"Food security has never been so critical to the future of civilisation. Localised and regional food systems counter balance globalisation and play a strategic role in community health and security." [Agriculture Today, NSW DPI July 2008]

"Food security refers to the ability of individuals, households and communities to acquire appropriate and nutritious food on a regular and reliable basis, and using socially acceptable means."

[NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition. Food Security Options Paper: A planning framework and menu of options for policy and practice interventions. 2003.]

Today the food system faces unprecedented pressure including extended drought, climate change, peak oil, pressure on fertile peri-urban and agricultural lands, loss of agricultural skills and knowledge. In addition, there are significant barriers to accessing good food for all, specifically inadequate income support and transport.

Innovative approaches by communities, government and industries to address these issues need support.

We call on the NSW government to respond to widespread community concern about the future of our food security and to initiate a partnership with non-government organisations, local governments, business and community to develop a comprehensive and integrated food strategy, together with policies to implement the strategy, based on the following principles.

Principles:

- All people have the right to adequate amounts of safe and nutritious food to promote and maintain health without the need for emergency food relief
- Provision of healthy food needs to be valued and planned - it cannot be left to market forces alone
- All levels of government must consider the impact of their policies on food systems
- Policies on income, employment, housing, health and transport should incorporate food access.
- Permanent protection of fertile agricultural land is fundamental to good planning
- The need to conserve essential eco-system services, especially biodiversity, soil and water
- Minimise the carbon footprint of food production, transport, manufacture, storage and distribution; reuse and recycle waste
- Innovative strategies that ensure food security and sustainable food systems are to be priorities of government and communities
- New technologies to be approved only following thorough testing and assessment against a sustainability and health impact framework.

Statement of Case:

Most Australians have not had to worry about our food supply in recent history and have had little awareness of those who do.

In NSW today, the Murray-Darling Basin, which produces a third of Australia's food supply, is in a critical state due to water shortages from less rainfall and mismanagement. Climate change and peak oil pose increasing and unknown threats to agricultural production, here and overseas.

Demand for land for housing is putting the squeeze on agricultural land in the Sydney Basin, and close to other cities, potentially limiting the future supply of fresh food to cities and undermining our farming communities. 50% of NSW vegetable farms are in the Sydney Basin and 50% of these are in areas designated for urban expansion.

Chronic disease, which has strong links to diet, accounts for about two thirds of the annual Australian health budget, and likewise health costs represent an increasingly high percentage of the entire NSW state budget.

In recent times, food in Australia has been relatively cheap and today we spend a lower proportion of our total income on food today compared to even 30 years ago. Conversely, over a million Australians experience food insecurity, meaning they frequently do not have enough money for food or have to buy cheap and unhealthy food. All citizens need to be educated about the complex systems that ensure an ongoing supply of healthy food, the real costs of production and how to safeguard a sustainable healthy future food supply.

NSW Department of Primary Industries:

Urban agriculture needs to be considered as a strategic contributor to dealing with peak oil, global warming, the increasing occurrence of natural disasters, urban and city ecosystems, landscapes and designs, along with bio-security, pandemics, food terrorism, and water and waste cycles.

Today, establishing food bowls is essentially about bottom line commodity development.

Embedding local food production, processing, distribution and consumption into urban communities can play a significant part in achieving sustainable food security.

This approach is consumer and community driven – not producer or supermarket driven – food culture.

Food security has never been so critical to the future of civilisation.

Agriculture Today, July 2008

The community speaks: SFFA Regional Forum reports

The NSW Food Summit represents the culmination of a process of 6 forums held across 5 regions across the greater Sydney region. Over 650 participants from diverse organisations in the Blue Mountains, Illawarra, Central Coast, Central Sydney and Illawarra have participated as speakers focussed on key food system issues for their region. Each forum was tasked with developing a statement of issues to take forward to NSW Food Summit in October.

Reports from the Forums are the actual summary points put forward by the Forum participants, summarised by the local organisers. Minimal changes have been made to modify the actual wording. Actual reports from the forums are at:

URL: www.sydneyfoodfairness.org.au

Food Policy Council

Concerned community members and agencies call for the formation of an independent Food Policy Council (FPC) with state-wide responsibility. The FPC to comprise representatives of local and state government, citizens, community and non-government organisations, agri-food industries, primary producers, education sector, business and those responsible for short and long term planning. Expertise on the FPC to include: health, social justice, ecological sustainability, research, planning, agriculture, food systems, innovation, business, economics and governance.

The Food Policy Council to be responsible for:

- Ensuring integrated, cross-government planning around food systems
- Ensuring sustainable and safe food production systems that are viable for producers
- Ensuring good food for all
- Safeguarding future food and future health
- Valuing and celebrating quality food in society