



# Sustain Food Roadmap

2013 - 2015

Working towards a food system that  
respects our bodies, our communities, our producers and our land.



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## Citation

We encourage organisations to work closely with this Roadmap and we simply request that you acknowledge this document in the following way:

Sustain Northern Rivers (2013) *Sustain Food Roadmap*. Sustain Food Working Group, Lismore.

## About

The Sustain Food Roadmap was generated through a series of participatory workshops with members of the Sustain Northern Rivers collaboration and specifically, members of the Sustain Food working group.

The Roadmap articulates the theory of change that underpins the work of the Sustain Food working group. It is not a strategic plan. In the spirit of distributed leadership and collaborative action, this Roadmap seeks to clarify our collective understanding of how we seek to create change – the specific actions we take will partly be determined by the interests, assets and opportunities that surround each collaborator.

The Sustain Food working group includes the following partner organisations:

- Byron Region Community College
- Byron Shire Council
- Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers
- Department of Primary Industries NSW
- Tweed Shire Council
- Southern Cross University
- North Coast TAFE
- Clarence Valley Council
- Northern NSW Local Health District

The Roadmap was produced largely through a full day strategy workshop held on 5 September 2012. Participants at the strategy planning workshop included:

- Katrina Shields, Sustainability Coordinator, Byron Region Community College
- Robyn Fitzroy, Regional Development Manager, Regional Development Australia - Northern Rivers
- Katrina Luckie, Chief Executive Officer, Regional Development Australia - Northern Rivers
- Geof Webb, Communications Officer, Regional Development Australia - Northern Rivers
- Rik Whitehead, Regional Director, Department of Primary Industries NSW
- Ben Roche, Head of Community Engagement, Southern Cross University
- Hazel Ferguson, Post-doctoral Fellow, Southern Cross University
- Mike Evans, Professor and Head, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Southern Cross University
- Kirsty Howton, Sustainability Facilitator, Southern Cross University
- Rodney Wright, Environmental Services Coordinator, Clarence Valley Council
- Fran O'Hara, Campus Manager, North Coast TAFE
- Mary Allan, Head of Tourism and Hospitality, North Coast TAFE
- Jillian Adams, Acting Manager Health Promotion, Northern NSW Local Health District
- Sebastian Garcia Cuenca, Sustainable Agriculture Program Leader, Tweed Shire Council
- Claire McGarry, Sustainability Manager, Sustain Northern Rivers
- Rebecca Lines-Kelly, Department of Primary Industries NSW
- Mark Hickey, Horticulturalist, Department of Primary Industries NSW
- Katrina Sinclair, Research Agronomist, Department of Primary Industries NSW

## Introduction

Food security is a measure of ensured access to essential nutrition. It refers to a household's or country's ability to provide future physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that fulfils the dietary needs and food preferences for living an active and healthy lifestyle (WHO, 2013). Food security is about creating resilience in communities subject to future disruption or unavailability of critical food supply due to various risk factors such as climate change impacts (including not only droughts, floods and storms but also the potential for climatic changes to effect plant growth); fuel shortages and rising oil prices; and economic instability.

The development of a complementary and distributed model of food supply will increase regional resilience in the face of these known risks to food supply. This is important for a region like the Northern Rivers, which has high social disadvantage and vulnerability to rising food costs. With only 14% of the region's population consuming the minimum recommended quantities of fruit and vegetables, increasing regional food resilience has important co-benefits for containing increasing demand for hospital services due to preventable chronic disease (Population Health Division, 2010)

There is growing recognition of the food security implications of climate change, with the likelihood of reduced water catchment in the Murray-Darling basin and other food growing regions of southern Australia as well as impacts from extreme weather (CSIRO, 2011). A national response must involve maximising agricultural capacity in regions of greatest potential. In this, the Northern Rivers is well positioned. In addition to good soils, available lands and proximity to SE Queensland growth zones, climate scenarios indicate that the region is likely to retain current abundant rainfall (slight increases in summer-autumn, slight decrease in winter rain) (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage).

The food system in Australia is directly responsible for an estimated 23% of Australia's greenhouse pollution and agriculture is the largest component at 16% (Northern Rivers Food Links, 2009). Current irrationalities in over-long supply chains present a 'low-hanging fruit' opportunity to reduce greenhouse emissions from food transport. This mitigation opportunity is also necessary for climate change adaptation.

## Vision

A food system that respects our bodies, our communities, our producers and our land.

## Objectives

1. Increase the sustainability, resilience and diversity of local food production
2. Increase the availability of local food through improved distribution
3. Increase affordable and nutritional local food consumption

## Outcomes

- Improved health and reduced morbidity from food-related illnesses in our community
- Improved understanding of the importance of buying local
- Better linkages between farmers and consumers
- More community gardens and farms producing more food
- Increased backyard growing
- People recognise that food is locally produced
- Food producers respected and supported in their communities
- Agriculture and food production is an attractive and desirable career

## Implementation

The Sustain Food Working Group will seek to progress priority outcomes and actions defined in this Roadmap. This will be done opportunistically, where agencies already have the capacity and resources to pursue activities collaboratively or when funding can be acquired as necessary.

The Roadmap is a living document that the Sustain Food Working Group can review and/or refine at any time, to address shifting priorities and new opportunities. The outcomes defined are long term, with timeframes attached to actions generally within the 3-5 year range.

## Priority outcomes and actions

Individual SNR organisations and other agencies and groups in the region are engaged in many activities relating to the sustainability and resilience of regional food systems. This Roadmap defines actions that can be achieved collaboratively by SNR organisations only.

<b>Objective 1: Increase the sustainability, resilience and diversity of local food production</b>		
<b>Critical outcomes</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Agencies</b>
Local planning instruments ensure retention of viable agricultural land with regards to title size, prime land, encroachment, CSG etc	Determine research gaps relating to land use and planning	SCU
	Submit regional strategy comments through Department of Planning	Sustain Food working group
	Capture, compare and compile SNR partner research	SCU Regional Food Research Network
	Utilise NSW DPI Land Use Planning processes	DPI
	Utilise Local Government resource kit	Local Government
	Brief new Councillors on importance of planning instruments with regards to food production	Sustain Food working group
Advocate for policy	Provide Input to National Food Plan	Completed
	Engage with NSW DPI Office of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security	DPI
	Utilise Land Histories Project research of farmers land use practices and change over time	SCU Regional Food Research Network
	Develop Tweed Shire Council Sustainable Agriculture Strategy	Completed
Engage best management practitioners to train on farm	Increase agricultural workforce development opportunities – fund farmers to mentor growers. Utilise Shared Farming Labour Pool.	RDA
Viable, sustainable and resilient agricultural workforce	Promote shared Farming Labour Pool	RDA
	Promote career pathway mapping that's been done by AgriFood Skills Australia	Sustain Food website, TAFE, SCU
	Develop champions of sustainable food production and utilise them. Create 'Food Gurus' section on the Sustain Food website.	RDA
	Develop strategy to encourage young people into agriculture as a career	TAFE, AgriFood Skills, DEEWR and DPI
Food producers on small blocks connected through a facilitated network to build capacity	Develop small producer web page on Sustain Food website including list of retailers who stock local produce	RDA
More community gardens and farms producing more food	Promote Resource Kit for those wanting to start community gardens/markets with link to/from Sustain Food website	RDA
	Support the construction of food gardens in aged care facilities across the region	Completed

<b>Critical outcomes</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Agencies</b>
Make training in organic/sustainable horticulture, agriculture and permaculture available in more locations (whole and part qualifications)	Expand organic agriculture training	TAFE
	Engage with State Training Services to increase course offerings and locations	Sustain Food working group
Knowledge of appropriate foods that can be grown locally	Maintain Sustain Food website	RDA
	Collect existing information	RDA
Agri food production is supported by a well-resourced, research, extension, education and advisory network	Submit funding applications for resources to extend extension services	SNR Development Manager; Sustain Food working group
	Conduct sustainable agriculture field days	Sustain Food working group
	Implement NSW DPI Extension and Research programs including resilience project	DPI
Increased knowledge of soil health	Implement NSW DPI Soil Advisory Program and bio-char and compost projects	DPI
	Conduct field days in best practice e.g. at Mara Seeds and about composting	Tweed Shire Council
	Engage with SoilCare Inc (NR group)	Sustain Food working group
	Engage with Landcare Community Support Officers + CMA	Sustain Food working group
Clean water	Promote NSW DPI soil erosion work and publications	DPI
Improved profitability of food production in the region	Extend and promote PROfarm courses	DPI
	Enable producer benchmarking of Agricultural Production Performance	DPI
	Develop Collaborative Relationship with Northern Rivers Food	Sustain Food working group
Secure markets for local food production, existing and new	Enable a market facilitators forum/meeting (potential to develop online Northern Rivers Food Hub)	Sustain Food working group

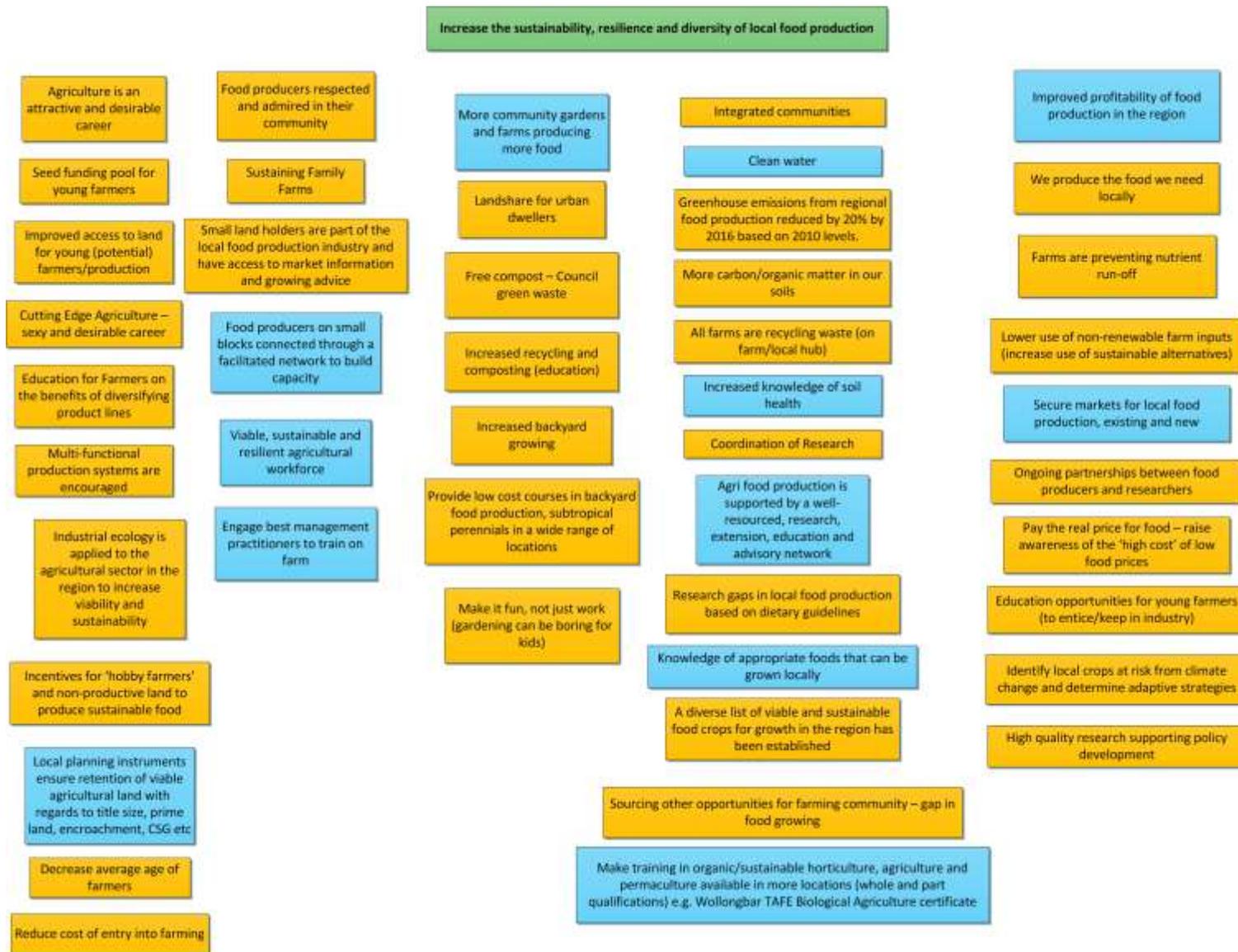
<b>Objective 2: Increase the availability of local food through improved distribution</b>		
<b>Critical outcomes</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Agencies</b>
Increase local supply of product in demand	Ensure Product Information accessible (could be addressed by online food hub)	
	Increase supplier registration on Sustain Food App	RDA
	Research where under or over supply exists in region	SCU
Rigorous research on new distribution hubs which support local food	Distribute National Food Plan White Paper	Completed
	Calculate the economic value of agriculture to the region	RDA & DPI
	Identify priorities in the National Food Plan White Paper	Sustain Food working group
Improved local marketing skills for local producers	Seek funding to offer short courses in collaboration with Northern Rivers Food	Sustain Food working group
People able to access locally produced food effortlessly	Promote alternative distribution systems (e.g. Fruitos)	Sustain Food working group

<b>Objective 3: Increase affordable and nutritional local food consumption</b>		
<b>Critical outcomes</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Agencies</b>
Provide skill development in healthy cooking using local foods (low cost options especially)	Teach children and parents how to cook cheap, healthy, local food via Health Promotion's school program	Ongoing by Northern NSW Local Health District
	Distribute kits for Schools Food Program out of Wollongong	Clarence Valley Council
	Seek funding to reward farmers who host regular school/consumer visits	Sustain Food working group
Improved understanding of the importance of "buying local"	Encourage retailers to label food as local and personalise if possible to link consumers to producers (could include photos of farmers); utilise Source ID project	Sustain Food working group

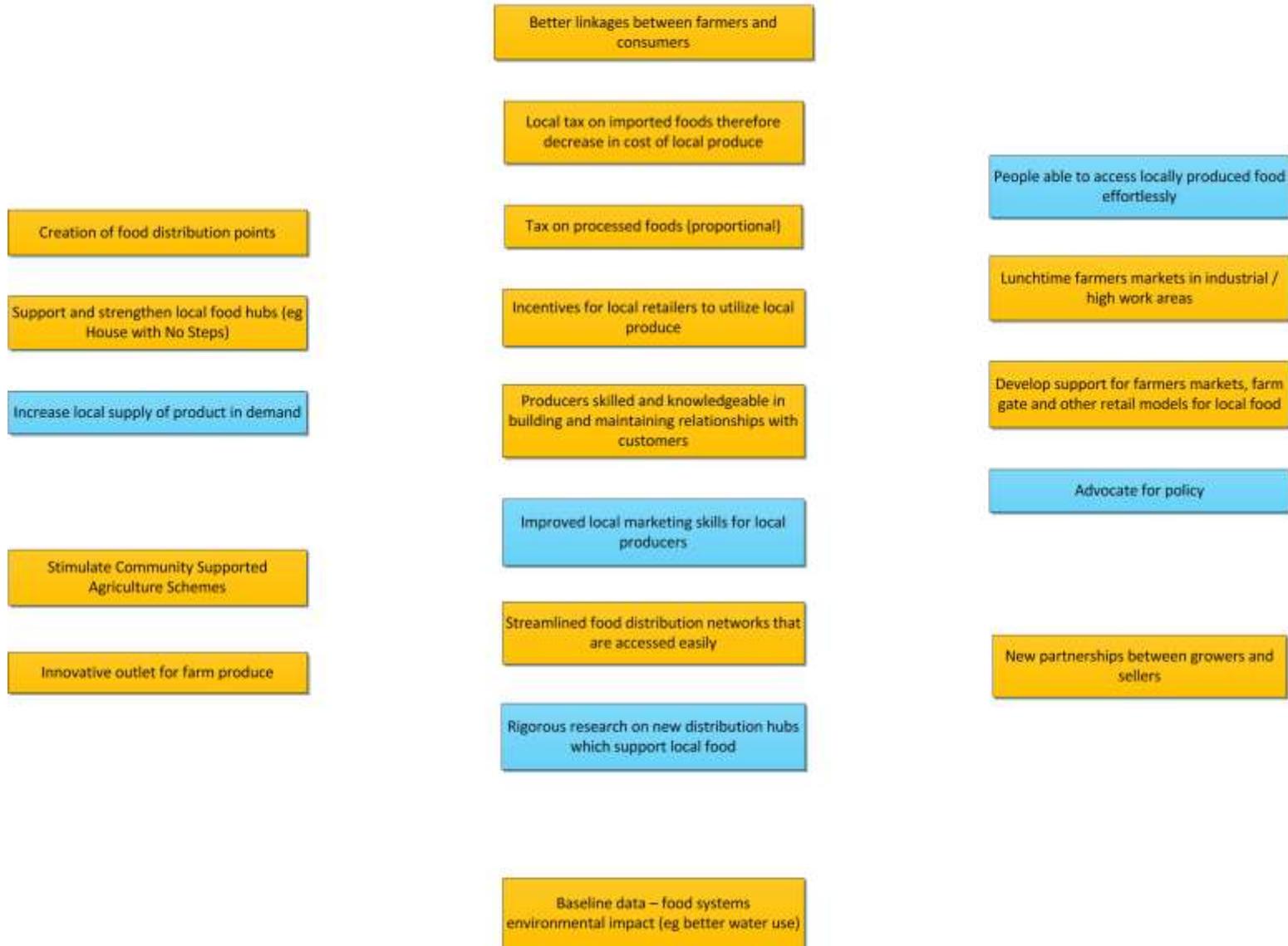
## Document version history

<b>Author</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Date</b>
Clare McGarry	Transcribed workshop outputs	02 October 2012
Kirsty Howton	Converted workshop outputs to Visio	09 October 2012
Ben Roche	First draft of Roadmap document	27 October 2012
Kirsty Howton	Amendments requested at working group meeting February 2013	5 April 2013

# Appendix A – Outcome maps



Increase the availability of local food through improved distribution



Increase affordable and nutritional local food consumption

People recognize that food is locally produced

NR consumer can tell what local food is

Well resourced local food product labeling for retailers

Increase numbers of people who complain to supermarkets about lack of local food

People able to cook delicious food

Consumers familiar with a diverse range of vegetables they wouldn't normally eat

Collaboration on school education

Increase school food gardens

Education re: food – start young

Improved understanding of the importance of "buying local"

Increase knowledge of benefits of local food – health, environment

The community understands the sustainability principles that relate to the food system

Decrease meat consumption

Provide skill development in healthy cooking using local foods (low cost options especially)