We Need to Talk About Food

how we can all build a better food system

A partnership project between

SUSTAINABLE TABLE

CITY OF MELBOURNE
If you’re looking for a concise, wildly useful and hugely engaging resource to help you to understand the wonderful, yet sometimes complex world of food and sustainability, then you’ve stumbled on just the right thing...

Start your journey with a little lifestyle audit we like to call the Sustainability Spring Clean, learn about the story of food and then discover all the tools that will set you on your merry way to treading more lightly on the planet.

Tools include
- Sustainability Spring Clean,
- 10 Steps to Sustainability (for businesses),
- 10 Steps to Sustainability (for individuals),
- A City Dweller’s Guide to Sustainable Food,
- Get Committed! A checklist,
- Sustainable Shopping Close to You
- Fast Facts on Food Waste,
- Sustainable Seafood Guide,
- Victorian Seasonal Produce Guide.

These tools will make sustainable shopping far less daunting than it sounds.

Start today and help to shape a sustainable food system for us and future generations.
How many cans of fish do you eat each week? [3]

How many canned drinks and how much canned food do you use weekly? [2]


One takeaway coffee every day equals 365 cups and lids every year that must be recycled or taken to landfill. [3]

How many takeaway coffees do you drink a week? [2]

Take your own cup and save 1kg of plastic lids and 8kgs of landfill each year. [3]

How many canned drinks and how much canned food do you use weekly i.e. tomatoes, corn, beans, tuna? [2]

Reduce or eliminate canned food and drink from your shopping basket. Buy food fresh and unpackaged from local producers and reduce the environmental impact of your food choices. [3]

How many cans of fish do you eat each week? [2]

250 million cans of tuna are sold in Australia each year. Most tuna species are listed as threatened and all populations of Bluefin Tuna species are susceptible to collapse due to overfishing. [3]

Buy sustainably sourced fish fresh, free from packaging. Use our Sustainable Seafood Guide to help you choose when you’re next at the fish shop or market. [3]

If you just can’t cut canned tuna out of your life completely right now, then take a look at the Greenpeace Canned Tuna Ranking (greenpeace.org/australia/en/what-we-do/oceans/Take-action/canned-tuna-guide/). [5]

Buy food that is locally produced, either direct from the farm gate or at a farmers’ market, through co-ops or community food swaps – see the City Dweller’s Guide to Sustainable Shopping to help you out. Better yet, grow some of your own, that’s as local as it gets! [3]

Many products in the average Australian grocery trolley are imported long distances from overseas. As a result the average shopping basket has travelled over 70,000 km—that’s nearly two times the distance around the Earth. [3]

How many imported food items do you have in your fridge or pantry i.e. tomatoes, sauces, fresh fruit and vegetables? [2]

Take your own lunch to work – this can save you lots of money and is likely to be healthier for you in the long run. If you have to buy your lunch or dinner, use your own plate or reusable container and cutlery. You’ll be surprised by the number of takeaway shop owners that will be happy to oblige. [3]

What proportion of your fresh food is organic and grown locally? [3]

Use localharvest.org.au to find good food close to you. Simply enter your postcode to see local organic produce shops, farmers’ markets, box systems and farm gates. [3]

How many times a week do you eat meat or fish? [2]

Instigate a meat-free day* and when you do eat meat, choose ethically and sustainably farmed meat and fish. Use Sustainable Table’s online Ethical Meat Suppliers Directory at sustainabletable.org.au to help find good suppliers.

*(If making dramatic changes to your current diet then please seek medical advice before doing so.) [3]
How many times a week do you eat or drink dairy milk, cheese and yoghurt?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20 (every meal)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dairy industry generates 10 per cent of emissions from the agricultural sector in Australia. Dairy cows also consume grain which amplifies the environmental impacts.

Action

Have some dairy free days during the week and help reduce carbon emissions in Australia. When you do consume dairy, choose ethical and sustainable milk and cheese products from local farmers. Use localharvest.org.au to find local dairy farmers near you. There are many alternatives to cow’s milk you can try. These include goat’s milk as well substitutes like nut milk, soy milk and rice milk.

How often do you visit the supermarket to buy food?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily (7)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally (1 pt)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never (0 pts)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When people get busy, they tend to cut corners when it comes to food. Popping into the shop every day instead of doing one weekly shop at a sustainable food outlet makes it harder to make ethical and sustainable food choices and can increase the amount of packaging your food comes in.

Action

Write a shopping list and do one big weekly shop at a sustainable food outlet (such as a farmers’ market or box system) instead of many last-minute shops. Alternatively shop at a local organic co-op, where you can shop more regularly and still ensure you are buying into a better food system. Use the City Dweller’s Guide to help you find the shopping mode that suits you best and make is easier to choose sustainable food.

What do you do with your food scraps?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Throw them in the bin (10 pts)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost/worm farm/feed to chooks most of the time (4 pts)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always compost or something similar (0 pts)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On average, 40 per cent of household waste is made up of food scraps. When sent to landfill, food scraps rot and produce methane a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Action

Start a compost bin or worm farm. Composting can reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by up to 50 per cent and helps cut greenhouse gas emissions by preventing methane emissions that occur when organic waste breaks down in the oxygen-starved environment of landfill. The City of Melbourne offers discounted compost bins for residents. You can find out more here – melbourne.vic.gov.au/Sustainability/WhatCanIDo/Pages/Sustainablegardening.aspx

What % of vegetables, fruit or herbs do you grow yourself annually?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None (10 pts)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10% (4 pts)</td>
<td>10-30% (6 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-30% (6 pts)</td>
<td>31-50% (4 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-50% (4 pts)</td>
<td>51-70% (2 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-70% (2 pts)</td>
<td>80-100% (0 pts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Growing your own food is a great way to reduce the environmental impacts of your food supply.

Action

The City of Melbourne has produced a booklet called Sustainable Gardening in the City of Melbourne (melbourne.vic.gov.au/Sustainability/WhatCanIDo/Pages/Sustainablegardening.aspx). It provides advice on how to garden in the city, whether in a courtyard, balcony, or window sill. Growing your own food can help save you money and it will taste better and is more convenient than heading to the shops.

Do you use plastic shopping bags?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, all the time (10 pts)</td>
<td>Bring your own shopping bags to reduce the number of plastic bags you use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I forget my green bags (4 pts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never (0 pts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It takes the average family just four trips to the supermarket to accumulate 60 shopping bags. Australians used 3.92 billion plastic bags in 2007. The amount of petroleum used to make that many bags would drive a car around the world 1,076 times.


What’s Food got to do with it?
how we can create a more sustainable food system

Food has a huge impact on the environment. Every step of the food supply chain, from production, to transport, processing, packaging and distribution has potential environmental consequences. The impacts include the use of scarce resources, biodiversity loss, waste generation, land degradation, pollution of waterways, and greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, 41.4% of the average Melbournian’s eco-footprint is embodied in the food we buy.1

The City of Melbourne has a vision of a food system that is secure, healthy, sustainable, thriving and socially inclusive. A key theme in our Food Policy is to ensure that the food we produce and consume improves our environment, regenerates our natural resource base and promotes sustainable and fair food practices. We all have a role to play in creating a more sustainable and secure food system, and while there isn’t a ‘silver-bullet’ that will solve all the environmental issues of our food system at once, there are a number of actions our community can take to drive change in specific areas. We have created this guide to provide you with an introduction to some of the impacts and the knowledge to prioritise the actions most important to you.

Working together, business, organisations, government and individuals, we can create a better food system for Melbourne.

What are the Environmental Impacts of our Food System?

1 Food is transported great distances
In Australia, food in the average shopping basket has travelled over 70,000 kms—that’s nearly two times the distance around Earth. In fact, four imported items alone can account for nearly 50,000 kms. Even if a product is labelled as Australian-made it can still have ingredients from all over the world, adding to its transport footprint.2

Transporting food long distances, either across Australia or from overseas, generally uses up more non-renewable resources than producing and eating food locally. Energy, fuel, gas and water are consumed during transportation and storage – adding to food’s environmental impact. Transportation from farm, to processing plant, to consumer, can account for up to 11 per cent of food’s total greenhouse gas emissions.2

You can reduce emissions by buying food produced locally. Want to find locally produced food? Local Harvest is an online database helping you to find good food close to you. Simply enter your postcode to see a map of local food producers and outlets. Visit localharvest.org.au. Also see the guide Sustainable Shopping Close to You (included in this Guide) for more suggestions.

2 Food is grown out of season
The modern food system often gives us the convenience of being able to buy out-of-season food at any time of the year, for example, buying tomatoes and garlic in winter. Unfortunately out-of-season food has a much larger environmental footprint than seasonal produce. Extra energy is used in production (for example heating hot houses in the winter), transportation (if it is shipped or flown from faraway locations), and storage (due to energy needs of facilities like refrigerated warehouses).

Selecting seasonal produce is an easy way for individuals and businesses alike to reduce these impacts. Check out the Victorian Seasonal Produce Cut and Keep Guide to find out what’s in season this month.

3 Food is packaged
The plastic and cardboard used to package food has a large environmental impact.

On average, every Australian throws away around 69kg of plastic every year!4 Help reduce plastic pollution by using cloth or recycled shopping bags and buying in bulk when you can.

Disposal is also an issue – if the packaging can’t be recycled, it is sent to landfill. Significant amounts escape from the waste system each year and end up in the environment. Recycling is part of the solution but avoiding packaging where possible is the best option. To avoid packaging altogether individuals and business can take actions like starting a kitchen garden, shopping at a farmers’ market or signing up to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or food box system.

Check out A City Dweller’s Guide to Sustainable Shopping for more info!

Food in season is not only more sustainable, but is often fresher and tastier.

Silo Cafe on Melbourne’s Hardware Street is a zero waste cafe that has introduced a pioneering system in which suppliers are not using any unnecessary packaging for goods delivered.

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Resources are used unsustainably

Water use:

Agriculture for domestic consumption accounts for 30 per cent of Australia’s water use while globally about 90 per cent of all freshwater withdrawals are for irrigated agriculture. Historically, water use in agriculture has not been managed sustainably. Over-allocation can deplete environmental flows and impact downstream food production and biodiversity, while excessive irrigation can result in salinity issues and the destruction of productive agricultural land.

The application of fertiliser presents additional environmental concerns. Over-application can result in fertilisers entering waterways and polluting or sometimes killing bodies of water and dependent fisheries; they accelerate global warming; and can acidity farm soil reducing its health and productivity.

Farming techniques which plant legumes like peas and beans (these are nitrogen-fixing) between regular crops reduce fertiliser requirements by up to a third. Support farmers who use cover crops to reduce fertiliser use in agriculture.

Energy:

Modern agriculture is dependent on the use of fossil fuels to fertilise, cultivate, harvest and transport produce. These energy inputs emit greenhouse gases which directly contribute to climate change. Global reserves of fossil fuels are also declining, placing the future sustainability of these methods at risk (IEA, 2010). The organic sector is one area reducing its energy usage and typically requires 30-50 per cent less energy than standard farms.

Food is increasingly being used as an energy resource too. Demand for biofuels in the Americas and Europe is driving grain prices up and will reduce food output by 10-20 per cent. The world is likely to burn around 400 million tonnes of grain as biofuels by 2020 – the equivalent of the entire global rice harvest.

Food is wasted

Australians waste $8 billion worth of food every year. That’s over $1,000 per household, or equivalent to one in every five bags of groceries bought being sent to landfills.

When food is sent to landfill and rotts, it releases methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than the carbon pollution that comes out of your car exhaust. What’s more, nutrients that could be recycled in compost for more production are instead contaminated with other waste and lost from the food cycle.

Throwing away food not only wastes money but also wastes the water, fuel, nutrients, farmer labour and other resources that went into producing it. Using all the food you buy is one of the smartest steps you can take to reduce the environmental impact of food production.

Food wastes and businesses:

Most food businesses create a lot of food waste. On average 21.5 per cent of business waste is food. This waste comes at a cost though to both the bottom line and the environment. Furthermore, reducing food waste is important to consumers with 81 per cent of Australians supporting the sustainable disposal of food.

Efficient ordering and usage can reduce food waste and boost business profitability, improve customer relations and limit overall environmental impacts.

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7 Impacts of livestock production

Animal farming impacts the environment both directly by producing greenhouse gas emissions, primarily methane, and indirectly through demand for other agricultural resources. Intensive factory farming has added impacts through consumption of electricity inputs for indoor light and climate control, demand for grains, and generation of large quantities of waste.

For example, a typical indoor 20,000 meat chicken farm uses approximately 16 tonnes of manufactured feed per week, and produces 30 tonnes of waste over the seven week production cycle.7 In low-density, sustainably managed free-range and organic farms, direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions are reduced and able to be managed more effectively and efficiently through a number of ecological practices: appropriate stocking densities are maintained, grazing animals are rotated over the farm land to allow for soil and pasture restoration, nutrients are recycled back into the soil through composting and by fertilising soil with animal waste, and no or comparatively little supplementary grain or manufactured feed is given to the animals.

The environmental impacts of meat production can be reduced by buying meat produced by sustainably-managed free range or organic farms. Individuals can further reduce their impact by reducing the quantity of meat eaten each week while businesses can provide additional vegetarian options on menus and at work events. To find sustainable meat producers near you, use localharvest.org.au or browse through the online directory at sustainabletable.org.au.

8 Land is being swallowed by urban sprawl

The world is running out of good farmland. A combination of degradation, urban sprawl, mining, industrial pollution, recreation and sea level rises eliminates around 1% per cent of the world’s farmland every year. This is on top of the quarter of land that is now degraded to the extent that it is scarcely capable of yielding food.8

As our cities sprawl, they smother what is often the most fertile soil and farmland, replacing it with unproductive concrete and asphalt. This in turn drives agriculture out into ever more distant areas, where food must be transported further; farmers are more isolated and city dwellers even more disconnected from how their food is grown. All the while, the internal food growing capacity of cities remains limited.

The environmental impacts of our food system are varied and with many different causes. By understanding what the impacts are and prioritising those you care most about you can start taking actions that will improve the sustainability and resilience of our food system.

Choosing what you eat, where you shop and what you spend your money on is a powerful way to drive sustainable change in our food system.

A few simple, but effective, actions include:

- Eat food that is in season – it’s fresher and generally has a lower carbon footprint! Look for good places to shop using ‘A City Dwellers Guide to Sustainable Shopping’ (included in this Guide).
- Source food locally – the environmental impacts from transport and storage will be lower and local production will increase your community’s food security.
- Grow your own – producing food yourself gives you control over environmental impacts. It’s also a convenient and secure source of food for you or your business.

At City of Melbourne residents have the power to support a more sustainable food system. For more information and actions that you can take, check out the action checklists and other resources that we have developed to help you get started:

Sustainability Spring Clean

10 Steps to Sustainability (For businesses)

10 Steps to Sustainability (For individuals)

A City Dwellers Guide to Sustainable Food

Get Committed! A checklist

Sustainable Shopping Close to You

Fast Facts on Food Waste

Sustainable Seafood Guide

Victorian Seasonal Produce Guide

Where to from here...

The environmental impacts from transport and storage will be lower and local production will increase your community’s food security.
1. **start a workplace kitchen garden**

Growing your own food reduces your food miles and CO2 emissions. It also helps to create green space and provides access to seasonal produce, no matter how small.

2. **reduce waste & start composting**

Australian businesses throw away more than 1 million tonnes of food every year. If you’re a food service operator, the Wise Up on Waste toolkit can help prevent food waste while reducing costs and improving sustainability. Secondly, you can separate organic waste and arrange a collection service so that you divert it from landfill (see What’s Food Got To Do With It? for more information).

Encourage staff to compost their food scraps using a bench-top composting kit or bin. Use the compost to feed your kitchen garden, distribute it to local gardeners or take it home.

3. **avoid packaging, buy in bulk or reusable containers**

Plastic takes up to 1,000 years to break down, so encourage staff or patrons to use reusable containers and coffee cups where possible.

Buy produce in bulk to minimise packaging, or request that produce be delivered in reusable or returnable containers.

4. **donate leftover food**

Help reduce sending waste to landfill by donating food leftovers from business catering and functions to a food donation program near you. See the Food Donation Toolkit for more information.

5. **buy chemical free, organic or biodynamic**

Organic and biodynamic farming methods improve soil health and reduce reliance on fossil fuels as no synthetic chemicals or pesticides are used. Purchase organic or biodynamic milk for the staff kitchen and ask any caterers you engage with if they can use sustainable produce when catering for your business.

6. **buy local & seasonal**

Does your business order a staff fruit box?

Use the Sustainable Shopping Close to You guide to find a box system that uses local, organic and seasonal fruit.

If you are a food outlet, work with your suppliers to source local produce and promote this to your customers.

7. **increase vegetarian and dairy-free options on the menu**

In Australia, methane emissions from cattle and sheep account for 10% of total greenhouse gas emissions. More meat and dairy free options on the menu can help reduce Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions and provide customers with more choice.

Promoting meat-free Mondays is another initiative which can reduce emissions.

8. **choose free range pork, chicken & eggs**

Sustainably managed free range or organic farms are able to reduce or better manage the environmental impacts of farming by following a number of ecological practices such as appropriate animal stocking densities and integrated farming. Choose free range or organic and help support environmentally-sound farming systems.

9. **choose sustainably farmed meat & dairy & sustainable seafood**

Sustainable meat and dairy farms employ good environmental practices such as animal rotation, pasture feeding (as opposed to grain feeding), water recycling and management, composting, tree planting and soil health practices, and use fewer non-renewable resources. Ask questions of your supplier and use the guides on the Sustainable Table (sustainabletable.org.au) or Local Harvest (localharvest.org.au) websites to find sustainably farmed meat and dairy close to you.

Three quarters of the world’s oceans are officially over-exploited or fished right to their limit. Use the Sustainable Seafood Guide (included in this Guide) to select sustainable species in order to preserve fish populations for future generations.

10. **develop relationships & ask questions**

Asking questions of your produce suppliers, caterers and decision makers is an important step in promoting positive change. Your requests as a supplier and a customer demonstrate demand for sustainable food and encourage changes in the supply chain.

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Paths to Sustainability – Individuals

1. grow your own food
   Growing your own food reduces your food miles and CO2 emissions. Plus it’s seasonal, delicious and saves money.

2. avoid packaging & use re-useable shopping bags
   In Australia alone, 3.92 billion plastic bags were used in 2011.1 The amount of petroleum used to make these bags could drive a car around the world 1076 times.2 Fifty million plastic bags enter the environment as litter every year and can take hundreds of years to break down in the environment.

3. choose sustainable seafood
   Three quarters of the world’s oceans are officially over-exploited or fished right to their limit. Use the pocket Sustainable Seafood Guide or Switch Your Fish Guide to select sustainable species in order to preserve fish populations for future generations. You can also download the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide iphone app via their website (sustainableseafood.org.au) or visit GoodFishBadFish for more information (GoodFishBadFish.com.au).

4. choose free range or organic chicken, pork and egg products
   Sustainably-managed farms are better able to reduce the environmental impacts of farming. Alternatively, raise your own chooks to produce daily eggs and reduce your food waste. Search Local Harvest (localharvest.org.au) for sustainable producers and outlets near you.

5. reduce, reuse, recycle & compost
   Australians send $8 billion worth of food to landfill each year.3 Using a compost bin can cut the garbage you send to landfill by 50%. The City of Melbourne provides discounted compost bins for residents – call 9658 9658 for more information.

6. buy chemical free organic or biodynamic
   Organic and biodynamic farming methods improve soil health and reduce reliance on fossil fuels as no synthetic chemicals or pesticides are used.

7. buy local & seasonal
   Support local farmers, reduce packaging and your carbon footprint by enjoying the freshness and variety of seasonal food.

8. instigate meat and dairy free days
   In Australia, methane emissions from cattle and sheep account for 10% of total greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing your meat and dairy consumption helps you reduce your contribution to Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions.

9. choose sustainably farmed meat & dairy
   Sustainable meat and dairy farms employ good environmental practices such as animal rotation, water recycling and management, nutrient recycling such as composting, tree planting and soil health practices, and use fewer non-renewable resources.

10. ask questions
    Asking questions at the shops, market and the restaurant is an important step in promoting positive change. It encourages businesses to provide more sustainable food options because they know their customers will buy it.

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SUSTAINABLE TABLE
A City Dweller’s Guide to Sustainable Food

Choosing sustainable food doesn’t have to be a challenge, even if you live in the city. This guide will help you find sustainable food options that are close and convenient for you.

Farmers’ markets bring many food producers together and offer a wide variety of seasonal regional produce picked fresh, sometimes even on the day of the market. They’re an easy, convenient and fun way to find locally grown food and there are lots of them in and around inner Melbourne.

The direct relationship with customers means that farmers’ market stallholders are held accountable for the quality of their produce. They set and receive what they deem to be a fair price for their produce and can explain what is involved in production and what drives their pricing. This also allows shoppers to make more informed choices about organic versus conventional versus biodynamic goods and sample the differences.

Shopping at a farmers’ market is a great way to buy local, seasonal produce straight from the source. You can check out the markets listed below or search at vicfarmersmarkets.org.au for more near you and to find out about their accreditation program.

Next time you get out of town or head down the coast, why not look into farms that operate a farmgate or seafood providers who sell at co-ops near a pier or fresh off the boat. ‘Pick-your-own’ farms, farmgates and cellar doors all offer the unique experience of visiting the source of your produce and meeting the people who grow and make it. This is not just shopping for food, it’s an opportunity to see the process up close in person and gain an insight into the growing environment. Some fishermen also sell direct from their boat or on a pier, such as Bay Sea Farms (Mornington), Sea Bounty (Williamstown) and Port Franklin Fresh Fish (Port Franklin).

Farmgates or fresh off the boat

There are a number of food box systems now operating across Melbourne. Some of the most well-known are…

- CERES Fair Food – ceresfairfood.org.au
- Organic Empire – organicempire.com.au

You can also research others by visiting localharvest.org.au and typing in your postcode with the keyword ‘box’.

Food co-operatives

If you love the idea of meeting people in your local area, sharing food stories and buying in bulk together to avoid packaging then get on down to your local food co-op.

Food co-ops are owned by their members and usually sell organic, locally and ethically sourced groceries in bulk. Food co-ops can be stores or groups that, because of their collective buying power, can provide these items in a more economical way.

Producers who work with co-ops have the benefit of selling in bulk and can use less packaging.

CSAs provide a great way to source direct from the farm and share the risks and benefits of production with the farmers.

For CSAs in your local area visit localharvest.org.au, type in your postcode and the key word ‘CSA’.

Grow it at home

Whether you have a huge backyard garden, a tiny balcony, or even just a window sill, just about anyone can grow food in the city.

By producing your own food you can choose what types to grow in the way that you want. Best of all, what you grow will always be in season and will be as locally sourced as possible!

For advice on starting your own garden in the city visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/sustainability/whatcanido/pages/sustainablegardening.aspx or browse through the many useful online resources listed on Sustainable Table’s website sustainabletable.org.au.

Do you struggle to find the time to plan a weekly shop? Then why not take the effort out of it and sign up to a sustainable box system. Produce boxes help strike the right balance between convenience and healthy, ethical and environmentally sound food.

Finding the right service is key; both organic and conventional greengrocers may offer box delivery, as do online grocers. The environmental benefits and impacts of each may differ despite catchy marketing names, so be sure to enquire about this when deciding which delivery system is appropriate for you. Food co-ops and CSAs can also utilise box delivery schemes by making them available for collection from a central point.

For local food swaps in your area visit localharvest.org.au, type in your postcode and the key words ‘food swap’.

If you love to grow your own food, but find yourself with too much of the one thing, then why not find your local food swap to supplement your local shop?

Neighbourhood food swaps may offer the perfect solution to a glut of garden produce. If your crops should falter, home-cooked meals, preserves, cordials and recipes can be used as trading commodities. An online search, talking to other gardeners or community noticeboards are a great way to get involved with a local swap, alternatively you can always start your own.

For Food Cooperatives in your local area visit localharvest.org.au, type in your postcode and the key word ‘coop’.

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Get Committed!

Pick three actions you can take to support a sustainable food system:

- **Organic Markets and Farmers’ Markets**
- **Box Delivery Systems**
- **Food Co-ops**

**Organic Markets and Farmers’ Markets**
- CERES Fair Food
- Organic and biodynamic produce hall near the corner of Therry and Queens Streets

**Box Delivery Systems**
- CERES Fair Food
- Organic and biodynamic produce hall near the corner of Therry and Queens Streets

**Food Co-ops**
- Friends of the Earth Food Co-op and Cafe
- Local Produce

Questions to ask when selecting which box system or outlet you will shop from:

- Is your produce chemical free, organic or biodynamic?
- Do you source your produce direct from farms or from a wholesale market?
- Do you source produce from Victoria or from around Australia/the world?
- Do you source only seasonal produce?
We all love eating out, but how much are we throwing out?

If you add up all the food Australia wastes each year, it's enough to fill 450,000 garbage trucks.

For the average Australian household, $1,036 of food is thrown away every year. This is enough money to feed the average household for over a month or to pay for around 6 months of your electricity bill.

Australians discard up to 20% of the food they purchase. This equates to 1 out of every 5 bags of groceries they buy.

We don't check our cupboard or fridge before going shopping. We buy too much because we don't stick to a shopping list. We often shop when we're hungry so buy more food than we need.

We don't know how to use leftovers. Food is mistakenly thrown out before the use-by/best before date.

We buy takeaways at the last minute instead of cooking the food we have at home. We cook too much food.

We buy edible food worth $8 billion every year. We check the cupboard or fridge before going shopping.

We buy takeaways at the last minute instead of cooking the food we have at home. We cook too much food.

Why is it wasted?

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Who are the biggest wasters of food?

Young consumers (18-24) Households with incomes of more than $100,000 per year Families with children

What are the environmental effects?

When food rots with other organic matter in landfill, it gives off a greenhouse gas called methane which is 25 times more potent than the carbon pollution that comes out of your car exhaust.

When you throw out food you also waste the water, fuel and resources it took to get the food from the paddock to your plate.

The hidden impact?

An estimated 20-40% of fruit and vegetables are rejected even before they reach the shops, mostly because they don't match the consumers' and supermarkets' need for perfection.

What you can do

Plan a little better and be mindful of what you are throwing out so you don't repeat the same mistakes.

We all end up with food scraps, so start a compost bin to generate nutrient-rich fertiliser to grow your own food.

If you're in an apartment block, chat to the body corporate about a communal organic waste collection service.

Above all, remember to love food and hate waste - it will save you money and save the Earth.

Placed end to end, the convoy would bridge the gap between Australia and New Zealand, just over three times.
Think Twice, Say No

Be part of the solution.

Oceans are now in a state of global crisis and overfished. Yet many populations of the fish we enjoy are.

Worldwide demand for seafood is increasing, but many species are threatened.

http://sustainableseafood.org.au
Free call 1800 066 299

Cut & Keep Guides
A guide to seasonal produce in Victoria

Spring (September – November)
- Carrot
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Broadbeans
- Avocado
- Asparagus

Summer (December – February)
- Carrot
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Broadbeans
- Avocado
- Asparagus

Autumn (March – May)
- Carrot
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Broadbeans
- Avocado
- Asparagus

Winter (June – August)

BETTER Choice
- Wild caught fish
- Also marketed as...
  - Australian Sardine
  - Blue Swimmer Crab
  - Whiting
  - Garnet
  - Orange Roughy
  - Bass
  - Prawn

Canned/Imported
- Also marketed as...
  - canned

Aquaculture
- Also marketed as...
  - Oysters
  - Mussels

Better Choice Species in this group are not currently overfished. They are generally resilient to fishing pressure at current levels, have a low level of fishing impact, and associated with high levels of biodiversity. There may be some caution required if farmed, as aquaculture methods place significant additional pressure on the marine environment.

Think Twice

Species in this group may be heavily targeted or caught using fishing methods that damage habitat or are associated with high levels of bycatch. There may be some caution required if farmed, as aquaculture methods place significant additional pressure on the marine environment.

Be informed. Choose your seafood wisely.

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Hungry for More?

Use your shopping dollar to vote for a fair food system

"We all have the power to change the world, three times a day in fact. Use your shopping dollar to vote for a fair food system, one that nourishes the earth, protects its animals, values its farmers and engages communities. One that will keep us full for generations to come. You hold that power in your hip pocket."

Hayley Morris, Sustainable Table Co-Founder

To find out more about the impact your food choices have and what you can do, visit sustainabletable.org.au

To find good food close to you, visit localharvest.org.au

To learn more about the Eco Carlton project, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au

@sustaintable on twitter
@localharvester on twitter
@ecocityforum on twitter

like /thesustainable on facebook
like /localharvest.org.au on facebook
like /cityofmelbourne on facebook