

The Food Security Project Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities

Report of the trial RAP Survey

City of Greater Geelong – Corio Norlane
City of Wyndham - Heathdale

2008



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*Connecting Communities
Strengthening Democracy*

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*Supporting local governments and other stakeholders who are working towards
improving access to healthy food and food security for all residents and visitors*

Reports of the Food Security Project

- 1) Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities. Summary report of the trail RAP Survey.
- 2) Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities. Report of the trial RAP Survey.
City of Greater Geelong – Corio Norlane
City of Wyndham - Heathdale
- 3) Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities. Survey Work Book.

Conference presentations

- 1) Wood B and McDowell S. *'Food security in the setting of Local Government and Neighbourhood Renewal.'* Public Health Nutrition in Australia Conference - Principles to practice, rhetoric to reality (July 11-12, 2008, Adelaide).
- 2) Wood B and McDowell S. *'Municipal food security - dimensions and opportunities.'* DAA 27th National Conference - Exploring new territory (May 2009, Darwin).

THE VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE ASSOCIATION

The VLGA is a unique peak body for councilors, community leaders and Local Governments working to build and strengthen their capacity to work together for progressive social change.

Our Vision is for communities to be inclusive, sustainable and dynamic, characterised by strong leadership and effective local governance.

We believe that transparent, accountable and democratic governance policies and practices in all settings enable citizens to create their own sustainable futures.

Preface

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) is a unique peak body for councilors, community leaders and Local Governments working to build and strengthen their capacity to work together for progressive social change. The VLGA has helped in leading the developing community movement to improve local food chain systems and local area food security across Victoria.

Our commitment to *Connecting Communities and Strengthening Democracy* led to us developing the Food Security Network (FSN) in 2003. Importantly, the VLGA supports Local Governments and other stakeholders who are building integrated planning and policy approaches to whole of population municipal and community food security. (<http://www.foodsecurity.vlga.org.au>)

Long term strategies are needed to achieve the systemic and sustainable change required to improve food security, particularly in Local Government areas of disadvantage such as those with Neighbourhood Renewal Projects.

A rapid assessment process for surveying municipal food security will provide the necessary understanding of the local issues to facilitate a shared understanding, strategic and cost-effective approach to local food security.

VLGA thanks the Victorian Department of Human Services partnership between the Program areas of Neighbourhood Renewal and Public Health, who funded this Project. We thank Susan McDowell, Shauna Jones, Stephanie McAdam and other members of the Steering Committee for their valued input.

The Project would not have been possible without the partnerships between VLGA and the Cities of Greater Geelong and Wyndham. Numerous people in both sites contributed to the successful conduct of the trial, and particular thanks is afforded the following:

City of Greater Geelong (Jane Wager, Cathy Walker, Karen Valentine, Steve Sodomaco, Cr Lou Brazier); Corio Norlane Neighbourhood Renewal Program (Rachel Tournier, Kirsten Hemley, residents).

City of Wyndham (Jacqui Croxon, Michelle MacDonald, Cr Bob Fairclough, Cr Shane Bourke); Heathdale Neighbourhood Renewal Program (Lesley Murray, residents); ISIS Primary Care (Kate Waters)

The acronyms are shown below and a glossary of terms has been provided (Appendix 1).

Acronyms	
DHS	Department of Human Services (Victoria)
E4H	Environments for Health
FS	Food security
LG	Local Government
NR	Neighbourhood Renewal Program
PH	Public Health
RAP	Rapid Assessment Procedures
VLGA	Victorian Local Governance Association

Executive Summary

Environments for Health

The Environments for Health (E4H) Municipal Public Health Planning Framework (Victorian Department of Human Services, 2001) is based on the natural, built, economic, and social environments.

This framework has now been utilised to identify the dimensions and opportunities for improving local area water security and food security through community planning and processes, and will be progressed through good governance. The systemic view inherent in E4H is reflected in the definition of food security.

Food security

'Food security can be defined as the state in which all persons obtain a nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable diet at all times through local non-emergency food sources. Food security broadens the traditional conception of hunger, embracing a systemic view of the causes of hunger and poor nutrition within a community while identifying the changes necessary to prevent their occurrence. Food security programs confront hunger and poverty' (Community Food Security Coalition, 1995)

We have an individual choice in what we eat but we have a collective responsibility to see that there are systems in place to support (and not impede) the household and individual choices that will strengthen the collective independence and health and well-being of our communities.

Municipal Food Security

Local Governments have a whole of population mandate. The recent Victorian Health and Wellbeing Act (Victorian Government, 2008) now provides legislative support for Local Governments undertaking improvement in whole of population health and well-being through strategic planning across most business units.

Local Governments can improve community health and well-being through support for equitable and local food chain systems, and by ensuring that shopping, transport and other infrastructure barriers do not affect the ability of the residents to achieve activities of daily living, independence, health and well-being, and quality of life. On many occasions, this can be achieved in a cost-neutral or cost-effective manner.

The strategies include inclusion of whole of population checklists for health and wellbeing and other methods in land use planning and support for water security, urban gardening, built environment planning, trade and economy, equitable food access, and advocacy for integrated local public transport to the food supply.

This is a traditional Local Government role, and can be achieved through local food policies and Municipal Public Health plans linked to Community Plans, Municipal Strategy Statements, Corporate Plans, and ultimately core Council functions.

These plans provide leadership and a structural framework for the environments and amenities that affect the residents ability to access healthy food, and make healthy food choices on a lifelong basis without resort to Local Government community services and/or emergency foods.

In the Project sites to date, many stakeholders have not yet had the opportunity to participate (food growers, food producers, food distributors, food suppliers, traders, commerce, tertiary institutions, regional interests and planning strategists).

Other important local food security stakeholders are the residents, self-help groups and clubs, primary health care partnerships, primary health care agencies (community health promotion plans and direct services), community services, welfare organisations, and health institutions such as local hospitals.

In Victoria, the frequency of food insecurity at the individual level is of the order of 12%, and the 2007 survey showed that the range was 1.5 to 23.2% across Local Government areas (The McCaughey Centre, 2007).

Transforming the way Local Government thinks about planning and integrating food security for all

This document highlights the effective utilisation of the Victorian Environments for Health (E4H) framework to identify the dimensions and opportunities for improving local area food security.

The Project outcomes included the initial identification of systemic barriers to local water security and food security and the beginning of Local Government and other planning for intervention strategies.

Victorian Local Governments have a legislative obligation to plan for municipal health and well-being through Municipal Public Health Plans. Long term sustainable solutions to local food security barriers towards an *integrated* sustainable water and local food chain systems from paddock to plate for all promotes social inclusion and food inclusion.

Social co-operation is essential to ensure sustainability of local food supplies to support community independence and resilience.

Democracy, good governance, and community planning for mental and physical well-being for whole of populations will achieve a democratic community movement for health and well-being. Water security and food security for all will be protected.

Victorian Neighbourhood Renewal Program

Neighbourhood Renewal is a place based initiative of the Victorian government aimed at addressing disadvantage (<http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au/>). To narrow the gap between disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Victoria and the rest of the State, each Neighbourhood Renewal project is implementing a six-point plan of action that focuses on:

- Increasing people's pride and participation;
- Enhancing housing and the physical environment;

- Lifting employment and learning opportunities and expanding local economies;
- Improving personal safety and reducing crime;
- Promoting health and wellbeing; and
- Improvement in government responsiveness.

Increasing concerns about inadequate community food security in Neighbourhood Renewal sites across Victoria have led to short term strategies such as community gardens, community kitchens, food co-operatives, breakfast clubs, and community food enterprises.

These initiatives relate to food supply and access and produce multiple outcomes for residents such as increased availability and access to healthy food as well as opportunities for social connectedness. They have helped to generate interest and enthusiasm around issues of food access and supply.

These initiatives now need to be built on, and encourage further identification and action around issues underpinning supply and access to healthy and affordable food.

Long term strategies are needed to achieve the systemic and sustainable change required, particularly in Local Government areas of disadvantage, such as those with Neighbourhood Renewal Projects.

A rapid assessment process for municipal food security will provide the necessary understanding of the local issues to facilitate a shared understanding, strategic and cost-effective approach to food security.

What we did in partnership

A previous version of the E4H Municipal Public Health Planning framework for food security (Wood and Streker, 2005) included health and well-being and was developed into a Work Book for application by rapid assessment procedures (RAP).

The E4H framework facilitated the trial of the Survey Work Book to quickly identify Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities in a geographical area.

The trial was undertaken in the Cities of Greater Geelong and Wyndham, and the Neighbourhood Renewal sites of Corio Norlane and Heathdale respectively. Contact with primary sources included key informant interviews, observation, and focus groups of workers and residents (community consultation).

RAP provided an effective method of implementing and evaluating the trial of the Survey Work Book, which included an inter-sectoral framework for municipal food security in the whole of population setting.

The procedures were complimentary, provided cross-validation, and were strengthened by community consultation. The outcomes for the trial were captured in each site and used collectively to update the Survey Work Book and to evaluate the rapid assessment procedures used.

Trial outcomes

The trial in Local Governments with Neighbourhood Renewal Programs progressed well without any major barriers and reached a stage of resolution within six months in both sites.

Evaluation of the trial included observations, key informant interviews and focus groups. The trial achieved many outcomes.

Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book revision

The structure of the *Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book* (VLGA, 2008) was thoroughly reviewed in response to the trial evaluation, and a revised outline of the Survey is shown in Table 1.

RAP Municipal Food Security Surveys in both sites

The Cities of Geelong – Corio Norlane and Wyndham – Heathdale achieved outcomes specific to each Neighbourhood Renewal site, and details of these outcomes have been provided in the interim site reports (refer list in Appendix 5).

In the evaluation, participants at both sites considered that it would have been helpful to have more guidance - training in RAP at the beginning of the trial - and provision of optional management structures, procedures and timelines for conduct of the Survey.

Development of site recommendations

The RAP trial of the Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book increased awareness in Local Governments, built capacity, and strengthened the two local Neighbourhood Renewal communities in their consideration of local issues. The identified opportunities to address systemic barriers to municipal food security have the potential to be categorised by cost and duration.

Common features of site outcomes

VLGA examined the Survey Work Books of both sites, for commonalities in the major barriers to municipal food security. These occur across the natural, built, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions of the *Environments for Health*.

Settings for improving food security at the local level

This RAP trial of a Municipal Food Security Survey confirms at least three of the settings for improving food security at the local level that were suggested in a previous study (Wood, Swinburn, and Burns, 2003).

Each setting can contribute to improvement in food security at the local level through their target populations (whole of population for Local Governments, vulnerable households and individuals for Primary Care Partnerships, Community Agencies, and Emergency Food Relief). These settings all have a traditional and established role in addressing the social and health needs of many groups, households and individuals.

Improving whole of population health and well-being can in the future be supported by the development and testing of a prediction checklist for the effect of short, medium and long term strategies. Three basic evaluation questions could be employed:

- Are any area demographic and other trends forecast in each environment for health?
- If the no-change option is selected, how will each environment for health develop?
- When change in a dimension has been selected, what are the predictions?

All strategies can be evaluated by using the Survey Work Book to repeat relevant parts of the Survey at intervals, say two years.

Monitoring of food security at the local level

In recent years, data on food security has become available at national, state and at the local government level in Victoria using the question – *‘In the last 12 months, were there any times that you ran out of food and you couldn't afford to buy more?’*

In local areas, data is also required at the Collector District level to provide advocacy and support for local interventions and their subsequent evaluation. Opportunities should be taken to progress the collection of this data whenever possible, such as through the Neighbourhood Renewal Program.

Recommendations

Achievement of environmental sustainability in the wider community and a liveable and just society require integrated Local Government planning and resources which will support activities of daily living for all and a ‘Fairer Victoria.’ Progressing Municipal Food Security Surveys across Victoria will therefore require the following recommendations:

1. Development of guidelines for use of the Survey Work Book, a short training course and resources. Together they will provide an outline of the potential management and processes for the Survey. The guidelines will also provide models for the Survey outcomes including those of community consultation and municipal food security.
2. Implementation of this training course with five Local Governments with Neighbourhood Renewal Projects, who submitted Expressions of Interest last year in conducting a Municipal Food Security Survey.
3. Promotion of this course to all Local Governments in Victoria, with encouragement of local food policy development.
4. Improvement in the monitoring of local food security by area (Collector District). One of these opportunities is through the Neighbourhood Renewal Program.
5. Development of a brief checklist (population, cost, duration) to assist conversion of food security dimensions and opportunities to integrated planning for local improvement in food security.
6. Development and testing of a prediction checklist for the effect of short, medium and long term strategies to achieve sustainable improvement in whole of population health and well-being.

7. Extension and testing of the derived method for examining Municipal Food Security dimensions across comparative areas by area, and by population.

NOTE: Recommendations 4-7 can be achieved within recommendations 1-3.

Further development of the Project outcomes and their dissemination across Victoria will support the inclusion of mainstream food security strategies in Local Government, Neighbourhood Renewal, and other planning partnerships for and with local communities.

Table 1: Municipal food security survey dimensions and opportunities

	NATURAL	BUILT	ECONOMIC	SOCIO-CULTURAL
LOCAL FOOD CHAIN SYSTEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 local supermarket and food outlets selling liquor? •Are there any retail local dining and meal outlets? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 produced				
Food available for distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are there any "breast feeding welcome here" locations? •Are there community programs and activities for social and food connectedness?
Food available for purchase				
Food purchased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is any assistance available for water conservation and recycling? •How is food and water safety, food waste and packaging waste addressed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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?
Food eaten				
Social benefit Health status outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are there any local environmental initiatives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are there minimum standards for food storage and preparation in community housing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are there any emergency relief food outlets? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are there any identified community resilience factors that can be built on to improve food security?

HEALTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What are the demographic factors? What are the indices of disadvantage? •Are there any infants, children, youth and women of child bearing age who are at risk of food security problems? •Who are considered to be the most vulnerable? •What are the food and nutrition risk factors for the population?

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1.0 Introduction

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) was funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services to lead and facilitate two Food Security Projects in the setting of Local Government with Neighbourhood Renewal Program sites. In a three-way partnership, VLGA developed and facilitated a trial of rapid assessment procedures (RAP) to identify systemic barriers to local food security.

1.1 Municipal food security

Since the 1990s, a community movement has been developing to address the barriers to food security at the local level across Victoria. An important part of this movement has been to progress local strategies to improve local food security through short-term programs supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Program, VicHealth and Local Governments.

Climate change, drought, water shortage and peak oil are all major issues which already affect local food chain systems, and have the potential to dramatically affect it in future. The food supply contributes 30-50% of the total ecological footprint. Therefore, what happens at the local level is more important than ever before.

There is an even more urgent focus required to improve the integrated planning and policy approaches of Local Governments to community water security and food security. In turn, these actions will improve household and individual food security of residents in the municipalities.

The most effective way in which Local Government can act to improve local food security is through Council and Community Plans, as informed by consultation with local citizens.

The Victorian frameworks available to support these actions include the following:

- Victorian Health and Wellbeing Act (2008);
- Victorian Environments for Health (E4H) Municipal Public Health Planning framework;
- VicHealth Leading the Way Program – Councils building healthier communities;
- Victorian Neighbourhood Renewal Program;
- Victorian Local Governance Association - Community Consultation framework;
- Healthy Cities framework; and the
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Project.

Consideration of food security across the E4H Municipal Public Health Planning framework (Victorian Department of Human Services, 2001) provided the opportunity to introduce the dimensions and opportunities for improving local food security through Local Government policies, planning and processes.

The application of the E4H framework developed from the evaluation of two food security demonstration projects in the Cities of Maribyrnong and Yarra (Wood, Swinburn, Burns, 2003). The initial work for applying the framework was conducted in the City of Port Phillip (Wood and Streker, 2005).

Local Governments have a whole of population mandate and can improve community health and well-being through support for equitable and local food chain systems, and by ensuring

that shopping, transport and other infrastructure barriers do not affect the ability of the residents to achieve independence and quality lifestyle.

This is a traditional Local Government role, and can be achieved through local food policies and Municipal Public Health plans linked to Local government Community Plans, Municipal Strategic Statements, and Council Plans – all legislated requirements of Local Governments. These plans provide leadership and a structural framework for the environments and amenities that affect resident’s ability to access healthy food, and make healthy food choices on a lifelong basis without resort to Local Government community services and/or emergency food sources.

Other organisations also have a traditional and established role in addressing the food security, social and health needs of many groups, households and individuals. These stakeholders are the residents, self-help groups and clubs, primary health care partnerships, primary health care agencies (community health, health promotion plans and direct services), community services, welfare organisations, and health institutions.

In this current trial, participating Local Governments were required to bring their local community, business, food production and other networks and resources ‘to the table’ to support identification of the local dimensions of food security and to generate the resources for the opportunities identified to improve it in sustainable ways.

This Food Security Project focused on Local Governments with Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) sites which focus on partnerships and resident engagement with a Local Government Area. To facilitate the work, a rapid assessment procedure (RAP) was developed which could be performed by Local Governments and communities over a few months. The trial of this method in two sites would provide Local Governments and the Neighbourhood Renewal Program with a rapid way of identifying the dimensions and opportunities for improving local food security.

1.2 Victorian Neighbourhood Renewal Program

Neighbourhood Renewal is a place based initiative of the Victorian government aimed at addressing disadvantage (<http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au/>). To narrow the gap between disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Victoria and the rest of the State, each Neighbourhood Renewal project is implementing a six-point plan of action that focuses on:

- Increasing people’s pride and participation;
- Enhancing housing and the physical environment;
- Lifting employment and learning opportunities and expanding local economies;
- Improving personal safety and reducing crime;
- Promoting health and wellbeing; and
- Improvement in government responsiveness.

Increasing concerns about inadequate community food security in Neighbourhood Renewal sites across Victoria have led to short term strategies such as community gardens, community kitchens, food co-operatives, breakfast clubs, community food enterprises.

These initiatives relate to food supply and access and produce multiple outcomes for residents such as increased availability and access to healthy food as well as opportunities for social connectedness. They have helped to generate interest and enthusiasm around issues of food access and supply.

These initiatives now need to be built on, and encourage further identification and action around issues underpinning supply and access to healthy and affordable food.

Sustainable, systemic change requires a range of actions to address the underlying causes for food security issues. These issues need to be identified so that appropriate integrated local responses can be developed and implemented.

Long term strategies are needed to achieve the systemic and sustainable change required, particularly in Local Government areas of disadvantage, such as those with Neighbourhood Renewal Projects.

A rapid assessment process for municipal food security will provide the necessary understanding of the local issues to facilitate a shared understanding, strategic and cost-effective approach to food security.

1.3 Food insecurity and its extent in Victoria

There are many facets of food security (natural, built, economic, socio-cultural, health) and many levels of food security (household and individual to global) (refer Appendix 1).

In Australia, the only monitoring question on food security in common use is *'In the last 12 months, were there any times that you ran out of food and you couldn't afford to buy more?'* (ABS, 1998). This question was asked in the last (1995) National Nutrition Survey of adults 16 years of age and over (Figure 1a) and in the Victorian Community Indicators Survey (Figure 1b) (The McCaughey Centre, 2007).

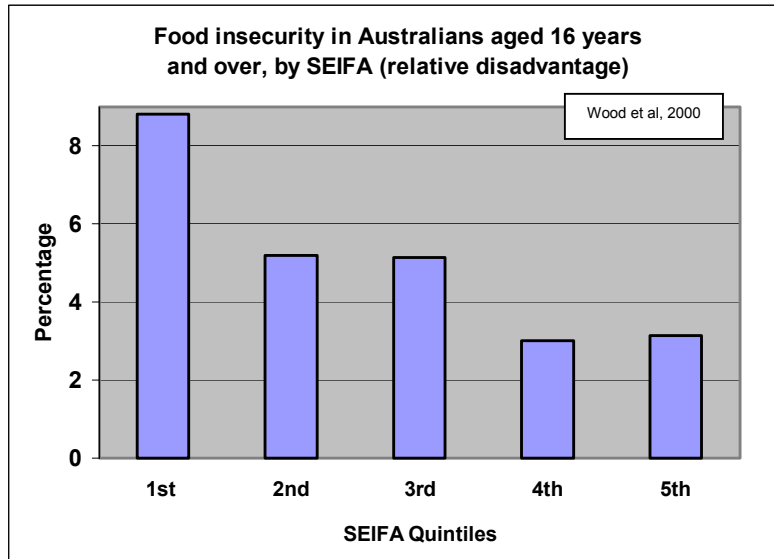
The estimated food insecurity frequency was 897 000 adults and children (5%) across Australia in 1995 (Figure 1a), and 317 000 adults and children (6.1%) across Victoria in 2007 (Figure 1b). The range for adult (only) food insecurity was 1.5 to 23.2% across Local Government Areas in Victoria (Figure 1b). This order of magnitude for food insecurity is supported by surveys of at risk groups and anecdotal information. Food insecurity is mostly invisible to those not affected by it.

A more systemic view and definition of food security is necessary, that is:

'Food security can be defined as the state in which all persons obtain a nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable diet at all times through local non-emergency food sources. Food security broadens the traditional conception of hunger, embracing a systemic view of the causes of hunger and poor nutrition within a community while identifying the changes necessary to prevent their occurrence. Food security programs confront hunger and poverty' (Community Food Security Coalition, 1995).

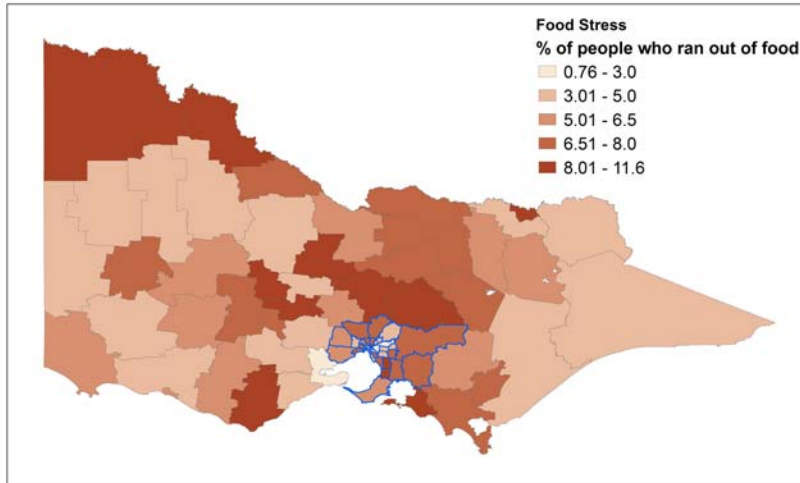
However, it should be noted that this question measures only one facet (economic) and one level (household) of food security, and can be reasonably expected to underestimate the extent of food insecurity. Food insecurity is most likely to be intermittent, and is more likely to be suffered by those who do not participate in Government and other surveys. Studies in other developed countries employ a much wider range of questions.

Figures 1a and 1b: Food insecurity in Australia and Victoria



**Australian adults: 5% plus dependent children (3.6:1)
(Estimated 897 000 adults and children in 1995)**

Food Stress



**Victorian adults: 6.1% plus dependent children (4.3:1)
(Estimated 317 000 adults and children in 2007)**

Food insecurity is reported in all areas of Australia, irrespective of the level of relative advantage or disadvantage (Figure 1a). Every Local Government area in Victoria has a proportion of its population (approximately 40% on average) in disadvantaged areas (1st-2nd quintiles of SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index of Disadvantage)).

Hunger in Australia

'Australia has a hungry underbelly. Many Australians are poor and many of the poor are hungry, and the available evidence suggests that hunger is on the increase in the Lucky Country' (Wilson, 1997)

It is noted that the risk of obesity is 20 to 40% higher in women who have low incomes and are experiencing food insecurity. Those with the poorest social, economic and educational resources are more likely to be obese. This has been observed consistently across the developed countries of the United States of America, Europe and Australia (Burns, 2004), and is still to be fully explained.

1.4 Rapid assessment procedures (RAP)

Rapid assessment is a qualitative method for planning and evaluation health related programs (Scrimshaw and Gleason, 1994), and is usually conducted by a multi-disciplinary team.

Rapid assessment procedures

'Rapid assessment is not merely a method for collecting data about , but more importantly a process on which to formulate a plan of action to improve the living conditions of the people, based on their participating in defining their own problems'
(Rifkin et al, 1994)

Mixed methods, based on the approach and holistic style of qualitative research called RAP - rapid assessment procedures, are those where the goal is to get useful data as quickly as possible, which can then be used for improving local food security. The method is time responsive, cost effective, flexibly applied, includes community consultation, utilises a range of techniques, and can be repeated easily and quickly at intervals.

RAP are applied over a relatively short time to the collection of field data that can identify a range of dimensions and opportunities and link directly to intervention strategies. The information collected is cross-validated by the use of a variety of techniques such as key informant interviews, surveys, community consultation, observation, and focus groups.

2.0 Aims

The aims of the RAP Trial for Municipal Food Security were as follows:

- 1) Facilitate two site-specific Neighbourhood Renewal Program food security processes:
 - a) Identify (and if necessary adapt) existing participatory mechanisms and work in partnership thereafter
 - b) Utilise relevant and available reports and information (local place features and characteristics, demographics, health and well-being, policies and plans); and
 - c) Trial of RAP to identify the dimensions and opportunities for food security across the natural, built, economic and social and cultural environments.

- 2) Build the capacity of each Neighbourhood Renewal Program to develop and begin to implement site-specific food security strategies:
 - a) Work with residents, Local Governments, Neighbourhood Renewal Program staff and other stakeholders to identify goals and local interventions, to achieve improvements in food security over the short, medium, and longer terms; and
 - b) Use the information and resources generated from consultations and training to disseminate to other stakeholders and settings.

The main target groups were Local Government in partnership with a local Neighbourhood Renewal Program, as well as residents and other stakeholders.

3.0 Methodology

A rapid assessment procedure (RAP) was developed for application in two sites for collecting municipal food security information, formulating action plans and initiating strategies within a short period (three months).

3.1 Development of the RAP trial Survey Work Book

Experience in applying the E4H framework for municipal food security in the City of Port Phillip (Wood and Streker, 2005) was utilised in developing the Municipal Food Security RAP trial draft Work Book (Victorian Local Governance Association, 2007).

The draft Work Book provided the outline for collecting local municipal food security information. It was planned to activate a form of scoping - needs assessment - mapping of the local site areas.

In developing the Work Book, a search was undertaken for specific information categories with readily available and mandatory core data (to allow area comparisons), as well as optional local data (decided on site). A combination of secondary and primary sources of information would facilitate the identification of the dimensions and opportunities for overcoming systemic barriers to local food security.

Whenever possible, the plan was to collect the data in an objective way that would facilitate subsequent examination of the data across municipal areas (sq kilometres) or populations (thousands).

1) Secondary sources of information

Existing information sources (documents, reports, pamphlets, fact sheets) were sourced. These sources included Local Government area data, and Victorian state and regional data. This information had the potential to be examined for consistency with, and support for, information from primary sources.

The Local Governments involved were asked to choose a second area for collection of secondary information, to provide data that could be used for comparative purposes.

2) Primary sources of information

Contact with primary sources included key informant interviews, and focus groups of workers and residents (community consultation). These information sources all provided for cross-reference and validation of the data that was obtained from secondary information sources.

Information gaps in the trial Work Book were supplied through contact with the stakeholders for municipal food security (whole of population), and included:

- Residents and Councilors;
- Local Government staff (particularly area, land, water, open space, social and business planners, transport managers, health promotion, community services, and emergency services);
- Neighbourhood Renewal Program staff;
- Primary Health Care Partnerships and agencies;

- Welfare Organizations; and
- Others.

3.2 Development of the trail for the RAP survey

The VLGA sought Expressions of Interest in the Project from all 19 Local Governments with Neighbourhood Renewal Projects. Seven Councils responded and the two trial sites were selected (refer key criteria in Appendix 2).

The participative methodology evolved in response to the activities of the Local Government partnerships established at the two Neighbourhood Renewal sites and the essential elements of it were the same in both sites.

The RAP trial was conducted using the RAP trial Survey Work Book (see Section 3.1), which was subsequently revised and now forms the main outcome of this Project (VLGA, 2008).

3.2.2 Engagement of Local Governments

The VLGA engaged the Local Governments and identified and assisted the enlistment of other multidisciplinary stakeholders in the Local Government area, including existing partnerships and alliances.

3.2.3 VLGA trial participation and observation

The VLGA objective was to provide advice and support on processes that facilitated collection of data and analysis in each site, and to conduct external evaluation.

The VLGA trial methods included participatory peer evaluation, through a mutually agreed set of evaluation criteria for process assessment. The outline follows:

- 1) To observe whether the selection criteria for trial sites were appropriate (Appendix 2), in that the Local Governments were ready to undertake the work in the sites using Neighbourhood Renewal as a platform for resident engagement, partnerships and community action planning.
- 2) To observe whether the RAP trial was rapid and effective (strengths) or slow and ineffective (weaknesses).
- 3) To use the evaluation to improve the Municipal Food Security Work Book and its implementation.
- 4) To validate the usefulness of the survey in assisting identification of municipal food security dimensions and opportunities (natural, built, economic, socio-cultural, health) and subsequent development of strategies.
- 5) To identify and document any models of good practice (organisational change, community participation), and lessons learnt through the trial at both sites, individually and collectively.
- 6) To use the evaluation approach to support capacity building, information transference and behavioural change in Local Government sites.
- 7) To disseminate the results and use them to inform future transference of the RAP (and subsequent processes) to other Local Government areas.

Regular review of the RAP process at each site took place through:

- 1) Direct support and assistance, as required, in support of Local Governments, partners and residents undertaking the trial.
 - a) Regular contact (telephone, and no less than monthly face-to-face meetings).
 - b) Attendance and participation at LG Project Management Committee meetings and review of meeting records.
 - c) Attendance at combined workshops, meetings and other activities on site.
- 2) Development of Project strategies, as required, with Local Governments, partners and residents.
- 3) Review and analysis of Project documents, reports, and products - in consultation with the sites.

3.2.4 Key informant interviews

The VLGA conducted one round of key informant interviews (refer Appendix 3) at each site.

The aims for this part of trial are listed below:

- 1) To generate general and descriptive background information to inform the sites and assist in evaluation.
- 2) To obtain insight into motives, attitudes and perceptions of different key informants.
- 3) To improve interpretation of available qualitative and quantitative data derived by the sites.
- 4) To elicit suggestions and recommendations from key informants to inform the Projects and assist in evaluation.
- 5) To develop questions, hypotheses, and proposals for later testing and elaboration.

The Project aims and objectives were used as the basis for planning the theme questions for the key informant interviews. This methodology was derived from consultation with site partners and reference to Samset (1993).

3.2.5 Focus group evaluation

When the local Survey Work Book was available in draft form for all site participants towards the end of the Project, the VLGA conducted focus group evaluations. The aims for this part of the trial follow:

- 1) Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Survey Work Book.
- 2) Determination of why and how the process worked well (or not) ie. determination of the effectiveness of the approach and strategies used.
- 3) Review of processes which facilitated application of the RAP trial and collection of data and analysis at each site.
- 4) Review how *quality* was maintained through the RAP trial for Municipal Food Security.

This outline was used to develop the theme questions for the focus group evaluations which were conducted by VLGA (Appendix 4).

3.2.6 Case studies

Case studies were developed for each site on the basis of all of the evaluation activities for the trial and included discussions of the following:

- Local Government capacity and commitment to leadership on local food security;

- Management and processes;
- Resources;
- Partnerships;
- Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book;
- Community consultation; and
- Dissemination of Project findings (local).

The Case Studies provided the basis for the updating of the Survey Work Book and this report of the trial. They also provide the potential for development of a training course to disseminate the results of the trial to other Local Government areas and Neighbourhood Renewal sites in Victoria and elsewhere.

4.0 Summary of site specific outcomes

The Cities of Geelong-Corio Norlane and Wyndham-Heathdale achieved outcomes specific to each Neighbourhood Renewal site. Details of the trial methods and outcomes for each site have been provided in the interim site reports (refer list in Appendix 5).

4.1 City of Greater Geelong - Corio Norlane

The City of Geelong achieved the Municipal Food Security Survey in the Neighbourhood Renewal site of Corio-Norlane. The comparative area of Belmont-Highton was chosen.

The Focus Group evaluation indicated that the outcomes of the trial did not meet local expectations:

- Although the Project included a lot of research looking at the environments and background and there were some small outcomes, additional research will be required to support Council changes in access to food for people living in northern suburbs;
- The Work Book needs to be simplified, with fewer questions and more depth; and
- Some identified activities can be conducted internally in Council, and may be suggested next steps towards an integrated response.

'We thought we were ready, but we were probably looking at a different perspective'
(Focus group evaluation)

There were two consistent responses to how the Survey outcomes were progressed and how they would become sustainable:

- It was good to focus on the whole of community (system problems), rather than on individuals (people problems); and
- It was agreed that stakeholder capacity building took place.

'The Project has changed understanding from a values base to a systems base'
'There have not been any judgments made about food type and human body weight'
(Focus group evaluation)

There are some existing council structures strategically to feed back some opportunities now. It may be necessary to take the slower road through internal Geelong processes, with awareness building and strategy checks. It would be advisable for Council to answer questions about the aspects of health that they can address best and have the most impact. Detailed feedback to the Corio-Norlane Neighbourhood Renewal Program will need to occur in future. A forum co-hosted by City of Greater Geelong and Neighbourhood Renewal to present findings and increase knowledge throughout the Neighbourhood Renewal area on food security is also desirable.

The City of Greater Geelong's revision of their Municipal Public Health Plan will take place early in 2009, and provides an opportunity to concentrate on what Council can do about local food security. In this Plan, the social determinants of health are the same for all issues, and

the new information from this Municipal Food Security Survey can be embedded in what is already there.

However, what is clear from this trial is that new community networks are not required. The Corio Norlane partnership structure already exists (two government tiers, lots of departments) and the challenge therefore is how to bring in other resources to progress the systemic response to municipal food insecurity.

Neighbourhood Renewal considered that there are many opportunities that this Project could contribute to and progress the issues and move them to the community of Corio-Norlane through the Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee (which includes representatives of three tiers of government). Key players can invest resources and Corio Norlane could be a model to pursue so that the progress of municipal food security doesn't just fall on Council Officers.

'It will help to put on Agenda of decision makers when we can present (Food Security Project) to the (NR) Health and Well-being Sub-Committee and Community Reference Committee'

'(It becomes) part of future planning for Council eg. land use planning'
(Key informants)

Figure 2: A snapshot of Geelong - Corio Norlane *

City of Greater Geelong land area 1 240 sq km
City of Greater Geelong population 194 346
Low income households (combined income < \$499/week before tax) = 23%
Food insecurity 5.0%
SEIFA 999.9

Belmont Highton land area: 20.9 sq km
Belmont Highton population: 28 123
Low income households (combined income < \$499/week before tax) = 21%
SEIFA 1036

Corio Norlane* land area: 24.8 sq km
Corio Norlane population: 23 171
Low income households (combined income < \$499/week before tax) = 33%
SEIFA 840

'A feasibility study was conducted in 2006 to identify the potential for a whole of Victorian Government major urban redevelopment in Norlane and Corio. This study identified the potential for significant improvements to be made in the urban environment including revitalisation of the strip shopping precincts, creation public open spaces and improved connectivity to increase opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices and improve the perceived safety of these areas'
(City of Greater Geelong, 2007)

* Neighbourhood Renewal Project site

4.2 City of Wyndham - Heathdale

The City of Wyndham achieved the Municipal Food Security Survey in the Neighbourhood Renewal area of Heathdale. The comparative area of the whole of the City of Wyndham was chosen. The Focus Group evaluation indicated that the outcomes of the trial of the Survey Work Book exceeded expectations:

- The results evidence base and community consultation will provide the foundation for strong initiatives by City of Wyndham, NR-Heathdale, residents and ISIS Primary Care;
- It has been seen to be an academic exercise, but we have coped with the complex E4H framework;
- The outcomes are simple and can be translated to all;
- The Council outcomes will require further development of drivers, resources, and processes within Council;
- Opportunities for improving food security have been identified;
- Residents have valued knowing what is going on, and Resident participation has been very good and informative;
- Projects like this increase awareness, and the broad nature of the term food security is now known in the area; and
- There is an obvious link to climate change and petrol prices (residents see this) - and future strategies for improving food security can be sold as cost saving.

Although no (intervention) trials were undertaken during this Project, some residents have already taken the initiative of approaching the local Milk Bar to sell fruit and vegetables. They are also considering how they can devise cheap ways of conserving household water.

'Food is good.' 'How do we work together to get more food easily?'
(Focus group evaluation)

It is now up to prioritising the opportunities and working out what is achievable. Some activities to immediately improve local food security (quick wins) have already been identified, including:

- Growing fruits and vegetables in home gardens;
- Food barter systems; and
- Affordable and easy provision of water tanks, food plants

A question for the City of Wyndham is how to use the Project outcomes for Heathdale in the future, with the challenge of focussing on assets rather than disadvantage. There is also a strong wish that Wyndham take up food security across all Council areas (eg. land use planning).

Partners in the Project will now take responsibility for the feedback and dissemination of Project findings to their respective organisations and will collectively ensure that the Project and its outcomes are communicated to relevant stakeholders in Heathdale and to the wider Wyndham community.

The partners in the Project Expression of Interest (Wyndham City Council, NR-Heathdale, ISIS Primary Care, WestBay Alliance) expressed a willingness to support and participate in the dissemination of project outcomes, eg the hosting of a forum, and utilising e-newsletters to promote and disseminate learnings.

On the basis of the information gained, the existing partnership could apply for Project funding to support (continuation) of a true partnership (Council, Neighbourhood Renewal, Primary Health Care), and funding of positions in each organisation.

Figure 4: A snapshot of Wyndham – Heathdale *

Wyndham land area: 542 sq km
Wyndham population: 122 036 (forecast 2007)
Low income households (combined income < \$499/week before tax) = 13%
Council core activity need for assistance: 3.1%
Food insecurity 10.6 %
SEIFA 1006

Heathdale* land area: 2.64 sq km (0.5%)
Heathdale population: 6 815 (forecast 2007) (0.06%)
Low income households (combined income < \$499/week before tax) = 23%
Council core activity need for assistance: 5.3%
SEIFA 902.3

Heathdale has two small local shopping areas within its boundaries, each of which consists of a mixed business (no fresh fruits and vegetables sold), and one or two takeaway outlets

Three shopping precincts (which include large supermarkets) are located on the opposite side of main roads bounding the Heathdale area. These major arterial roads are physical barriers between Heathdale residents and the shopping precincts

It is difficult to obtain choice of affordable food in these locations.

The many discarded shopping trolleys in Heathdale streets reflect the difficulty achieving access to food shops by Heathdale households

'It is said to not be unusual for fish and chips to constitute a family's evening meal because of the convenience of take-way food outlets' (Key informant)

- Neighbourhood Renewal Project site

4.3 Common features of site specific outcomes for the Survey

The VLGA examined the Survey Work Books of both sites, for commonalities in the major barriers to municipal food security (Table 2).

Table 2: Examples of common features of major barriers to municipal food security

Dimensions and opportunities			
NATURAL	BUILT	ECONOMIC	SOCIO-CULTURAL
Arable land not preserved	Centralised food supplies	Limited competition in food supply High food cost	At risk groups (social exclusion, food exclusion)
Little local food grown	Centralised dining and meal outlet access	Low food variety Poor quality fresh food	Low skills and knowledge re household management
Water restrictions affect ability to grow local food	Inadequate public transport to local food supplies	High cost of public transport	
	Inadequate amenities & infrastructure for food access	Unknown location of emergency food relief outlets	

HEALTH
Specific food problems in at risk groups

Potential examples of Municipal Public Health Planning and Corporate planning to address these systemic barriers to municipal food security have been shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Potential examples of Municipal Public Health Planning to support sustainable food security through the local food chain system

Dimensions and opportunities			
NATURAL	BUILT	ECONOMIC	SOCIO-CULTURAL
Agricultural land preservation	Decentralisation of food supplies	Increased competition in food supply Reasonable food cost	Provision of support and opportunities for social inclusion and food inclusion
Local food growing Edible food planting	Decentralisation of dining and meal outlet access	Increased food variety Good quality fresh food	Provision of opportunities for improving skills and knowledge re household management
Extension of water conservation and recycling	Investigation of public transport routes	Review of the cost of public transport	
	Review of amenities and infrastructure for food access	Map location of emergency food relief outlets	

HEALTH
Specific food programs for at risk groups

Opportunities were limited in this RAP Project to progress Local Government inter-sectoral integration of food security strategies. A training program is required to progress the issues in a cost effective way, so that there is provision of support and capacity building for workers and residents in getting food security issues on to local agendas.

5.0 RAP trial outcomes

In general, the outcomes reflected the original Expressions of Interest submitted by each Local Government.

The rapid assessment procedures (RAP) provided an effective method of implementing and evaluating the Trial of the Survey Work Book, which included a complex inter-sectoral framework in the whole of population setting. The RAP were complimentary, provided cross-validation, and were strengthened by community consultation.

The Project outcomes for the trial were captured in each site Focus Group evaluation and used collectively to update the Survey Work Book and to evaluate the processes used.

5.1 Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book

The structure of the Survey Work Book was thoroughly reviewed in response to the trial evaluation and has been updated in response to the observations made and the focus group evaluations, that is:

- Change to vertical format;
- Introduction of question numbers;
- Addition of separate section and increased detail for descriptors and information sources information; and
- Comparative area retained.

All of the Survey questions have been reviewed, some have been removed and most have been edited.

Contact with primary sources included key informant interviews, focus groups of workers and resident/community consultation. These information sources all provided important cross-references and validation of the data that was obtained from secondary information sources.

In the comparative area, primary sources of information were not engaged during the RAP trial, other than Council staff.

Complimentary and cross-validated information was achieved using mixed methods, including key informant interviews:

- Survey Work Book;
- Community consultation;
- Observation; and
- Focus group evaluations.

These methods were time responsive, cost effective, and flexibly applied, and can be repeated easily (in whole, or in part) in the future for monitoring purposes.

The participatory research methods described above led to process development without any apparent barriers, and tapped into existing structures and activities on the local community settings. A monthly timeline for RAP meetings is suitable, often with provision of refreshments as an incentive for attendance (particularly for residents), and with time for reflection.

5.2 Municipal Food Security Survey in both sites

The RAP were applied over a relatively short time (six months) to the collection of secondary and primary data, which in turn identified the range of municipal food security dimensions and opportunities.

In the Focus group evaluations, participants at both sites considered that it would have been helpful to have more guidance - training in RAP at the beginning of the trial - and provision of optional management structures, procedures and timelines for conduct of the Survey.

The site documents (particularly the two Case Studies) have been listed in Appendix 5. This rich source of information can now be used to develop a Municipal Food Security training course outline for the purpose of getting whole of population food security strategies and policies onto Local Government agendas (refer Appendix 6).

This training course will be of short duration (six months) to assist participants to achieve:

- Municipal Food Security Survey of dimensions and opportunities; and
- Working with Local Government to improve Municipal Food Security.

5.3 Development of site recommendations

The RAP trial of the Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book increased awareness in Local Governments, build capacity, and strengthened the two local Neighbourhood Renewal communities in their discussion and consideration of local issues. The non-judgmental nature of the questions was welcomed by all participants.

As expected, the Surveys revealed multiple dimensions and opportunities for reducing systemic barriers to food security in both sites:

- Particular municipal food security dimension, that appeared to be satisfactory;
- Particular municipal food security dimensions that are obviously not satisfactory, and provide opportunities for cost-effective and immediate intervention strategies; and
- Particular municipal food security dimensions that are obviously not satisfactory, and require further investigation before they can be linked indirectly or directly to intervention strategies.

*'We (need to) get across to the community of that there is an issue here
and all members of families (men, women, kids) can get a reasonable food supply
and I hope we can assist with that'*
(Key informant)

5.4 Common features of site outcomes

VLGA examined the Survey Work Books of both sites, for commonalities in the major barriers to municipal food security. These occur across the natural, built, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions of the *Environments for Health* (Table 4).

Table 4: Examples of commonalities of major barriers to municipal food security to support sustainable food security through the local food chain system

Dimensions and opportunities			
NATURAL	BUILT	ECONOMIC	SOCIO-CULTURAL
Arable land not preserved	Centralised food supplies	Limited competition in food supply High food cost	At risk groups (social exclusion, food exclusion)
Little local food grown	Centralised dining and meal outlet access	Low food variety Poor quality fresh food	Low skills and knowledge re household management
Water restrictions affect ability to grow local food	Inadequate public transport to local food supplies	High cost of public transport	
	Inadequate amenities & infrastructure for food access	Unknown location of emergency food relief outlets	

HEALTH
Specific food problems in at risk groups

Examples of Municipal Public Health planning and Corporate planning to address these systemic barriers to municipal food security are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Examples of Municipal Public Health Planning

Dimensions and opportunities			
NATURAL	BUILT	ECONOMIC	SOCIO-CULTURAL
Agricultural land preservation	Decentralisation of food supplies	Increased competition in food supply Reasonable food cost	Provision of support and opportunities for social inclusion, and food inclusion
Local food growing Edible food planting	Decentralisation of dining and meal outlet access	Increased food variety Good quality fresh food	Provision of opportunities for improving skills and knowledge re household management
Extension of water conservation and recycling	Investigation of public transport routes	Review of the cost of public transport	
	Review of amenities and infrastructure for food access	Map location of emergency food relief outlets	

HEALTH
Specific food programs for at risk groups

The opportunities for improving municipal food security have the potential to be categorised by population, cost and duration; some examples have been shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Examples for categorisation of opportunities for improving municipal food security, by population, cost, and duration

	Short duration (immediate)	Moderate duration (less than 1-2 years)	Long duration (5 years)
Target population	Low income individuals and households	Whole of population - vulnerable groups	Whole of population
Less than \$ 5 000	Map Emergency Food Relief outlets and disseminate		
\$ 5 - 20 000		Review public transport to local food supply	
\$ 20 - 100 000		Establish Community Garden hub	
More than \$ 100 000			Decentralise food supplies

5.5 Settings for improving food security at the local level

This RAP trial of a Municipal Food Security Survey confirms at least three of the settings for improving food security at the local level that were suggested in a previous study (Wood, Swinburn, and Burns, 2003). Each setting can contribute to improvement in food security through their target population.

Table 7: Settings for improving food security at the local level

Sector	Duration	Target population (dimensions)
Community and residents Consultation empowerment, issue identification, survey validation, assistance with interventions	Perpetual	Whole of population (<i>natural, built, economic, socio-cultural dimensions</i>)
Local Government All Departments Municipal Public Health Policies and Plans	Moderate - long duration	Whole of population (<i>natural, built, economic, socio-cultural dimensions</i>)
Primary Health Care & Community Agencies Inter-sectoral policies and strategies	Short - moderate Duration	Vulnerable households and individuals (<i>socio-cultural, health dimensions</i>)
Emergency Food Relief Policies and strategies	Short duration	Vulnerable households and individuals (<i>socio-cultural, health dimensions</i>)

In the Project sites to date, many other stakeholders have not yet had the opportunity to participate (food growers, food producers, food distributors, food suppliers, traders, commerce, tertiary institutions, regional interests and planning strategists).

'Council cannot achieve the changes alone, without other stakeholders engaged'
'How does food become part of ethos long term? 'This starts some of this process'
 (Key informant)

Improving whole of population health and well-being can in the future be supported by the development and testing of a prediction checklist for the effect of short, medium and long term strategies. Three basic evaluation questions could be employed:

- Are any area demographic and other trends forecast in each environment for health?
- If the no-change option is selected, how will each environment for health develop?

- When change in a dimension has been selected, what are the predictions?

All strategies can be evaluated by using the Survey Work Book to repeat relevant parts of the Survey at intervals, say two years.

5.6 Getting the outcomes on the agenda

The RAP trial of the Survey Work Book was applied in a similar way to the trials in both sites, and appeared to be influenced by the following factors:

- The larger of the two Local Governments (Geelong) had a larger Neighbourhood Renewal area and population (Corio Norlane), which together added complexity to the RAP trial procedures;
- Each Council used a slightly different management structure for the Survey; and
- Community Consultation was central to the management of the Survey in Wyndham (three meetings), and peripheral (one meeting) to the management of the Survey in Geelong.

These three factors appeared to make a difference in the way the RAP was conducted in each site and the outcomes.

'Coming of out process we have got a strategic plan which will drive an integrated approach to improving food security and able to use the plan to influence other planning eg. urban redevelopment projects'

'Something comes out of this Project and it doesn't end when audit ends'
(Key informants)

The sustainability of the outcomes for each site require further strategic development, if they are to be embedded in Local Government planning in most Departments, and to result in procedural and policy changes in Local Government.

'Like to see it taken on board by Council, awareness at very least across Council and Departments (planning to health, economic developments)'
(Key informant)

'It would be good to be updated on outcomes, and form more partnerships to increase potential.'

'Start small and set up framework for change and a co-operative approach'
(key informants)

The support of population health and well-being is an important and essential function for all Council staff. Hence, the Focus group evaluations in both sites strongly indicated that a training course is required to assist Local Governments, their partners and residents to get whole of population water and food security strategies on to Local Government Council and Community Plans and other relevant agendas.

5.6 Monitoring of food security at the local level

In recent years, data on household food security has become available at national, state, and at the local government level in Victoria using the question *'In the last 12 months, were there any times that you ran out of food and you couldn't afford to buy more?'*

In local areas, data is also required at the Collector District level to provide advocacy and support for local interventions and their subsequent evaluation.

Opportunities to progress the collection of this area data should be taken whenever possible, together with that for population groups. The Neighbourhood Renewal Program provides one of these opportunities.

6.0 Comparative food security information, by area and population

Municipal Food Security Surveys facilitate the extension of data collection in an objective way, and will support examination of the data across areas (sq km) and populations (thousands), and thus provide more opportunity for examining inequities across Victoria.

Information gathered by Survey in the two Project sites provides the first comparative view by area and population of food security dimensions (Table 8).

Table 8: Comparison of area food security dimensions, by area and population

		Highton Belmont	Corio Norlane	City of Wyndham	Heathdale
Population		28 123	23 171	128 000	6 815
Area (sq km)		20.9	24.82	542.0	2.64
Natural environment	Arable land?	NO	NO	3 000 hectares	NO
	Community Gardens?	NO	ONE	NO	NO
Built environment	Supermarkets?	6	8	17	0
	Butcher?	8	8	16	0
	Greengrocer?	4	2	8	0
	Baker?	9	5	23	0
	Milk bar, 7-11, petrol station?	9	8	45	2
	Liquor outlets (packaged)?	10	10	20	0
	Restaurant, bistro, Cafe?	43	21	105	0
	Take-away food outlets?	28	40	118	3+2
	Households that do not have a car?	7.1%	15.4%	4.9%	9.7%
Economic environment	Emergency food outlets?	1	2	4+	5
Socio-cultural environment	Support and activities for social and food connectedness?	5	16	8+	3
Health environment	Unemployed % labour force?	5.3%	13.3%	6%	10.2%
	Households (<\$500/week)?	21%	33%	13%	23%
	SEIFA?	1036	840	1006	902.3

When compared to more advantaged adjacent areas, the Neighbourhood Renewal areas of Corio Norlane and Heathdale were both distinguished by the following:

- Fewer Greengrocers and Bakers;
- Fewer Restaurants, Cafes and Bistros;
- More take-away food outlets;
- More households that do not have a car;
- More unemployment; and
- Lower SEIFA levels (more relative disadvantage by area).

7.0 Conclusions and recommendations

The Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book was trialled by a VLGA partnership with two Local Governments in Neighbourhood renewal areas. The result of the RAP trial in the Cities of Geelong-Corio Norlane and Wyndham-Heathdale have resulted in significant improvement in the Municipal Food Security Survey Work Book.

Documentation of the experience of using the rapid assessment procedures to implement the Survey can now be used to develop a training course and associated resources.

The first step in improving local food security through this relatively rapid process involving the community has elements similar to those in more complex assessments such as reviewed by Pothukuchi in 2004.

We have an individual choice in what we eat but we have a collective responsibility to see that the systems in place to support (and not impede) these individual choices. Governments must make sure that shopping, transport and other infrastructure barriers do not affect the ability of the residents to achieve activities of daily living, independence, health and wellbeing and quality of life.

Long term sustainable solutions to local food security barriers (towards *integrated* sustainable water and local food chain systems from paddock to plate for all) promotes social inclusion and food inclusion. Social cooperation is essential to ensure food supply and support community independence and resilience.

Democracy, good governance, and planning for mental and physical well-being for whole of populations will achieve a democratic people's movement for health and well-being. Water security and food security will be protected.

'Food is good.' 'How do we work together to get more food easily?'
(Focus group evaluation)

To achieve sustainability of change in the wider community and a liveable and just society, integrated government planning and resources which supports activities of daily living for all:

- Whole of Government policy and planning;
- Community planning;
- Environments for health planning;
- Food security planning;
- Housing strategy planning; and
- Physical activity strategy planning.

The following recommendations are made to progress the outcomes of this RAP trial of Municipal Food Security Survey.

1. Development of guidelines for use of the Survey Work Book, a short training course and resources. Together, they will provide an outline of the potential management and processes for the Survey. The guidelines will also provide models for the survey outcomes, including those for Community consultation and Municipal Food Security.

2. Implementation of this training course with five Local Governments with Neighbourhood Renewal Projects who submitted Expressions of Interest last year in conducting a Municipal Food Security Survey.
3. Promotion of this course to all Local Governments in Victoria, with encouragement of local food policy development.
4. Improvement in the monitoring of local food security by area (Collector District). One of these opportunities is through the Neighbourhood Renewal Program.
5. Development of a brief checklist (population, cost, duration) to assist conversion of food security dimensions and opportunities to integrated planning for local improvement in food security.
6. Development and testing of a prediction checklist for the effect of short, medium and long term strategies to achieve sustainable improvement in whole of population health and wellbeing.
7. Extension and testing of the method for examining Municipal Food Security dimensions across comparative areas by area, and by population.

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Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Levels of food security

Global food security
National food security
State food security
Area food security
Local community food security
Household and individual food security
Individual hunger

Food security

‘Food security can be defined as the state in which all persons obtain a nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable diet at all times through local-non-emergency food sources. Food security broadens the traditional conception of hunger, embracing a systemic view of the causes of hunger and poor nutrition within a community while identifying the changes necessary to prevent their occurrence. Food security programs confront hunger and poverty’
(Community Food Security Coalition, 1995)

Food access

Access to the food supply is defined as access to quality food in local communities which is safe, affordable at competitive prices, culturally and environmentally acceptable and nutritious, with opportunity for healthy food choices, within walking distance or by readily available, frequent and affordable public transport.

Socio Economic Index of Relative Disadvantage

The SEIFA index of relative socio-economic disadvantage assigns an index to geographic areas based on socio-economic variables such as economic resources, education and occupation. People in the first quintile live in the most disadvantaged areas whereas people in the fifth quintile live in the least disadvantaged areas. The SEIFA indexes were derived from the 1991 Australian Census' (ABS, 1994).

VLGA Food Security Network (FSN)

<http://www.foodsecurity.vlga.org.au>

The VLGA Food Security Network (FSN) supports the officers and municipalities who are participating in the VicHealth *Food for All Program*, and the many others who are also addressing food security issues in their local areas, and is expected to enhance the uptake of integrated strategies throughout the sector.

A key communication channel for the Network is its online library and discussion forum list serve. The FSN is now building strategies to extend this work for assisting all of these processes towards achieving improved food security across Victoria in rural and urban Local Government areas.

Appendix 2: Selection of trial sites

Key criteria for evaluation of submissions

- 1) Local Government capacity and commitment, to be the lead local agency, and any work to date on the issue of local food security.
- 2) Demonstrated commitment to food security as an important community issue identified within local Neighbourhood Renewal priorities and an indication that planning to improve local food security has commenced.
- 3) Evidence of existing partnerships with a range of organisations and agencies that have a role in promoting and supporting food security within your Neighbourhood Renewal setting.
- 4) Demonstrated understanding of the issue of food security and integrated health promotion and how this may apply within your Local Government area and Neighbourhood Renewal site(s).
- 5) Identification of a broad local management structure for the Project. This should include how existing Local Government and Neighbourhood Renewal partnership structures could be utilised.
- 6) Provision of in-kind or financial support through local Project partners and other potential partners.
- 7) Local Government capacity to commence from November 2007 with partners to develop and trial a local Food Security Rapid Assessment process in selected Local Government-Neighbourhood Renewal sites.
- 8) Willingness to support and participate in dissemination of Food Security Project outcomes through a number of strategies including co-hosting a Forum on Local Government and local food security.

Submissions were initially scored against the following scale Scoring Scale for key evaluation criteria

	Scores
Exceeds all aspects of the selection/evaluation criterion	4
Exceeds some aspects of selection/evaluation criterion (and meets all other aspects of the selection/evaluation criterion)	3
Meets the selection criterion	2
Fails some aspects of the selection criterion	1
Fails all aspects of the selection criterion	0

Appendix 3: Key informant interview outline

1) Process - Extent of the problem

- What is your own definition of food security?
- Are you aware of any barriers to food security in the area?
- Who is affected by it in the area?
- Do you know of any information on the size of the problem in the area?

2) Process - Perception of possible solutions

- How can food security be improved in the area?
- What are the Organizations in the municipality who can be part of the short-term solution to the issues?
- What are the Organizations in the municipality who can achieve some long-term solutions to the issues?

3) Process - Perception of roles

- What do you think your own Organisation is going to be able to contribute in the solution of these problems?
- How is your organization involved in the Food Security Project?
- Is food security part of the core business of your Organisation?
- Is your Organisation developing any partnerships on food security issues?
- Is communication between you and other stakeholders in the Project working well to date?
- How much do you feel you have been able to influence the Project activity to date?

4) Other issues

- Do you think that the Project is well located in terms of its auspicing body?
- Does this body have enough resources/infrastructure/orientation/ to achieve the Project objectives in the time available? If not, why not?
- Was there any awareness of food security issues in the area before the Project began?
- Who was aware? Why were they aware? Had any work been done to address the problems?
- Is there enough staffing, budget and time for this Project to make a difference in the municipality?

5) Reflections and learnings

- What are your reflections? (How do you think it is all going to date?)
- What are the main lessons which you have learnt so far? (Past month?)
- What is your best wish? (Where would you like to see the future going?)
- Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

CLOSE

Appendix 4: Focus group evaluation outline

Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP) for municipal food security (procedures and workbook)

NOTE: The evaluation has ten main themes. Trigger questions have been listed under each theme - to aid discussion only.

1.0 Readiness for this Project

- 1.1 Was there enough communication between the stakeholders before the Project begun?
- 1.2 Were the stakeholders ready for the Project to start?
- 1.3 Other comments?

2.0 Strengths and weakness of the RAP workbook for municipal food security?

- 2.1 Were the questions framed correctly to gather the information required?
- 2.2 When using the workbook, have you changed any questions?
- 2.3 Should the workbook be shortened/lengthened? How? What sections?
- 2.4 Was the inclusion of a comparative local area worthwhile?
- 2.5 Other comments?

3.0 Strengths and weaknesses of the rapid assessment procedures (RAP) for municipal food security?

- 3.1 How much time has all of the procedures taken? Average hours per week? Duration?
- 3.2 To achieve the same result, could any of the procedures have been left out?
- 3.3 What is an optimal amount of time for the RAP?
- 3.4 What resources have been needed for the RAP?
 - * Human
 - * Financial
 - * Organisational
- 3.5 Were there any resource barriers?
- 3.6 Has the Project organisation been effective?
- 3.7 Should any additional procedures have been undertaken?
- 3.8 Other comments?

4.0 Who has been involved in this Project?

- 4.1 Have the intended stakeholders been successfully engaged and sustained in the time available?
- 4.2 Do you think that the Project has reached the appropriate stakeholders?
- 4.3 Have community members-residents been successfully engaged?
- 4.4 Were the community consultation strategies effective? If not, why not?
- 4.5 Has VLGA always responded to assistance requests and been involved?
- 4.6 Could the RAP audit be conducted by Local Government without VLGA assistance?
- 4.7 Other comments?

5.0 Outcomes of the RAP for municipal food security?

- 5.1 Have the outcomes of the RAP met your expectations?
- 5.2 Have there been any unexpected outcomes?
- 5.3 What do you think about the identified systemic opportunities for improving food security?
- 5.4 Will these strategies support community food security, resilience and well-being (physical, mental, socio-cultural) for the whole of the population?
- 5.5 Can these opportunities be turned into short, moderate and long term strategies?
- 5.6 Will these strategies be compatible with those addressing climate change and peak oil?
- 5.7 Other comments?

6.0 Has there been any improvement in area food security during the Project?

- 6.1 Has any short term impact been made on area food security? What is it?
- 6.2 Has any short term impact been made on food security for any population group?
- 6.3 Other comments?

7.0 How are the outcomes going to be progressed and become sustainable?

- 7.1 Has any knowledge transfer taken place as a result of RAP?
- 7.2 Is there any indication of stakeholder capacity building?
- 7.3 Is any structural-system-process change in progress as a result of the RAP?
- 7.4 Are there any networks and partnerships in place as a result of the RAP?
- 7.5 Is there any ongoing-future financial support or other resources?
- 7.6 Are you optimistic or pessimistic about this happening?
- 7.7 Other comments?

8.0 Next steps

- 8.1 How are you going to progress the identified systemic opportunities to improve area food security?
- 8.2 How and when do you expect the decision-makers to assist in this future work?
- 8.3 Are there any likely reasons why these opportunities may be accepted-rejected?
- 8.4 Other comments?

9.0 Are there any good-bad process models?

- 9.1 What are your reflections on the RAP for municipal food security?
- 9.2 What are the main lessons that have been learnt?
- 9.3 Are there any stories to be told?
- 9.4 What is your best wish for the future?
- 9.5 Other comments?

10.0 Are there any other observations you would like to make?

CLOSE

Appendix 5: Food Security Project interim site reports

These reports were developed and validated with Project site participants and are available if required.

City of Greater Geelong - Corio Norlane

1) Interim site reports:

Expression of Interest Document

Key Informant Interviews

Focus Group Evaluation

City of Greater Geelong - Corio Norlane Case Study

2) Municipal Food Security RAP trial Work Book

Contact: Community Development, City of Greater Geelong
PO Box 104, Geelong 3220

City of Wyndham - Heathdale

1) Interim site reports:

Expression of Interest Document

Key Informant Interviews

Focus Group Evaluation

City of Wyndham - Heathdale Case Study

2) Municipal Food Security RAP trial Work Book

Contact: Social Planning Unit, Civic Center, 45 Princes Highway, Werribee 3030

Appendix 6: Municipal Food Security - Training course outline

Aim

Assist participants to achieve:

- 1) Municipal Food Security Survey of dimensions and opportunities.
- 2) Get food security strategies and policies on to Local Government agendas.

Target groups*

- 1) Local Government Councils
 - Single Local Government Area, including local stakeholders (12 individuals)
 - Several Local Government Areas who wish to work together (12 individuals)
 - Regional Local Government Areas who wish to work together (12 individuals)
- 2) Primary Health Care Organisations
- 3) Non-Government Organisations
- 4) Residents

* Priority groups are those with Neighbourhood Renewal Projects (Department of Human Services), Community Renewal Projects (Department of Planning and Community Development) and Community Building Initiatives (rural Department Planning and Community Development)

Course type

Short course (three - six months time span):

- 1) Face-to-face sessions (monthly for three months or longer)
- 2) Municipal Food Security Work Book and resources
- 2) Follow-up support (telephone, site visits if required)

Course structure

Phase A: Influencing and working for and with Local Government

- Process and capacity building
- Community planning
- Policy development
- Strategic planning

Phase B: Application of the scoping Survey for Municipal Food Security

The Victorian '*Environments for Health*' framework will be used to examine the food security dimensions and opportunities by area. This process achieves the following:

- 1) Identification of local area food security dimensions and opportunities (natural, built, economic, socio-cultural, health) for improving whole of population food security.
- 2) Support for Council and Local Government Area capacity building, planning, development and progression of local policies and strategies to support and improve municipal food security.

