



Food

Strategic objective

More people access affordable, nutritious food.

Domain overview

Food is at the centre of our lives. It shapes our health and wellbeing, influences the landscape in which we live, impacts the strength of our economy and the vibrancy of our culture. Cardinia Shire has an abundance of fertile farmland that is rapidly declining due to population growth. Although food is grown right on our doorstep, most people don't eat enough nutritious food each day due to time, access and affordability constraints. There is a high density of fast-food outlets in the growth corridor and limited access to a 'healthy food basket' in some regions of the shire. Many families, especially those with children, are experiencing food insecurity.

About food

Data about food in Cardinia Shire identifies:

- 94% of residents don't eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables.
- 70% of resident eat take away meals/snacks at least once a week and over a third of residents consume sugar-sweetened drinks at least once a week.
- 14% of households without children in Cardinia Shire experience food insecurity.
- 24% of households with children under 18 years in Cardinia Shire have low or very low food security. A further 16% have marginal food security.
- 9% of residents are employed directly in agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- The three largest agricultural products by value in Cardinia Shire are livestock (36%), vegetables (23%) and milk (15%). Fruit, nuts and eggs make up 7.7% of the economic value.
- There are 6 established community gardens.
- 30% of household waste in Cardinia Shire is food waste.

Food liveability indicators

- Percentage (%) of dwellings without any food outlet within 3.2km.
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket.
- Average distance to closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer).
- Average distance to closest fast food outlet.
- Average distance to closest café, restaurant or hotel



The role of food in our COVID-19 recovery

COVID-19 restrictions have impact people in many ways. A significant impact for some people has been loss of income. In July 2021, 27% of households experiencing food insecurity said that COVID-19 had an impact. Access to nutritious food is essential to our physical and mental health. Growing and eating food is also at the centre of our society and provides a means for social connection and inclusion, which is vital as communities recover from the impact of COVID-19.



The role of food in addressing climate change

Food system activities, such as producing food, transporting it, and storing wasted food in landfills, produce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Reducing the emissions associated with food is critical to reducing the severity of climate change and the future impacts the climate will have on food resources. The increasing frequency and intensity of the adverse effects associated with human induced climate change is likely to result in poor harvests and food insecurity in the future. Strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of food system activities is critical to successfully adapting to future uncertain weather events associated with climate change.



Links to Cardinia Shire Council Plan

1.3 Lead by example in creating an inclusive and welcoming community for all by facilitating community education, capacity building, connection and celebration of our diversity.

1.5 Work closely with the community to deliver programs that build community resilience, relating to a pandemic or other disasters.

2.1 Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need.

3.1 Partner with community, business and industry to take action on, and adapt to, climate change.

3.2 Actively move towards zero waste through increasing waste recovery and reuse.

3.4 Plan and advocate for better water cycle planning and management to reduce environmental impacts.

3.5 Facilitate community stewardship to build preparedness for natural threats.

4.1 Facilitate better planning for our agricultural land to support industry, innovation, local food economy and local job growth.

When thinking about the future of food, the following issues are relevant:



- Loss of fertile farmland due to population growth.
- A hotter and drier climate and an increase in extreme weather events such as storms, bushfires and floods.
- Changing climate and its impact on food production.
- Need for more sustainable farming practices.
- Opportunity to use recycled water in agriculture.
- Impact of food packaging and food waste on CO2 emissions.
- Ageing workforce of farmers and opportunities to make land available for young farmers.
- Increased need for growing food in urban areas.
- Growing awareness and demand of local food and 'place of origin' labelling.
- Growing trend towards plant-based diets.
- Increasing rates of household food insecurity due to financial stress.
- Opportunities to assist the community in raising food literacy and skills.
- Opportunities for food celebrations to bring diverse communities together.
- Increasing interest in growing and cooking with native foods.
- Less overseas travel creating further opportunities for local food tourism.
- Increasing support for buying food direct from farmers.
- Plan Melbourne 2050 policies such as:
 - 1.4.1 Protect agricultural land and support agricultural production.
 - 5.3.3 Support not-for-profit community services to build social capital and stronger communities.
 - 5.4.2 Support community gardens and productive streetscapes.
 - 6.4.1 Support a cooler Melbourne by greening urban areas, buildings, transport corridors, and open spaces to create an urban forest.
 - 6.5.1 Create a network of green spaces that support biodiversity conservation and opportunities to connect with nature.