

Food



Strategic indicator

Increase access to, affordable, appropriate, sustainable and nutritious food.

Domain overview

Food shapes our health and wellbeing, influences the landscape in which we live, and impacts the strength of our economy and the vibrancy of our culture. Cardinia Shire has an abundance of fertile farmland, supplying Victoria with nutritious food from all five food groups (fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy and grains).

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 healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate food in some regions of the shire.

Many families, especially those with children, are experiencing food insecurity.

Links to Cardinia Shire Council Plan 2021-25

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

About food

Data about employment in Cardinia Shire identifies:

- Half of all residents don't eat the recommended amount of fruit and 93% don't eat the recommended amount of vegetables.
- One-third of residents eat takeaway meals/snacks or consume sugar-sweetened drinks weekly.
- 7% of households in Cardinia Shire experience food insecurity.
- 33% of households spend more than 30% of their household income on food.
- 40% of households feel that the food in the shops/supermarkets costs too much, 5% feel that culturally appropriate food isn't available, and 35% are located within 1 kilometer of a supermarket.
- The largest agricultural products by value in Cardinia Shire are livestock (36%), vegetables (22%) and milk (16%), and nursery plants and flowers (16%).
- There are 6 established community gardens.

Food liveability measures

- Percentage (%) of dwellings without any food outlet within 3.2km.
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket.

Food liveability measures (cont)

- Average distance to closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer).
- Average distance to closest fast food outlet.

Social justice and equity statement

Some groups in the community face unequal barriers to reaching their highest achievable health, social and economic outcomes. The Liveability Plan recognises the need to direct efforts for improving health, wellbeing and liveability in a way that addresses inequities through social justice.

Equity refers to providing resources based upon the circumstances and characteristics of the people involved, to ensure the same opportunities for all. Social justice removes barriers so that people can enjoy the same opportunities without reliance on external support. Social Justice and Equity action areas include:

- Equitable and accessible places, services, programs and activities
- A well-planned, accessible and liveable community.
- A safe and equitable workplace.
- An inclusive and empowered community.
- Leadership, collaboration and advocacy.

The role of food in addressing climate change

Food needs to be grown and processed, transported, distributed, prepared, consumed and sometimes disposed of. These stages make up our food system. Globally, about onethird of all human-caused emissions are linked to the food system, with food waste which accounts for half. Overall, animal-based foods generate more emissions than plant-based foods.

The agricultural industry is an important sector for Cardinia Shire, for the local economy and export trade. Strengthening a resilient and sustainable regional food system requires significant sectoral improvements.

Climate-health impacts on employment

A changing climate and extreme events impact the agricultural economy from damaged crops, poor harvests and illness or injury to livestock. Immediate access to fresh, affordable, local and nourishing food is reduced and experiences of food insecurity are exacerbated.

Households increase their reliance on processed, packaged foods that are 'shelf-stable', and fast food, when they experience housing damage or displacement. During climate events such as heatwaves, bushfires and flooding, drinking water quality is affected, increasing the risk of illness.

When thinking about the future of food, the following is relevant:

- Increasing interest in growing, cooking with and celebrating native and cultural foods.
- Building peer networks in agriculture to promote best practice climate-change adaptation, sustainable technology adoption, and renewable energy transition.
- The role of local tourism and farmer support to enhance the financial sustainability of agriculture.
- Leveraging demand for our Shire's natural food assets through the retail sector and farm-gate sales.
- An aging farming workforce, increasing costs of land, and supporting new entrants, including migrants, multicultural communities, and young people, into agriculture.
- Enhancing awareness, adoption of and local capacity for circular economies, food waste recycling, packaging reduction, regenerative agriculture, and recycled water.
- Leveraging practical learning in kitchens, gardens and farms, to promote food literacy and farm careers.
- Promoting opportunities to donate/sell surplus food to address increasing rates of household food insecurity and financial distress among food and farming businesses.
- Farmland loss due to population growth contrasting increasing need for growing food in urban areas.
- A hotter and drier climate and an increase in extreme weather events such as storms, heatwaves, bushfires and floods, and its impact on food production.

For more information contact Cardinia Shire Council on
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