



# We Need to Talk About Food

how we can all build  
a better food system

June 2019

A partnership project between



# Introduction

**We Need to Talk About Food** is a collaboration between the City of Melbourne and environmental not-for-profit Sustainable Table – developed for residents, businesses and those who work in or are visitors to the City of Melbourne.

This guide has been developed to provide information and practical resources to educate readers about our food system challenges and the opportunities we are presented with each day to engage in positive action to support a resilient, local food system.

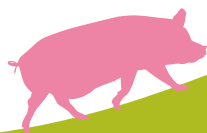
**We Need to Talk About Food** complements the **City of Melbourne's Food Policy**, which shares a vision of supporting a food system that is secure, healthy, sustainable, thriving and socially inclusive.

Through extensive consultation and research, the City of Melbourne identified five key themes to guide their policy vision and implementation;

- A strong, food secure community
- Healthy food choices for all
- A sustainable and resilient food system
- A thriving local food economy
- A city that celebrates food

**We Need to Talk About Food** brings these themes to life through the lens of people looking to implement sustainable and low-waste practices into their daily lives. If you are one of these people, you've come to the right place.

**Dig in and enjoy!**



The City of Melbourne has an overarching vision to improve our food system. Our aim is to promote sustainable choices within a system that is secure, healthy and socially inclusive. By supporting sustainable food production and consumption within the city and nearby regions we can reduce the negative environmental impacts of Melbourne's food system and enhance our future food security. This guide **We Need to Talk About Food – how we can all build a better food system**, developed with Sustainable Table, will help our community understand the impacts and enable them to make more sustainable food choices.

[melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodpolicy](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodpolicy)



Sustainable Table is a not-for-profit organisation that empowers people to use their shopping dollar to vote for a food system that is fair, humane, healthy and good for the environment.

Sustainable Table delivers challenging and creative events, taps into social media networks, provides consulting services and shares information through a website and selection of books – empowering people to overcome today's environmental challenges, one meal at a time.

Sustainable Table also supports community projects that improve our local food system and deliver health and sustainability outcomes for the population and environment.

[sustainabletable.org.au](http://sustainabletable.org.au)

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

Learn about **What Food's Got to Do With It?** then embark on a little lifestyle audit we like to call the **Sustainability Spring Clean**. This will set you up to engage with all the tools we've provided to set you on your merry way to treading more lightly on the planet.

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The tools included in this guide will make sustainable shopping far less daunting than it sounds.

Start today and help to shape a sustainable food system for all.

# What's Food Got To Do With It?

how we can create a more sustainable food system



Food has a huge impact on the environment. Every step of the food supply chain, from production, to transport, processing, packaging and distribution has potential environmental consequences. The impacts include the use of scarce resources, biodiversity loss, waste generation, land degradation, pollution of waterways, and greenhouse gas emissions. In Victoria, the EPA determined that food makes up around 30% of our personal eco-footprint – more than our transport and home energy use combined.

The City of Melbourne has a vision of a food system that is secure, healthy, sustainable, thriving and socially inclusive. A key theme in our **Food Policy** is to ensure that the food we produce and consume improves our environment, regenerates our natural resource base and promotes sustainable and fair food practices.

We all have a role to play in creating a more sustainable and secure food system, and while there isn't a 'silver-bullet' that will solve all the environmental issues of our food system at once, there are a number of actions our community can take to drive change in specific areas. We have created this guide to provide you with an introduction to some of the impacts and the knowledge to prioritise the actions most important to you.

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

# What are the Environmental Impacts of our Food System?

## 1 Food is transported great distances

In Australia, food in the average shopping basket has travelled over 70,000 kms—that's nearly two times the distance around Earth.<sup>1</sup> In fact, four imported items alone can account for nearly 50,000 kms. Even if a product is labelled as Australian-made it can still have ingredients from all over the world, adding to its transport footprint (labelling laws now stipulate that the % of Australian ingredients must be stated).

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

**You can reduce emissions by buying food produced locally. Want to find locally produced food? [Local Harvest](http://LocalHarvest.org.au) is an online database helping you to find good food close to you. Simply enter your postcode to see a map of local food producers and outlets. Visit [localharvest.org.au](http://localharvest.org.au).**

**Also see the guide [Sustainable Shopping Close to You](#) (included in this Guide) for more suggestions.**

## 2 Food is grown out of season

The modern food system often gives us the convenience of being able to buy out-of-season food at any time of the year, for example, buying tomatoes and garlic in winter (approximately 90% of garlic consumed in Australia is imported). Unfortunately out-of-season food has a much larger environmental footprint than seasonal produce. Extra energy is used in production (for example heating hot houses in the winter), transportation (if it is shipped or flown from faraway locations), and storage (due to energy needs of facilities like refrigerated warehouses).

Selecting seasonal produce is an easy way for individuals and businesses alike to reduce these impacts. Check out the **[Victorian Seasonal Produce Cut and Keep Guide](#)** to find out what's in season this month or visit the **[online version](#)**.



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

## 3 Food is packaged

The plastic and other materials used to package food has a large environmental impact.



Disposal is also an issue – 75% of all plastic ever produced is now waste.<sup>3</sup> Recycling is part of the solution but avoiding packaging where possible is the best option. In 2018, China enforced strict regulations on the recycling they would accept from Australia which has caused somewhat of a recycling crisis as governments grapple with how to process the plastic and paper that was once sent offshore. In 2017, China accepted **29% of all kerbside paper and 36% of all plastic** collected in Australia. There is also a huge environmental footprint associated with transporting waste all over the world for processing.



Check out **[A City Dweller's Guide to Sustainable Shopping](#)** for more info!



The production of virgin plastic has increased 200-fold since 1950, and has grown at a rate of 4 per cent a year since 2000.

In 2016, production reached 396 million metric tonnes. That is **equivalent to 53 kilograms of plastic for each person on the planet, annually.**<sup>4</sup>

Find your local farmers' market or fresh food market and bring your own shopping bags, mesh bags for fruit and veg and seek out **Bulk Food Stores** to buy dry goods, personal care items and cleaning products packaging free.

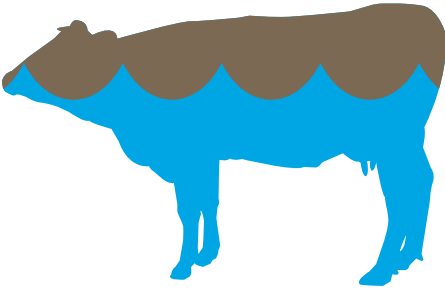
## 4 Resources are used unsustainably

### Water use:

During 2016-17, of the 16,558 gigalitres of water that was extracted from the environment for consumption – 11,663 gigalitres or 63.4 per cent was to support the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, compared with 1,909 gigalitres for households (11.5%).<sup>5</sup> Globally about **70 per cent of all freshwater withdrawals are for irrigated agriculture.**

Historically, water use in agriculture has not been managed sustainably. Over-allocation can deplete environmental flows and impact downstream food production and biodiversity, while excessive irrigation can result in salinity issues and the destruction of productive agricultural land. An example of this in Australia is the mismanagement of the Murray Darling Basin, which sparked a Royal Commission that delivered damning findings.

Water shortages, particularly in Australia, can be exacerbated by the production of water-intensive crops such as cotton and rice.



**Starting your own vegetable garden, especially if you use tank-water, is a way for individuals and business to reduce the water intensity of their food. Also, some foods are far more water intensive than others, so it pays to do your research.**

### Fertiliser use:

Modern agriculture is powered by fertilisers which provide macro-nutrients, such as nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus that are essential for plant growth. Sources of macro-nutrients, however, are finite and are becoming increasingly scarce, meaning they are unsustainable in the long-term. Synthetic fertilisers also exist but are often produced using other non-renewable resources like gas.<sup>6</sup>

**Fertilisers made from essential nutrients have powered productivity of the farming sector for the past half-century, but like oil, nutrients are finite resources.**<sup>7</sup>

The application of fertiliser presents additional environmental concerns. Over-application can result in fertilisers entering waterways and polluting or sometimes killing bodies of water and dependent fisheries; they accelerate global warming; and can acidify farm soil reducing its health and productivity.<sup>8</sup>

**The predominant form of farming in Australia is termed 'conventional' and uses synthetic inputs such as pesticides and insecticides to kill weeds, disease and insects. In contrast, agro-ecological or regenerative agriculture seeks to boost on-farm biological activity and soil health to support the natural systems which support food production. Seeking out regenerative and organic farmers at farmers' markets is a good way to support a resilient local food system.**

### Energy:

Modern agriculture is dependent on the use of fossil fuels to fertilise, cultivate, harvest and transport produce. These energy inputs emit greenhouse gases which directly contribute to climate change. Global reserves of fossil fuels are also declining, placing the future sustainability of these methods at risk (IEA, 2010).<sup>9</sup> The organic sector is one area reducing its energy usage and typically requires 30-50 per cent less energy than standard farms.<sup>10</sup>

Food is increasingly being used as an energy resource too. Predictions are that global demand for biofuels will hit 172 billion litres by 2020, up from 81 billion litres in 2008. At current production levels, that would mean an additional 40 million hectares of land would have to be converted to growing crops for biofuel, which leads to land-grabbing, deforestation and sometimes starvation as local communities can no longer grow their own food.<sup>11</sup>

Depleting oil reserves, scarcity of nutrients, threats to water supply, limited land, and climate challenges present serious risks to the long-term viability of the food system in its current form.

**Finding and supporting new low-input ways to grow food will help the transition. Individuals and business can reduce the resource intensity of the food system by choosing food produced on local regenerative, organic or biodynamic farms and growing what they can at home.**

## 5 Food is wasted



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



Using a compost bin can cut the garbage you send to landfill by 50%.



When food is sent to landfill and rots, it releases methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than the carbon pollution that comes out of your car exhaust.<sup>12</sup> What's more, nutrients that could be recycled in compost for more production are instead contaminated with other waste and lost from the food cycle.

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



## Biodiversity impacts of agriculture

### Food waste and businesses:

While waste occurs throughout the food supply chain in Australia, roughly two-thirds of food waste is generated in consumer-facing businesses (e.g. restaurants and retail outlets) or in the home.<sup>13</sup>

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

Charities including SecondBite, FareShare, OzHarvest and Foodbank are redirecting surplus food to community food programs for the homeless instead of going to landfill.

Donating surplus food to organisations such as these means that food can be redistributed to people who need it rather than it going to waste. Find out how you can donate or become involved at [secondbite.org](http://secondbite.org), [fareshare.net.au](http://fareshare.net.au), [ozharvest.org](http://ozharvest.org) and [foodbank.com.au](http://foodbank.com.au).

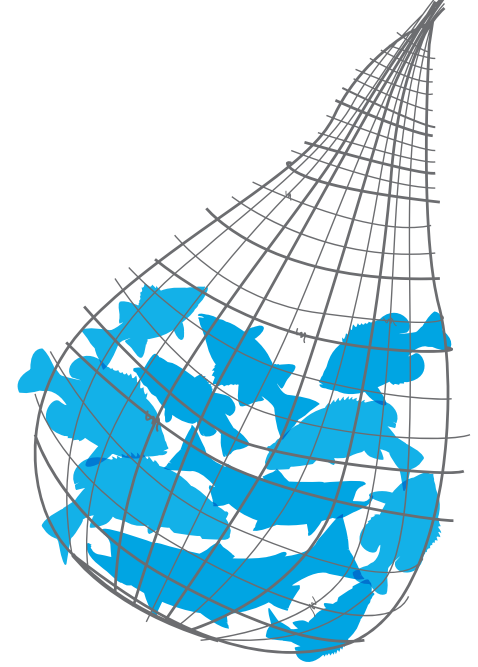
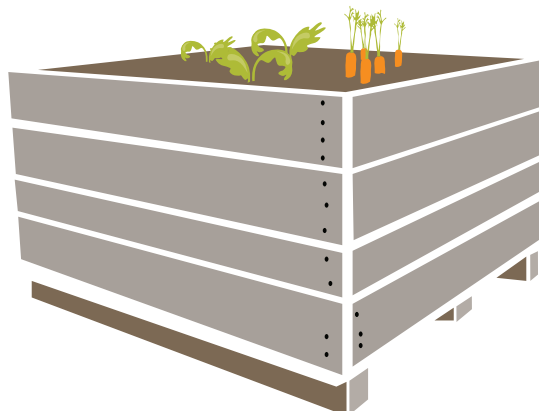


Monocrops, over-use of pesticides and farming practices which remove native habitat all impact on biodiversity. Monocrops, where a single crop species is planted extensively and to the exclusion of all other species, do not occur naturally and require greater use of chemical and technological inputs than mixed cropping that includes a diversity of plants and animals. Monocrops also reduce the resilience of farms by limiting genetic diversity – if a small number of plants are struck by disease, the entire crop can be destroyed. **They also reduce the variety of foods available to us – for instance, there are over 7,500 varieties of apples, yet we tend to eat just 5.**



Growing food in the city is one way for individuals and business to reverse the biodiversity impacts of food.

Urban agriculture can actually increase local biodiversity and opens the option of growing less common varieties of fruits and vegetables. To help increase food production within the municipality we have produced a guide called **Sustainable Gardening in the City of Melbourne** to help our community get started.



### Our oceans:

**Food production also has an impact on marine biodiversity. Overfishing has already led to the collapse of three quarters of the world's fisheries.**

Excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers also contributes to pollution run-off which threatens fish farms and wild fish stocks. Coral reef systems – whose fish help to feed 500 million people – are under threat due to ocean acidification, chemical run-off from agriculture and climate change.<sup>14</sup>

A whopping 72% of the seafood Aussies eat is imported. Cheap imports are often fished and farmed without the same regulation, which adds to the environmental pressure placed on our oceans. Support local communities and sustainable fisheries where possible and if you are buying fish from overseas look for accreditation logos (i.e. MSC) and sustainable fish species.



Cut and keep your very own **pocket Sustainable Seafood Guide** or download the **ACMS Sustainable Seafood smartphone app** to help you make better choices when it comes to seafood.

## 7 Impacts of livestock production

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

**For example, a typical indoor 20,000 meat chicken farm uses approximately 16 tonnes of manufactured feed per week, and produces 30 tonnes of waste over the seven week production cycle.<sup>15</sup>**

In low-density, sustainably managed free-range and organic farms, direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions are reduced and able to be managed more effectively and efficiently through a number of ecological practices: appropriate stocking densities are maintained, grazing animals are rotated over the farm land to allow for soil and pasture restoration, nutrients are recycled back into the soil through composting and by fertilising soil with animal waste, and no or comparatively little supplementary grain or manufactured feed is given to the animals.

The environmental impacts of meat production can be reduced by buying meat produced by sustainably-managed free range or organic farms. Individuals can further reduce their impact by reducing the quantity of meat eaten each week while businesses can provide additional vegetarian options on menus and at work events. To find sustainable meat producers near you, visit Sustainable Table's [Where to Shop](#) section.

## 8 Land is being swallowed by urban sprawl

**The world is running out of good farmland. A combination of degradation, urban sprawl, mining, industrial pollution, recreation and sea level rises eliminates around 1 per cent of the world's farmland every year. This is on top of the quarter of land that is now degraded to the extent that it is scarcely capable of yielding food.<sup>16</sup>**

As our cities sprawl, they smother what is often the most fertile soil and farmland, replacing it with unproductive concrete and asphalt. This in turn drives agriculture out into ever more distant areas, where food must be transported further, farmers are more isolated and city dwellers even more disconnected from how their food is grown. All the while, the internal food growing capacity of cities remains limited.<sup>17</sup>

**Melbourne's city fringe foodbowl produces a lot of food – it currently has the capacity to meet just over 40 per cent of Greater Melbourne's food needs, including over 80 per cent of the city's vegetable needs. But by the time Melbourne's population grows to seven million people in 2050, the foodbowl's capacity to meet the city's food needs is likely to fall to around 18 per cent and its capacity to meet the city's vegetable needs to around 21 per cent.<sup>18</sup>**

Melbourne's foodbowl has the potential to contribute to a more resilient and sustainable food supply for the city in future, but it is at risk from population growth and urban sprawl.



Support local food production by changing where you shop and learn about how to engage with food programs near you by heading to the following sections in this guide:

[A City Dwellers guide to Sustainable Food](#)

[Sustainable Shopping Close to You](#)

Where to from here...





# A Sustainable Food System

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

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

A few simple, but effective, actions include:

- **Eat food that is in season** – it's fresher, often cheaper and generally has a lower carbon footprint. Look for good places to shop using **A City Dwellers Guide to Sustainable Shopping**.
- **Source food locally** – The environmental impacts from transport and storage will be lower and local production will increase your community's food security.
- **Grow your own** – Producing food yourself gives you control over environmental impacts. It's also a convenient and secure source of food for you or your business.
- **Reduce packaging waste** – Reduce packaging waste by carrying your own reusable coffee cup, water bottle, shopping bags and mesh produce bags. Take your own containers to the deli and butcher, and seek out **Bulk Food Stores** for other everyday items that normally come in packaging.

- **Reduce food waste and start a compost bin** – Plan a little better when doing your food shop. Check what you already have at home, be realistic about how many times a week you will eat out and cook up or freeze leftover food before it goes to waste. Also start a compost bin or worm farm. Composting can reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by up to 50 per cent. Check out the **Sustainability Spring Clean** for more information.

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

**Sustainability Spring Clean**

**Paths to Sustainability – for businesses**

**Paths to Sustainability – for individuals**

**A City Dweller's Guide to Sustainable Food**

**Sustainable Shopping Close to You**

**Fast Facts on Food Waste**

**Victorian Seasonal Produce Guide**

**Sustainable Seafood Guide**

**Get Committed! A checklist**



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- 17 Carey, R., Larsen, K. and Sheridan, J. (2019) Roadmap for a resilient and sustainable Melbourne foodbowl. University of Melbourne. doi.10.26188/5c92e85dd6edf
- 18 Sheridan, J., Larsen, K. and Carey, R. (2015) Melbourne's foodbowl: Now and at seven million. Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab, The University of Melbourne.)

# Sustainability Spring Clean

## your personal food audit

Choose the answer that is **closest** to your weekly behaviour. No one is judging your answers and by recognising where your impacts are you will be able to make quick and simple improvements, so be honest!

Write the number in the range that best describes you and use this as your point score **i.e.** 10 coffees a week equates to 10 points.

**Q.1** How many takeaway coffees or drinks in disposable packaging do you drink a week? **i.e.** water, soft drink, other hot drinks

More than 10    8-10    5-8    2-5    None, or when I do I use a reusable cup (0pts)

In Australia, we use an estimated 1 billion takeaway coffee cups a year. Due to the pesky plastic lining hiding in takeaway coffee cups, it is very challenging for waste management streams to recycle cups. Unwittingly, people dispose of their 'paper cup' in recycling bins but this actually contaminates the collection which can result in the whole bin getting sent to landfill.<sup>1</sup>

Action



**Take your own coffee cup or order in and take a moment to sit and enjoy your caffeine hit. Carry your own water bottle, refilling it is free and you're saving on single-use plastic waste.**

**Q.2** How many cans of food and drink do you use weekly **i.e.** tomatoes, corn, beans, tuna, soft drink?

8-10    5-8    2-5    Occasionally (1 pt)    Never (0pts)

Cans are made of steel, tin or aluminium that must be mined and are lined with plastic. Although it's best to reduce our use of canned foods in the first place, recycling cans saves energy and water and reduces carbon emissions – recycling 1 tonne of packaging steel saves 400kg of carbon emissions. Each year Australians generate about 6.4 kg of steel scrap that can be recycled.<sup>2</sup>

Action



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

<sup>1</sup> Responsible Cafes, The Problem, <https://responsiblecafes.org/about/>, viewed June 2019

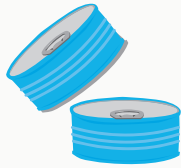
<sup>2</sup> Department of Environment and Conservation Waste Authority, The Waste Wise Schools Program, Factsheet – Steel, [http://education.dec.wa.gov.au/downloads/cat\\_view/6-waste-wise/37-resources/58-factsheets.html](http://education.dec.wa.gov.au/downloads/cat_view/6-waste-wise/37-resources/58-factsheets.html), viewed 15/01/2013

### Q.3 How many cans of fish do you eat each week?

5+  3  2  Occasionally (1 pt)  Never (0pts)

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

Action



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

If you just can't cut canned tuna out of your life completely right now, then take a look at the Greenpeace Canned Tuna Ranking – [changeyourtuna.org.au](http://changeyourtuna.org.au)

### Q.4 How often do you purchase your lunch or dinner from a takeaway outlet?

8-10  5-8  2-5  Occasionally (1 pt)  Never or I take my own reusable container (0pt)

Australians consumes over 3.4 million tonnes of packaging every year – that's roughly 165kg per person, of which only 48 per cent is recycled.<sup>4</sup> The rest is taken to landfill or enters the environment, taking hundreds of years to break down.

Action



Take your own lunch to work – this can save you money and is likely to be healthier for you in the long run. If you do buy your lunch or dinner, take your own plate or reusable container and cutlery, it's a real conversation starter and you'll be surprised by how supportive most people are.

Visit [trashlesstakeaway.com.au](http://trashlesstakeaway.com.au) for retailers who have pledged their support.

### Q.5 How many imported food items do you have in your fridge or pantry i.e. tomatoes, sauces, fresh fruit and vegetables?

80% (10 pts)  50% (7 pts)  20% (3 pts)  10% (2 pts)  <10% (1 pt)  None (0 pts)

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

Action



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

### Q.6 What proportion of your fresh food is organic and grown locally?

None or don't know (8 pts)  10% (7 pts)  30-50% (5 pts)  
 51-70% (3 pts)  71-99% (1 pt)  All (0 pts)

Organic food is grown without the use of synthetic chemicals that can destroy soil health and negatively impact the environment. Locally grown food can save carbon emissions because less transport is involved in getting the food from the farm to your plate.

Action



Use [localharvest.org.au](http://localharvest.org.au) to find good food close to you. Simply enter your postcode to see local organic produce shops, farmers' markets, box systems and farm gates. Alternatively, visit the [City Dwellers Guide to Sustainable Shopping](#) and [Sustainable Shopping Close to You](#) in this guide for listings.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/resources/news/?7820/Increased-protection-urgently-needed-for-tunas>

<sup>4</sup> Ethical Consumer Group, Packaging and Waste, <http://www.ethical.org.au/issues/?issue=10>, viewed 17/01/2013

### Q.7 How many times a week do you eat meat or fish?

14 or more (at least every lunch and dinner)  7  5  2  Never (0 pts)

The meat and livestock industry is a large contributor to emissions and water use. Reducing meat consumption to the levels recommended by the Australian National Dietary Guidelines can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,354 kg CO<sub>2</sub> and water use by 70,145 litres per household.<sup>5</sup>

The Australian National Dietary Guidelines recommend 1–3 serves of meat, fish or meat-alternative a day depending on your age, with a serving size being 65g–100g. On average, that's 54.75kg of meat, fish, and poultry or meat alternatives in a year. However, the average Australian consumes **115kg** meat and seafood per year – that's more than double the recommended amount!

#### Action



**Instigate meat-free days\* and when you do eat meat, choose ethically and sustainably farmed meat and fish. Use Sustainable Table's online directories under [Shopping Guides](#) and [Where to Shop](#).**

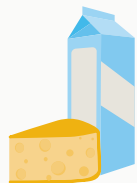
\*If making dramatic changes to your current diet then please seek medical advice before doing so.

### Q.8 How many times a week do you eat or drink dairy milk, cheese and yoghurt?

15  10-15  8-10  5-8  3  1  Never

Agriculture accounts for approximately 16% of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions, with direct on farm emissions from dairy farms contributing about 19% of this, (or about 3% of total national emissions).<sup>6</sup>

#### Action



**Have some dairy free days during the week and help reduce carbon emissions in Australia.**

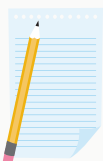
**If you do consume dairy, try to choose organic and local branded options. [Flavour Crusader](#) provides a fabulous state-based listing of unhomogenized and organic milk.**

### Q.9 How often do you visit the supermarket to buy food?

Daily (7)  4  3  2  Occasionally (1 pt)  Never (0 pts)

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

#### Action



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

<sup>5</sup> Sustainable Living Guide, <https://www.sustainablelivingguide.com.au/eat-less-meat>, viewed June 2019

<sup>6</sup> Agriculture Victoria, <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/dairy/emissions-in-dairy>, viewed June 2019

## Q.10 What do you do with your food scraps?

- Throw them in the bin (10 pts)
- Compost/worm farm/feed to chooks most of the time (4 pts)
- Always compost or something similar (0 pts)

On average, 40 per cent of household waste is made up of food scraps.<sup>7</sup> When sent to landfill, food scraps rot and produce methane a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. If food waste could be represented as its own country, it would be the **third largest greenhouse gas emitter**, behind China and the U.S.

### Action



Start a compost bin or worm farm. Composting can reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by up to 50 per cent and helps cut greenhouse gas emissions by preventing methane emissions that occur when organic waste breaks down in the oxygen-starved environment of landfill. Composting also allows finite nutrients found in food to be returned to the soil. The City of Melbourne offers **discounted compost bins and worm farms** for residents.

If you are unable to house your own compost bin then you may be able to share someone else's – check out [sharewaste.com](http://sharewaste.com)

## Q.11 What % of vegetables, fruit or herbs do you grow yourself annually?

- None (10 pts)
- 5-10% (8 pts)
- 10-30% (6 pts)
- 31-50% (4 pts)
- 51-70% (2 pts)
- 80-100% (0 pts)

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

### Action



The City of Melbourne has produced a booklet called **Sustainable Gardening in the City of Melbourne**. It provides advice on how to garden in the city, whether in a courtyard, balcony, or windowsill. Growing your own food enables you to develop an appreciation for the seasons and the incredible role that our farmers play in growing our food. You'll also celebrate imperfection when you realise it doesn't impact taste.

## Q.12 What proportion of your weekly shop is completely free of plastic packaging or purchased using your own containers?

**note:** packaging includes items such as plastic bags or wrap for fruit and veg; packets for biscuits, chips, kids snacks and dry goods; plastic containers for items such as milk, yoghurt and cleaning products.

Australia is the second highest producer of waste per person in the world to the tune of 650kg per person per year, second only to the USA.<sup>8</sup> An average Australian family of 4 makes enough rubbish each year to fill a 3-bedroom house from floor to ceiling.

50% of the plastic we use we use just once; and food and beverage packaging accounts for 60% of the items collected on Clean Up Australia Day.

- 0-10% (20pts)
- 10-20% (15pts)
- 20-40% (10pts)
- 40-60% (8pts)
- 60-80% (5pts)
- 80-100% (2pts)

### Action



Begin by seeking out your local farmers' market or fresh food market and take your own bags and containers for fresh food items. There are no regulations stopping retailers from accepting your containers.

Seek out bulk food stores or co-ops for dry goods, personal care items and cleaning products. Sustainable Table has a **Bulk Food Directory** to get you started.

If you do accumulate some soft-plastics, collect them in a bag and drop them at a **REDCycle** drop-off point for to be turned into recycled-plastic products. Most large supermarkets have a drop-off point and some council resource centres do also. Visit **REDCycle** for a full list of what can be recycled through them.

<sup>7</sup> Foodwise, Fast Facts on Food Waste, <http://foodwise.com.au/food-waste/food-waste-fast-facts/>, viewed June 2019

<sup>8</sup> Australian rubbish facts you probably didn't know, <http://sectordefinition.com/australian-rubbish-facts-you-probably-didnt-know/>, published July 2015, viewed June 2019

# How did I Score?

My total

0-17

Great work! You regularly choose more sustainable food practices. Why not share what you're doing with friends and neighbours and help inspire them to change

18-44

You're well on the road to sustainability, keep going and see what other changes you can make to drive even more improvements in our food system

45-81

You're doing a few things really well, with some more information you'll be able to reduce your impact even more

82+

Great, you have lots of opportunities to improve the sustainability of our food supply through some simple changes



Now that you know where you stand in terms of sustainability, why not use the actions within the survey and the tools in this guide to help you to continue your sustainability journey.

# Packaging-Free Shopping Brought to Life!



## BUTCHER

If you eat meat, take your own containers to an ethical butcher. If you're meeting up with a large group for a BBQ you could even offer to source the meat for everyone, so people aren't turning up with individually packaged items.



## BAKERY

Take your own cloth bags to the bakery or farmers' market. No need to buy new ones, use ones that have been collected along the way.



## FOOD ON- THE-GO

A simple hack is to carry a cloth bag or napkin for food ordered on-the-go



## BULK FOOD

Here is an example of a bulk food store, providing a huge range of goods where you can take your own containers to refill pantry, cleaning and personal care items.



## FARMERS' MARKET

A great way to kick off your weekend and connect with the people who grow our food.



## FARMERS' MARKET

Attend your local farmers' market equipped with all your zero-waste tools, such as reusable coffee cups, bags, jars for juice or returnable milk and plates and cutlery for eat-in hot food.



## DELI OR TAKEAWAY STORE

Take your own containers to the delicatessen or takeaway venue to save on single-use plastic containers.

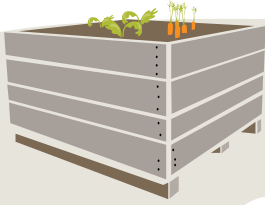


## TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

Nobody's perfect. We need millions of people doing zero-waste imperfectly rather than just a few doing it perfectly. Here's a weekly shop using very little packaging.

# Paths to Sustainability - Businesses

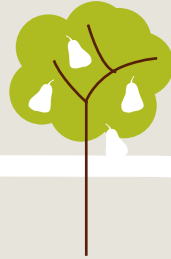
10 ways to reduce your business' eco-footprint



1

## start a workplace kitchen garden

Growing your own food **reduces your food miles** and CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. It also helps to create green space and provides access to seasonal produce, no matter how small.



2

## reduce waste & start composting

Australian businesses throw away more than 1.3 million tonnes of food every year.<sup>1</sup> If you're a food service operator, or looking for ideas to reduce food waste in the office, visit [lovefoodhatewaste.vic.gov.au](http://lovefoodhatewaste.vic.gov.au). Secondly, you can separate organic waste and arrange a collection service so that you divert it from landfill (see [melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/waste-recycling/pages/food-other-waste.aspx](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/waste-recycling/pages/food-other-waste.aspx) for more information).

Encourage staff to compost their food scraps using a bench-top composting kit or bin. Use the compost to feed your kitchen garden, distribute it to local gardeners or take it home. Compost bins can go months, sometimes years before they need to be emptied, so don't let the idea of distributing nutrient-dense compost put you off!



3

## avoid packaging, buy in bulk or reusable containers

Plastic takes up to **1,000 years to break down**, and even then it simply breaks down into smaller parts, it never truly goes 'away'. Encourage staff or patrons to **use reusable containers and coffee cups** where possible.

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

4

## donate leftover food

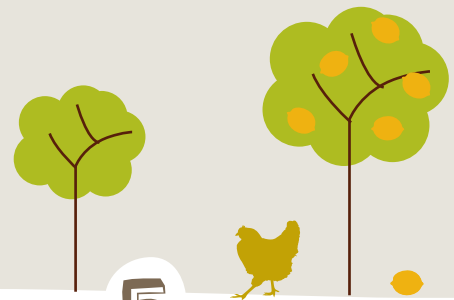
Help reduce sending waste to landfill by donating food leftovers from business catering and functions to a food donation program near you. See the [City of Melbourne's Community Food Guide](#) for more information.<sup>2</sup>



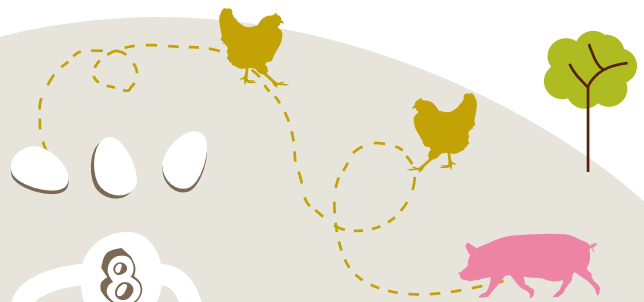
5

## buy chemical free, organic or biodynamic

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







7

## increase vegetarian and dairy-free options on the menu

**Agriculture accounts for approximately 16% of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions**, with direct on farm emissions from dairy farms contributing about 19% of this, (or about 3% of total national emissions).<sup>4</sup>

More meat and dairy free options on the menu can help reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and provide customers with more choice. Promoting **Meat-free Mondays** is another initiative which can reduce emissions.

6

## buy local & seasonal



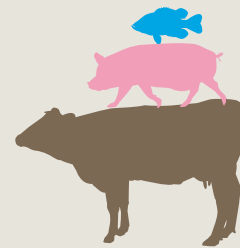
Does your business order a staff fruit box? Use the **Sustainable Shopping Close to You guide** to find a box system that uses local, organic and seasonal fruit.

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

8

## choose free range pork, chicken & eggs

Sustainably managed free range or organic farms are able to reduce or better manage the environmental impacts of farming by following a number of ecological practices such as appropriate animal stocking densities and integrated farming. Choose free range or organic and help support environmentally-sound farming systems. See Sustainable Table's **Shopping Guides** for what to look for.<sup>3</sup>



9

## choose sustainably farmed meat & dairy & sustainable seafood

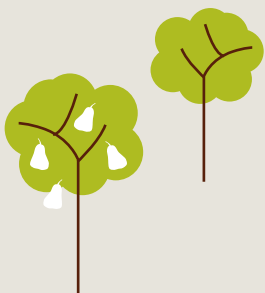
Sustainable meat and dairy farms employ good environmental practices such as animal rotation, pasture feeding (as opposed to grain feeding), water recycling and management, composting, tree planting and soil health practices, and use fewer non-renewable resources. Ask questions of your supplier and use the **Shopping Guides** on the Sustainable Table ([sustainabletable.org.au](http://sustainabletable.org.au)) or Flavour Crusader ([flavourcrusader.com](http://flavourcrusader.com)) websites to find sustainably farmed meat and dairy close to you.

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

10

## develop relationships & ask questions

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



<sup>1</sup> Food Wise, <http://www.foodwise.com.au/food-donation-tool-kit/>, viewed June 2019

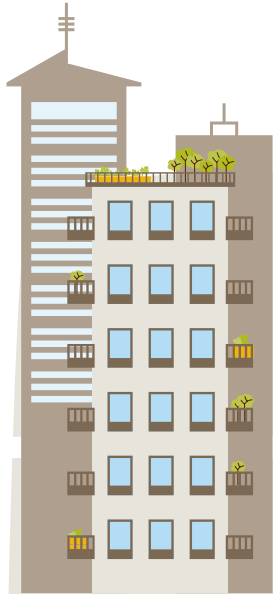
<sup>2</sup> City of Melbourne, <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/health-services/Pages/community-food-guide.aspx>, viewed June 2019

<sup>3</sup> Sustainable Table, <https://sustainabletable.org.au/all-things-ethical-eating/#shopping-guides>, viewed June 2019

<sup>4</sup> Sustainable Table, <https://sustainabletable.org.au/all-things-ethical-eating/beef/>, viewed June 2019

# Paths to Sustainability – Individuals

informed shoppers are savvy shoppers



1

## grow your own food

Growing your own food reduces your food miles and CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. Plus it's seasonal, delicious and saves money.

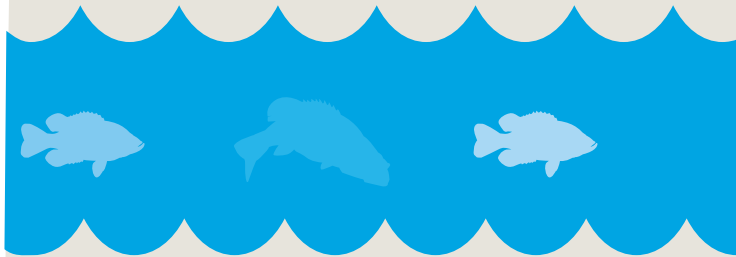


2

## avoid packaging & use re-useable shopping bags

50% of the plastic we use, we use just once; and food and beverage packaging accounts for 60% of the items collected on Clean Up Australia Day.<sup>1</sup>

Carry your own shopping bags and mesh fresh produce bags. Seek out **bulk food outlets** where you can take your own containers for dry good, personal care items and cleaning products.



## choose sustainable seafood

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

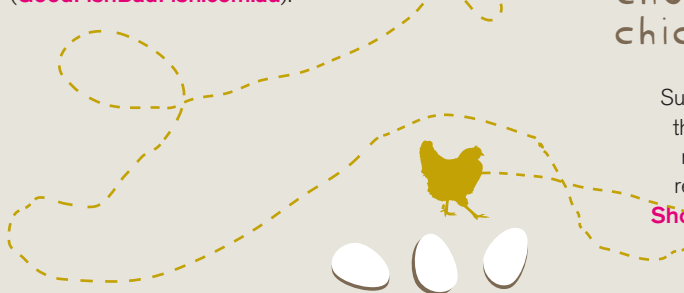
3



4

## choose free range or organic chicken, pork and egg products

Sustainably-managed farms are better able to reduce the environmental impacts of farming. Alternatively, raise your own chooks to produce daily eggs and reduce your food waste. See **Sustainable Table's Shopping Guides** for producers and outlets near you.<sup>2</sup>





6

### buy chemical free organic or biodynamic

Organic, regenerative and biodynamic farming methods improve soil health and reduce reliance on fossil fuels as no synthetic chemicals or pesticides are used.



5

### reduce, reuse, recycle & compost

Australians send \$8 billion worth of food to landfill each year.<sup>3</sup> Using a compost bin can cut the garbage you send to landfill by 50%. The City of Melbourne provides discounted compost bins for residents – visit [compostrevolution.com.au](http://compostrevolution.com.au) to claim your discount

7

### buy local & seasonal

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



8

### instigate meat and dairy free days

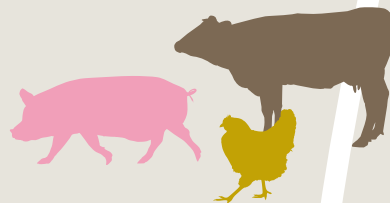
A 2015 study concluded that a diet that is vegetarian 5 days a week and includes meat 2 days a week would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and water and land use by about 45%.<sup>4</sup>



9

### choose sustainably farmed meat & dairy & sustainable seafood

Sustainable meat and dairy farms employ good environmental practices such as animal rotation, pasture feeding (as opposed to grain feeding), water recycling and management, composting, tree planting and soil health practices, and use fewer non-renewable resources. Ask questions of your supplier and use the **Shopping Guides** on the Sustainable Table ([sustainabletable.org.au](http://sustainabletable.org.au)) or Flavour Crusader ([flavourcrusader.com](http://flavourcrusader.com)) websites to find sustainably farmed meat and dairy close to you.



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

10

### ask questions

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



1 2017 Clean Up Australia Dat, National Rubbish Report Fact Sheet, <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/72mhhzs5q7ueqvw/AACqkI8KHpnFt9Llbs2pbKdDa?dl=0&preview=2017+Fact+Sheet+National.pdf>, viewed June 2019

2 Sustainable Table, <https://sustainabletable.org.au/all-things-ethical-eating/#shopping-guides>, viewed June 2019

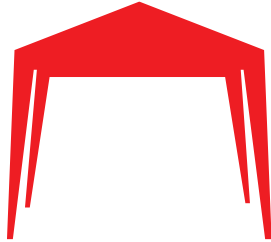
3 Foodwise, Fast Facts on Food Waste, <https://www.foodwise.com.au/foodwaste/food-waste-fast-facts/>, viewed June 2019

4 Ruini LF, Ciati R, Pratesi CA, Marino M, Principato L and Vannuzzi E (2015) Working toward healthy and sustainable diets: the "Double Pyramid Model" developed by the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition to raise awareness about the environmental and nutritional impact of foods. *Front. Nutr.* 2:9. doi: 10.3389/fnut.2015.00009 <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fnut.2015.00009/full>

# A City Dweller's Guide to Sustainable Food

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

farmers' markets



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

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

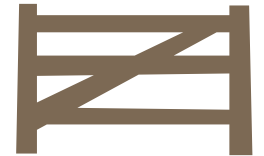
Shopping at a farmers' market is a great way to buy local, seasonal produce straight from the source. You can check out the markets listed below or search at [vicfarmersmarkets.org.au](http://vicfarmersmarkets.org.au) or [mfm.com.au](http://mfm.com.au) for more near you and to find out about their accreditation program.

## local markets

See [Sustainable Shopping Close to You](#) for farmers' markets and local markets near you.

Find out more about farmers' markets by visiting [vicfarmersmarkets.org.au](http://vicfarmersmarkets.org.au) or [mfm.com.au](http://mfm.com.au)

farmgates or fresh off the boat



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

## farmgates

Visit the local tourist information website of the region you're visiting for listings of farms that are open to the public.

[www.visitvictoria.com](http://www.visitvictoria.com)

For listings of 'Pick-your-own' farms, visit: [www.pickyourown.org/australiavic.htm](http://www.pickyourown.org/australiavic.htm)

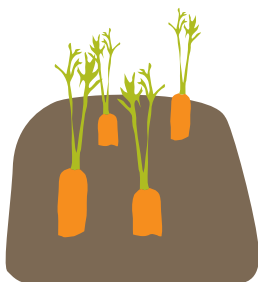
Check out our [Sustainable Seafood Guide](#) or download the [AMCS Smartphone app](#) to find 'better choice' species at your local fishmonger or fresh off the boat.

## grow it at home

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

By producing your own food you can choose what types to grow in the way that you want. Best of all, what you grow will always be in season and will be as locally sourced as possible! Herbs are a great way to start - it will reduce plastic packaging and how many times have you bought a bunch only to throw out half of it!

For advice on starting your own garden in the city visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/residents/home-neighbourhood/gardens-and-green-spaces/pages/sustainable-gardening-in-the-city.aspx](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au/residents/home-neighbourhood/gardens-and-green-spaces/pages/sustainable-gardening-in-the-city.aspx) or browse through the many useful online resources listed on Sustainable Table's website [sustainabletable.org.au](http://sustainabletable.org.au).



## produce boxes



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

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

## food boxes

There are a number of food box services now operating across Melbourne. See [Sustainable Shopping Close to You](#) for suggested food box services.

## community supported agriculture (CSA)

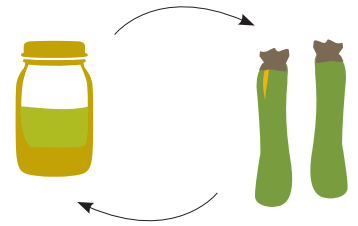


Are you interested in developing a closer connection with your source of food? Then consider becoming involved in community supported agriculture (CSA). A CSA extends your participation into the production of the food you eat, such that you invest and share in the risks and benefits of growing food on a specific farm. CSAs help growers by guaranteeing sales when crops are successful and minimising losses when they are not. They offer city dwellers a rare opportunity to personally invest in food production.

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

For CSA's in your local area visit [csanetworkausnz.org](http://csanetworkausnz.org)

## food swaps



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

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

For local food swaps in your area visit [Local Food Connect](#)

## food cooperatives (co-op)



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

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

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

For Food Cooperatives in your local area visit [localharvest.org.au](http://localharvest.org.au), type in your postcode and the key word 'coop'.

Also see [Sustainable Table's Bulk Food Directory](#) for co-ops and bulk food stores.

Walk on over to our [Sustainable Shopping Close to You](#) guide for more listings and information about where and how to shop more sustainably.

# Sustainable Shopping Close to You

## Sustainable Shopping Outlets & Useful Sites as at June 2019

### Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are a great way to buy local, seasonal produce straight from the source; meaning you can ask questions and all of your shopping dollar goes to the people who produced your food.

#### First Saturday of each month

##### Carlton Farmers' Market

Carlton North Primary School,  
Cnr Canning and O'Grady Streets,  
Carlton North

#### Second Saturday of the month

##### Collingwood Farmers' Market

Collingwood Children's Farm,  
St Heliers St, Abbotsford

#### Fourth Saturday of the month

##### Abbotsford

Abbotsford Covent,  
St Heliers St, Abbotsford

#### Third Saturday of the month

##### Gasworks Farmers' Market

Gasworks Arts Park,  
21 Graham St, Albert Park

#### Every Sunday

##### Flemington Farmers' Market

Mt Alexander Secondary College,  
169-175 Mt Alexander Rd, Flemington

#### Every Wednesday during semester

##### Farmers' Market at the University of Melbourne

University of Melbourne, Union Lawn,  
Union Rd, Parkville

#### Check website for opening hours

##### CERES Fair Food

Corner Roberts and Stewart Streets,  
Brunswick East

#### First Saturday of the month

##### Veg Out St Kilda Farmers' Market

Corner of Shakespeare Grove and  
Chaucer Street, St Kilda

For more information visit  
[vicfarmersmarkets.org.au](http://vicfarmersmarkets.org.au)  
and [mfmm.com.au](http://mfmm.com.au)

### Fresh Food Markets

Fresh food markets often bring together a collection of small businesses under one roof. The difference between these and a farmers' market is that most produce is sourced from the wholesale markets and re-sold, as opposed to the actual farmers also being the ones selling the produce. Also be sure to check the origin of food, as imported items are often allowed.

#### Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat

##### Queen Victoria Market

Corner of Victoria Street and  
Elizabeth Street, Melbourne

#### Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat

##### Prahran Market

163 Commercial Road,  
South Yarra

#### Every Saturday

##### Gleadell Street Market

Gleadell Street, Richmond

#### Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun

##### South Melbourne Market

Corner of Coventry Street and  
Cecil Street, South Melbourne

### Box Delivery Services

#### CERES Fair Food

#### Organic Angels

#### Organic Empire

#### Your Grocer

For more box services in your local area visit  
[localharvest.org.au](http://localharvest.org.au) and type in your postcode  
with the keyword 'box'.

### Food Swaps

#### Sat 10am-1pm

(when CERES market is open)

#### Urban Orchard

Stewart Street and Roberts Street,  
Brunswick East

#### Meeting 1st Saturday of every month

#### Urban Harvest

Smith Reserve, Alexandra Pde

For more food swaps in your local area visit

[localharvest.org.au](http://localharvest.org.au), type in your postcode  
and the key words 'food swap'

Also visit [Local Food Connect](#)

### Food Co-ops

#### Friends of the Earth

312 Smith Street, Collingwood

#### Brunswick Unity Church Food Co-op

212- 214 Sydney Road, Brunswick

#### Melbourne University Food Co-op

[yourfoodcoop@gmail.com](mailto:yourfoodcoop@gmail.com)

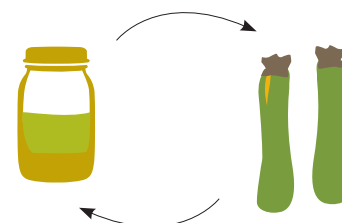
1st Floor, Union House, University of  
Melbourne Parkville campus, Melbourne

#### Realfoods

RMIT Building 12, Level 4  
360 Swanston Street, Melbourne

For more Food Cooperatives in your local  
area visit [localharvest.org.au](http://localharvest.org.au), type in your  
postcode and the key word 'coop'.

Also see [Sustainable Table's Bulk Food  
Directory](#) for co-ops and bulk food stores.



## Community Gardens

### Docklands Community Garden

Geographe Street, Docklands  
activators@docklandsgarden.org

### East Melbourne Community Garden

Sinclair's Cottage, Fitzroy Gardens,  
East Melbourne  
eastmelbcommgarden@gmail.com

### Brotherhood of St Laurence

– Coolibah Centre  
67a Brunswick Street, Fitzroy  
bacci@bsl.org.au

### Kensington Community Garden

118-128 Westbourne Road, Kensington  
kensington@ymca.org.au

### Kensington Neighbourhood House

321 Arden Street, Kensington  
loretta.c@kenhouse.org.au

### Kensington Neighbourhood House

89 McCracken Street, Kensington  
info@kenhouse.org.au

### Melbourne University Community Garden

Monash Road, Parkville  
mucgarden@gmail.com

### South Port Uniting Church

144 Bridge Street, Port Melbourne  
janet.hoare@southportuniting.org.au

### Boyd Community Hub

207 City Road, Southbank  
boyd@melbourne.vic.gov.au

### Veg Out Community Gardens St Kilda Inc.

Corner of Shakespeare Grove and  
Chaucer Street, St Kilda  
hello@vegout.org.au

### Rushall Community Garden

Thomas Kidney Reserve, Rushall Crescent,  
Fitzroy North

For more Community Gardens in your local area visit:

- [localharvest.org.au](http://localharvest.org.au), type in your postcode and the key word 'community gardens'
- [communitygarden.org.au](http://communitygarden.org.au) and click 'Find a garden' for a map and postcode directory

## Community Food Programs

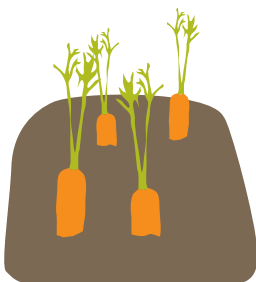
There are some fabulous organisations servicing people in our community who are experiencing disadvantage. Here are a few of them:

- **The Community Grocer**  
Community Grocer run weekly affordable fresh food markets.
- **Cultivating Community**  
Cultivating Community currently supports 21 public housing community gardens as well as non-public housing gardens.

For more listings and information about food programs operating in the City of Melbourne, see our full [Community Food Guide](#)

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

- Q. Is your produce chemical free, organic or biodynamic?
- Q. Do you source your produce direct from farmers (more money goes direct to the farmer) or from a wholesale market (money goes through a middle-man and produce can be from anywhere)?
- Q. Do you source produce from Victoria or from around Australia/ the world?
- Q. Do you source only seasonal produce?



# Fast Facts on Food Waste

We all love eating out, but how much are we throwing out?

Australians discard up to **20%** of the food they purchase

up to **40%** of the

This equates to **1 out of every 5** bags of groceries they buy.



average household bin is **food**

For the average Australian household

**\$1,036**

of food is thrown away every year.

This is enough money to feed the average household for over a **month**



**month**



or to pay for around **6 months** of your electricity bill.



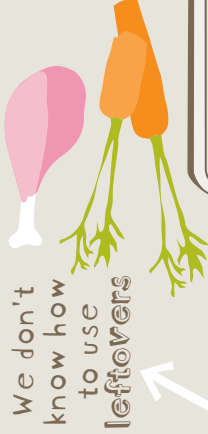
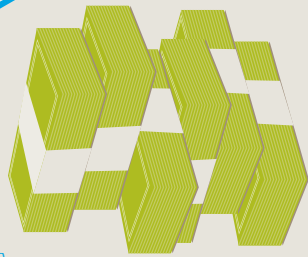
**6 months**

of your electricity bill.

Aussies throw out

**\$8 billion**

worth of edible food every year.



We don't know how to use leftovers

We cook too much food

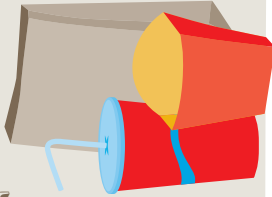
**Why is it wasted?**

We don't check the cupboard or fridge before going shopping

We buy takeaways at the last minute instead of cooking the food we have at home

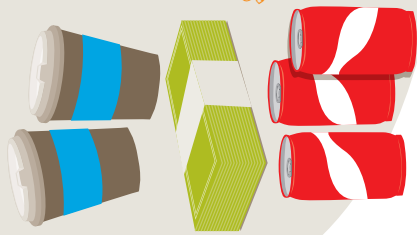
We buy too much because we don't stick to a shopping list. We often shop when we're hungry so buy more food than we need.

Food is mistakenly thrown out before the use-by/best before date





## Who are the biggest wasters of food?



Young consumers (18-24)

Households with incomes of more than **\$100,000** per year

Families with **children**

## What are the environmental effects?



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

## The hidden impact?

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



an estimated **20-40%** of fruit and vegetables are **rejected**

If you add up all the **food Australia wastes**

each year, it's enough to fill **450,000** garbage trucks.



Placed end to end, the convoy would bridge the gap between **Australia** and **New Zealand**, just over three times.

## What you can do



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

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

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




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

DO SOMETHING!

**FOODWISE**  
YOUR SITE FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD

# Cut & Keep Guides

Check out Sustainable Table's online [Seasonal Produce Guide](#)

Spring (September – November)			Summer (December – February)			A guide to seasonal produce in Victoria	  	fruit
avocado	lemon	rhubarb	apricot	figs	peach			vegetables
cherry	lime	strawberries	blackberries	grapes	plum			herbs and spices
cumquat	loquat		blueberries	honeydew	raspberries			
grapefruit	mandarin		boysenberries	loganberries	rhubarb			
			cantaloupe	mulberries	strawberries			
			cherries	nectarines	watermelon			
			currants	passionfruit				
artichoke	celery	peas, snow	asparagus	leek	radish			
asian greens	cucumber	peas,	avocado	lettuce	shallot			
asparagus	fennel	sugar snap	beans	okra	sweetcorn			
avocado	kale	potato	cabbage	onion	silverbeet			
broadbeans	leek	radish	capsicum	onion, spring	tomato			
beetroot	lettuce	shallot	carrot	peas, snow	watercress			
broccoli	mushrooms	silverbeet	cucumber	peas,	zucchini			
cabbage	onion, spring	spinach	daikon	sugar snap	zucchini flower			
carrot	peas	watercress	eggplant	potato				
basil	chives	ginger	mint	oregano	sage			
basil, thai	coriander	lime, kaffir	mint, apple	parsley	tarragon			
chervil	dill	(leaves)	mint, viet.	rosemary	thyme			
chilli	garlic	lemongrass						

fold

fold

'80% of the world's oceans are officially over-exploited or fished right to their limit.'

You can make a difference.

**Be informed. Choose your seafood wisely.**

Consider its sustainability and always go for 'Better Choice' where you can.

**Things to do...**

Whether you are at a supermarket, fish merchant, dining out at a restaurant or simply getting takeaway, always ask...

- Is the species overfished?
- How was it caught or farmed?
- Is it a deep-sea, slow-growing or long-lived species?

**Tell your friends!**

Spread the word about how good it feels to eat sustainably.

Consult the website and get your hands on the full version of **Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide** for more detailed information on each species, sustainability and fishing methods.



Why do your choices matter?

The fish we choose today will directly affect the health of our oceans tomorrow.

Worldwide demand for seafood is increasing, yet many populations of the fish we enjoy are overfished.

Overfishing, destructive fishing gear and poor aquaculture practices impact significantly on our seas. Once considered inexhaustible, our oceans are now in a state of global crisis and they need our help.

Be part of the solution.

Freecall 1800 066 299  
sustainableseafood.org.au

Freecall 1800 066 299  
sustainableseafood.org.au

Like this pocket guide?

Why not download the free AMCS iPhone or Android app for more information on each species. Search for 'Sustainable Seafood Guide' in your app store.

Please remove this page, cut and fold the guides to use when shopping for seafood and fresh produce

# Cut & Keep Guides

## Autumn (March – May)

apple	fig	peach	pomegranate	rockmelon
avocado	grapes	pear	quince	strawberries
cumquat	honeydew	persimmon	raspberries	tamarillo
feijoa	nashi	plum	rhubarb	

asian greens	cabbage	eggplant	onion, spring	spinach
avocado	capsicum	fennel	parsnip	squash
beans	carrot	leek	potato	sweetcorn
beetroot	cauliflower	lettuce	pumpkin	tomato
broccoli	celery	mushrooms	radish	watercress
brussels sprouts	cucumber	okra	shallot	witlof
	daikon	onion	silverbeet	zucchini

basil	chives	ginger	lime, kaffir (leaves)	oregano	sage
chervil	coriander	lemongrass	mint	parsley	tarragon
chilli	dill			rosemary	thyme

## Winter (June – August)

apple	lime	rhubarb
avocado	mandarin	tamarillo
grapefruit	nashi	tangelo
kiwifruit	orange	
lemon	pear	

asian greens	celeriac	onion, spring
avocado	fennel	parsnip
beetroot	horseradish	potato
broccoli	kale	pumpkin
brussels sprouts	kohlrabi	silverbeet
cabbage	leek	spinach
carrot	lettuce	swede
cauliflower	mushrooms	turnip

ginger	mint	rosemary
coriander	oregano	
dill	parsley	

fold

fold

## Better Choice

<i>Aust. wild caught fish</i>	<i>Marketed as...</i>
Australian Salmon	Australian Salmon
Crabs	Blue Swimmer Crabs (SA, NSW, WA) Spanner & Mud Crabs (NT)
Flathead (NSW & VIC)	Dusky Flathead
Snapper (VIC)	Pink Snapper
Southern Calamari	
Spanish mackerel	Mackerel
Spencer Gulf King Prawns (SA)	King Prawns
Whiting	King George & Eastern School
<i>Australian Farmed</i>	<i>Marketed as...</i>
Barramundi	Barra
Cobia	Cobia
Murray Cod	Murray Cod
Blue Mussel	Mussel
Oysters	Sydney Rock, Native & Pacific Oysters
Prawns	Black Tiger, Kuruma & Banana Prawns

These species represent a **BETTER choice**. Species in this group are not currently overfished. They are generally resilient to fishing pressure, have history of stable catches or are caught or farmed using techniques that have a low environmental impact. Some of these species may still have some minor issues but are a better choice.

## Eat Less

<i>Aust. wild caught fish</i>	<i>Also marketed as...</i>
Barramundi (WA & NT)	Barra
Blue Grenadier	Cod, Hoki
Blue-eye Trevalla	Blue-Eye Cod
Blue Swimmer Crab (QLD)	Blue Manna
Bugs	Balmain Bugs & Moreton Bay Bugs
Flathead	Tiger Flathead, Deepwater Flathead, Dusky Flathead (QLD)
Mahi Mahi	Dolphinfish
Prawns	Western & Eastern King, Banana, Tiger, School & Endeavour Prawns
Red Emperor	Nannygai
Snapper	Pink Snapper (WA & SA), Goldband Snapper, Saddletail Snapper
Southern Rocklobster	Crayfish
Swordfish	Broadbill Swordfish
Tuna	Albacore & Yellowfin Tuna

**EAT LESS** of these species. Wild caught species in this group may be heavily targeted or caught using fishing methods that damage habitat or are associated with high levels of bycatch. There may be scientific uncertainty about the status of wild caught stocks and a level of fishing pressure that suggests caution is required. If farmed, the aquaculture method used has some conservation challenges.

## Say No

<i>Aust. wild caught fish</i>	<i>Also marketed as...</i>
Blue Warehou	Sea Bream
Gemfish	Hake
Mulloway	Jewfish
Orange Roughy	Deep Sea Perch
Shark	Flake
Snapper	Pink Snapper (QLD & NSW), Tropical Snapper
Southern Bluefin Tuna	Bluefin
<i>Australian Farmed</i>	<i>Also marketed as...</i>
Atlantic Salmon	Tasmanian/Smoked Salmon
<i>Imported</i>	<i>Also marketed as...</i>
Basa	Freshwater fillet, Royal Basa & Mekong Catfish
Blue Grenadier	Hoki
Farmed Prawns	Prawns, Shrimp
Tuna	Albacore, Yellowfin, Bigeye Tuna

**Say NO** to these species. Wild caught species in this group, whether Australian or imported, may be overfished or their capture heavily impacts our seas e.g. killing threatened or protected species as bycatch or damaging sensitive habitats. Farmed species include those produced by methods that place significant stress on our oceans.

# Get Committed!

Pick three actions you can take to support a sustainable food system  
between 30-60% of our ecological footprint is embodied in the food we buy

## ask questions to encourage change

I will ask my local cafe, restaurant, work or school to provide sustainable food options like...

.....  
e.g. more meat and dairy free menu options, organic or biodynamic milk, a discount for bringing my own cup, free-range meat etc.

## choose sustainably farmed meat + dairy

I will look for the following free range egg certification logos:



I will buy free range or organic meat and dairy sourced from farms that have good environmental practices by shopping at...

.....  
e.g. my local farmers' market, food co-op, CSA, free range butcher etc.

## grow your own food

I will try my hand at growing...

.....  
e.g. tomatoes, silverbeet and herbs

## avoid packaging + use reusable shopping bags

I will not buy packaged...

.....  
e.g. plastic wrapped fruit and vegetables, bottled water, tinned food etc.

## reduce, reuse, recycle + compost

I will reduce my food waste by...

.....  
e.g. writing a shopping list and sticking to it, starting a compost bin, reducing the packaged food I buy so less goes into the recycle bin.

## buy chemical free organic or biodynamic

I will commit to buying chemical free food for .....% of the time where possible.

## eat local + seasonal

I will eat seasonal produce by finding my local...

.....  
e.g. farmers' market, community garden, organic box system etc.

## choose sustainable seafood

I will buy sustainable species such as

.....  
and will no longer buy overfished species such as

.....  
e.g. flake and tuna

## instigate meat free days

I will have .....meat-free days per week for the next.....months.



# Hungry for More?

## Use your shopping dollar to vote for a fair food system

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

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



[sustainabletable.org.au](http://sustainabletable.org.au)

 [@Sustain\\_Table](https://www.instagram.com/Sustain_Table)

 [@thesustainabletable](https://www.facebook.com/thesustainabletable)

To learn more about the City of Melbourne and its commitment to a local, sustainable, resilient food system, visit



[melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodpolicy](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodpolicy)

 [@cityofmelbourne](https://www.instagram.com/cityofmelbourne)

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