



Working together to improve food security across the Rural City of Wangaratta 2021 - 2025

A case study from Gateway Health's Health Promotion Team

Aim	To improve access to nourishing, affordable food for people living in the Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW).
Rationale	<p>Working together to improve access to nourishing, affordable food is based on the understanding that to create systems change we need to work on a range of strategies including:- strengthening community action, creating supportive environments, developing personal skills and building healthy public policy (Ottawa Charter). This work builds on previous Gateway Health work in the food security/food systems space.</p> <p>The Rural City of Wangaratta has a population of just under 30,000 people spread across a large geographical area in north-east Victoria, with one large township (Wangaratta) and many smaller rural townships and rural areas. The Gateway Health, Health Promotion Team have worked closely with community and local settings and organisations to better understand local food needs and to enable, mediate and advocate for local food access initiatives.</p> <p>Gateway Health have prioritised working with communities that are more likely to face barriers to accessing food due to being on a lower income, have less transport options and/or experience geographical isolation (known as 'food desert areas'). Gateway Health recognise that the broader food system has many players and have partnered with Wangaratta Council and regional bodies to take a collective impact approach to strengthen local and regional food systems that support food security for everyone in our community.</p>

Links to local policy/ initiatives	<u>Ottawa Charter and Geneva Charter</u> <u>Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 –2029</u> <u>VicHealth Local Government program & Food Systems Module</u> <u>Vic Kids Eat Well</u> <u>Healthy Choices Policy Directive</u> <u>North East Local Food Strategy (NELFS)</u> <u>Victorian Food Consensus Statement</u>
Outcomes	<p>Gateway Health have supported a range of initiatives including food shares, food hubs, food growing gardens, cooking sessions and community food pantries. Gateway Health have developed strong connections with the local community, local organisations, community groups and Council and have enabled, mediated and advocated with our partners and key stakeholders to build sustainability.</p>

The Story

Gateway Health, Health Promotion Team work with community and stakeholders to improve food security/food systems across the Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW) through:-

Working collaboratively with partners and community to build collective impact in the food space locally and regionally:-

- Collating and sharing information about local food initiatives through development of the [RCoW Community Food Maps](#)
- Working with RCoW Council and community members/groups to establish the RCoW Sustainable Food Alliance (Vic Health Food Systems Module).
- Understanding community needs through the [Wangaratta Community Food Survey](#) and local food access need assessment (to be completed)
- Participating as a key partner in the development of the North East Local Food Strategy and the [Northeast Border Community Food Alliance](#)

Supporting community-led, place-based food access initiatives in geographically isolated areas:-

- Supported successful grant applications and ongoing support for the Sustainable King Valley Food Hub in Cheshunt that provides access to food for 120+ people
- Continued support/promotion of Eldorado Food Share and Moyhu Food Share

Supporting food access initiatives for people on low incomes/ with limited transport options:-

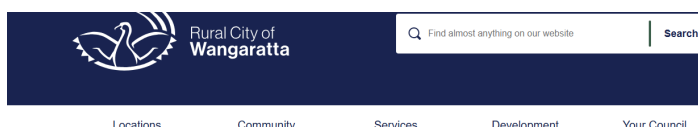
- Supported successful grant applications with King Valley Community Centre and Open Door Neighbourhood House to improve dignified access to food through community food pantries and food growing/cooking programs.
- Gateway Health (Wangaratta site) hosts food bags over the Christmas/New Year holiday period and organises staff donations for local food relief agencies
- Connected local food growing initiatives (Wangaratta Community Garden and Therapeutic Centre) with local food relief agencies to utilise excess produce.

Working with settings to provide nourishing food options, and food growing/cooking skills:-

- Implementation of the [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) program that supports nourishing food options in settings - engaged with five Outside School Hours Care services and six Schools.
- Supported new/expanded food growing gardens in five schools, one supported play group and one youth hub through small grants/resources. There are approximately 30+ food growing gardens across RCoW (Veggie Garden Mapping Project)
- Supported cooking skills sessions in several schools and neighbourhood houses.
- Gateway Health Food Procurement Policy reviewed and updated in line with the Healthy Choices Policy Directive

Advocacy for a food system that supports equitable, dignified access to food for everyone in our community

- Member of the working group that developed the [Victorian Food Consensus Statement](#)
- Submission made by Gateway Health to the [Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Food Security](#)
- Participated in the working group of the [University of Melbourne Food Resilience Project](#) that produced Planning a resilient food system for Victoria (Toolkit to be launched soon)

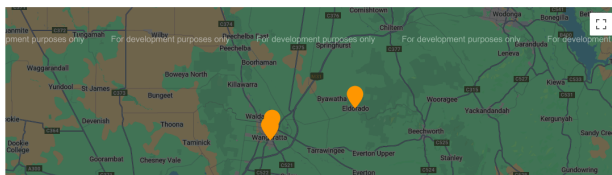


Home / Community / Community Food

Community Food

Here you will find a map of the community food environment across the Rural City of Wangaratta, including community gardens, food shares, food pantries, food hubs and farmers markets.

This map has been developed by the Wangaratta Community Food For All network. For more information email recreation@wangaratta.vic.gov.au or visit the [Community Food For All Facebook page](#)



Home / Community / Community Food / Eldorado Food Share

Eldorado Food Share

Eldorado Food Share provides the community with the opportunity to share excess produce they may have grown in their own backyards. The Food Share welcomes everyone even if you have nothing to share at the time. They encourage those who have never grown their own produce and have a desire to learn more, to those who have extensive knowledge and are willing to share their experience with others in the community. The Food Share encourages all age groups in the Eldorado and surrounding districts to attend.



About Us

Type

Community Food

Hours

10am to 12noon, third Saturday of each month.

Social Media



Home / Community / Community Food / Wangaratta Community Garden

Wangaratta Community Garden

The Wangaratta Community Garden Inc is a volunteer-run garden that provides plots, equipment, knowledge, and water for members to grow food and to nurture social connections through community gatherings. Sometimes community workshops or events are offered so please follow the WCG facebook page.

Several of the beds at the garden are set aside as Community Beds, where a team of volunteers grow food to donate to Open Door Neighbourhood House's Community Food Pantry.



Home / Community / Community Food / Open Door Neighbourhood House

Open Door Neighbourhood House

Community Food Pantry is open Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 10am – 2pm. Orders via phone only, collections at allocated time.

Please call for information about cooking programs and community lunches.



About Us

Type

Community Food

Contact

03 5721 9175
<http://www.opendoornh.org.au/>

Hours

Sunday	Closed
Monday	10:00 AM-02:00 PM
Tuesday	10:00 AM-02:00 PM
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10:00 AM-02:00 PM
Friday	Closed
Saturday	Closed

10am - 2pm Monday - Friday. Check Facebook for school holiday times.

Social Media



About Us

Type

Community Food

Social Media



Wangaratta Community Food Maps

Outcomes:

9

Nine place-based food access initiatives are located in areas or support communities where residents are on lower incomes, have less transport options or are geographically isolated ('food desert areas').

30

There are over 30 food growing gardens in a range of settings across RCoW including schools, early childhood services, neighbourhood houses, workplaces and other community settings.

3+

Cooking skills sessions are offered at all three neighbourhood houses and many school settings.

11

Eleven Schools and Outside School Hours Care services are engaged in the Vic Kids Eat Well program.

2

Stronger partnerships for collective impact have been developed at the local level (Rural City of Wangaratta Sustainable Food Alliance) and the regional level (North East Local Food Strategy).

3

Advocacy for a food system that supports equitable, dignified access to food for everyone in our community through the consensus statement, input into state food security inquiry and contributing to food resilience planning research.



Wangaratta Community Food Forum 2023



Open Door Neighbourhood House is very appreciative of the support and work we do with GWH - Health Promotion Team. We are located within Yarrunga, an area in Wangaratta which has a SEIFA Index 1 and sit in the bottom 1-7% of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage in Australia. We get great value from working with such a community minded and committed organisation. They recognise the barriers faced by our community and always provide support and advice when asked. They are innovative, receptive and clearly passionate. We work with many people who are unable to access healthy food due to hardship, and GH - HP are always looking for ways to support at a community level as well as a systems level. We are not in the position to undertake this work, so are very grateful to have others in our community be able to advocate at a state and federal level on our communities and our behalf.

Coordinator, Open Door Neighbourhood House

Council and Gateway Health have been working closely together to support local food systems across the Rural City of Wangaratta. Together we have developed the Rural City of Community Food Maps, hosted a Community Food Forum, are establishing the Rural City of Wangaratta Sustainable Food Alliance and have recently undertaken a Community Food Survey. It has been great to utilize our local connections to do this work together and with our local community.

Community Wellbeing Officer, Rural City of Wangaratta.



**Food Growing
Gardens, Food Hub
and
cooking activities**



Evaluation & lesson learnt

Gateway Health have worked collaboratively to improve access to nourishing, affordable food for people living in the Rural City of Wangaratta, particularly those living in geographically isolated areas and people on lower incomes. Gateway Health will continue to work collaboratively with our community and collectively at a local and regional level to support a strong equitable and sustainable food system.

Learnings –

- starting with small changes and being flexible with the ways in which support is provided has meant that local food initiatives are guided by community and are more likely to be sustainable
- social connection and partnerships are key factors in successful, sustainable place -based food initiatives (mental health co-benefits!)
- working closely with the community ensures that initiatives meet local needs and are more likely to be sustainable
- there are some communities that we have not yet engaged with in the food space including multicultural and First Nations communities

Recommendations & next steps

- Engage with local multicultural and first nations communities in the food space
- Continue to support and advocate for a dignified approach to food access
- Support opportunities to better connect excess produce with local community food needs
- Utilise findings from the Community Food Survey and local food access needs assessment to prioritise future actions and build partnerships
- Continue to support settings with food growing/cooking initiatives and Vic Kids Eat Well
- Continue to build collective impact through participation in local and regional food alliances (RCoW Sustainable Food Alliance and North East Local Food Strategy).
- Highlight the co-benefits of mental health and climate/planetary health to assist in engaging with more community members and new partners.