



Northern NSW  
Local Health District

SUSTAIN the Australian  
food network



# Northern Rivers Urban Agriculture and Sustainable Food Futures Roundtable

28th November, 2023  
Ballina Surf Club, East Ballina  
An Urban Agriculture Month event

## Event report



# Northern Rivers Urban Agriculture and Sustainable Food Futures Roundtable

In 2023, rising living costs in Australia contributed to increasing food insecurity with 36% of Australians struggling to put food on the table. In the Northern Rivers, floods, bushfires and the COVID pandemic made this region's food system one of the most vulnerable in Australia.

In June 2023, the [Northern Rivers Food Security Scoping Study](#) documented an understanding of regional food networks, identified food security challenges and opportunities during recent disaster events and provided recommendations for developing greater resilience within the regional food system.

On November 2nd 2023 the Living Lab Northern Rivers, hosted a community forum to begin dialogue on these recommendations to identify adaptable and resilient food futures for the region. This was attended by over 60 community stakeholders.

On November 28th 2023, 65 stakeholders from government, First Nations, community and industry, gathered at this roundtable to continue the conversation. Sponsored by Business NSW, Indigenous Futures Foundation and Northern Rivers Community Gateway and took place on Bundjalung country at the Ballina Surf Club as part of the Sustain 2023 Urban Agriculture Month. The following questions were addressed through presentations, a panel and participatory workshops:

- **What are the key challenges to the Northern Rivers food and farming system from health to climate adaptation, food security and reconstruction?**
- **What roles do key stakeholders play in addressing these challenges?**
- **What does participatory food system governance look like for the Northern Rivers region?**



**The Roundtable brought people together in the region to produce practical next steps as foundations for long-term food system planning and strategy for the Northern Rivers.**



# Executive Summary

## Key challenges

Participants highlighted several key challenges facing the Northern Rivers food system:

- **Food insecurity:** lack of access to food, high price of food and cost of living crisis pushing marginalised populations to rely on food relief services
- **Supermarket dependency / pricing:** lack of locally-owned access to local produce, reliance on out-of-state produce, supermarkets squeezing farmers on price
- **Land use conflicts / urban sprawl:** competing land uses from population shift in the region leading to loss of farmland
- **Disasters / supply chain disruptions:** compounding disasters (floods, bushfires, COVID)
- **High land prices / high costs of farming:** acting as a barrier to entry for new / young producers and increased vulnerability with high energy / fuel prices
- **Unsustainable forms of production:** monocultures / poor land management practices
- **Lack of skills & training:** no extension support from DPI / no pathways for new farmers
- **Lack of coordination:** no overall cohesive, integrated or supported mechanism to address these challenges

## Key recommendations

Participants then identified ways forward to address these challenges:

- **Local and regional food systems frameworks and coordination:** participants called for establishment of a community-led regional food coalition/council to develop a regional food plan, supported by government & key legislative, planning and financing frameworks
- **Diversity, inclusiveness and representation:** the regional food system plan and its governance should be multi-sectoral and representative of all key stakeholders
- **Participation of marginalised voices:** ensure that the voices and perspectives of First Nations people, children and young people, people with disabilities, people experiencing food insecurity and older people are heard and facilitated in this regional framework
- **Support from State and Federal alongside regional/ local government:** While the process begins with community-ownership, this work requires local government support but current lack of resourcing locally means state and federal governments are important to provide system-wide planning and funding



## Policy context

### NSW

This Roundtable took place just over a year after the Environment and Planning Committee delivered its report into Food Production and Supply in NSW. Key recommendations included:

- **Comprehensive statewide Food System Plan for NSW:** covering a) strategies to tackle food insecurity b) equitable access to good food c) food production including urban agriculture d) changes to planning frameworks e) integration with local government
- **A NSW Food System and Food Security Council:** to implement the Plan, with multi-stakeholder membership including First Nations and food producers
- **Proper measurement of food security and nutrition:** comprehensive surveys covering NSW's diverse communities including First Nations and Culturally & Linguistically Diverse
- **Key role for local government:** NSW government to support local councils to develop and implement local food strategies and provide appropriate funding
- **Make land available for urban agriculture:** Amend planning frameworks to allocate underused Crown land for urban and community agriculture projects

### Federal

After the Roundtable concluded, the House Standing Committee on Agriculture related its report on a year-long inquiry into food security in Australia: *Australian Food Story*. The report contained 35 recommendations including:

- **A comprehensive National Food Plan**
- **A Minister for Food**
- **A National Food Council**
- **Fairness between actors in the food system**
- **Develop urban agriculture:** The Federal government to work with State, Territory and local governments to develop urban agriculture, with a focus on building skills and encouraging careers in agriculture
- **Protect farmland from urban sprawl**
- **Funding to support sustainable agriculture**
- **Support communities to improve localised food systems**

The Federal government's response is expected before June 2024.

Subsequently, in the wake of reports of record profits posted by the major supermarkets and continuing high prices for fresh produce, the Federal government announced a Senate Inquiry into Supermarket Pricing. The Inquiry will deliver its report by May 2024.

ABC RURAL

## Pressure mounts for ACCC inquiry into supermarket pricing amid claim farmers being paid 1978 prices

ABC Rural / By Jennifer Nichols

Posted Mon 8 Jan 2024 at 7:06pm



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

## Australian Food Story: Feeding the Nation and Beyond

Inquiry into food security in Australia

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Agriculture



# Roundtable Presentations



Roundtable presentations were delivered by (see Appendix for speaker bios):

1. Kathryn Watson, Northern NSW Local Health District
2. Tamara Prentice, NSW Department of Primary Industries
3. Fiona Berry, UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures
4. Nick Rose, Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Speakers discussed the state of play of our Northern Rivers food system including (click link to access video of presentation):

- health and food security
- land use planning for food production
- food system resilience, policy and planning
- food system advocacy & local government best practice



The Roundtable benefited enormously from the graphic recording skills of Michelle Walker. Her attentiveness and delightful combination of text and imagery produced a wonderful visual recording of the story of the Roundtable as it unfolded. Key findings from the Roundtable are illustrated in her graphics above and throughout this report.

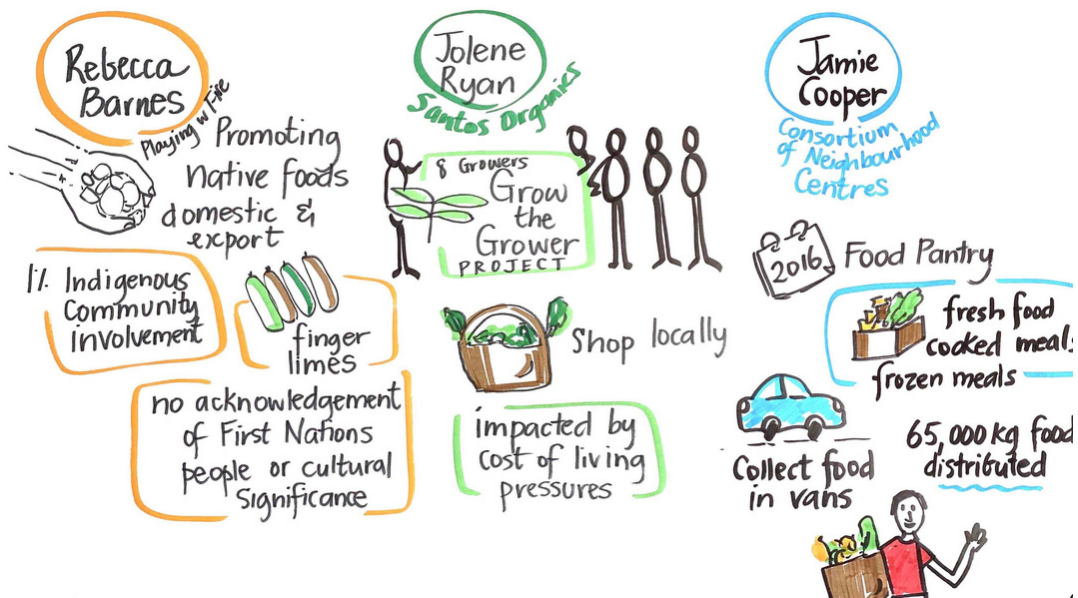
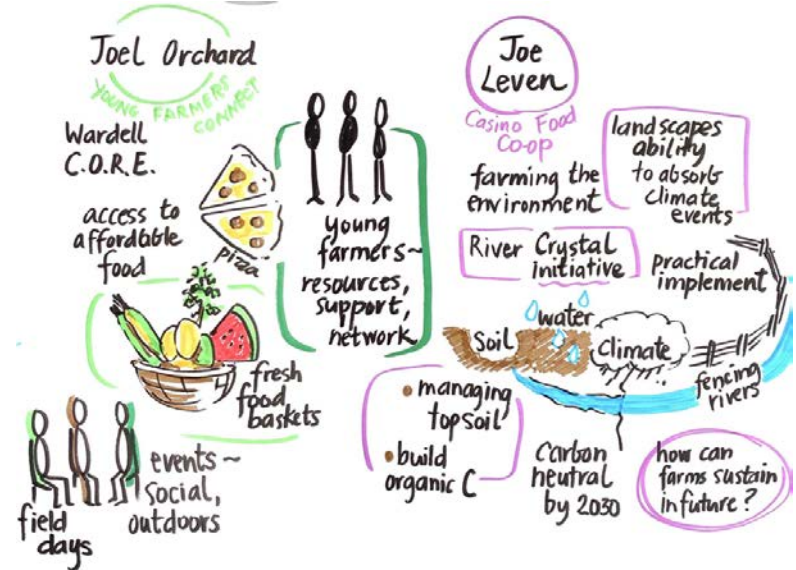
# Roundtable Panel

A **panel** of local food champions followed the presenters:

1. Joel Orchard , Young Farmers Connect
2. Rebecca Barnes, Playing with Fire Native Foods
3. Jaime Cooper, Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres
4. Jolene Ryan, Santos Organics
5. Joe Leven , Casino Food Co-op

Panellists spoke to the topics of (click to access videos of presentations):

- young farmer advocacy and community food enterprise
- Indigenous agri-business and native foods
- food security and emergency food relief
- retail and local food security
- environmentally sensitive agriculture



**A local, seasonal and native foods inspired lunch was served by Casino-based and Indigenous-owned Twisted Tucker (see details in Appendix).**



# Roundtable Participatory Workshops

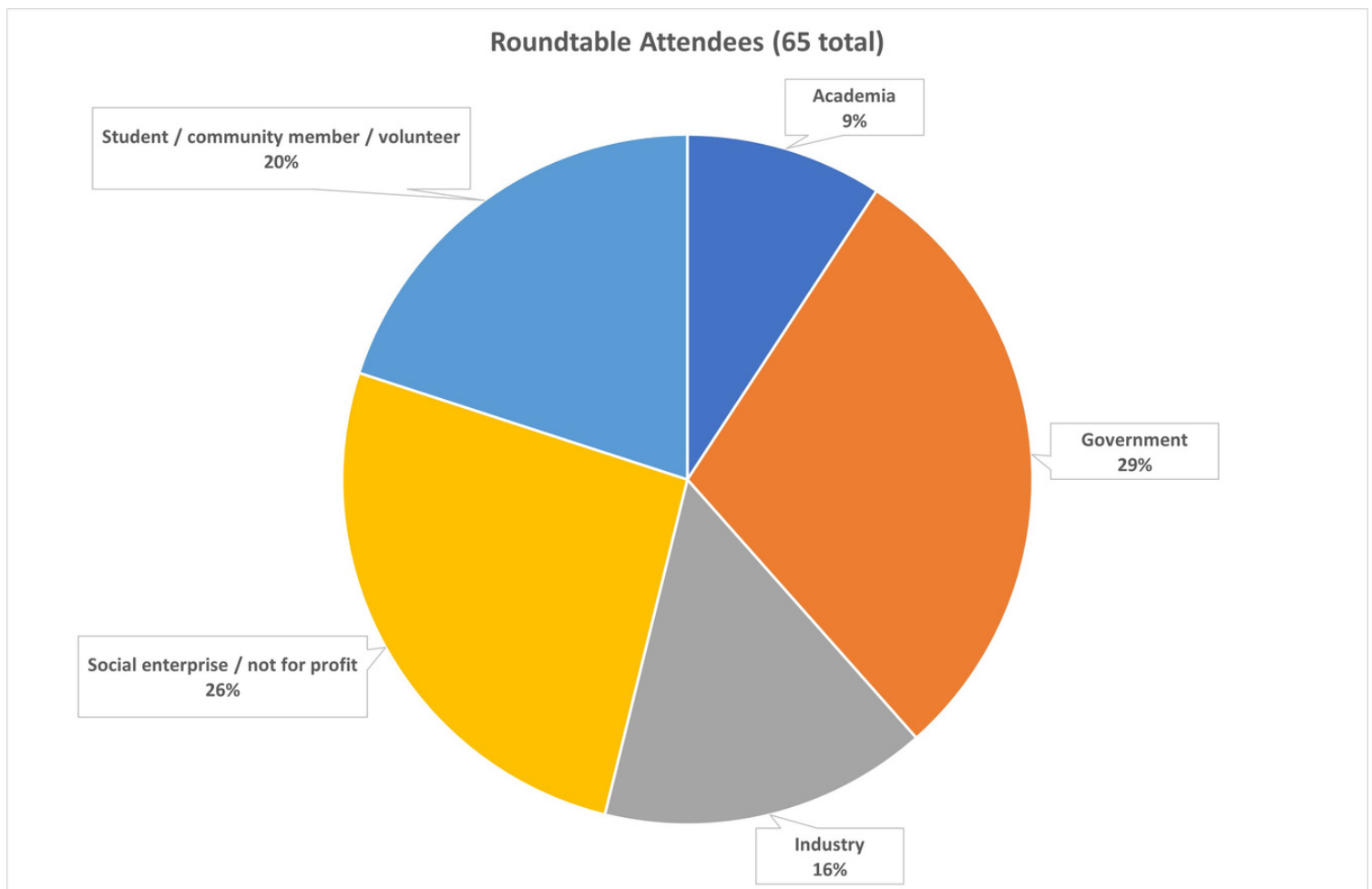
Following the presentations participants split up into smaller groups to engage in a reflective dialogue **Socratic circle** process. In this format group conversation took a democratic approach to sharing ideas, teasing out issues and generating productive conversations with participants. Three Socratic circles were formed, with each exploring first the challenges and actions, and secondly participatory governance frameworks and ideas. The circles were facilitated by (see Appendix for bios):

1. Nick Rose, Sustain
2. Fiona Berry, UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures
3. Sheriden Keegan, Griffith University

A facilitator and scribe captured the flow of the conversation using a 'web' diagram to track when conversation became stuck, providing a visual prompt to create spaces for others.

## Participants

The Roundtable participants represented a diverse cross section of stakeholders from the Northern Rivers food system including representatives from government, industry, not for profit and community sectors. Invitees travelled to attend the Roundtable in Ballina from across the seven Local Government Areas of the Northern Rivers and beyond.



# Roundtable Participatory Workshop - findings

## Challenges and actions

Key prompting questions were asked of participants in the circles including:

- **What are some of the key challenges facing the food system in your community?**
- **Are these particular to your community or shared across the region?**
- **Are these challenges being addressed currently? If so, by whom and in what ways?**
- **What are some different ways to approach these challenges?**

Participants highlighted several key challenges facing the Northern Rivers food system:

- **Food insecurity:** lack of access to food, high price of food and cost of living crisis pushing marginalised populations to rely on food relief services
- **Supermarket dependency / pricing:** lack of locally-owned access to local produce, reliance on out-of-state produce, supermarkets squeezing farmers on price
- **Land use conflicts / urban sprawl:** competing land uses from population shift in the region leading to loss of farmland
- **Disasters / supply chain disruptions:** compounding disasters (floods, bushfires, COVID)
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Key actions identified by participants to address these challenges included:

- **Small scale agriculture** that is diversified, sustainable and oriented to local markets
- **Education** such as TAFE horticulture courses, mentoring for young farmers and school food production curriculum
- **Community food action** including support for expanding farmers markets, community gardens and food sharing programs
- **Local and circular food economy** via innovative ideas and supported by planning frameworks
- **Smart land use and business models** to fund land leasing and food cooperatives
- **Coordination** of food security and disaster response, information and best practices e.g. Nimbin Community Plan & emergency food relief



# Roundtable Participatory Workshop - findings (cont.)

## Participatory and inclusive governance

Key prompting questions were asked of participants in the circles including:

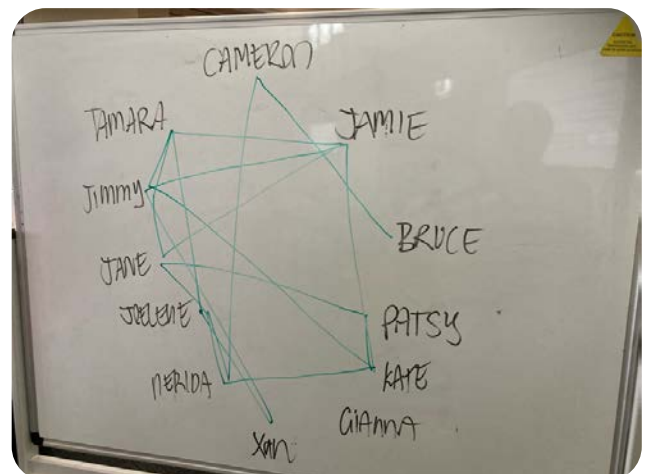
- *Do you feel that you have a say in the key decisions that affect the food system in your community?*
- *What forums / platforms exist for you / your organisation to participate in decisions about the food system?*
- *Who needs to be involved in the process for creating change, and how can they be engaged democratically in the process?*
- *What entrenched narratives do we need to change?*
- *What policies need to change or need to be developed?*



Participants highlighted a number of opportunities for improving governance of the Northern Rivers food system and policy levers:

- A **democratic community-led regional food coalition/council** to develop a **regional food plan**, supported by government & key legislative, planning and financing frameworks
- **Diversity, inclusiveness and representation:** multi-sectoral (including **agriculture, health, planning and social services**) and representative of all key stakeholders, especially **youth and children**
- **Resourcing** of a coalition/council by **state and federal governments** to support regional and local system-wide planning and funding
- Providing evidence through **collaborative information sharing** through storytelling, workshops and meetings
- **Local policy reform** across land use planning and review of current mechanisms, with more support for small scale farms, urban agriculture and community food initiatives

Who needs to be involved...



## Next Steps

Based on the findings of the Roundtable, key recommendations and next steps include:

- **Local and regional food systems frameworks and coordination:** participants called for the establishment of a community-led regional food network / coalition, supported by government and key legislative, planning and financing frameworks

### ACTIONS:

- **Local government advocacy** e.g. Clarence Valley and Ballina Shire have passed Notice of Motions in Council since the Roundtable, urging state government support (see Appendix) and decisions to address food security before the next disaster
  - **Regional advocacy** e.g. Northern Rivers Joint Organisation and Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers to acknowledge food security as a significant issue and advocate for state and federal government support
  - **Feasibility study of food system governance** structure, SWOT analysis of past projects and legislation barriers e.g. FoodLinks (2009-2013), land use planning policy barriers
- **Diversity, inclusiveness and representation:** The regional food system governance framework should be multi-sectoral (across agriculture, planning, health and social services) and representative of all key stakeholders, with a particular emphasis on youth and children and including Indigenous voices and knowledge

### ACTIONS:

- **Working group** formed from the stakeholders of the Roundtable, led by NNSWLHD
  - **Continued cross-sector food system and resilience collaboration** (via workshops, roundtables, seminars) across the 7 Local government areas in the Northern Rivers via key agencies e.g. Business NSW, Northern Rivers Community Gateway, SCU
- **State and Federal government must be involved:** This work can't be left to local government which doesn't have the resources to support it properly. There are essential roles for both state and federal governments with system-wide planning and funding

### ACTIONS:

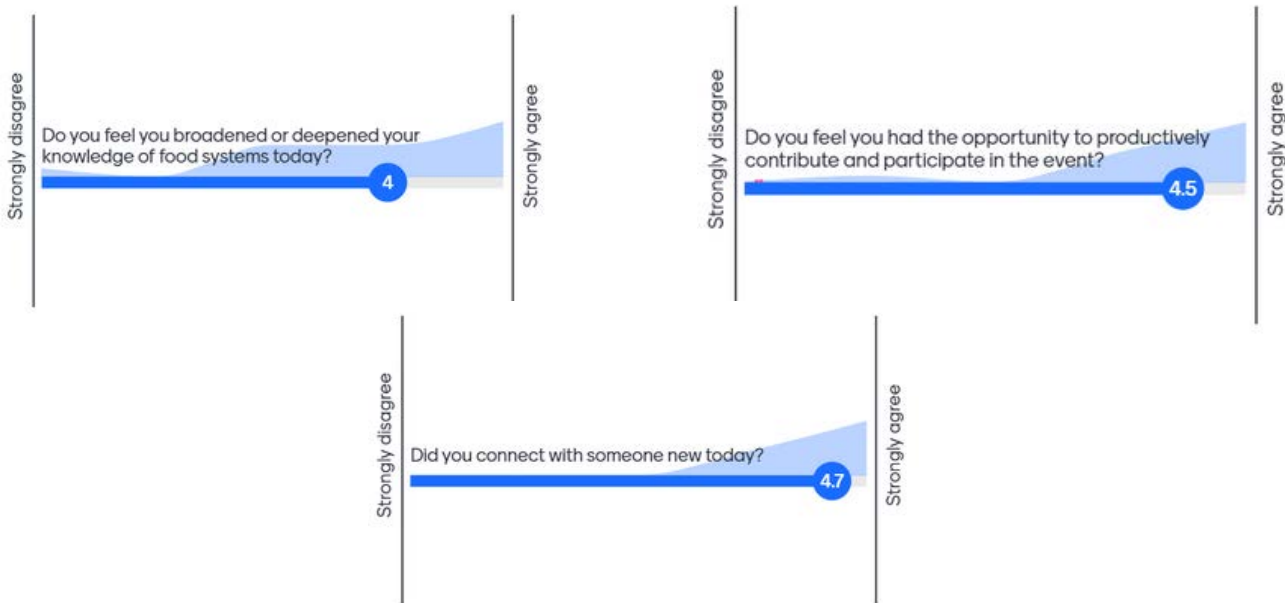
- **State MPs to write to State Government ministers** (Agriculture, Health, Planning, Local Government, Disaster Response) for a response to [NSW Inquiry into Food Production and Supply](#) which recommends support for food security at a local level





## Participant feedback

We asked whether participants felt the Roundtable added to their food systems knowledge, provided opportunities for networking and productive participation. Here's what they said



## What aspects of the Roundtable did you find most useful

*Socrates style idea brainstorming. Look forward to the outcomes. We need a shared dialogue that we can use to lobby elected members and get buy-in from governments on the importance of local food.*

*Connections with groups that I wasn't aware of.*

*Great groove processes!*

*Thank you! I would love to be involved in this type of project in the Wagga area. Please let me know when it is happening.*

*The conversations in the Socratic Circles surfaced interesting themes of access to land, aging farmers and distribution issues.*

## What was a highlight of today's Roundtable?

*Networking opportunities*

*Being in a room of like-minded people is always good*

*Socratic circles*

*Hearing different people's perspectives on the topic of food networks*

*Everyone having the ability to share ideas*

*Guest speakers, workshopping exercises and the researchers' planned ways forward*

# Appendices







**We thank our major event partner Northern NSW Local Health District for making this event possible and extend our gratitude to Business NSW, Indigenous Futures Foundation and Northern Rivers Community Gateway for their generous support. We thank the IFF in particular for facilitating professional photography and videography on the day.**



**Northern NSW  
Local Health District**



**Sustain acknowledges that this event took place on the unceded lands of the Bundjalung peoples.**

**We respectfully acknowledge their ongoing custodianship and recognise that their ancestors and elders, past and present, have stewarded this land and her diverse creatures sustainably for tens of thousands of years.**

**The processes of historical truth-telling and treaty negotiation with First Nations peoples are essential to creating a food system grounded in the principles of care, respect, justice, healing and regeneration.**

## Program

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12.00 – 12.45PM

**Lunch and networking** | Local and seasonal lunch by Twisted Tucker

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12.45 – 1.00PM

**Acknowledgement to Country and introduction**

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1.00 – 1.40PM

**Roundtable presentations**

**Kathryn Watson** | Northern NSW Local Health District

**Tamara Prentice** | NSW Department of Primary Industries

**Fiona Berry** | University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures

**Sheridan Keegan** | Griffith University

**Nick Rose** | Sustain: The Australian Food Network

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1.40 – 2.40PM

**Panel and questions**

**Joel Orchard** | Young Farmers Connect

**Rebecca Barnes** | Playing with Fire Native Foods

**Jaime Cooper** | Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres

**Jolene Ryan** | Santos Organics

**Joe Leven** | Casino Food Co-op

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2.40 – 3.00PM

**Afternoon tea**

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3.00 – 4.00PM

**Participatory food system mapping and needs assessment**

Facilitated by Nick Rose, Sheridan Keegan and Fiona Berry

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4.00 – 4.30PM

**Wrap up and next steps**

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4.30 - onwards

**Networking**

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# Presenters and facilitators



## **Kathryn Watson** | Northern NSW Local Health District

Kathryn has worked in a broad range of health services and settings over the past 20 years from clinical roles in exercise physiology and nutrition, to population health and health promotion, service planning and leadership roles in NSW and Queensland. Kathryn has a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and Nutrition, Masters of Public Health and Graduate Certificate in Health Service Planning. Kathryn is currently the A/Director of Integrated Care and Allied Health for the Northern NSW Local Health District overseeing Allied Health strategy, Value Based Health Care, Integrated Care, Priority Populations, Health Promotion, Oral Health, Renal Integrated Care Programs, Disability and the Northern Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury and Parkinson's Nursing Service. Kathryn is passionate about collaborative and multi-strategic public health and health promotion opportunities and is committed to working with all sectors to achieve this.



## **Tamara Prentice** | NSW Department of Primary Industries

Tamara manages the agricultural land use planning unit within the NSW Department of Primary Industries where she leads a team of planners across NSW in providing statutory and strategic planning advice, and policies, to ensure intergenerational access to landscapes that support food and fibre production. Tamara has previously held roles in the NSW Department of Planning, Crown Lands, Local Government, and in the Northern Territory government. She also runs a small farm on the urban fringe and has dealt with land use conflict and planning complications first hand as a farmer. Tamara's team have been instrumental in identifying areas of the planning framework that require reform to support intergenerational access to local food and fibre. Tamara was the recipient of the 2023 PIA NSW Dr Helen Proudfoot Women in Planning award.



## **Fiona Berry** | UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures

Fiona is a Research Principal at the University of Technology Sydney's Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF). She lives in the Northern Rivers NSW, conducting research in ISF's food systems research area and project manages research across a variety of disciplines. Fiona is passionate about building communities through peri-urban and regional agriculture, local food systems and democratic community participation.



## **Sheriden Keegan** | Griffith University

Sheriden (MPH) is a PhD scholar in the School of Engineering and Built Environment at Griffith University, Australia, working with the Local Food Resilience and Contingency project team at Griffith University's Cities Research Institute and Disaster Management Network. Sheriden works collaboratively with governments and communities to enable place-based pathways to resilient and sustainable food systems. Her research interests include disaster food security, food system governance and how regional food supply chains can support communities to thrive and have equitable access to healthy food. Her PhD research is focused on how governance can enable food system resilience at the regional scale.



## **Dr Nick Rose** | Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Nick been the Executive Director of Sustain since its establishment in January 2016. With a background In law and community development, Nick brings more than a decade of working at the grassroots and institutional level in several Australian states in food sovereignty and sustainable food systems. He is the editor of "Fair Food: Stories From a Movement Changing The World (2015)" and the co-editor of "Reclaiming The Urban Commons: The Past, Present and Future of Food Growing in Australian Towns And Cities (2018)." Nick is also a lecturer in food systems, food policy and governance and food movements for William Angliss Institute in their Bachelor of Food Studies and Master of Food Systems and Gastronomy.

# Panellists



## Joel Orchard | Young Farmers Connect

Joel is the Director of Young Farmers Connect Inc (YFC), a national not for profit organisation committed to cultivating networks, resources and community for young farmers state and nation wide. YFC provide educational platforms and community connections that encourage young agrarians to farm for the future, supporting the use of regenerative, holistic and sustainable agricultural practices. The YFC community provides a national framework for peer support and a network that facilitates opportunities, land sharing, collaboration, education, mentorship and industry support to new, young and aspiring farmers throughout Australia. Joel is also the co-founder of Wardell Community Organised Resilience Effort, a community owned and managed recovery hub and support service for the lower Richmond River catchment providing a number of programs to alleviate food insecurity.



## Rebecca Barnes | Playing with Fire Native Foods

Rebecca is co-founder of Playing with Fire Native Foods which now grows, processes, manufactures and supplies native foods at local farmers markets, gourmet food shops and high end restaurants. With demand currently outstripping supply Rebecca believes the industry is at a critical point and needs to expand to ensure its survival. She is on a mission to educate more growers about the enormous potential of Australia's native foods and provide industry leaders with a platform to connect and share their stories. Rebecca wants to support First Nations Enterprise in the industry and hopes that one day, the industry will be First Nations led and have a majority of its operators First Nations people.



## Jamie Cooper | Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres

Jamie is the Emergency Relief Coordinator for the Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres delivering referrals and resources for persons with an immediate need for financial and material aid across the Northern Rivers region. This service utilises partnerships across the donation streams of many organisations and connects into specialist community services. Centres also operate Community Food Pantries and the group deliver a regional Food Rescue program.



## Jolene Ryan | Santos Organics

Jolene has been the CEO of Santos Organics for over five years and has a passion for healthy and conscious living. She was the Store Manager for the Mullumbimby Santos Organics store for nearly two years. Prior to arriving in Australia, she developed her business knowledge during a 17+ year career in retail with an extensive background in sales and operations, training and development, customer service, product knowledge, merchandising, people and culture and opening new stores. Jolene now calls the Northern Rivers home and Santos Organics has been the perfect fit for her to put her skills to use.



## Joe Leven | Casino Food Co-op

Joe heads up Member Services at the Casino Food Co-op working with farmer members across the Northern Rivers. Joe is the founder of River Crystal, an initiative which facilitates best management practices within the Co-op membership delivering tangible productivity and environmental outcomes. The initiative provides farmers support in focusing on Soil, Water, Climate and Landscape Hydration and executes projects in the grazing sector to build resilience within their business and the landscape. The River Crystal initiative has gained great traction within the local beef industry and formed a trusting and respectful relationship with regional government groups, natural resource management sectors and Landcare groups. Joe is a cattle farmer himself and a closet ecologist who has a passion for building a sustainable and resilient landscape who acknowledges we are 'farming the environment'.



## Impact - influence on policy and planning

Following the Roundtable, and prompted by its occurrence, several local governments and policymakers in the region have begun the process of advocacy for addressing food security and food system resilience.

The following pages outline:

- A Motion successfully passed by Ballina Shire Council
- A Motion successfully passed by Clarence Valley Shire Council
- A letter to State ministers from Tamara Prentice MP
- A recommendation successfully passed by Northern Rivers Joint Organisation



MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET, BALLINA,  
ON 14/12/23 AT 9.00AM

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**11. Notices of Motion**

**11.1 Notice of Motion – Food Security and Urban Agriculture**

**141223/7      RESOLVED**

(Cr Kiri Dicker/Cr Jeff Johnson)

That, with a view to enhancing food security by increasing opportunities for small-scale food production in the Ballina Shire, Council:

1. Conduct an audit of disused Council owned or managed land that may be suitable for small-scale food production, and pending identification of suitable sites, provide further information on the feasibility of Council providing affordable leases to individuals or co-operatives capable of producing food for local markets.
2. Write to the Hon Tanya Moriarty, Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional NSW, requesting that the government deliver their overdue response to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning's 2022 Inquiry into Food Production and Supply in NSW.

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Page 4 of 12 of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ballina Shire Council – 14/12/23

..... MAYOR

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET, BALLINA,  
ON 14/12/23 AT 9.00AM

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FOR VOTE - Cr Kiri Dicker, Cr Jeff Johnson, Cr Simon Chate, Cr Stephen  
McCarthy and Cr Phillip Meehan

AGAINST VOTE - Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Nigel Buchanan, Cr Eva Ramsey  
and Cr Rodney Bruem

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Eoin Johnston



## 6. NOTICES OF MOTION

## ITEM 06.23.016 NOTICE OF MOTION CLARENCE VALLEY FOOD SECURITY AND PRODUCTION

<b>Meeting</b>	Council	28 November 2023
<b>Submitted by</b>	Cr Debrah Novak	
<b>Attachments</b>	A. Report - food production and supply in NSW ⇨ B. Plan C - NR Food Security and Resilience Scoping Study_Final Report ⇨	

To the General Manager, Clarence Valley Council, I propose that the following report and notice of motion be submitted to Council.

**SUMMARY**

In November 2022, the NSW Government undertook an inquiry into food production and supply in NSW (report 3/57).

This inquiry was self-referred on 10 November 2021. That the Committee on Environment and Planning inquiry into and report on food production and supply in NSW, including improving food security, equitable access to food, reducing food waste and destruction.

The report highlighted food insecurity and a lack of equal access to nutritious food. NSW food production and supply systems face serious workforce challenges as well as the impacts from Natural Disasters for humans and livestock.

The inquiry made 65 recommendations that aim to address issues in the NSW food system some of these recommendations directly impact local councils.

The NSW Government and local Councils have an opportunity to tackle food insecurity and food waste which will bring significant environmental, social and health benefits by reducing our emissions, capitalising on opportunities to bolster the local food economy, and improving the health & wellbeing of our communities.

**PROPOSED MOTION**

That Clarence Valley Council

1. note and thank the previous NSW Coalition Government for their 'Food Production and Supply in NSW' Inquiry and Report (November 2022).
2. note the newly elected NSW Labor Government (March 2023) had until May 2023 to respond to this report however this has not yet happened.
3. write to the following NSW Labor Government Ministers requesting the Government to respond to the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report as a matter of urgency:
  - NSW Premier the Hon. Chris Minns MP
  - Minister for Agriculture the Hon. Tara Moriarty MP
  - Minister for Local Government the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP
  - Minister for Regional New South Wales and North Coast the Hon. Rose Jackson MP
4. write to the Chair of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation, Cr Sharon Cadwallader to have this matter put on the agenda for their next quarterly meeting.
5. write to the Northern Rivers RDA GM Nathan McGrath and ask to have this matter put on the agenda for the next RDA meeting.
6. acknowledge **Recommendation 6** from the Food Production and Supply in NSW' inquiry, that the NSW Government works with local councils to develop and implement strategies to improve local food systems, and provides appropriate funding as required.



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**COUNCIL RESOLUTION - 06.23.016**

**Novak/Whaites**

**That Clarence Valley Council**

1. write to the following NSW Labor Government Ministers requesting the Government to respond to the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report as a matter of urgency:
  - NSW Premier the Hon. Chris Minns MP
  - Minister for Agriculture the Hon. Tara Moriarty MP
  - Minister for Local Government the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP
  - Minister for Regional New South Wales and North Coast the Hon. Rose Jackson MP
2. write to the Chair of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation, Cr Sharon Cadwallader to have this matter put on the agenda for their next quarterly meeting.
3. write to the Northern Rivers RDA GM Nathan McGrath and ask to have this matter put on the agenda for the next RDA meeting.
4. acknowledge Recommendation 6 from the Food Production and Supply in NSW' inquiry, that the NSW Government works with local councils to develop and implement strategies to improve local food systems, and provides appropriate funding as required.

**Voting recorded as follows**

**For: Clancy, Day, Johnstone, Novak, Pickering, Smith, Tiley, Toms, Whaites**

**Against: Nil**

**CARRIED**

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**TAMARA SMITH MP**

**MEMBER FOR BALLINA**

Shop 1, 7 Moon Street, Ballina NSW 2478

T (02) 6686 7522 E ballina@parliament.nsw.gov.au W tamarasmith.org.au



The Hon. Tara Moriarty, MLC  
Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional NSW  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

8 December 2023

*Tara*  
Dear Ms Moriarty,

I am writing in regards to your government's overdue response to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning's inquiry into Food Production and Supply in NSW, which was tabled in Parliament on 1st November 2022.

Despite producing a significant amount of the state's agricultural output, an increasing number of people in my electorate of Ballina are facing food insecurity. Following the 2022 Northern Rivers Floods we experienced an acute food security crisis when farms, transport routes and cold storage facilities were inundated. As a result, supermarket shelves were empty for weeks on end and people had to rely on farmers markets to source fresh produce.

The inquiry's final report made several important recommendations in relation to addressing food insecurity, reducing food waste and the important role that community organisations play in strengthening the resilience of our food systems.

I am eagerly awaiting the government's response to this inquiry, which was due on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023, and your plans to address the growing food insecurity crisis threatening regional NSW communities.

Yours sincerely,

**Tamara Smith MP**  
Member for Ballina



22 January 2024

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

Cr Sharon Cadwallader

Email [sharon.cadwallader@ballina.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sharon.cadwallader@ballina.nsw.gov.au) and [Phillip.Rudd@rous.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Phillip.Rudd@rous.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Chairperson Cadwallader

*Email: [general.manager@clarence.nsw.gov.au](mailto:general.manager@clarence.nsw.gov.au)*

CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL  
CLARENCE VALLEY FOOD SECURITY & PRODUCTION

On behalf of the Clarence Valley Council and following unanimous support for a resolution of Council (November 2023 Item 06.23.016), I formally request the matter the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report be included on the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's February meeting agenda for discussion.

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION - 06.23.016**

**Novak/Whaites**

**That Clarence Valley Council**

- 1. write to the following NSW Labor Government Ministers requesting the Government to respond to the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report as a matter of urgency:**
  - NSW Premier the Hon. Chris Minns MP
  - Minister for Agriculture the Hon. Tara Moriarty MP
  - Minister for Local Government the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP
  - Minister for Regional New South Wales and North Coast the Hon. Rose Jackson MP
- 2. write to the Chair of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation, Cr Sharon Cadwallader to have this matter put on the agenda for their next quarterly meeting.**
- 3. write to the Northern Rivers RDA GM Nathan McGrath and ask to have this matter put on the agenda for the next RDA meeting.**
- 4. acknowledge Recommendation 6 from the Food Production and Supply in NSW' inquiry, that the NSW Government works with local councils to develop and implement strategies to improve local food systems, and provides appropriate funding as required.**

**Voting recorded as follows**

**For: Clancy, Day, Johnstone, Novak, Pickering, Smith, Tiley, Toms, Whaites**

**Against: Nil**

**CARRIED**

In November 2022, the NSW Government undertook an inquiry into Food Production and Supply in NSW (report 3/57).

The report highlighted Food Insecurity and a lack of equal access to nutritious food. NSW food production and supply systems face serious workforce challenges as well as the impacts from Natural Disasters for humans and livestock.

The NSW Government and local councils have an opportunity to tackle food insecurity and food waste which will bring significant environmental, social and health benefits by reducing our emissions, capitalising on opportunities to bolster the local food economy, and improving the health & wellbeing of our communities.

An opportunity to discuss the key findings of the report and Clarence Valley Council's resolution to call on the NSW Premier and relevant Ministers to provide response to the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report at the February meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation would be greatly appreciated.

Following your discussion with Mayor Peter Johnstone, I welcome the opportunity to invite Cr Debrah Novak to address the JO for 10 minutes on item. To facilitate this, I recommend NRJO Executive Assistant Robyn Waldron contact Cr Debrah Novak through the Janelle Hale (Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors) on 6643 0801 or [Janelle.Hale@clarence.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Janelle.Hale@clarence.nsw.gov.au).

As background information I also include a copy of the Notice of Motion considered at Clarence Valley Council's November 2023 Ordinary meeting and a link to the [NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report](#).

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office on 6443 0200.

Kind regards



Laura Black

General Manager

Cc: Phillip Rudd, CEO NRJO

Attached: Notice of Motion Clarence Valley Food Security and Production



## NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report

Clarence Valley Council

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board:-

1. Note and receive the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report
2. Call on the NSW Premier and relevant Ministers to provide response to the report.

### Background

During the Clarence Valley Council meeting in November 2023, a resolution was recorded covering the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report. As a result and part of the Council's resolution, a letter dated 22 January 2024 to the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation requesting a discussion, support and/or recommendation for the same issue be placed as an item onto their next agenda.

### Attachment

1. Letter from Clarence Valley Council dated 22 January 2024
2. Report – Food Production and Supply in NSW – November 2022

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Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board Meeting Minutes 16 February 2024

### 10.6 NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry report

**RESOLVED** (Johnstone/Cherry) that the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board:-

1. Note and receive the NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry Report
2. Call on the NSW Premier and relevant Ministers to provide response to the report.
3. Requests the implementation of recommendation 6 of the Report.

<b>NSW 2022 Food Production and Supply Inquiry report (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Kylie Webster	1
<b>Carried</b>		

## Catering

**A local, seasonal and native foods inspired lunch was served by Casino-based and Indigenous-owned Twisted Tucker.**



Shane Runciman is a Wiradjuri man passionate about building food security and education in the Northern Rivers and the owner of Kyogle-based Twisted Tucker.

Twisted Tucker provide wholesale bush tucker products, retail and catering services and deliver cooking programs within the community. Shane is passionate about preparing meals that are local, seasonal, ethical and and utilise native foods. He is a passionate gardener and in 2015 ran the Kyogle school canteen eliminating processed food while replacing it with local, healthy options influenced by Indigenous bush flavours. In 2021, Shane developed and delivered a 6 week 'Faster Food' cooking course with nutritionist Simon Gava which included authoring the accompanying book *Faster Food by Twisted Tucker: 6 Week Cooking program* for local young people in Casino.

This program has been delivered 14 times across the region. Shane has been involved in gardening programs, one which saw 42 long term unemployed Aboriginal men participate at Lismore community gardens, with 39 gaining full time employment, mainly with Ngullingar Land Council.

During the 2022 floods Shane co-ordinated 3500 meals to be cooked and delivered across the region with 50 volunteers, local growers, and Kyogle High School cooking facilities.



## Meet SUSTAIN: The Australian Food Network

About Sustain

# Our vision is to create food systems that nourish people and nurture the planet.

We know that transitioning to a healthier, more sustainable and equitable food system requires good policy and practice, underpinned by a strong evidence base and inspiring examples that empower communities and governments to work collectively towards a better food future for all.

As **connectors**, we facilitate events and grow networks for sharing knowledge and encouraging collaboration amongst growers, producers, planners, landowners and communities.

As **researchers**, we translate and share our food systems knowledge to build an evidence base for effective food policy and action.

As **policy experts**, we understand the critical issues facing all levels of government, and communities across Australia. Our holistic approach aims to cut across the institutional and departmental silos that hinder cohesive and integrated food policy implementation.

As **practitioners**, we design and deliver community food projects that experiment with new approaches to food system transformation and model the change we want to see. Our projects aim to demonstrate in the here and now that, *yes, a better future is within our grasp.*

We draw on decades of experience in urban agriculture, food security and food systems governance. Our dedicated team includes public health and food system professionals, bringing a diverse mix of research and policy expertise in health and nutrition, housing and food security to every project, along with a deep, practice-based commitment to food and social justice.

**SUSTAIN.ORG.AU**  







About UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures

## Our vision is the transformation of food systems to ensure healthy, thriving and food secure communities and businesses.

**There is a need for research to have positive impacts on social, economic, and environmental systems.** This requires food research to look beyond production, to focus on value chains, markets, stakeholder values and social equity. We take a 'food systems' approach to understand and address issues across the food value chain and associated human and ecological drivers of change.

**We design our food systems research to identify:**

- Feedbacks between different food activities and their associated human and ecological drivers
- The role of institutional and individual values and their influence on food activities
- Social and policy opportunities "Our vision is the transformation of food systems to ensure healthy, thriving and food secure communities and businesses". sustainable food systems governance
- Leverage points to enable sustainable practices across the food system
- Emerging innovations to advance the use of spatial and digital technologies in food systems



[www.isf.uts.edu.au](http://www.isf.uts.edu.au)