



IPAN
INSTITUTE FOR PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION



Thursday, 28 May 2020

To Whom it may concern,

This submission from the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) Deakin in response to the CoGG's call for input on their Sustainability Framework and Action Plan 2020 is being provided by email on the advice of a City of Greater Geelong Reception person (Megan at 3.57pm 28.05.2020). On seeking to submit this response online I found the CoGG's website is down and I was advised that it will not be available by COB today.

Thank you for confirming the receipt of this submission and for indicating to which person and department the document will be sent.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Campbell

Professor Population Nutrition

1. What do you like about the Sustainability Framework (SF) and Action Plan (AP)?

We write as a group of academic staff within the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) (<https://www.deakin.edu.au/ipan>) within the Faculty of Health, Deakin University (Waurin Ponds).

IPAN's vision is to improve the health of all Australians through nutrition and physical activity research excellence. Our mission is to conduct high-quality multidisciplinary nutrition and physical activity research that actively informs policy and practice, improves health, and builds capacity in nutrition and physical activity research in Australia.

Our research is solutions focused and used in the development of nutrition- and physical activity-related policy as well as new programs.

IPAN is pleased to see the promotion of a sustainability framework for the CoGG and the acknowledgement that:

- Climate Change is a global emergency
- There is a need "to show leadership and a commitment to sustainability"
- There is a need "for a structured and coordinated approach to ensure that commitment is represented across all services, projects and plans"
- There is acknowledgment in "Our Vision" that Greater Geelong "be recognised regionally, nationally and internationally as a **clever and creative** city-region"

As an international leader in the promotion of public health through improved food quality, access and nutrition promotion IPAN is however surprised to find no mention of food or food systems sustainability within this framework.

In considering the Sustainability Action plan we are concerned both at the absence of considerations related to food systems and the opportunity to join up existing food systems initiatives, but also note that the proposed objectives are vague. They are not **specific** and currently have no reference to **measurability, achievability, or time frames** for achievement.

2. What is missing from the Framework and AP?

We note three major omissions in the City's Framework relating to:

- our role as actors to prevent climate change;
- food and food sustainability;
- and clarity around actions and urgency to meet objectives.

A. Adapting versus enacting: exploiting all opportunities to drawdown on carbon

There is regular mention throughout the framework of a commitment to building community resilience to the impacts of Climate Change. This is important but indeed is a **passive response** – suggesting we are adapting to climate change as it happens, rather than working at every level to slow the speed of progression. **We are the portrayed as the audience rather than the actors.**

Indeed it is noted that for the City sustainability means “*Working together so our environment, community and economy **are resourced for the challenges now and into the future***”. We need to be much more than resourced to adapt, we need to act to mitigate and we need to do that urgently.

It would be internally consistent if CoGG is seeking to promote a “clever and creative” city, to be ambitious here and work together so our environment, community and economy seek to slow climate change and drawdown on carbon wherever and whenever possible.

A comprehensive explanation of priority actions for drawing down carbon is provided in Project Drawdown 2020 (<https://drawdown.org/>). These actions are documented actions that we can do today – we don’t need to wait for further intelligence. We provide further detail within this response.

B. Putting sustainable food systems, including reduced food waste, front and centre of the City’s response to sustainability

In considering the central role of local government in promoting sustainable food systems an exemplar is provided by the City of Melbourne. That council has developed The Melbourne Food Alliance (<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/health-services/Pages/melbourne-food-alliance.aspx>) a new food governance group for all of metropolitan Melbourne. It has been established to address current and future food system issues associated with city growth and development. The City of Melbourne supported its creation, and acts as secretariat and chair. The Melbourne Food Alliance encourages collaborative planning and action across food system stakeholders. It aims to provides leadership across the broad agenda of food; demonstrates advocacy for food system reform and policy change; build and strengthen partnerships that will deliver improvements to metropolitan Melbourne’s food system; launch and support projects and initiatives that address local needs; and share insights and best practice across Melbourne, Australia and internationally.

The Melbourne Food Alliance consists of 12 community leaders and specialists, including a representative from IPAN Deakin, who are passionate about the future of Melbourne’s food system and providing leadership across the nation. IPAN has real capacity to work with CoGG to consider how CoGG could link to and/or learn from The Melbourne Food Alliance activities and, importantly how to work to strengthen the G21 regional food systems alliance (<http://g21hwpillar.com.au/resources/regional-food-system-alliance-rfsa>).

A further important document to inform CoGG in considerations of opportunities for promotion sustainable food systems is provided by Project Drawdown (<https://drawdown.org/>). That 2020 document provides analysis of around 80 approaches internationally that will work towards reducing global warming through carbon drawdown, and these are ranked based on projected emissions impact globally.

Importantly, within the top 3 strategies to maximise drawdown across the world– a move to a **progressively more plant based diet** and **reduced food waste** sit third and first (of 80 tested strategies) respectively.

Food waste:

For the City, it is vitally important that issues regarding the management of our food waste are systematically understood and addressed. Drawdown 2020 notes “Roughly a third of the world’s food is never eaten, **which means land and resources used and greenhouse gases emitted in producing it were unnecessary**. Interventions can reduce loss and waste, as food moves from farm to fork, thereby reducing overall demand.”

There is clearly abundant scope for action within CoGG’s sustainability agenda and indeed there is currently unmet opportunity to link across council portfolios within CoGG. For example, the sustainability action plan needs to join up actions such as CoGG’s current prioritising of food waste through their waste management area and CoGG’s \$3 million investment in a garden organics composting facility.

Linking strongly to successful food waste prevention campaigns such as *Love Food Hate Waste* (<https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/campaigns/love-food-hate-waste>) provides another opportunity for CoGG to embrace all aspects of food waste prevention and management. This campaign involves many examples of working to reduce food waste ranging from their business focussed program - *Love Food Hate Waste Business* (<https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/Government/Campaign-resources/Love-Food-Hate-Waste-Business-resources>) seeking to support Victorian hospitality businesses prevent food waste, reduce costs and increase profits, to a broad ranging community education campaign.

Preferencing a plant based diet:

Further, CoGG must plan for our regions’ ability to:

- grow food sustainably (land use),
- provide food locally (reducing transport),
- promote farming and food industries focussed on plants preferentially,
- and to ensure that food policies (e.g. council food procurement) preference a plant based diet.

At a time when we’re considering sustainability across our regions we must acknowledge that **food sustainability and food waste deserve** to be at front of mind. The City has a hugely important role to play at every level and this domain provides an outstanding opportunity to “show leadership and a commitment to sustainability”. Our current experience of the COVID-19 emergency has shone a spotlight on the importance of investing in a sustainable, robust and local food supply.

Current reports (http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/COVID-19_CommuniqueEN.pdf) highlight just how food systems are implicated in the outbreak of COVID-19, and in turn how fragile food systems – getting food from paddock to plate – can be in times of emergency.

In considering next steps we can liaise quickly with a number of councils across Victoria – Surfcoast (<https://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Environment/Local-and-sustainable-food>), Bendigo (<https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Environment-and-sustainability/Sustainable-living-guide/Sustainable-food>) and Ballarat (<https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/Food%20Strategy%202019-22.pdf>) that have established effective policy and processes, and have dedicated positions to work in this area.

We can and must work locally, nationally and internationally to embed world leading innovation in the food sustainability agenda. With strong representation in Geelong, and as mentioned above, representation on The Melbourne Food Alliance, IPAN Deakin is well placed to work with CoGG to progress this agenda.

C. Clarity for strategy urgency, implementation and accountability

A further omission as noted above in the reference to defining objectives is a transparent action framework with measurable, time locked outcomes. This is important if CoGG is to move beyond the perception that this **Framework of Sustainability Action** may simply be a **Framework for Sustainability of Business as Usual**. This is important because the **climate crisis is an emergency and we need to act with urgency. This is not a business as usual environment.**

One important part of this clarity for action relates to providing detail around how the City will address “the need for a structured and coordinated approach to ensure that commitment is represented across all services, projects and plans”. It is not clear for example how the Sustainability Framework links to the G21 Environment Pillar (currently also excluding food and food sustainability) or the G21 Health and Wellbeing Pillar (providing a focus on food security).

Another is providing easily accessible transparency around who the stakeholders in the development of the current plan have been. We have not been able to find this information within the framework documents. If we are to have a roadmap for action that reflects the constituents of CoGG and the stakeholders’ views we must be sure that all relevant stakeholders have had a seat at the table.

It is interesting to note that CoGG has previously considered a sustainable food supply system – with the commissioning of a Food Policy Discussion Paper (https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/Public/Documents/8d193df3e8e310f-Healthy%20Food%20Policy%20Discussion_Paper.pdf). This paper clearly documents the status quo, the opportunities, and calls for broad consultation on best paths forward. As a resident of CoGG I am interested to understand the reasons this work has not been acknowledged or referenced in this sustainability plan here or more broadly. I am also very disappointed that in a time of accepted Climate Emergency that we are not embracing the knowledge we have in rapid and proactive ways.

3. Gaps in CoGG approach to Sustainability?

The lack of any mention of food in either document is a major omission and must be addressed. The City of Greater Geelong has the opportunity to actively drive a Food Policy and Action Plan for the region to develop a sustainable and resilient food supply system.

There is no shortage of evidence informed approaches to addressing food, agriculture and land use. Drawdown 2020 outlines broad ranging strategies – addressing waste and diets, ecosystem protections, and shifts in agriculture practices (<https://drawdown.org/sectors/food-agriculture-land-use>). The sections on reducing food waste (<https://drawdown.org/solutions/reduced-food-waste>) and promoting plant rich diets (<https://drawdown.org/solutions/plant-rich-diets>) are of particular importance.

It is timely also to acknowledge the relationships between healthy eating policy and strategy and the call for food sustainability. As outlined in the prestigious journal Lancet (<https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/>) – the progression to a diet predominantly based around vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes and grains - with fewer serves of animal protein - will promote healthy weight, good mental health and healthy years of life lived (less cancer, diabetes, heart disease).

This dietary pattern is good for the individual, good for the planet and in turn, good for the individual all over again. And, this push to a more plant rich diet is happening at a time when the populous is primed, with the move to vegetarian diets well underway. Research conducted by Roy Morgan in 2020 reports that the trend in vegetarian eating continues to grow — with **2.5 million people (12.1% of the population)** in Australia now eating all or almost all vegetarian food, up from **2.1 million people (11.2%)** 2016, and **1.7 million people (9.7%)** in 2012. The cumulative impact to health and the environment across a population of any move to eating less animal products is great.

4. How can CoGG demonstrate Leadership?

CoGG has a commitment to be a “clever and creative city-region” and has the opportunity to be a leader in sustainability and the food supply system. As noted, numerous councils locally and internationally provide inspiration and innovation from which CoGG can gain traction and move rapidly into a position of leadership. This will of course require investment in the people with knowledge, skills, capacity – and who can negotiate a “structured and coordinated approach....across all services, projects and plans”. To demonstrate leadership CoGG must invest in staff for whom food sustainability is core business and enable these staff to join the dots across CoGG’s activity and agendas.

Further CoGG must take a leadership role in bringing community leaders, and specialists (including for example Sustainability Geelong) who share a passion for promoting a sustainable food system for Geelong and surrounds . This group could work collectively to ensure representation across the region and to facilitate capacity for a long term plan of action. IPAN Deakin would welcome the opportunity to work productively within such a group.

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