



**AUSTRALIAN FOOD  
SOVEREIGNTY ALLIANCE**

## **Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance Peoples' Food Plan**

### **Right to Food**

#### **Executive summary**

Food justice is a fundamental aspect of the Right to Food, and is reflected in the 'food for people' pillar of food sovereignty. It represents 'a transformation of the current food system, including but not limited to eliminating disparities and inequities.'<sup>1</sup> It demands an acknowledgement of the racial, class, gender, ability and political inequalities historically designed into our food system.<sup>2</sup> For example, local food movements urging households to eat fresh food must account for low-income neighbourhoods who have been systematically deprived of access to healthy and sustainable food. Food justice is a key theoretical framework to understand the intersectional nature of inequity in the food system and to explore how communities can create environmentally sustainable and socially just alternatives. Interrogating the root causes of food insecurity necessitates an examination not only of the structures of the food system, but of society itself. It demands we ask why society as a whole does not take responsibility to ensure that everyone can live a dignified life. Untangling the power relations that are stopping the vast majority of us who do believe everyone should be assured a dignified life, the Peoples' Food Plan offers systemic and pragmatic ways to assure food security for all, **starting with provision of a Universal (or Unconditional) Basic Income (UBI) for everyone.**

The Plan provides definitions and explorations of some key areas of concern in the Right to Food, including distinctions between food security and food sovereignty approaches to ending hunger and obesity, a focus on first foods for babies, and the inalienable human right to water. Turning to priority populations, the Plan proposes grassroots and institutional solutions to the disenfranchisement of refugee and asylum seekers entering the Australian food system, and examines the failures of institutional food environments (schools, aged care, hospitals, prisons, and transport hubs) before offering peoples' actions and recommendations to institutions and governments. A number of inspiring examples of community initiatives to care for each other and ensure the Right to Food is upheld as a shared social responsibility are included in the case studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010 (p.9)

<sup>2</sup> Alkon & Agyeman, 2011

## Key peoples' policy recommendations\*:

### Local and State Governments:

- Acknowledge and actively support the contribution of culturally significant traditional knowledge, law, practice and food production by First Peoples to the health and wellbeing (physical, emotional, cultural) of people and Country.
- Reduce and eventually remove reliance on food charities (outside of acute emergency/disaster situations, where relief should also be provided within a food sovereignty framework), enabling all people to access food via socially acceptable and empowered means.
- Reorient public policies toward preventative health, such as those that improve access to fresh, locally and sustainably produced food.<sup>3</sup>

### Federal Government:

- Introduce a Universal (or Unconditional) Basic Income (UBI).
- Ensure that the Basics Card is eligible for spending at farmers' markets, box schemes, CSAs, and other direct distribution channels providing nutritious, socially-just and ecologically-sound food. This is an opportunity to incentivise the purchase of healthy, local food by lower-income communities and also support the livelihoods of small-scale farmers.
- Support local production by paying small-scale farmers full price for their produce and then subsidising the sale of this food to low-income households, such as through food hubs, local greengrocers or independent grocery stores, and/or through cooked meals at dedicated venues (similar to Belo Horizonte's 'popular restaurants', where lunch is \$1 no matter who is buying it)
- Introduce a universal school lunch or breakfast program with food procured from local producers that would provide a level of basic food security for every Australian child, and avoid the stigma associated with accessing 'food relief' charity in schools.
- Allocate funding to small farms and food gardens in prisons to ensure that incarcerated people a) have access to fresh food and b) provide them with food skills and knowledge that can improve mental health and wellbeing, as well as increase employment opportunities once they are released from prison.

***\*Please refer to the Right to Food section of AFSA's Peoples' Food Plan for a full list of policy recommendations for local, state and federal government.***

## Case studies

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<sup>3</sup> Galloway, Devine, Parsons and Jones, 2022

## Food Next Door Coop

Food Next Door is an initiative which matches under-utilised farm land with landless farmers, specifically newly arrived migrants and refugee groups.<sup>4</sup> With community gardens based in the Sunraysia region of rural New South Wales and Victoria, the co-op aims to support small-scale regenerative farming and protect the right of migrant communities to produce nutritious and culturally-appropriate foods. For example, the hand harvesting of traditional African maize by the Twitezimbere Burundian Community in north-west Victoria has given refugees, most of whom have a farming background, an opportunity to ease into the local community whilst maintaining their cultural practices. Interviews of other migrant farmers from Vietnam, Tonga and Italy<sup>5</sup> have highlighted how their introduction of safe, low-tech cultivation and pest management techniques from their home countries has made community food production more resilient to pests and disease.

## Tasmania's urban agroecological gardens

Tasmania has a widespread and well-established culture of agroecological urban gardens. One third of these gardens are located along Community Houses in low socio-economic areas, and bring communities together to protect their right to safe, nutritious, affordable, environmentally sustainable and fairly produced food. Marsh (2020) highlights four urban agroecological gardens of central consideration from a public health and food sovereignty perspective.<sup>6</sup> *Goodwood Community Garden* is maintained by and feeds its surrounding low socio-economic communities. The *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Community Food Garden* aims to grow food for low socio-economic communities and improve mental health for returned veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It also donates the majority of the 4 tonnes of local vegetables and fruit they produce to Second Bite. *DIGNity Supported Community Garden* supports individuals with various disabilities to garden within a shared community space. *Edible Precinct* serves as a reconciliation garden to honour the history and knowledge of the Palawa people as traditional custodians of Tasmania.

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<sup>4</sup> Food Next Door Co-op., 2023

<sup>5</sup> Klocker, Head, Dun, & Spaven, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Marsh, 2020