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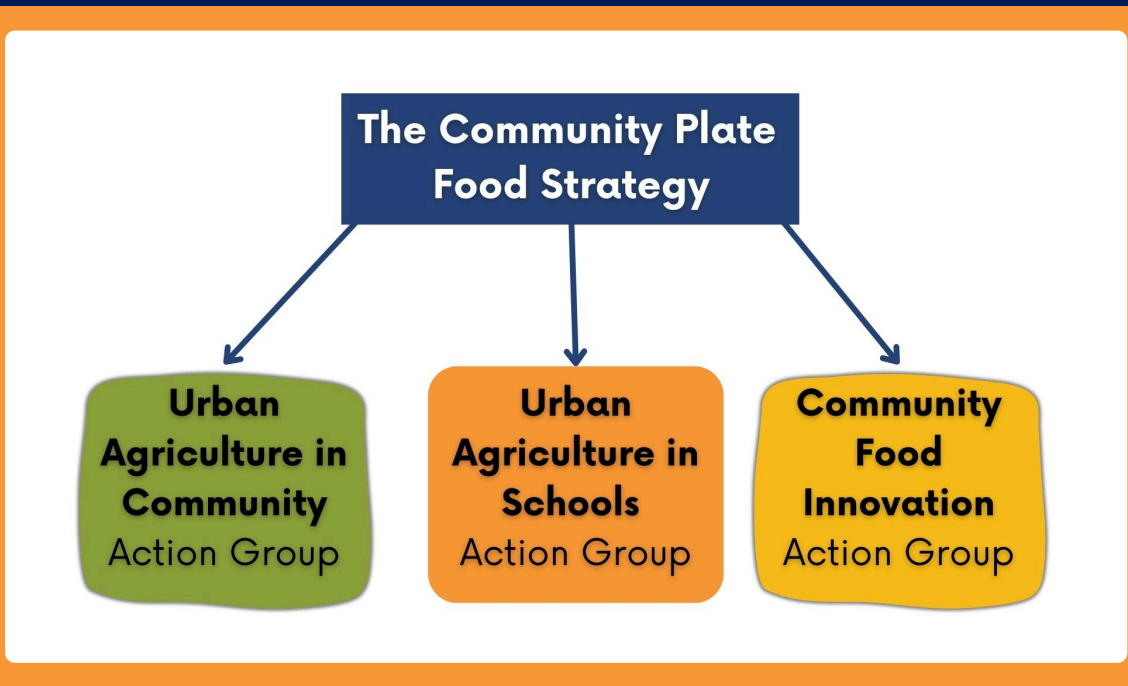
Dear members of The Community Plate,

What a year it has been! Together, we've sown seeds of connection and continued to cultivate a vision where everyone has access to food that is local, nourishing, and abundant.

As 2025 draws to a close, let's take a moment to celebrate the rich harvest of achievements we've grown together.

A heartfelt thank you to every person, group, partner, and collaborator who contributed to this journey—and to all of you who followed along and supported our mission.

Now, let's wrap up the year with a celebration of...



STRATEGY

Early this year, The Community Plate completed the creation of its Food Strategy – the result of years of conversations, ideas, and collective action. This strategy aspires to strengthen our local food system so that everyone is connected to food that is local, nourishing, and abundant. It focuses on three key areas:

- **Community Food Innovation** – supporting sustainable food enterprises like cooking hubs, markets, and cooperatives.
- **Urban Agriculture in Schools** – growing food literacy through school gardens, farms, and food forests.
- **Urban Agriculture in Community** – encouraging neighbourhood initiatives such as seed libraries, backyard farming, and community growing spaces.

Together, these actions aim to boost food access, affordability, and literacy across our region over the next 3 years.



Response to the National Food Security Discussion Paper

Submission to the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

30 September 2025

DRIVING CHANGE:
Submission to the National Food Security Strategy

The Community Plate has helped shape the future of food security in Australia by submitting a formal response to the National Food Security Strategy Discussion Paper.

Our submission reflects the voices of our community and the expertise of The Community Plate Steering Group, alongside leading thinkers in food systems redesign such as [Sustain](#). It builds on our shared aspiration that “we are all connected to food that is local, nourishing, and abundant”—an aspiration co-designed through extensive engagement across the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula catchments.

We called for action to strengthen local food systems, improve access and affordability, and support sustainable practices nationwide. Thank you to everyone who contributed their insights and passion to this important work.

Together, we’re ensuring local voices help shape national solutions.



Local Partnerships for *Food First*



Celebrating a Major Milestone: VicHealth Local Partnership for Food First

One of our proudest achievements in 2025 was securing a place in VicHealth's Local Partnerships for Food First.

This exciting opportunity recognises The Community Plate's commitment to building a stronger, fairer local food system.

Our Food Strategy, developed earlier this year, became the foundation of our successful application, and through this partnership, we join eight other initiatives across Victoria working to drive significant food systems change.

- New capacity and resources to strengthen local action groups.
- Three years of dedicated support to implement bold, community-driven solutions.
- A chance to collaborate and innovate with partners across the state to make healthy, local food accessible for all.

This achievement is a testament to the power of collaboration and the vision we share: “We are all connected to food that is local, nourishing, and abundant.”

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this success—we can’t wait to see what we achieve together in 2026 and beyond!



School Food Forest Pilot Proposal
Prepared by Regenerating Farms
For the Community Plate

November 2025

THE
COMMUNITY
PLATE

REGENERATING
FARMS

Looking Ahead: School Food Forest Pilot!

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the co-design of our **School Food Forest Pilot**—an initiative that reimagines school grounds as vibrant, regenerative spaces for learning and growing food.

Working in collaboration with Regenerating Farms, Living Culture, local secondary schools, and passionate stakeholders, we've held two co-design workshops to shape a shared vision:

"A School Food Forest pilot transforms school grounds into inclusive, sustainable laboratories. These spaces connect culture, curriculum, and community—enhancing student engagement, fostering belonging, and promoting biodiversity. Through hands-on experiences in sustainable food systems, students develop a stronger sense of community and environmental stewardship."

Living Culture will play a key role in this initiative, helping to meaningfully integrate bushfoods and Indigenous practices into the food forest design, and several schools are already enthusiastic about the benefits.

We're thrilled for the first pilot school to soon be announced! Our goal is to be standing within a budding school food forest by mid-next year.

This initiative is more than a garden—it's a movement toward education that connects young people to food, sustainability, and culture. Thank you to everyone who has contributed ideas and energy to bring this to life.



Gather & Grow: Building Momentum for Local Action

Our Gather & Grow event brought together 60 attendees from across the region for interactive activities, networking, and inspiring presentations by

VicHealth & Sustain. Participants explored innovative models such as Bendigo Food Share and Pocket City Farms and learned about local food initiatives shaping the future.

A highlight? The introduction of three new Action Groups, with 22 people signing up on the spot:

- **Urban Agriculture in Schools**
- **Urban Agriculture in Community & Neighbourhoods**
- **Community Food Innovation**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making Gather & Grow a success. Your enthusiasm and commitment are driving real change—and we can't wait to see these Action Groups in action in 2026!



Driving Local Food Solutions

In November, The Community Plate proudly launched three new Action Groups to turn ideas into action, including the:

- **Community Food Innovation Action Group** – to create sustainable, social and supportive food business solutions for enterprises such as cooking hubs, food markets, cooperatives, and community-grown food outlets.
- **Urban Agriculture in Schools Action Group** – strengthening food growing projects across primary and secondary schools, such as school gardens, farms and food forests.
- **Urban Agriculture in Community Action Group** – strengthening food growing and sharing across our neighbourhoods, such as fruit rescue boxes, food share carts, seed libraries, growing circles, backyard farming and community growing spaces.

Across the three groups, passionate community members came together to confirm their first actions and set plans in motion. Each group is now preparing to kick off in the new year, building momentum for practical, grassroots solutions that strengthen our local food system.


This is a huge step forward for collaborative action—and we can't wait to share updates as these projects come to life in the new year!

If you would like to join an Action Group, contact us at thecommunityplate@gmail.com to find out more.




BACKGROUND

The project was developed by The Community Plate (TCP) as an outcome from the 2024 TCP Food Forum. The project aimed to strengthen the Frankston City Council (FCC) and Mornington Peninsula Shire's (MPS) food system through greater local food production by utilising kitchen spaces in the community.



RESULTS



- No. of kitchen spaces we found:**
 - 4 places in FCC
 - 13 places in MPS
- Top 3 barriers in providing kitchen space:**
 - Lack of available time
 - Access and security concerns
 - Occupational Health & Safety consideration
- Top 3 barriers in accessing kitchen space:**
 - Require a storage space
 - Limited engagement from kitchen providers
 - Limited budget for facility hire

OBJECTIVES

- To increase TCP's awareness of the community needs, barriers and enablers to accessing kitchen space
- To increase TCP's awareness of kitchen provider's barriers and enablers to provide kitchen space
- To increase TCP's knowledge of available kitchen spaces in the FCC and MPS area

IMPLICATIONS

Short term (For TCP):



- ↑ understanding of:
 - Kitchen space available in the community
 - The enablers and barriers to accessing kitchen space
- ↑ capacity and ability to engage with the community

Long term:

- Linking kitchen seekers and providers will help to:
 - Strengthen the food system
 - Increase food production and reduce food insecurity
 - Support use of local assets
 - Build stronger connection between community groups
- Revenue generated by community groups can be contributed back to the community

METHODS

- Phase 1: Planning and exploration**
Reviewing current research and policy, exploring the local area
- Phase 2: Interviewing key stakeholders**
Meeting with the local councils and kitchen seekers
- Phase 3: Developing the Kitchen Assessment Tool**
Developing the Kitchen Assessment Tool based on key stakeholders interviews
- Phase 4: Sourcing and contacting kitchen providers**
Shortlisting, emailing and calling kitchen providers to understand their kitchen space
- Phase 5: Assessing kitchen spaces**
Visiting kitchen spaces in the community and noting equipment and availability


RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term:

- Consortium Approach**
 - Increase the knowledge and education in sharing kitchens
 - Expand the cooking hub project
 - Identify and advance further opportunities by addressing common barriers
 - Explore potential connections
 - Creating a starter pack resource for kitchen seekers
- Kitchen Seeker Promotion**
 - Further explore food storage needs in the community
 - Further exploration of kitchen spaces in neighbouring local government areas

Long term:

- Partnership with organisations to create a centralised hub



Cooking Hub Project: Connecting Kitchens and Community

Another initiative this year has been the development of our **Cooking Hub Project**, originally suggested at last year's **Community Food Forum**. Thanks to a Monash student placement, we completed a scoping study that identified 17 kitchens willing to share their space and 4 seekers looking for kitchens.

The aim? To better connect and utilise existing resources to support community-led food innovation. This project will inform the work of our **Community Food Innovation Action Group**, helping to identify opportunities for cooking hubs that foster collaboration, skill-sharing, and sustainable food solutions.

This is just the beginning—2026 will see this concept grow into practical action that strengthens local food connections and supports community enterprise.



Wrapping Up 2025: Thank You for Growing with Us

journey in 2025. Together, we've created a Food Strategy, launched Action Groups, built new partnerships, and planted the seeds for transformative projects like the School Food Forest Pilot.

Your passion and commitment have shown what's possible when a community comes together around a shared vision:

"We are all connected to food that is local, nourishing, and abundant."

Here's to a new year of collaboration, creativity, and action.

Let's keep growing together in 2026!



Have something to promote or share?

The Community Plate can share information and events through our website, newsletters and social media. If there is something you would like to share, please get in contact.

Please also reach out with any further questions, feedback, ideas or opportunities, and we look forward to keeping in contact next year!

Finally... thank you all again for your contributions over the past year, and we hope you enjoy the summer season!!

All our best,

The Community Plate

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