

17 December 2020

For attention: NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Re: Submission on Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041

Regional food security (access to fresh, nutritious and safe food) and creating supportive environments for healthy eating are key goals of Food Fairness Illawarra (FFI). FFI is a community based alliance of over 500 community members, community groups, non-government and government organisations who have been working together for over 15 years to enable access to good food for all in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region (food security). By good food Food Fairness Illawarra means fresh, nutritious, safe and sustainable food. FFI is committed to an integrated food system which considers that public health, planning and sustainability are all connected. Inconsistent availability and poor access to healthy food choices within the local environment negatively influence food choice behaviours and consequently the health of the population.

Food Fairness Illawarra Coalition members include local residents, Healthy Cities Illawarra (HCI), Wollongong City Council (WCC), Kiama Municipal Council (KMC), Shellharbour City Council (SCC), University of Wollongong (UOW), Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) Health Promotion, as well as a diverse number of community centres, food aid providers and welfare services, community gardens and school garden programs. Local non-government organisation Healthy Cities Illawarra has administered the secretariat since FFI inception.

Food Fairness Illawarra (FFI) makes the following submission based on research, data, and key nutrition and sustainability document. These include research and public health evidence for the impact of the obesogenic food environment on the key determinants of health. Nutrition is one of these determinants. This submission is made with the aim to ensure safe, affordable and nutritious food for the Illawarra/Shoalhaven with a focus on bringing fresh, regional food into communities. This is important for community health and wellbeing and ecological sustainability.

FFI is concerned about the high rates of overweight and obesity in Australia, particularly among children. Epidemiological data show that globally the prevalence of young people with obesity has increased by 10-fold in the last 40 years. Today, around one in every four Australian children has overweight or obesity. We are also concerned about that people living in the lowest socioeconomic groups and who are Indigenous are more likely to have overweight or obesity than those in the

Regional food security (access to fresh, nutritious and safe food) and creating supportive environments for healthy eating are key goals of Food Fairness Illawarra (FFI), thus ensuring these goals are incorporated/ represented into ISRP is important. Inconsistent availability and poor access to healthy food choices within the local environment negatively influence food choice behaviours and consequently the health of the population.

Food Fairness Illawarra (FFI) values the following key elements of the plan that support work towards “healthy food for all in the Illawarra”:

- The strong vision for a diverse, creative, healthy and sustainable region
- While all four themes are supported these key themes of interconnect with the many aspects of the food cycle. These two themes are valued ‘a productive and innovative region’ and ‘a sustainable and resilient region’
- Consultation and partnership with local Aboriginal communities
- Supporting agriculture innovation, sustainability and the productivity of resource lands is essential for regional food security by protecting land for food production and supporting new ventures which broaden the range of food produced
- Increasing the urban tree canopy cover which has the benefit of food-bearing species that could be
- Enhancing regional transport networks for connectivity, sustainability which strongly influence food production systems
- Goal for a Net Zero region by 2050. Climate change significantly impacts food production, water usage and land degradation
- Investment in smart infrastructure which will drive innovative solutions to the provision of local food
- Protecting and maintaining the natural environment ensuring biodiversity and water resources
- Recognising the value of non-government organisations and businesses to fund and deliver regional programs

FFI provides the following recommendations and areas of potential collaboration with the aim to maximise food security within the plan:

- Ensure that the neighbourhood planning includes identifying key assets in the local food system and grow a Regional Food Culture
- Support a review of the Illawarra Regional Food Strategy as a key document to link to deliver strategies on the under regional food security
- Action resourcing regional Food Lab training to build skills, expertise and networks. FoodLab is a for-purpose food business incubator comprised of exceptional food artisans and experienced business professionals passionate about helping people launch their own food businesses - <https://foodlabsydney.com/who-we-are>
- We equip people with the skills, tools, networks and resources needed to become a sustainable food enterprise in Sydney
- By empowering individuals and communities with the capabilities they need to participate in a thriving local food system, collectively we can make Sydney a more vibrant and diverse place to live and eat.

- Ensure land use zoning provides flexibility to allow for active living and healthy eating principles e.g. linked infrastructure for walking and cycling, retaining agricultural land.
- Enact rate frameworks which protect prime agricultural land from housing development.
- Develop guides for new housing development that enable provision of food producing areas. Community gardening provide opportunities for 'selective' interactions between residents
- Support councils to develop policies to enable edible street trees and fruit tree groves on public land
- Pursue changes to planning mechanisms to limit proliferation of unhealthy food outlets
- Establish targets for urban vegetation (including edible species) and develop strategies to achieve them
- Ensure the plan considers transport and distribution systems to move food within the Region
- Ensure that efficient and sustainable transport of agricultural inputs and outputs is considered in all transport and infrastructure planning
- Pursue integration of transport systems that connects people to local and regional commercial and retail centres where fresh food is available
- Retail and commercial areas where fresh food is available should be linked to public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks
- Encourage streetscapes designed to be attractive, interesting and welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists, including by providing edible street trees, appropriate amenities such as water and shelter from the weather.
- Prioritise regional events which showcase local food and educate consumers about regional food availability and seasonality
- Ensure the plan works towards making fresh drinking water available in all public spaces
- Ensure there are provisions for increasing access to culturally appropriate food for people of all needs
- Employment and training should support the development of practical skills training to support backyard, school and community food production
- Ensure resources are available to provide regionally relevant information on edible gardening
- Create and promote a directory of local producers, providores, retailers, stallholders, caterers, distributors and other businesses focussed on local, traditional and bush foods
- Enhance investment in creating and promoting, farm gate trails, markets
- Facilitate food redistribution projects including wild and roadside harvesting, food swaps
- Consider good food as a focal point for enlivening public spaces and bringing people together

- Ensure vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (such as low income households, single parent families, unemployed people, recently arrived immigrants and refugees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability, older people) have fair and equitable access to services and facilities including access to fresh food , employment opportunities and transport
- Provide a range of facilities that enhance recreational usage of public spaces such as community gardens and create active recreation opportunities for all in the community

We are pleased to have the opportunity to provide this submission and provide this link <https://foodfairnessillawarra.org.au/> to our website and FFI Strategic Plan and website. If you require further information, please contact [REDACTED] at Healthy Cities Illawarra, Secretariat for Food Fairness Illawarra or [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,

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Secretariat for Food Fairness Illawarra