



Greater Shepparton Food Hub

Prepared for Greater Shepparton City Council

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Introduction

Overview

Greater Shepparton Food Hub is an initiative of the Greater Shepparton City Council. Council is investigating ways to improve healthy living through sustainable communities and locally grown food.

This study shows the potential for transforming vacant land located at SPC Ardmona KidsTown Adventure Playground into a collaborative agriculture project that grows food whilst engaging local community members who are experiencing or at risk of being food insecure and providing an avenue to generate income through social enterprises and tourism.

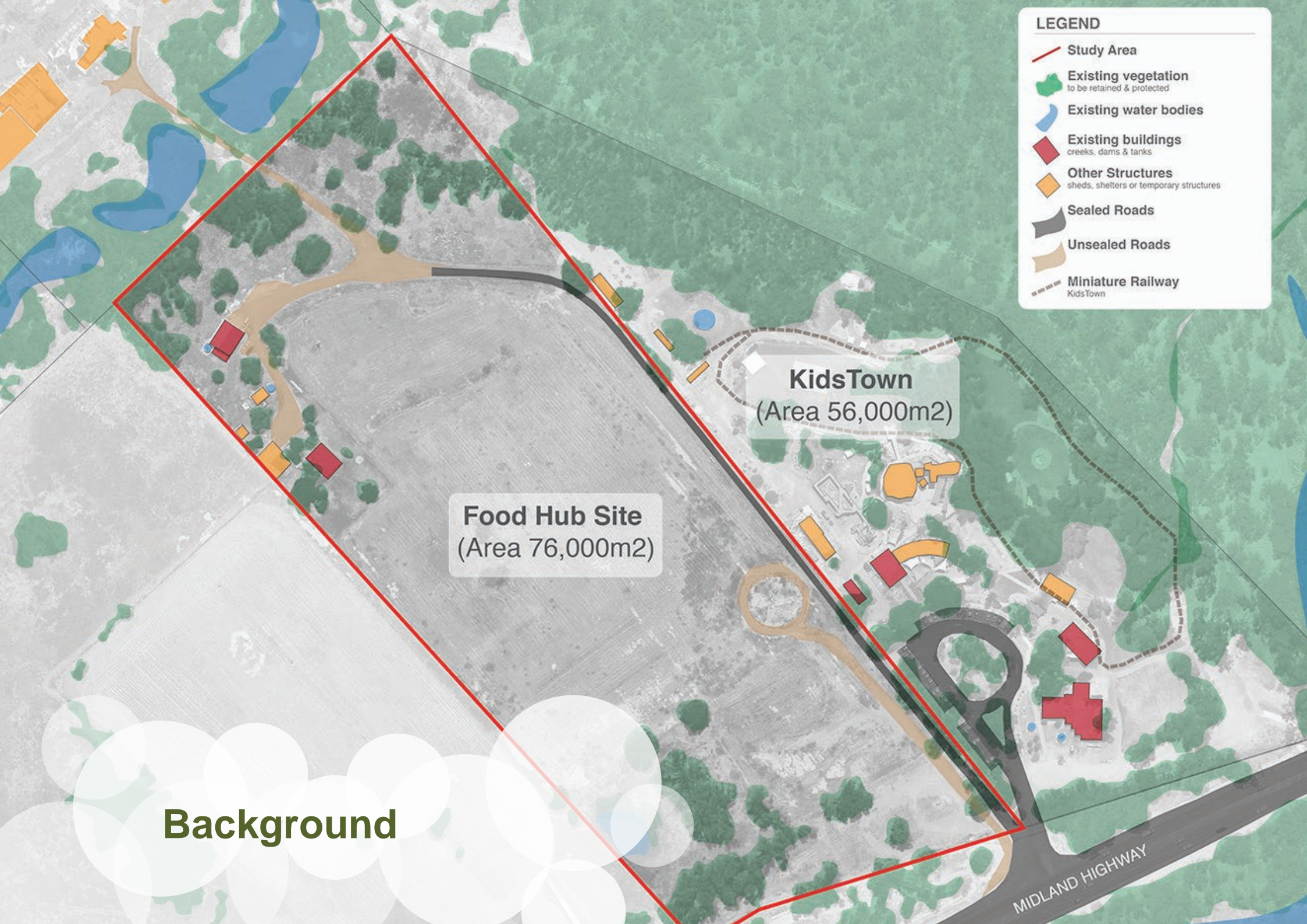
This project aims to develop the site as being much more than a community garden, but as a hub to empower the local community to connect with local food producers, educating people about growing their own food as well as encouraging healthy eating through cooking, sharing and celebration.



Greater Shepparton Location Map



Greater Shepparton Food Hub Location Map



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Existing vegetation
to be retained & protected
- Existing water bodies
- Existing buildings
creeks, dams & tanks
- Other Structures
sheds, shelters or temporary structures
- Sealed Roads
- Unsealed Roads
- Miniature Railway
KidsTown

KidsTown
(Area 56,000m²)

Food Hub Site
(Area 76,000m²)

Background

MIDLAND HIGHWAY

SPC Ardmona KidsTown

SPC Ardmona KidsTown is a regional adventure playground built by the community of Greater Shepparton through the contribution of volunteer labour and materials from local businesses as well as financial support from the City of Greater Shepparton and SPC Ardmona. A key part of the overall philosophy of the playground is that it is accessible to all parts of the community. Entry is by a voluntary gold coin donation per person.

The proposed Greater Shepparton Food Hub site is located to the east of Kidstown, just off the Midland Highway. It consists of 76,000m² of predominantly open pasture land with some scattered copses of native trees. Several billabongs lie to the north of the site in the forested floodway of the Goulburn River.

Greater Shepparton City Council and SPC Ardmona KidsTown is committed to enhancing health, education and tourism; making KidsTown the preferred site for the Food Hub.

KidsTown plays host to approximately 150,000 visits each year and runs a wide range of educational programs with different community organizations. KidsTown is not only a hugely popular local facility, but is an important tourist attraction in the region. The development of a Future Directions Plan for the site will further enhance the playground and range of activities available to visitors, along with ensuring the ongoing viability of this important icon.

The Greater Shepparton Food Hub aims to double KidsTown's visitation and so the broader economic benefit to the Greater Shepparton region is seen as being very valuable.



Greater Shepparton Context

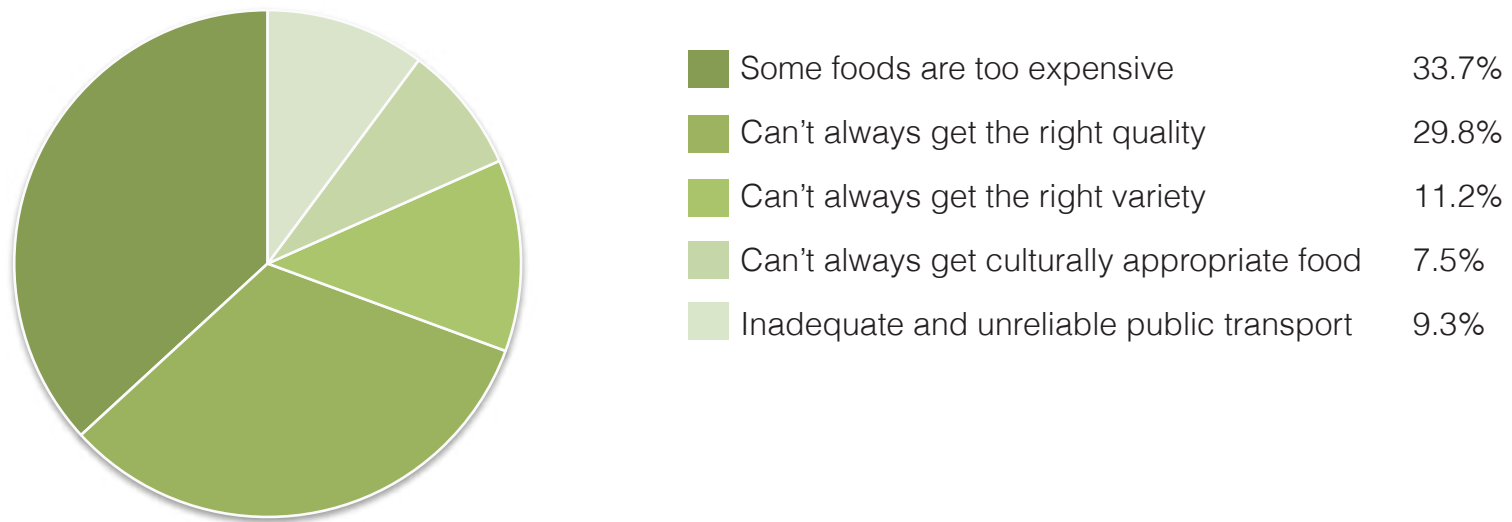
Shepparton is a regional city of 63,000 people located 180 kilometres north-east of Melbourne, Victoria and is one of the five fastest growing inland regional centres in Australia. A diverse and multicultural population lives in Shepparton with 13% born overseas. It also has the largest Aboriginal population in Victoria outside of Melbourne with 3.5% of residents having indigenous heritage.

Greater Shepparton has significant food and vegetable processing industries and a strong rural economy based on irrigated and dry land agriculture, grazing, viticulture and forestry. Also known as the 'food bowl' of Australia, generating 25% of the total value of Victoria's agricultural products; Greater Shepparton remains one of Australia's major horticulture and food production areas manufacturing products for both local consumption and export markets.

Greater Shepparton has significant Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and historical heritage. The original inhabitants of this region are known as the Yorta Yorta people and still have a strong presence in the community today.

'The Flats' located along the Goulburn River between Shepparton and Mooroopna is the site where Aboriginal families settled after the historic 'Cummeragunja walk-off' in 1939. Regular flooding caused many residents of 'The Flats' to relocate to nearby Daish's Paddock, which is now the site of KidsTown and the proposed Food Hub.

The reasons why Shepparton residents don't always have the quality or variety of food they want by frequency include;



Food Security

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences. Food insecurity exists “whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain”.

8.1% of persons living within the City of Greater Shepparton ran out of food in the previous 12 months and could not afford to buy any more in comparison to 5.6% living in Victoria.

The 2011 Census data for the City of Greater Shepparton demonstrates the majority of the population fall within the lowest quartile in regards to household income and household rental payments. It can be assumed that increasing cost of living would attribute to individuals and families being unable to afford healthy food.

Whilst this project aims to increase accessibility to affordable healthy food, increasing the capacity of individuals and families through programming to enhance food preparation and cooking skills and knowing the positive impact healthy eating has on health and wellbeing also plays a major role.



Strategic Context

Policy Background

A range of guiding principles have been identified to provide direction in the development of the feasibility study for the Greater Shepparton Food Hub at SPC Ardmona KidsTown, including local, state, federal and international studies:

- Greater Shepparton 2030 Strategy Plan
- Greater Shepparton City Council Plan 2013-2017
- Greater Shepparton Disability Policy and Action Plan
- SPC Ardmona KidsTown Business Plan
- Greater Shepparton Food security Alliance Operational Plan 2012 – 2013
- Hume Region Health Promotion Strategy
- Victorian Healthy Eating Enterprise 2012
- VicHealth Food for All 2005 – 2010 Program
- National Food Plan 2013
- Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion
- WHO Social Determinants of Health



Renata

It will teach children about what happens before food hits their plate and for people to appreciate the fuel that feeds their body.

Consultation Process

A range of stakeholders were consulted at various stages from February 2013 to June 2013. The most important aspect of a project like this is to engage the community and find out who are the key partners and stakeholders for the project. Extensive engagement occurred in the community over a number of days, including visits to local farms, schools, businesses and organisations.

The Local Lunch workshop was the first consultation event, held at The Connection building at KidsTown and provided an opportunity for local people to come together and share ideas on what the Greater Shepparton Food Hub could entail. Food from local producers was provided and stories from people in the local food industry were heard.

One of the initial exercises during the Local Lunch Workshop was to ask people how a Food Hub could be relevant to them through filling out a Narrative Template and to place themselves within a picture to start to visualise how they will become a part of the project.

Other consultation sessions involved Co-Design Workshops with the community, Council and key stakeholders, using Design Led Innovation tools.

Social Media also played a significant role in communicating the project through the Get Mooving Greater Shepparton Facebook page.

Many people have also been individually consulted with during the project and it is expected that an ongoing consultation process will be needed as the Food Hub evolves.

A photograph of a rooftop garden. In the foreground, several tall sunflowers with bright yellow heads and green leaves are in focus. In the background, a group of people are walking around, slightly out of focus. A city skyline with tall buildings is visible in the far background under a bright sky. The text "What is a Food Hub?" is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, enclosed in a cluster of overlapping white circles.

What is a Food Hub?

What is a Food Hub?

A Food Hub acts as a catalyst to spark local food economy, culture and community. The operations of a food hub can stem from a place, through a website, or via local food services. A formal definition of a “Food Hub” is a place that provides the social and physical infrastructure to connect local buyers and sellers and offer facilities for farmers to store and process, market and distribute local food.

Our definition of a Food Hub is quite different. We see the Greater Shepparton Food Hub as being a place that centralises local food services, provides food education programs and enhances community spirit. This is not so much a place for intensive food processing and distribution, but rather a social place for making connections, improving business and creating an enhanced food community.

There are a number of possible models for the Food Hub including Stand Alone, Integral, Articulated and Mobile Models.

The Greater Shepparton Food Hub is proposed to be based on an Articulated model. An Articulated Model is where the overall program has a specific site headquarters, however the activities grow and expand to other sites in the region to connect with off-site activities.

An example of an articulated model of a food hub is CERES Environment Park. It is based on a main site location with additional sites for carrying out or contributing to organisation enterprises, programs, activities and events.



CERES Environment Park, nursery

Case Studies

CERES ENVIRONMENT PARK

is a not for profit educational organisation located on 4 hectares of rehabilitated landfill in East Brunswick, Victoria. The site houses multiple buildings, gardens and activities and includes a nursery, community plots, farmer's market, cafe and kitchen.

CERES has been supported by Moreland City Council for over 30 years and is currently operating an annual \$8million turnover with a small surplus. It has over 470,000 visitors per year and employs over 130 staff and 400 volunteers.

Multiple education programs and social enterprises operate out of CERES and it remains as one of Australia's key sites for environmental education.

Case Studies

PERTH CITY FARM

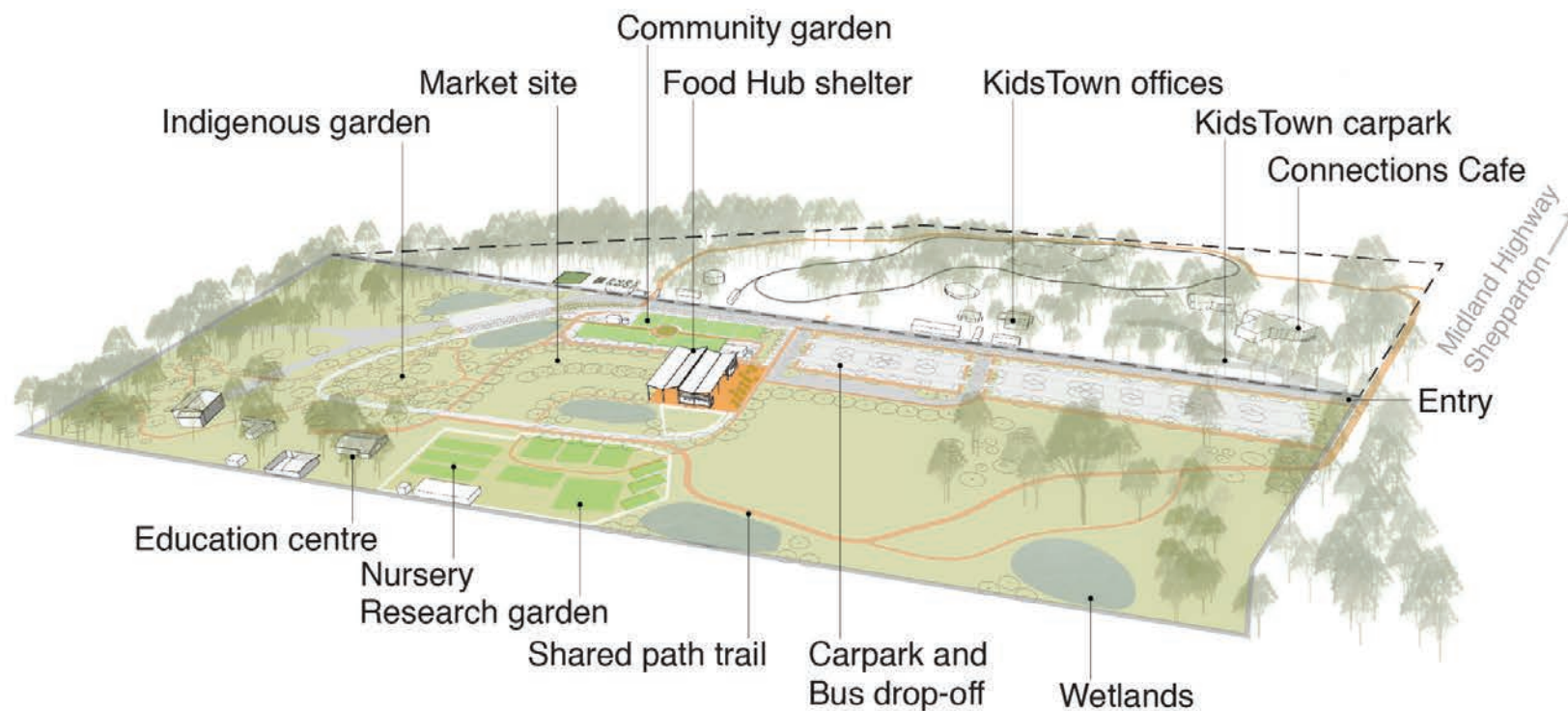
is located close to the city on an old scrap metal yard. It is partly funded by the City of Perth and sees over 200,000 people through its gates every year. The one hectare site comprises of an urban farm, cafe, commercial kitchen, exhibition spaces, courtyards and a large hall.

The farm has been operating for over 20 years and accommodates multiple events including a weekly organic farmer's market, education programs and workshops.

Federally funded school tours operate through the site and it also runs TAFE accreditation and job-seeker training courses. The staff at the farm have also been contracted by The City of Perth to manage an urban orchard and wetland in the centre of the city.



Perth City Farm



Greater Shepparton Food Hub

Goals and Objectives

The Greater Shepparton Food Hub at SPC Ardmona KidsTown is envisioned to be a multi-functional site for growing food, teaching about fresh food production and nutrition as well as generating tourism for the site and region.

It is envisaged Food Hub will enhance the local economy, support tourism and become a leader in the local food movement in regional areas through strong education programs and enhanced environmental sustainability.

The Food Hub's key goals are to improve Health, Education, and Tourism through food based activities, events, programs and information. The Greater Shepparton Food Hub aims to:

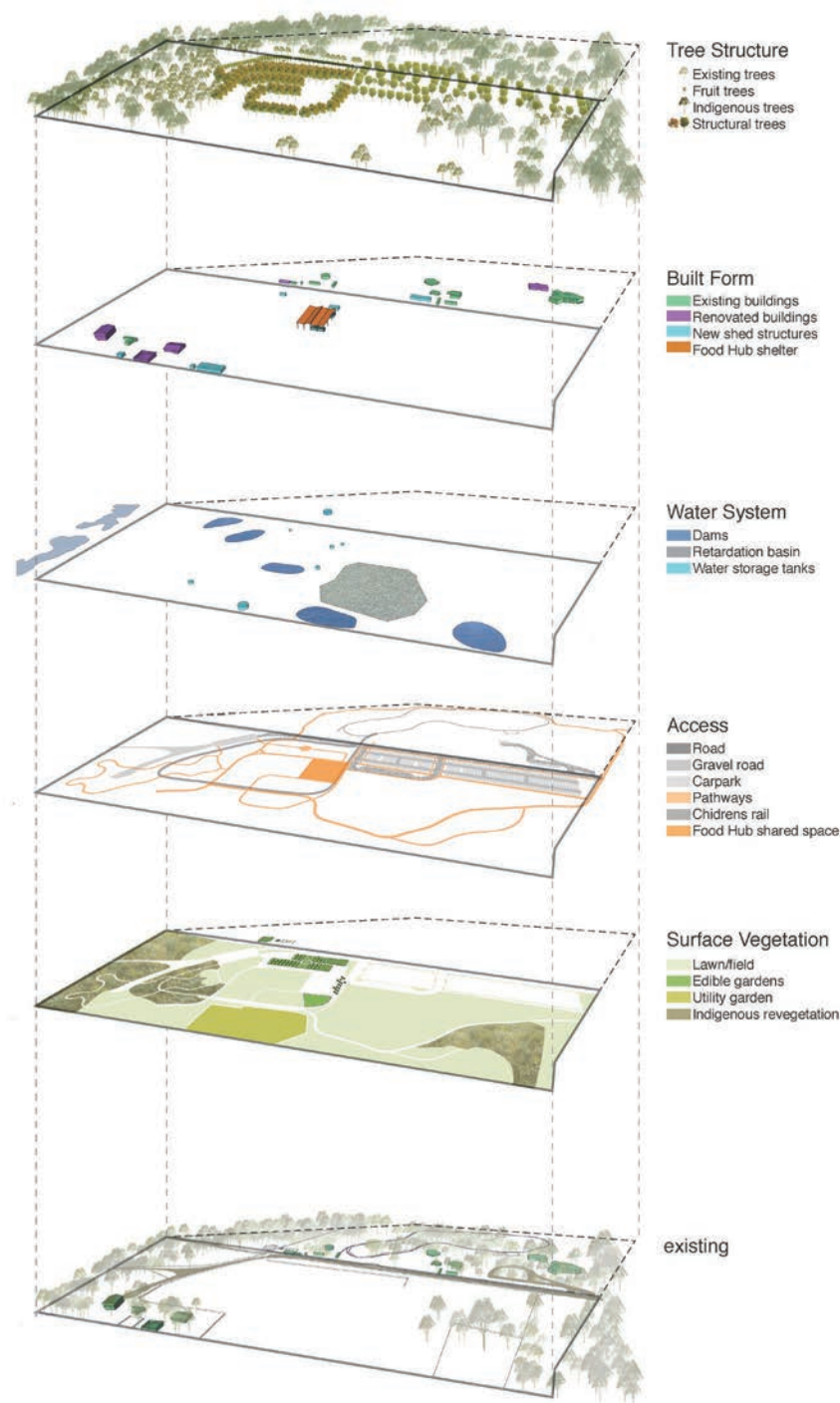
1. Contribute towards the region's food security by improving access to affordable fresh produce.
2. Provide space for growing food and learning about fresh food production, cooking, nutrition and gardening.
3. Allow for multiple activities and events to occur from small community gatherings to markets and festivals.
4. Build upon the existing infrastructure at KidsTown to improve usability as well as increase visitation and tourism opportunities.
5. Improve social, community and business networks through media, programs and events.

Projects

The overall aim of the design is to create flexible spaces that can accommodate multiple services that can be programmed differently as the need arises.

Services have been co-designed with the community and key stakeholders to ensure that the demand for the services is there and that there are already people and organisations that can take ownership of these programs.

The Food Hub Coordinator will need to collaborate with Social Enterprises, Local Community Organisations and Businesses to ensure that multiple projects can evolve independently from the day-to-day running of the Food Hub.





Projects

Proposed projects have been grouped into three key sites:

Community Garden

- Community Garden Programs
- Food Box Program
- Mobile Food Van

Market Site

- Farmer's Market
- Farm Gate Trail
- Food Festival
- Food Hub Media
- Food Hub Tours
- Food Hub Retail Shop and Café
- Food Hub Information Centre

Education Centre

- Educational Garden and Propagation Nursery
- Wetland Education
- Workshop / Tool Shed
- School / TAFE / Uni Education Programs
- Employment Programs
- Bush Kinder / Childcare
- Indigenous Garden Education Programs



Artist impression of proposed Community Garden

Community Garden

Community Garden

One of the core components of the Food Hub is a **Community Garden**. The southern half of the garden is dedicated to 450m² of market garden style planting beds for the purpose of providing vegetables to the Food Box project. The northern half of the community garden is dedicated to 34 raised vegetable patches which can be allocated to school groups, community groups or individual community members.

The Community Garden aims to educate about the complete fresh food cycle from growing plants to using them in cooking and enjoying the food with others.

The concept of the **Food Box** program is to provide a weekly supply of healthy fresh food to disadvantaged community members. This will contribute to existing Foodshare and food charity programs that exist in Greater Shepparton.

One of the problems with improving access to fresh fruit and vegetables is the inability for less able community members to get to a market or fresh food store. A **Mobile Food Van** is proposed to bring fresh food to the people by acting as a mobile distribution point that can be linked with the Food box program. This can be branded with the Greater Shepparton Food Hub branding to act as a visual marketing tool at markets and events.

The **Community Garden** is expected to accommodate multiple services including **School Tours and Programs, Gardening Workshops, Skills Training and Employment Programs**.



Artist impression of proposed Market Site

Market Site

Market Site

Whilst the design of the Food Hub has attempted to use as many of the existing facilities as possible, it is inevitable that with its expansion, purpose-built facilities will need to be developed to house certain functions.

The **Food Hub Shelter** is seen as being the core of the Food Hub. It is proposed to be a large, flexible, covered space that can house multiple services and change according to particular events.

The northern half of the shelter has been left open for regular market stalls, which can also expand into the open grass area to the north for larger markets or festivals.

An **Industrial Kitchen** and associated **Kitchen Garden** will be used for educational, tourist and business activities and can be programmed for different classes or events.

A regular **Farmer's Market** has been proposed to act as a catalyst to bring together the community around a local food system and culture. The market will not only bring additional visitors to SPC Ardmona KidsTown, but allow for other festive activities such as craft stalls and music to create a community atmosphere on the site.

A **Farm Gate Trail** has been proposed to be associated with the Food Hub and will operate as a user-guided experience to enable tourists to connect with various farm gates in the region.

It is envisaged that an annual **Food Festival** will operate on the site to act as a celebration of local produce and help bring tourists to the Food Hub and Greater Shepparton region.

As Food Hub facilities are developed, this will become a major site with multiple points of interest, including tours, a retail centre and visitor information.



Artist impression of proposed Indigenous Education Garden

Education Centre

Education Centre

The existing house on site is proposed to be renovated and used as an **Education Centre and Workshop**. An area has also been reserved for an Educational and Research Garden and Nursery.

A number of education programs already exist at the KidsTown community garden and the Food Hub aims to expand upon these existing programs and build new ones. Multiple education programs can operate out of this facility from school groups to TAFE students, university research and community courses.

The Greater Shepparton Food Hub needs to differentiate itself from other community gardens and food hubs by investigating new methods for growing food through a series of research programs at a dedicated facility.

Programs aimed to provide employment opportunities for local people have previously operated at KidsTown. The Food Hub will aim to build upon these programs as well as create additional food and agriculture

related employment opportunities.

An **Indigenous Education Garden** has been proposed for the north end of the site so as to blend into the adjacent forest and billabongs associated with the Goulburn River floodplain. This will be signposted as a self-guided tour through the indigenous vegetation of the area as well as incorporate guided tours of indigenous bush food and cultural customs. Two open performance areas have been included for cultural and educational events.

Bush Kinder programs are becoming an increasingly popular way of introducing pre-schoolers to outdoor activities. This is primarily about connecting with nature and the environment but is also often linked to learning agricultural and food systems.

There are multiple education opportunities at the proposed Food Hub which will involve almost every aspect of the site from the Education Centre to the Community, Indigenous and Market Gardens.



Management Overview

Governance Model

The governance of the Food Hub needs to ensure that the overall goals of the project are consistently adhered to and that the Food Hub remains economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. The project needs to be managed carefully to ensure there is a solid income, the business attracts visitors, provides jobs, enhances the local community and also strongly supports an entrepreneurial spirit with innovation.

We see the governance and servicing of the Food Hub as being a gradual transition from being a localised Council-run initiative to having its own board as a not-for-profit organization. We have assessed various governance models and see this as being the best outcome for the Food Hub, Council and its stakeholders.

To begin with, the aim is for the Greater Shepparton Food Hub to incubate with 'Social Traders' to develop a strong business plan for the early years of its development. The governance structure needs to support the Food Hub's aims independently, whilst remaining connected to Greater Shepparton Council and KidsTown as partners.

There are many potential partners that can contribute to the Food Hub, including government organisations, social traders, community groups and business. Food Hub partners will initially be sought out by Council and will continue to be coordinated and managed as the Food Hub evolves to an independent model.

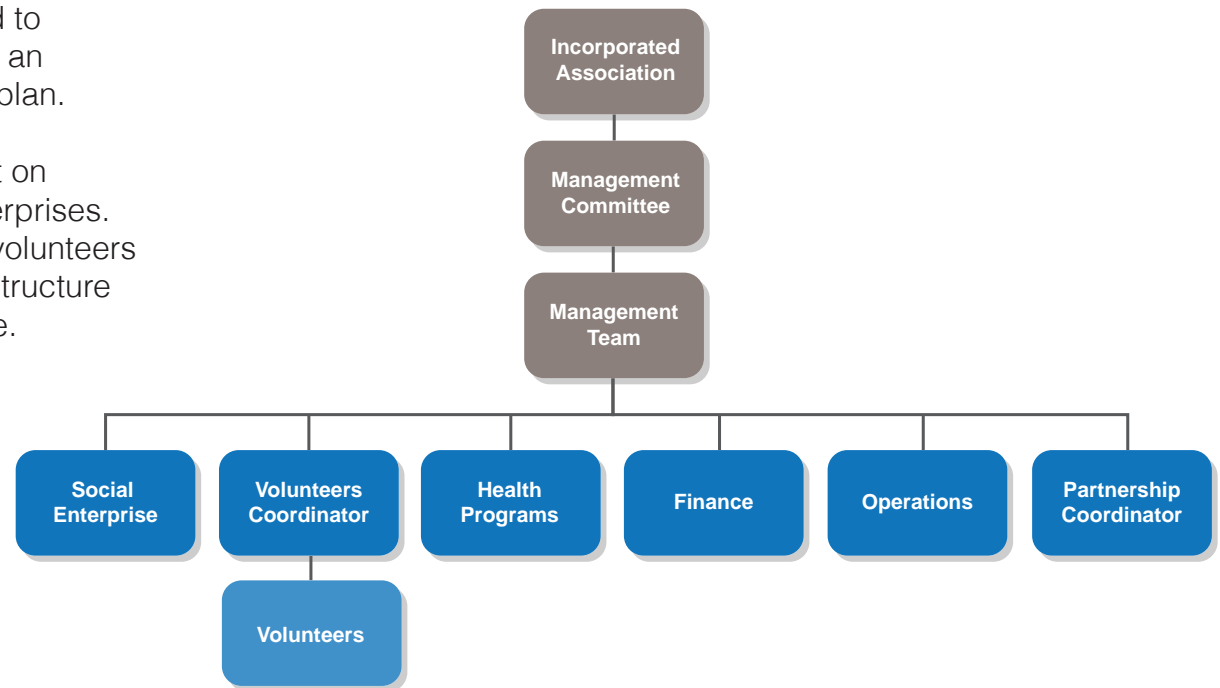
Governance Model



Not For Profit Structure

Revenue can be generated through three main sources: income from enterprises, grants and donations. Income received would be applied to the management of the Food Hub, in line with an overarching vision, strategic and operational plan.

The success of the organisation is dependent on community interest and those involved in enterprises. There is a significant cost benefit from using volunteers who assist with operations. The governance structure could be based around a Board or Committee.



Not For Profit Governance Structure

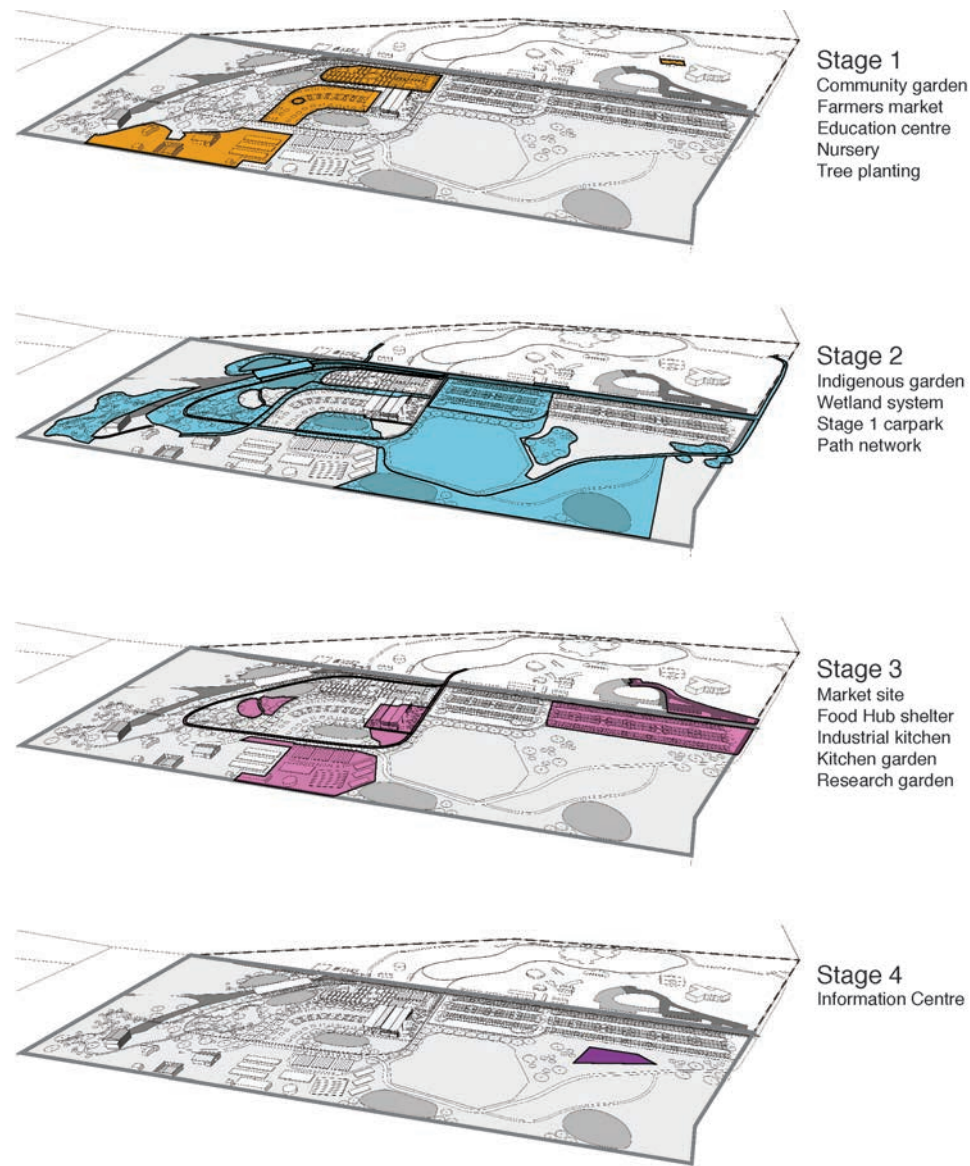


Staging options

Staging options

The Greater Shepparton Food Hub needs to unfold over multiple stages under a flexible implementation strategy. The overall financial goal of the Food Hub is to be sustainable and this includes a cost neutral status for Council.

The infrastructure and services have been designed so that it can be broken off into separate projects and implemented as funding becomes available.



We would like to thank

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