



Public health planning and climate change

Healthy and sustainable food systems

Local governments, as providers of services and facilities, can take action in a number of areas to support equitable access to safe, healthy, affordable food, free and safe drinking water, and a more sustainable food system.

The [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) recommends drinking plenty of water and eating a wide variety of nutritious foods from each of the five food groups. When coupled with an active lifestyle, a plant-rich and fresh food-based diet can play an important part in reducing obesity and lowering cholesterol and blood pressure. Eating fresh, sustainably-farmed local produce reduces carbon emissions and can support healthy eco-systems and soils compared with highly processed food and packaged foods, as well as bringing health co-benefits. This is particularly relevant in high income countries where ill health is related to overconsumption of highly processed products.

Food systems face challenges due to a range of factors, including climate change. These factors reduce the capacity of food systems, threaten food security and impact the ability of communities to access healthy and affordable food. At the same time, food systems are significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, environmental degradation, and land-use changes.

Communities will face increasing disruptions to food availability due to climate change impacts (including increased extreme events) on local and global food production. Local governments can play a role in supporting local food production, reducing barriers for the distribution of food surplus, facilitating educational programs for community members wanting to grow their own food, increasing the sustainability of local farming, encouraging local healthy food businesses, prohibiting unhealthy food outlets and working to decrease supply risks.

Local governments play an important role in leading initiatives that decrease nutritional poverty, support food security, and improve access to healthy, sustainable, and affordable food, while also delivering actions to promote and support local and sustainable food production, reduce food and water waste, and raise awareness within the community of sustainable and healthy food choices.

Example strategies that could be implemented are included in the table below:

Examples
Engage with the community to raise awareness about the benefits of healthy and sustainable food choices and practices on both reducing the impact of climate change and staying healthy. This could also include workshops, practical classes and training, providing community kitchens and low cost or free venues, information sessions, and written information.
Promote and support participation in home gardening activities and community gardens.
Expand areas to grow food locally, including new community gardens.
Form partnerships with and support community organisations, services and food relief programs, to improve access to affordable and nutritious food across your local area. This could include providing the free use of community spaces for these programs.
Support programs with local food providers to encourage environmentally sustainable business practices and to improve community access to healthy and sustainable food choices.
Consider the impacts of climate change and sustainability on food waste management – for example, through education programs and diversion of food waste away from landfill.
Engage in food risk mapping exercises for your local communities to better understand possible climate related impacts on food security and develop food security and emergency plans for supply disruption, including at times of climate related extreme weather.
Develop and implement a healthy and sustainable food procurement policy for food and drinks purchased for council meetings and events.
Develop a comprehensive food system policy to ensure strategic action on health, food system sustainability, and equity.
Strengthen community programs such as farmers markets and local food share initiatives.

This document has been adapted from [Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing planning - Guidance for local government, 2024](#), Department of Health, Victoria.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2025

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

health.wa.gov.au