

Healthy Food Systems Framework Consultations

Background

The Loddon-Mallee Public Health Unit (LMPHU) has been tasked by the Victorian Government with implementing population level initiatives to help keep people in our region healthy and well. Our priorities include climate change, mental wellbeing and healthy food systems.

The establishment and implementation of a healthy food system framework has been identified as a key priority in bringing stakeholders together to move our food system toward more sustainable circular economy in food production, social equity and increasing healthy eating. Adopting a system-wide view enables us to address the challenges at the population level that must be overcome to achieve this goal.

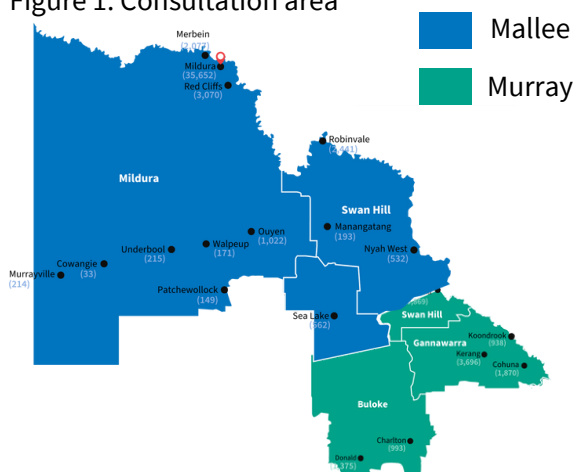
Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) have undertaken a comprehensive consultation process across their catchment (Campaspe, City of Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander, Macedon Ranges, Loddon Shires) and developed a healthy food system framework, The Flourish Framework. To reduce duplication, LMPHU has been in discussions with Healthy Loddon Campaspe about upscaling The Framework across the Loddon Mallee region. It was agreed that the LMPHU Mallee and Murray teams would consult with their local stakeholders to review The Flourish and determine its applicability to the needs of their local food system (Figure 1).

Consultation Process

Stakeholders from Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Buloke shires were invited to Healthy Food System Framework workshops via email and through the LMPHU update. A face-to-face workshop was held in Mildura and on-line workshops for Swan Hill and Buloke/ Gannawarra stakeholders. Workshops were two hours long and included a HLC presentation on The Flourish Framework.

A follow-up survey was also offered to those that attended the workshops and those that were unable to attend, with a copy of The Flourish Framework.

Figure 1. Consultation area



Stakeholder Participation

The Table below lists the number of participants that attended the workshops in each LMPHU sub-region (n=30). There were 21 responses to the survey. Of these, 13 stakeholders had also attended the workshops and eight had not participated.

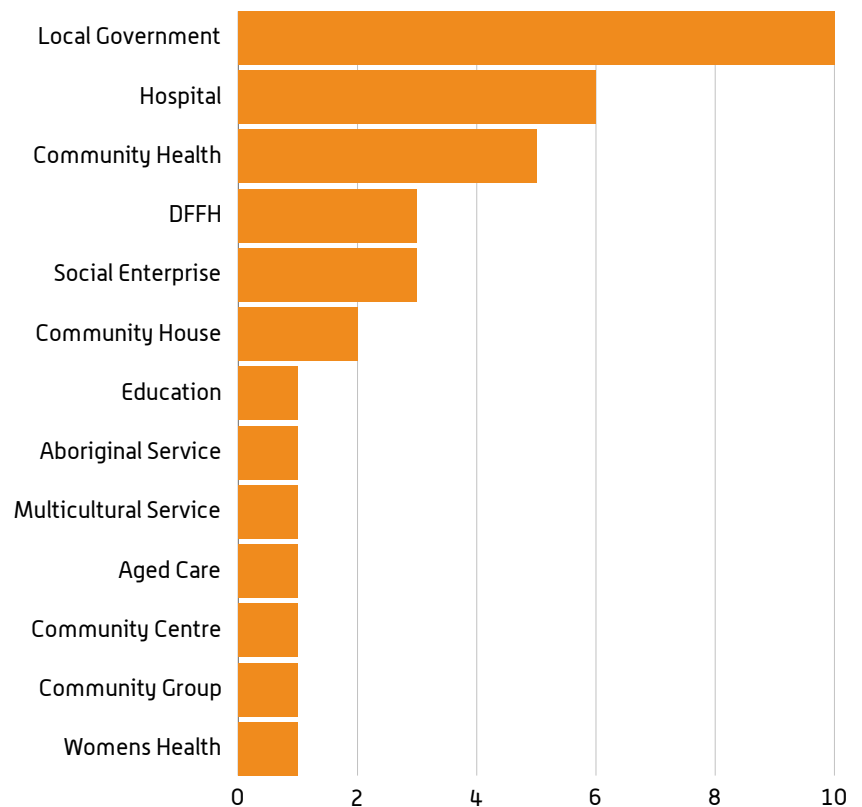
There was a cross-sector representation of local stakeholders (Figure 2) in the consultation. More work is required to engage with primary producers and food retailers. Full list of participants in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Number of consultation participants

	Mallee	Murray	Mallee/ Murray	Total
Work shop	16	14		30
Survey only	1	5	2	8
Total	15	19	2	38



Figure 2. Consultation Participants by organisation type



Feedback results

The workshop participants expressed their enthusiasm for engaging in discussions about establishing healthy food systems. The prospect of developing a Healthy Food System Framework was met with anticipation, as it marked a significant step forward in their collective efforts. Acknowledging the importance of fostering healthy sustainable food systems for the well-being of both individuals and the economy, the participants recognised there is still much work to be done, particularly in addressing the limited access to locally grown food. The conversation was notably inspired by insights gained from discussions with the HLC, further confirming their commitment to advancing initiatives that promote healthy and sustainable food system.

Evaluation of the workshop can be found in the survey results (Appendix 2).

Is a Regional Food System Framework for the Loddon Mallee Region needed?

Workshop participants agreed that it is important to have a Healthy Food System Framework to focus and guide their work in this space. They were excited to see this being explored. It's an opportunity to bring stakeholders together in a partnership approach and provides an overview of the whole food system including primary production. This was confirmed in the survey, with all respondents (n=19) indicating a Framework was very/extremely important.

The Flourish Feedback

Workshop participants were very positive about The Flourish Framework and impressed with the level of process in its development. The survey indicated most agreed that The Flourish was important to their community, relevant and logical (see appendix for full survey results). Both the workshops and survey showed the majority of the respondents agreed (very/extremely relevant) with the objectives of The Flourish, however there were some concerns around the broadness of the objectives, language and implementation.

- “
- *Addresses a serious long-term intergenerational issue around poor eating choices and limited access to knowledge and good food.*
 - *Love the idea behind it; long-term sustainable and holistic approach.*
 - *Love the framework. Comprehensive and relevant. All objectives relevant.*
 - *Like how it's a simple framework but the visual diagram makes it easy to understand.*
 - *Good starting point, like the objectives and like the simplicity. Agree that the strategies are good.*
 - *Love the opportunity that it's going to be a regional framework. This would enable networks to be stronger and more focused.*
- ”

How can The Flourish Framework be improved for your area?

- “
- *Document needs to be more explicit around who the target audience is.*
 - *A systems focus infographic illustrating local food systems (in addition to image on pg 6).*
 - *Important to take into account that many people's individual values and bias' affect how we work in this space therefore more evidence examples needed.*
 - *The Flourish Framework does not define what a regional food system is. The definition needs to be clear and measurable.*
 - *Summary of key stakeholders would be of benefit - who the stakeholders are and what their involvement might look like.*

Objectives and strategies

- *The objectives could be clearer and measurable. SMART objectives would be good.*
- *There are big objectives, some clarification or sub-objectives would be helpful .*
- *Identification of values and objectives in the flourish framework is great, but "Actions" need mentioning in a framework.*
- *Bit concerned with some of the strategies being more middle-class based – not as appropriate for lower economic groups who might be more focused on getting food on the table, kids to school rather than the full breadth .*

Language

- *Language felt a bit high level for where we are at.*
- *Uncomfortable with the use of the word disadvantage. Needs specificity.*
- *Conscious about climate change language with farming/ag industry – hot topic this needs to be moderated as modified practices.*
- *Concerns around the language – what is a food policy? What does food policy really mean in the context? Is it advocate for food policy reforms - ? sugar tax?*

Extending The Flourish Framework across the Loddon Mallee Region

Although stakeholders were very positive about The Flourish, there was a strong theme in the workshops and survey results that the development process is as important as the framework document. Stakeholders are keen to better understand their local context and develop a Healthy Food System Framework together.

- “
- *Flourish is a good example; this is not relevant to our community. The local stakeholders/community need to be involved from the start and built to represent our local needs.*
 - *Framework relevant to us but consultation and co-design happened down south – great for people involved. Need to go on a journey with the local community to engage more people like primary producers and other stakeholders on the journey with us.*
 - *Flourish is great but was developed for HLC, we need to do further work to determine the objectives and inform the framework.*
 - *The objectives need to be thought through to determine if they are appropriate for our region - evidence base.*
 - *It is a great framework however as discussed during the consultation it would be great to have a framework that meets the unique needs of the smaller communities like Buloke.*
 - *Very high level. Would be helpful to develop a framework for each particular region based on region issues. And include specific examples of what each strategy may look like for that region.*
- ”

Additional focus areas in the Framework

The feedback generally agreed with The Flourish objectives but would also like to see a focus on:

- Local context, evidence and a mapping of the existing Food System
- Climate change lens:
 - Management of food waste
 - Reduce food miles
- Food insecurity and access, including disaster food relief
- Food literacy
- Build capacity to grow food

Next steps

After discussions with Healthy Loddon Campaspe, LMPHU next steps include:

- **The LMPHU Murray team** will engage local stakeholders/sectors in the Gannawarra, Buloke and Swan Hill shires; understand their local context and map their food system. Once this process is near completion, key priority objectives will be determined for each local government area (LGA). Following this we will also re-visit alignment to the HLC Flourish framework to assess if the key drivers marry with the Flourish objectives.
- **The LMPHU Mallee team** will lead a project with the broad aim of establishing a Mallee Food Strategy, incorporating Mildura Rural City LGA as well as Robinvale and Sea Lake communities. The project will first seek to establish governance with key stakeholders from across the food system represented, followed by scoping, research, consultation and co-design of strategies and implementation plans.
- **The LMPHU Loddon team** will continue to support the HLC in the implementation of the Flourish framework across the Loddon catchment (City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander Shires). We will also work with local stakeholders/sectors to meet the objectives of the Loddon Mallee Population Health Plan which has additional objectives particularly pertaining to food security.

Appendix 1: Consultation participants

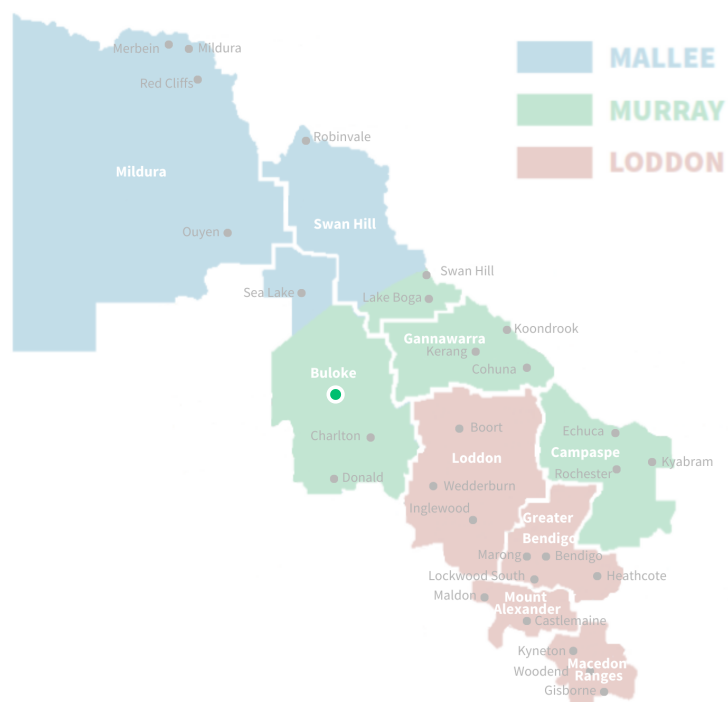
Organisation	Name	Sub-region
Sunraysia Community Health Services	Linda Henderson	Mallee
Sunraysia Community Health Services	Heath Pillen	Mallee
Sunraysia Community Health Service	Jacinta Yetman	Mallee
Mallee District Aboriginal Services	Kirsty Hampton	Mallee
Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH)	Brandon Winter	Mallee
DFFH	Fiona Harley	Mallee
Food Next Door	Shingi Nyabonda	Mallee
Floodplains and Food	Deborah Bogenhuber	Mallee
Regenerative Communities	Rhae Kendrigan	Mallee
Mildura Rural City Council	Cheree Jukes	Mallee
Mildura Rural City Council	Andrew Millen	Mallee
Mildura Rural City Council	Nadine Lynch	Mallee
Mildura Rural City Council	Cr Helen Healy	Mallee
Mildura Rural City Council	Survey participant	Mallee
Mildura Rural City Council	Brooke Keher	Mallee
Mildura Rural City Council	Barbara Clifford	Mallee
Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council	Mitch Rayson	Mallee
Swan Hill Rural City Council	Survey participant	Murray/Mallee
Women's Health Loddon Mallee	Survey participant	Murray/Mallee

Organisation	Name	Sub-region
East Wimmera Health Service	Maddie Henley	Murray
East Wimmera Health Service	Stacey Keller	Murray
Northern District Community Health	Rachel Clarke	Murray
Northern District Community Health	Tanya Maher-Toose	Murray
DFFH	Fiona Harley	Murray
Buloke Shire Council	Rory White	Murray
Buloke Shire Council	Survey participant	Murray
Healthy Kids Advisor	Sarah Botheras	Murray
Donald Learning Group	Charmaine Delaney	Murray
Swan Hill District Health	Gayle Taylor	Murray
Swan Hill District Health	Bronte Raynor	Murray
Swan Hill District Health	Tania Lawry	Murray
Swan Hill District Health	Ro Enever	Murray
GIFT Permaculture Community Garden & Sustainable Living in the Mallee	Leanne Skipsey	Murray
Aged Care	Survey participant	Murray
Community Centre	Survey participant	Murray
Education	Survey participant	Murray
Gannawarra Shire Council	Narelle O'Donahue	Murray
Community House	Survey participant	Murray

Note: Murray Sub-region excludes Campaspe Shire from these consultations as they are in the Healthy Loddon Campaspe catchment

Q1 The following map outlines the 3 Loddon Mallee sub-region catchment areas

Answered: 1 Skipped: 20



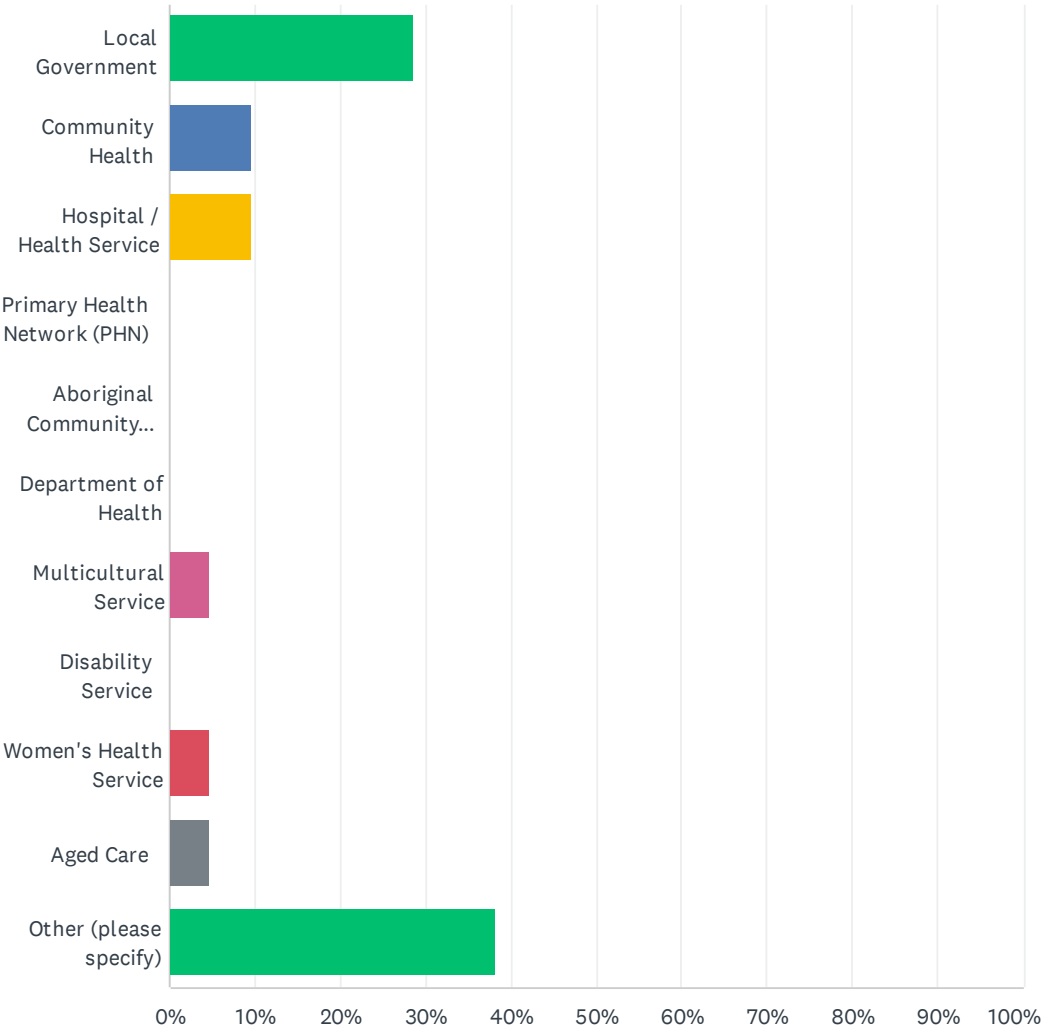
Q2 Which LGA postcode do you primarily work in?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Buloke	1/11/2024 4:49 PM
2	3525	1/10/2024 10:43 AM
3	3579	1/10/2024 8:14 AM
4	3579	1/9/2024 4:15 PM
5	3500	1/9/2024 1:59 PM
6	3585	1/9/2024 1:43 PM
7	Mallee	1/9/2024 9:11 AM
8	Mallee	12/21/2023 8:34 PM
9	3500	12/21/2023 6:44 PM
10	3500	12/21/2023 2:56 PM
11	3525	12/19/2023 12:40 PM
12	3500	12/19/2023 9:33 AM
13	3500	12/15/2023 12:52 PM
14	3478	12/14/2023 3:55 PM
15	3483	12/14/2023 3:40 PM
16	3525	12/14/2023 3:09 PM
17	3480	12/14/2023 2:35 PM
18	Mallee	12/13/2023 1:48 PM
19	3585	12/13/2023 10:57 AM
20	Whole of region	12/13/2023 10:32 AM
21	3500	12/13/2023 10:22 AM

Q3 Please state the organisation type you represent. (Select the most relevant from the drop down box)

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



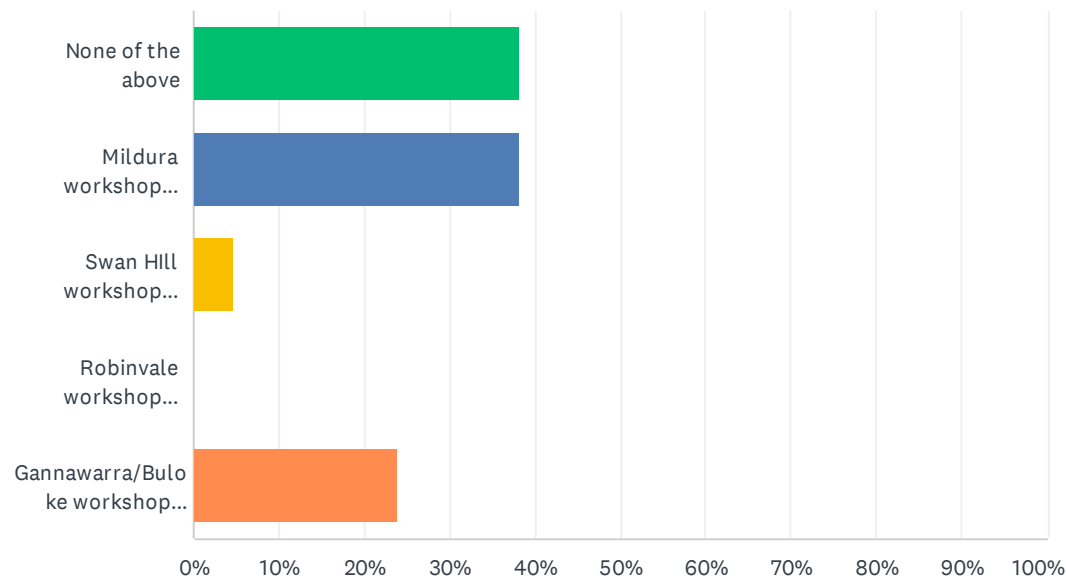
REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM FRAMEWORK Stakeholder Feedback

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local Government	28.57%	6
Community Health	9.52%	2
Hospital / Health Service	9.52%	2
Primary Health Network (PHN)	0.00%	0
Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO)	0.00%	0
Department of Health	0.00%	0
Multicultural Service	4.76%	1
Disability Service	0.00%	0
Women's Health Service	4.76%	1
Aged Care	4.76%	1
Other (please specify)	38.10%	8
TOTAL		21

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Community House	1/10/2024 10:43 AM
2	Community centre	1/9/2024 4:15 PM
3	DFFH	1/9/2024 1:59 PM
4	Social Enterprise	12/21/2023 8:34 PM
5	DFFH	12/19/2023 9:33 AM
6	Community health promotion - healthy eating	12/14/2023 3:40 PM
7	Education	12/14/2023 2:35 PM
8	Volunteer local food movement	12/13/2023 10:22 AM

Q4 Which Loddon Mallee sub-region workshop did you attend? (Select all that apply)

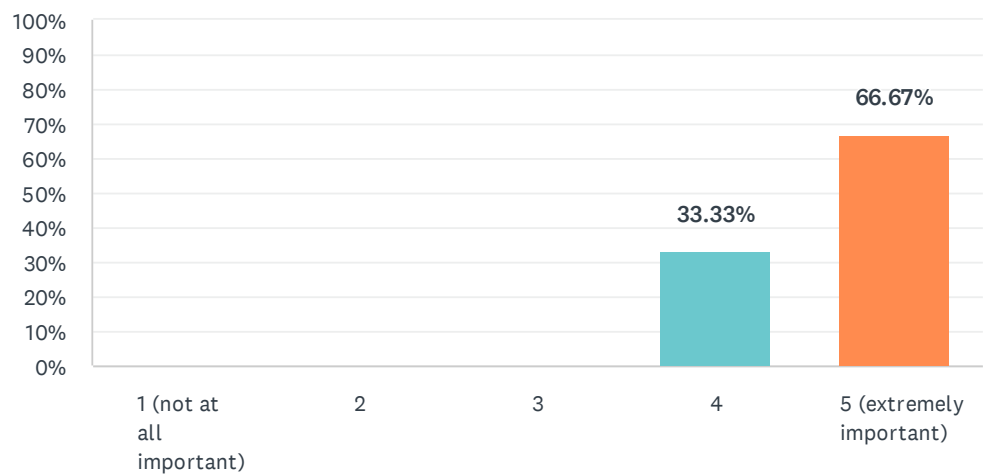
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	38.10%	8
Mildura workshop (5/12/2023)	38.10%	8
Swan Hill workshop (12/12/2023)	4.76%	1
Robinvale workshop (13/12/2023)	0.00%	0
Gannawarra/Buloke workshop (14/12/2023)	23.81%	5
Total Respondents: 21		

Q5 Please let us know how important you feel it is to have a Regional Food System Framework developed for the Loddon Mallee?

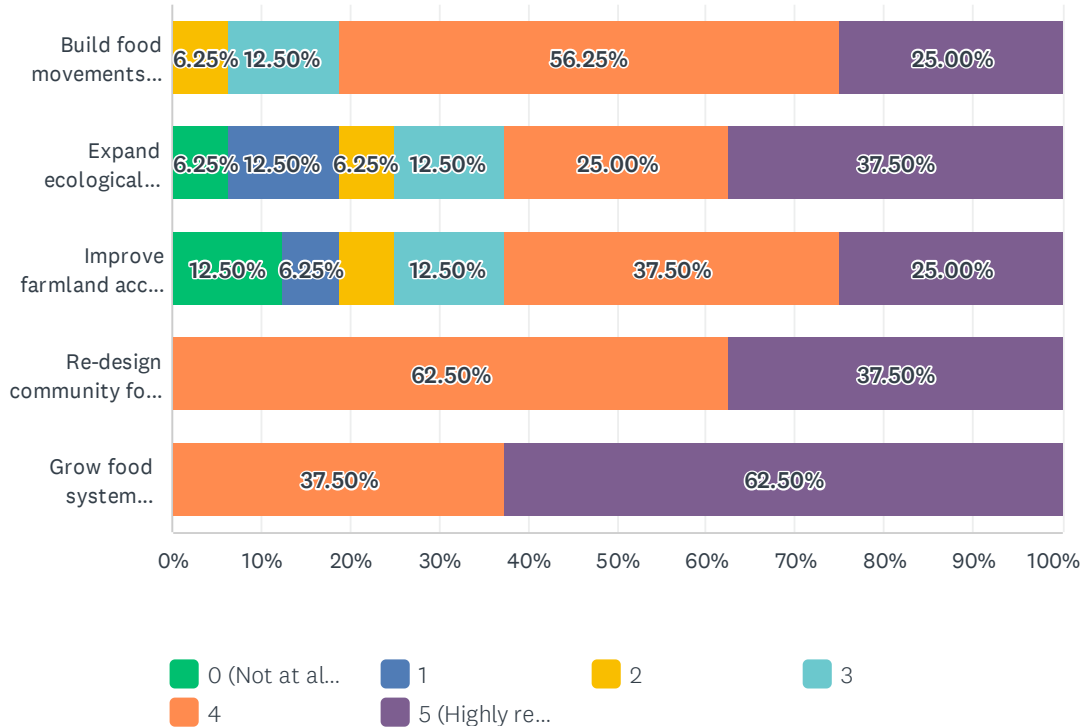
Answered: 18 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 (not at all important)	0.00%	0
2	0.00%	0
3	0.00%	0
4	33.33%	6
5 (extremely important)	66.67%	12
TOTAL		18

Q6 How relevant do you feel the objectives of the Flourish Food System Framework are to your work and/or community? (Please provide one response for each objective below)

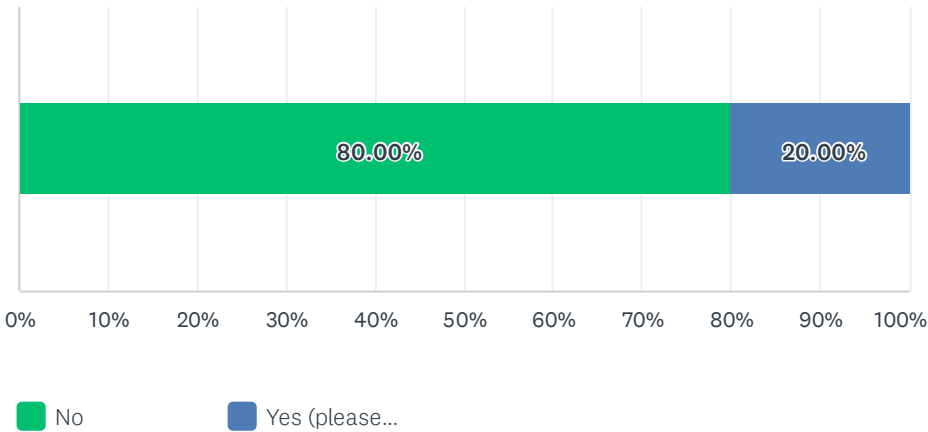
Answered: 16 Skipped: 5



	0 (NOT AT ALL RELEVANT)	1	2	3	4	5 (HIGHLY RELEVANT)	TOTAL
Build food movements across the region to generate change.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6.25% 1	12.50% 2	56.25% 9	25.00% 4	16
Expand ecological farming principles and practices to improve the health of the landscape.	6.25% 1	12.50% 2	6.25% 1	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	37.50% 6	16
Improve farmland access and protection to diversify our food system from the ground up.	12.50% 2	6.25% 1	6.25% 1	12.50% 2	37.50% 6	25.00% 4	16
Re-design community food environments to prioritise healthy seasonal and culturally appropriate foods from values-led regional food chains.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	62.50% 10	37.50% 6	16
Grow food system knowledge to reconnect people with healthy food.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37.50% 6	62.50% 10	16

Q7 Do you have any suggested changes to these objectives?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 6

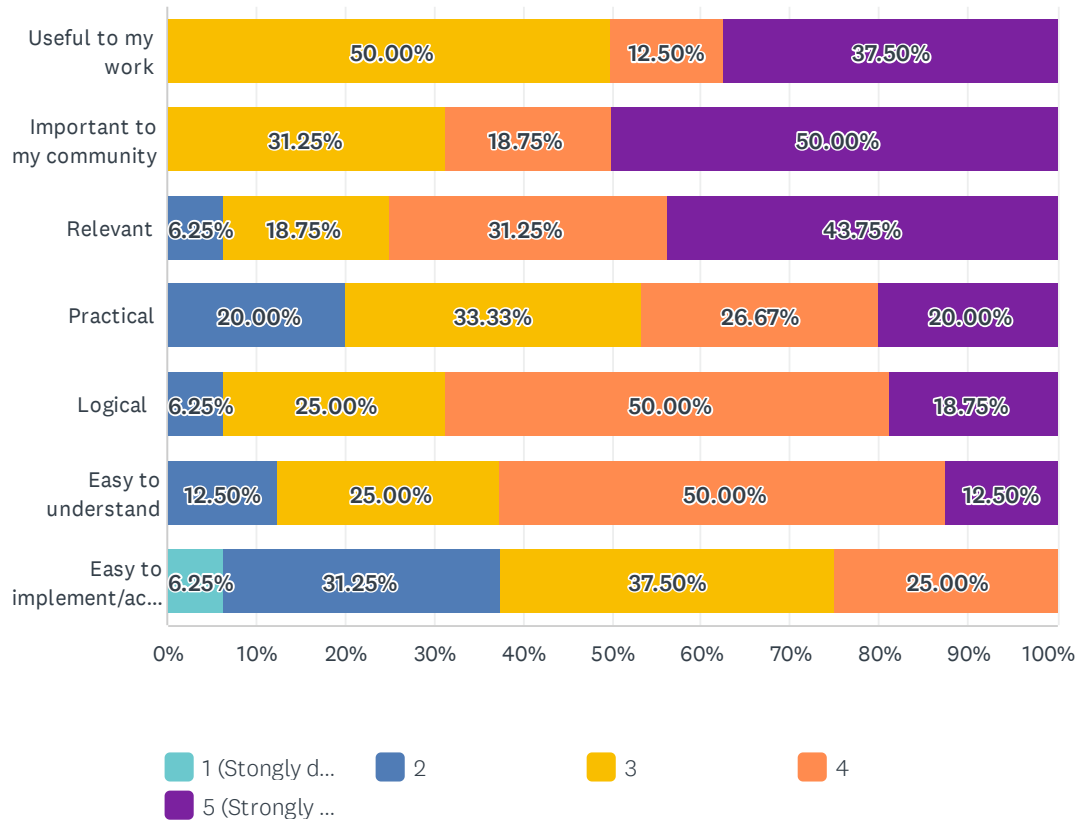


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
No		80.00%12
Yes (please specify)		20.00%3
TOTAL		15

#	YES (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	These need to be thought through to determine if they are appropriate for our region - evidence base.	12/19/2023 9:38 AM
2	Address issues of food waste. !) Recent MRCC bin audits revealed that each household is binning just under 5kg of food per week. 2) Farms dump what they perceive to be fruit and vegetables not suitable for market.	12/15/2023 12:55 PM
3	It could help to add more detail around the objectives (they are pretty big). Perhaps the addition of sub-objectives before listing strategies	12/13/2023 2:16 PM

Q8 How would you rate the Flourish Food System Framework in relation to the following? (Please provide one response for each descriptive)

Answered: 16 Skipped: 5



	1 (STONGLY DISAGREE)	2	3	4	5 (STRONGLY AGREEE)	TOTAL
Useful to my work	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 8	12.50% 2	37.50% 6	16
Important to my community	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	31.25% 5	18.75% 3	50.00% 8	16
Relevant	0.00% 0	6.25% 1	18.75% 3	31.25% 5	43.75% 7	16
Practical	0.00% 0	20.00% 3	33.33% 5	26.67% 4	20.00% 3	15
Logical	0.00% 0	6.25% 1	25.00% 4	50.00% 8	18.75% 3	16
Easy to understand	0.00% 0	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	50.00% 8	12.50% 2	16
Easy to implement/action	6.25% 1	31.25% 5	37.50% 6	25.00% 4	0.00% 0	16

Q9 What do you like or do not like about the Flourish Food System Framework

Answered: 13 Skipped: 8

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	haven't had much involvement personally.	1/10/2024 10:45 AM
2	nothing i dont like	1/9/2024 4:17 PM
3	Clear and concise	1/9/2024 3:30 PM
4	Flourish is a good example; this is not relevant to our community. local stakeholders/community need to be involved from the start and built to represent our local needs	1/9/2024 9:17 AM
5	Its a formal document - how does it look on the ground -how is it shared with community and what part do they play?	12/21/2023 6:52 PM
6	Its nice and simple to follow and understand.	12/20/2023 11:59 AM
7	Very high level. Would be helpful to develop a framework for each particular region based on region issues. And include specific examples of what each strategy may look like for that region.	12/19/2023 9:38 AM
8	Addresses a serious long term inter generational issue around poor eating choices and limited access to knowledge and good food..	12/15/2023 12:55 PM
9	It is a great framework however as discussed during the consultation it would be great to have a framework that meets the unique needs of the smaller communities like Buloke. Unfortunately not all the framework is practical and realistic for Buloke and Gannawarra. However I think the examples and case studies are great and its great for that region	12/14/2023 3:48 PM
10	The framework is logical and well developed, however I am concerned at the ability for this framework to be implemented, the appropriate parties to lead the conversation and for true change and understanding of the system to be achieved.	12/14/2023 3:13 PM
11	Not sure	12/14/2023 2:37 PM
12	There are big objectives, some clarification or sub-objectives would be helpful Like that it has a systems focus infographic illustrating local food systems (in addition to image on pg 6) Summary of key stakeholders would be of benefit - who the stakeholders are and what their involvement might look like	12/13/2023 2:16 PM
13	It's a high level framework - great, BUT, only useful if it is reflected in implementation on the ground. How do we ensure resources are allocated to implementation - in a way that is owned and led by community so it's sustainable in the long term. I prefer the word "regenerative" over "sustainable" in the context of farming practices - we have degraded our soils through farming practices in the Mallee and need to be regenerating them to be able to keep growing food in the long term. Practicing sustainable farming is not enough to build a resilient food system. The Flourish Framework does not define what a regional food system is. The definition needs to be clear and measurable. The objectives could be clearer too - and measurable. SMART objectives would be good. This work is about changing the current system so that we as a community improve our health - as individuals, as a community, and for our soils. When we talk about local and regional food systems this gives us the basis for change - how do we encourage regenerative farming practices in our region, connect the food being grown in our region to the people living in our region, expand processing and manufacturing in our region (of food grown in our region), and educate our community to eat local seasonal produce?	12/13/2023 10:32 AM

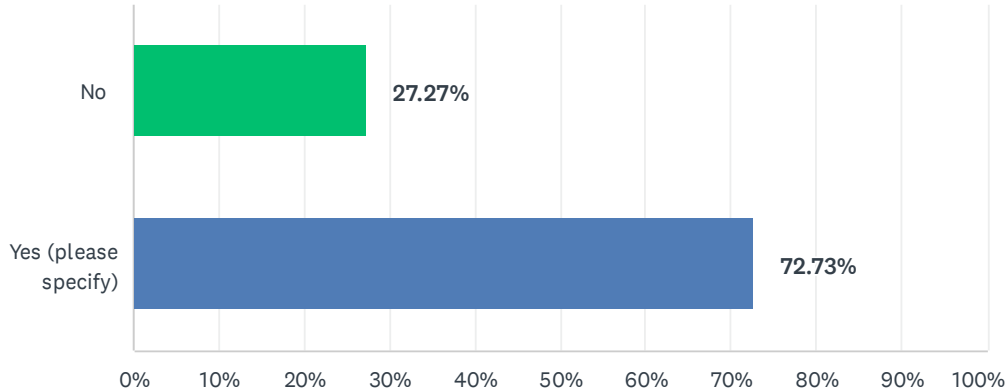
Q10 Is there anything you feel is missing from the Flourish Food System Framework to make it more relevant to your work and/or community?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 12

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Unsure	1/10/2024 10:45 AM
2	no	1/9/2024 4:17 PM
3	How does it reflect the fact that we are a major food bowl? Needs more local context and data around the why and what? How do we engage existing players in the space? and how do we make it accessible to all? Due to our physical isolation - Transport and logistics of accessing food could be an issue for our community with any break down of infrastructure ie transport - is this being taken into account too or is it out of scope?	12/21/2023 6:52 PM
4	Not at this time.	12/20/2023 11:59 AM
5	N/a	12/19/2023 9:38 AM
6	education of 'healthy eating' - using what ingredients you have to fuel your body, addressing food insecurity directly.	12/14/2023 3:13 PM
7	Not sure	12/14/2023 2:37 PM
8	a bit of historical work in this space for context (Healthy Together Mildura for example) and how the current projects (for example Food Next Door) got to where they and how? would be good to present that this work isnt new, but needs to be current. Make a stronger case about the food systems and health. some type of research or epidemiolocal evidence to support the importance for this work. Inny's presentation covered this really well, would be nice to see this translated into the policy. Also, maybe connections to other planetary health and food systems policies	12/13/2023 2:16 PM
9	See above.	12/13/2023 10:32 AM

Q11 Did you learn anything new from the Regional Food System Framework workshop you attended?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 10

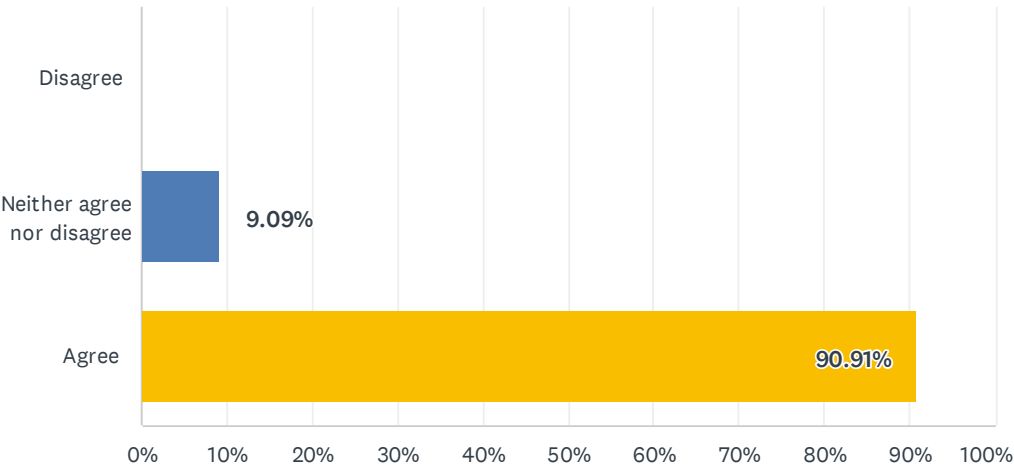


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	27.27%	3
Yes (please specify)	72.73%	8
TOTAL		11

#	YES (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Greater understanding of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Food System Framework and how it is implemented.	1/9/2024 3:34 PM
2	That people are on the same page about how we need to be thinking about this	12/21/2023 8:36 PM
3	Wasn't in attendance.	12/20/2023 12:00 PM
4	Stats on food systems.	12/19/2023 9:39 AM
5	The absence of farmers was obvious. Great start, I'm glad it's happening.	12/15/2023 12:58 PM
6	What exactly the purpose of the framework is	12/14/2023 3:26 PM
7	Didn't necessarily learn anything new, but was helpful to link the data presented by Inny with the Policy, and then try to think about how Flourish can be adapted to fit our region.	12/13/2023 2:23 PM
8	It was great to hear staff from SCHS and MRCC collaborating between their organisations and a genuine willingness to work together and not overlap or replicate work. It was also great to hear acknowledgement of the local food system work that has been done in our region to date primarily by community and not-for-profits.	12/13/2023 10:35 AM

Q12 Did the workshop provide you with enough opportunities for your opinions to be heard? (select one response below)

Answered: 11 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Disagree		0.00%	0
Neither agree nor disagree		9.09%	1
Agree		90.91%	10
TOTAL			11

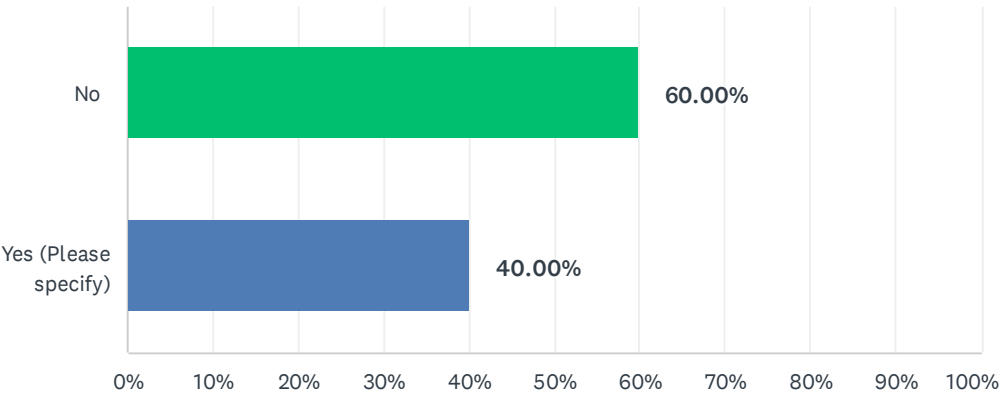
Q13 What did you find most useful in the stakeholder workshop?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 10

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Initial presentation and overview	1/9/2024 3:34 PM
2	provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of participants perspective on food security and healthy food systems as it related to their particular LGA.	1/9/2024 2:04 PM
3	Hearing about the Flourish program, discussing and networking. T	1/9/2024 9:22 AM
4	It was a safe, welcoming and respectful space	12/21/2023 8:36 PM
5	N/A	12/20/2023 12:00 PM
6	Presentation on stats.	12/19/2023 9:39 AM
7	well facilitated.	12/15/2023 12:58 PM
8	Hearing from people in different communities and their ideas/suggestions/concerns. Great conversations	12/14/2023 3:49 PM
9	Breakout room discussions	12/14/2023 3:26 PM
10	Always helpful and meaningful to have people together in a room, which allows for good conversation & networking.	12/13/2023 2:23 PM
11	To hear a genuine desire to change our food system.	12/13/2023 10:35 AM

Q14 Is there anything that could have improved your stakeholder workshop experience?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
No		60.00% 6
Yes (Please specify)		40.00% 4
TOTAL		10

#	YES (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	More attendees	1/9/2024 3:34 PM
2	Local, seasonal food served would have made sense!	12/21/2023 8:36 PM
3	could have been worthwhile to find out what each stakeholder was doing in this space, or had plans of doing in this space.	12/13/2023 2:23 PM
4	It would have been great to hear more from farmers and food aggregators/distributors.	12/13/2023 10:35 AM