

COFFS HARBOUR GREENS

INITIATIVE

GROW THE GROWER



PREPARED BY

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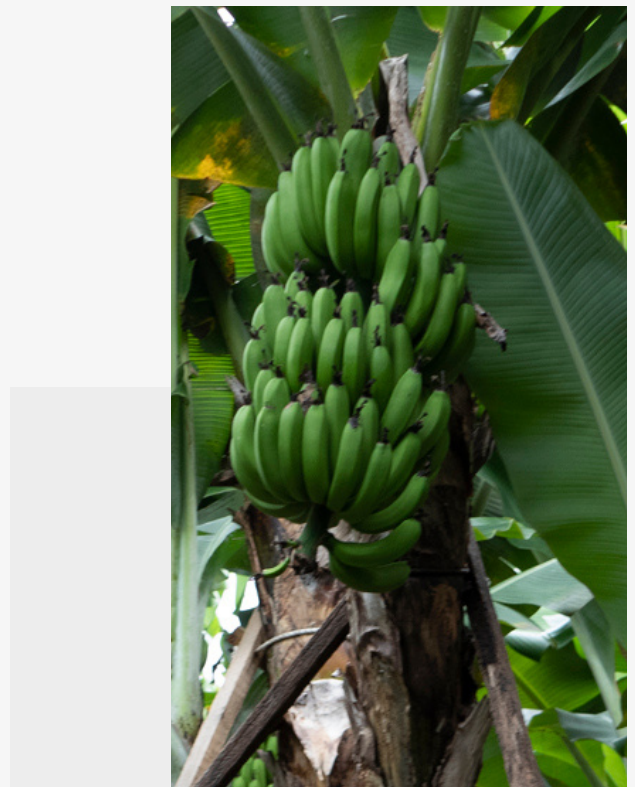
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Why support local food producers?

There are several reasons our local food supply needs Council support:

1. **Inequity:** Farmers produce food and fibre products for large inter-state or global markets whereby wholesale and retail forces limit options for growers and consumers. This limitation is designed to benefit the 'middle-men' of the supply chain with farmers often struggling to meet market expectations.
2. **Waste:** Our agri-buisness driven food supply is a leading cause of food waste with an estimated 60% food produced thrown out. It is understood that 20% of the supply chain is wasted at the farm gate due to a range of conditions placed on growers. We need to reverse this trend and strengthening local growers can create less waste and better quality produce.
3. **Climate change:** Large agriculture businesses are also a significant contributor to climate change globally and in Australia. The industrialisation of our food chain has lead to unsustainable practices with long term impacts of fossil fuel derived foods leaving an undesirable legacy of pollution in our environment.

4. **Community:** Further, there is also a large disconnect between producers of our food and the consumers who buy it. The size and scale of the agri-business model has created a divide between farmers and the dinner plate with supply chains that now span the globe. Localising our food system can bring growers and consumers together increasing social connections and community.



GROW THE GROWER

BACKGROUND

The Grow the Grower idea came from an initiative out of the Eurobodalla Shire on the NSW South Coast:

Sustainable Agriculture and Gardening Eurobodalla (SAGE) is a community-driven initiative created to develop opportunities for sustainable agricultural practices and to support the local small-scale farming community on the south coast of NSW.

By establishing organisational support for small-scale growers, SAGE has managed to build their local food network producing food products of very high quality. This has led to a growing demand by consumers for the availability of fresh and locally sourced food.



While SAGE offers an excellent example of what can be achieved, a similar local growers market would be tailored to our community's needs and expectations. We would like to see Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) develop a framework that would grow a strong local market in our area and create many benefits for growers, consumers and the wider business community.



HOW WILL IT WORK

The concept will draw on the strategies and organisational structures already in place from SAGE and the Eurobodalla Shire. Coffs Harbour already has a strong network of small-scale growers who have the capacity to contribute to a local market. As an example, our region can grow the following fruits – Banana's, Avocado's, Keitt Mango's, Kiwi Fruit's, Stone Fruit's, Paw Paw's, Citrus varieties (mandarins, lemons) and Apples.

We would expect that Council deliver a weekly market event that genuinely represents a farmer's market either in its existing location in the CBD mall or at another central location such as Brelsford Park.

The SAGE market concept is unique and delivers a small festival experience beginning at 3pm every Tuesday along the picturesque Riverside Park in the township of Moruya.

We would welcome Council build on this initiative and actively support our hard working local small-scale growers. According to Korora banana grower, David Tate, many are struggling to remain viable:

If it costs \$15 to produce a box of banana's and I'm currently selling it for \$8, then I'm going backwards.



HOW WILL IT WORK

CONTINUED

To create a thriving local horticulture industry requires thinking outside the box and we call on council to implement plans that develop initiatives such as:

- Land share agreements - rate cut for land holders that encourages land sharing sea changer incentives
- Central packing infrastructure that acts as a hub for local growers, info and meeting place
- Farmer Market encouragement for Coffs producers
- Horticulture Start-Ups
- Horticulture Publication

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Why this would work

Fresh food produced locally on 5 acres or less is an initiative that works as is the case of the SAGE markets. This way of producing local food is seasonal and dependent on social capital as much as developing land sharing agreements. This system of producing and selling food builds economic and agricultural resilience into our local community whilst simultaneously reducing pollution. We believe Coffs Harbour is well placed to benefit from this small-scale farming initiative producing fresh healthy food products that benefits growers and buyers.

