



# Victorian Journal of Home Economics

Volume 55 Number 2 2016



# Contents

|  |    |  |    |
|--|----|--|----|
| Foreword   | 1  | Food, culture and community  | 19 |
| Introducing the new VCE Food Studies   | 2  | Supporting the nutritional wellbeing of adolescents: Findings from the Youth2000 surveys | 22 |
| Developing your own assessment tasks   | 4  | Implementing the right to food in Australia  | 25 |
| Unit 1: Food origins (in other words, why do we eat what we eat?)                        | 8  | Food systems infographics  | 30 |
| Social struggle, tall tales and stereotypes: A closer look at food in colonial Australia | 12 | Submission guidelines and contributor notes  | 34 |



## About Home Economics Victoria

Home Economics Victoria was established in 1958 as a professional association for teachers, and is the peak home economics organisation in the state of Victoria, Australia. The organisation supports educators in empowering young people to live sustainably and take responsibility for their own physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of Home Economics Victoria.

At the time of writing, all internet addresses included in articles were correct. Owing to the dynamic nature of the internet, however, we cannot guarantee their continued validity.

ISSN 1836-7275

## Home Economics Victoria

605/198 Harbour Esplanade  
Docklands VIC 3008 Australia

Telephone: +61 3 9642 1061  
Facsimile: +61 3 9642 2418

Email: [office@hev.com.au](mailto:office@hev.com.au)

[www.homeeconomics.com.au](http://www.homeeconomics.com.au)

© 2016 Published by  
Home Economics Victoria

The Victorian Journal of Home Economics is published twice yearly.

Acting Editor: Jo Scanlan

Designer: Savanah Design



Cover image: Melbourne's immigrant food culture is vibrant, dynamic and, for many, everyday: Raffela Muscatello prepares anchovies for preservation

(Photography by Patrick Honan)

# Foreword

Welcome to this special VCE Food Studies issue. We hope you find it both interesting and of immediate use for your Food Studies planning and teaching. To those who don't teach VCE or, for that matter, food-related subjects, do take a look. We think you'll find it worthwhile.

We are proud of the writing talent we have gathered for these pages, and the depth of expertise and insight they have delivered. Beyond the details and demands of the study design, we hope that one thing comes through: the intent of VCE Food Studies to equip young people to know their food. So many good things can flow from this: practical skills, confident decisions, discernment, enjoyment. Health.

We begin with coverage of the VCE study review process, new content and approaches to assessment, courtesy of the VCAA's Leanne Compton and 2016 State Reviewer Christine Wintle. Jo Scanlan and Charmaine O'Brien then provide some history on a plate, Jo from a global perspective and Charmaine taking aim at some entrenched views about Australian colonial food. Patrick Honan gets into the Food Studies nitty gritty by linking food with identity, culture and community, with a piece that is all at once charming, familiar, insightful and informative.

Jennifer Utter and her team from the Adolescent Health Research Group (University of Auckland) have done a superb job in unpacking survey data and proposing how to promote and support the nutritional wellbeing of young people. Her conclusions reflect one of the cornerstone inquiry bases of VCE Food Studies: how does food (and the way we eat) have an impact on connectedness and wellbeing?

Rebecca Lindberg, Martin Caraher and Kate Wingrove introduce the topic of the human right to adequate food and explore whether it is fulfilled in contemporary Australia, in light of ongoing food insecurity. Links are made throughout to different parts of the Food Studies curriculum. And finally – inspired by Nick Rose's presentation at our July Food Studies Conference – we present a series of food systems infographics. The intent here is to provoke discussion and encourage inquiry – not to overwhelm you with complexity!

All the best with your 2017 Food Studies adventures. Here at Home Economics Victoria, we will continue to support your ongoing implementation of the new curriculum.

# Introducing the new VCE Food Studies

## Abstract

During 2014 and 2015, the VCE Food and Technology study design was reviewed and a revised study with a new name VCE Food Studies developed. This year, professional learning has been provided to support implementation commencing in 2017. It has been a significant team effort that has been challenging and rewarding for the many teachers and experts involved.

This article outlines the process for reviewing and developing VCE studies and explains some of the major changes across the new and revised VCE Food Studies study design. A summary of key changes is presented in the article along with specific changes to each of the four units.

## How does a review happen?

The review or development of a VCE study is a lengthy process and is really an ongoing, continuous process. Every time the phone rings or I get an email from a teacher with a question about the study design, this contributes to a picture of how well the study design is working.

The school-based assessment audits that the VCAA runs annually also provide useful information about how teachers are implementing the studies. Our other regular processes are also a useful source of feedback: School-assessed task sessions, examination panels and assessors all provide information about how the study design is being implemented in schools.

### Stage 1

Once the end of an accreditation period is approaching, the review process becomes formalised and moves into what we call Stage 1. Stage 1 requires a recommendation to be made to the VCAA Board about whether the accreditation period of a study can be extended or whether a minor or major review is needed. This stage provides an opportunity for synthesis of feedback collected throughout the life of the study design, analysis of assessment and enrolment data, a survey of national and international practice and the collection of more formal feedback through focus groups, the chief assessor, exam panel chair, state reviewer and professional associations. Other sources may be

drawn on if particular issues emerge, for example an academic with particular expertise may be asked to contribute an analysis or targeted report.

### Stage 2

Once the VCAA Board approves the recommendation to review a study made at the conclusion of Stage 1, the review or development moves into Stage 2. Stage 2 involves a representative group of teachers, academics and industry representatives, who work with the relevant curriculum manager to review the study in detail and propose specific changes. The review panel must be balanced in terms of representation including (but not limited to) gender, sector, age, experience and region. The review panel members must be approved by the VCAA's senior internal committee.

The actual drafting of the revisions to a study design is the responsibility of an expert, usually a teacher, who is appointed and paid to do this significant work. The writer and the review panel have a close and important relationship. The review panel guides and advises on the direction for the study design based on all of the information gathered in Stage 1.

Needless to say, panel meetings are characterised by robust discussion and debate, thorough referencing of information and evidence, and any issue that is contentious receives particular discussion. I can describe some of the activities that went on during this most recent set of reviews:

- analysis of Stage 1 information to highlight themes and issues to be addressed as part of the review
- identification and debate of priority areas which must be addressed as part of the review, versus areas that could be addressed as part of the review
- presentation of possible solutions and discussion and debate about strengths and weaknesses
- developing teaching and learning programs/activities and assessment aligned to possible solutions to test validity
- revisiting national and international curriculum to test and source ideas
- consideration of impact on teacher and student workload.

Midway through the review process, the writer and curriculum manager submit a draft of the study design to be released for public consultation. This draft must be approved by the Senior Secondary Curriculum and Assessment Committee, a sub-committee of the VCAA Board.

The consultation process is crucial to canvass the opinion of the teaching community. Feedback received as part of the consultation must be considered by the review panel. Consultation feedback can and does change study designs. An important part of the consultation process is the appointment of the independent reviewers. These are experts who are usually academics and teachers who provide a structured report on the study design. The academic reviewer is usually from an interstate or international organisation.

Once the final draft of the study design is complete, it must be submitted to the VCAA Board with an account of how consultation feedback has been addressed. Once approved by the Board, the study design is submitted to the Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) for accreditation in the year prior to the accreditation period.

So, all of the above provides an account of *how* the review process happens.

The following section takes each of the key changes across the revised Food Studies study design and gives a rationale.

## Revised VCE Food Studies

VCE Food Studies is the study of food and its effects on our daily lives. It takes an interdisciplinary approach to the exploration of food, with an emphasis on extending food knowledge and skills and building individual pathways to health and wellbeing through the application of practical food skills. VCE Food Studies provides a framework for informed and confident food selection and food preparation within today's complex architecture of influences and choices.

Practical work is integral to Food Studies. In the context of Food Studies, the scope of practical activities has been broadened and could include cooking, demonstrations, creating and responding to design briefs, dietary analysis, food sampling and taste-testing, sensory analysis, guest speakers, industry visits, market tours, product analysis or scientific experiments.

So in a nutshell, the new VCE Food Studies study design:

- has an interdisciplinary approach to food, with the inclusion of a broader range of new and contemporary issues
- has a greater emphasis on healthy eating across all four units
- incorporates evidence-based research and a critical inquiry approach across all four units
- explores food through a range of practical activities with increased alignment with theoretical content; there is a broader definition of practical experiences and a focus on development of food skills
- replaces the School-assessed Task (SAT) in Units 3 and 4 with school-assessed coursework; a design process, previously used in the SAT, has been retained in Unit 2
- builds on knowledge and skills developed in the Victorian Curriculum at levels 9–10
- mandates practical work as part of the assessment of each area of study.

## Specific changes

### Unit 1: Food origins

Unit 1 retains two areas of study, now entitled Area of Study 1: Food around the world and Area of Study 2: Food in Australia. This unit introduces new content with a focus on food from historical and cultural perspectives and an emphasis on critical inquiry. There is a removal of content related to food safety and hygiene and classifications of food to avoid duplication of content with F–10 curriculum. Content related to the functional properties of food has been moved to Unit 3 where the science of food is studied.

### Unit 2: Food makers

Unit 2 also retains two areas of study, now entitled Area of Study 1: Food industries and Area of Study 2: Food in the home. In this unit there is a focus on food systems in contemporary Australia. There is new content related to commercial food production in Australia, encompassing primary production, food processing and manufacturing, and the retail and food service sectors, providing an overview of the range of career paths in the food industry. Content related to design processes and the Food Standards Code has been moved from Unit 3 Area of Study 1 to strengthen the teaching of the design process and the adaptation of recipes in this unit. Content related to food safety and hygiene and selection of tools and equipment has been removed to avoid duplication of content in the F–10 curriculum. A strong emphasis on critical inquiry to build on the F–10 curriculum has been incorporated into the content.

### Unit 3: Food in daily life

Unit 3 now has two areas of study, entitled Area of Study 1: The science of food and Area of Study 2: Food choice, health and wellbeing. This unit has an increased focus on the roles, influences and impacts of food from scientific and social perspectives. There is consolidation of content related to properties of food, a greater emphasis on discussing and debating issues and critical inquiry, and a focus on evidence-based research principles in regards to food selection. Content related to design processes has been shifted to Unit 2, and content related to food safety and hygiene has been removed to avoid duplication of content in the F–10 curriculum.

### Unit 4: Food issues, challenges and futures

Unit 4 retains two areas of study, entitled Area of Study 1: Environment and ethics and Area of Study 2: Navigating food information. The content in this unit focuses on debates relating to global and Australian food systems. There is also the addition of new content with a focus on individual responses to food information and misinformation with an emphasis on critical inquiry.

## Conclusion

The reviews of VCE studies are thorough and evidence-based, and it may be useful to consider the how and why of the VCE Food Studies study review as you set out to develop teaching, learning and assessment programs that support your students to achieve as well as they can during their VCE.

While there are some years before we start the review process formally again, the ongoing process of gathering feedback has already begun. I encourage you to consider how VCE Food Studies works, how it meets the needs of your students and whether it teaches and assesses important knowledge and skills. And when the time comes, to take the opportunity to provide feedback and have your say about the future of VCE Food Studies.

## References

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2013, *Principles and guidelines for the development and review of VCE studies* [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/VCE\\_principles\\_guidelines\\_development\\_review\\_VCE\\_studies2013.pdf](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/VCE_principles_guidelines_development_review_VCE_studies2013.pdf)

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2016, *Victorian Certificate of Education Food Studies Study Design* [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/technology/FoodStudiesSD\\_2017.pdf](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/technology/FoodStudiesSD_2017.pdf)

## Author biography

Leanne Compton is Curriculum Manager, Design and Technologies for the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) where she is responsible for VCE Food Studies. Leanne has an extensive background in home economics and digital learning. She has a Bachelor of Education (Home Economics), Master of Information Technology in Education and is a PhD candidate.

[compton.leanne.l@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:compton.leanne.l@edumail.vic.gov.au)  
03 9032 1698

# Developing your own assessment tasks

Christine Wintle

## Principles of assessment

Assessment is carried out in a variety of ways and can be used for a variety of purposes. There are differences in who decides what is to be assessed, who carries out the assessment, where the assessment takes place, how the resulting responses made by students are scored and interpreted and what happens as a result (Wiliam 2004).

In the context of the Victorian Certificate of Education, the assessment provides opportunities for further learning by engaging students and allowing them to perform at the highest level. It describes student achievement and allows teachers to establish a ranking to assist with the process of statistical moderation. This presents as a challenge for teachers to pitch the assessment correctly in order to delineate the group of students they are teaching in a given year. Simultaneously, teachers set internal assessments that articulate and maintain a standard that has been set through a study design, providing students with the skills they require for an external examination at the end of the year (VCAA 2014).

School-assessed Coursework in VCE Food Studies can serve both summative and formative assessment purposes. Summative assessment, or assessment for learning, involves an evaluation of student achievement using internal assessment tasks resulting in a score that is submitted via the Victorian Assessment Software System (VASS). However, this type of assessment does need to be a means to an end for either the teacher or the learner. Formal and informal processes can be used by teachers and students to gather evidence for the purpose of improving learning, as in formative assessment. In other words, information derived from summative assessment in the form of School-assessed coursework tasks can be used to improve future student performance. The learner might

set goals after each progressive task, identifying key knowledge and skills that require improvement and reviewing the assessment preparation and process, with the use of study skills, revision programs, approaches to applying content and the use of effective feedback in modifying responses.

## Preparation and feedback

How effective is feedback in this process? In 1999 Hattie (cited in Hattie & Timperley 2007) reported a synthesis of over 500 meta-analyses, involving 450,000 effect sizes (i.e. measurements of the size of an effect) from 180,000 studies representing 20 to 30 million students on various influences on student achievement. Feedback was ranked in the top 5 to 10 highest influences (0.79) on achievement in Hattie's synthesis. Feedback should cause thinking and provide guidance on how to improve with explicit reference to marking schemes and rubrics from internal assessments. Ultimately, it should be more work for the recipient and not the deliverer. The aim is for students to learn to become self-regulators of their learning by using external feedback provided by the teacher and internal feedback when monitoring their own performance.

In setting school-based assessment in Victoria, it is common practice for schools to provide students with an assessment calendar with all of the school-based coursework dates on it so that students get an overall picture of their assessment load. Specific information is also provided to students about individual school-based coursework assessment as they approach the completion dates. The conditions under which the task is to be completed should be the same for all students. Documentation given to the students should include: the type of task (e.g. short written test); the date for completion; the time allowed for

the task (e.g. 60 minutes); allocation of marks (e.g. a breakdown of the questions and the mark allocation for each); details of materials requirements when completing the task (e.g. closed book – no text book or notes); and information on how to demonstrate high level of performance (e.g. the highest level performance descriptors from the assessment handbook).

## Steps in developing and managing assessment

### 1. Task selection

The first step involves choosing the assessment task where there is a range of options listed in the study design for School-assessed coursework. It is possible for students in the same class to undertake different options; however, teachers must ensure that the tasks are comparable in scope and demand. For example, in VCE Food Studies, Unit 3 Area of Study 1: The science of food, the assessment tasks include a range of practical activities and records of two practical activities related to the functional properties of components of food. In addition, any one or a combination of the following must be completed: a short written report (media analysis, research inquiry, structured questions and case study analysis), an annotated visual report, an oral presentation, a practical demonstration or a video or podcast (VCAA 2016).

### 2. Task mapping

The task(s) should then be mapped against the key knowledge and key skills. Each outcome that is contextualised in the study design is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills. The key knowledge provides the content and what students are required to know. The

key skills provide detail about how students are to apply the knowledge and what they are required to do in terms of the outcome. The key skills are examinable. However,

not all key skills may be applicable to any one assessment or School-assessed coursework but all key skills following each key knowledge should be covered in each unit. The

key skills are useful when writing assessments so that students become familiar with their use and application.

Figure 1: An example of how key knowledge and skills can be mapped against assessment tasks for VCE Food Studies, Unit 3, Area of Study 1

| Task type   | Key knowledge   | Key skills   | Task design  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Practical activity with records of two practical activities on functional properties of components of food</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>principles of heat transfer in cooking techniques, and the effects on the properties of food of dry and moist heat, electromagnetic radiation, mechanical action, enzymes and changes to pH</li> <li>functional properties of protein, sugar, starch, fats and oils and the physical and chemical changes that occur to these components during preparation and cooking including dextrinization, caramelisation, gelatinisation, emulsification, denaturation and coagulation, aeration and the Maillard reaction</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate a range of practical food skills to create healthy meals</li> <li>use appropriate food science terminology and techniques to describe and demonstrate chemical and physical changes to food during preparation and cooking</li> <li>use equipment and techniques appropriately</li> <li>demonstrate organisational and technical skills in relation to the preparation, cooking and presentation of nutritious meals in a range of practical activities</li> </ul>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practical activities + infographic on browning processes (Piktochart)</li> <li>Practical activities + annotated images of processes that change the texture of food during preparation (Thinglink)</li> </ol> |
| <b>Oral presentation or a practical demonstration (video format)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physiology and conditioning of appetite, satiety and sensory appreciation of food</li> <li>microbiology of intestinal tract and sequential process of digestion of carbohydrates, protein and fats, including enzymatic hydrolysis, absorption and utilisation of these macronutrients in the body</li> <li>rationale and evidence-based principles of the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, with focus on ways in which food selection can assist in prevention of obesity and related lifestyle diseases</li> <li>biological reasons for differences in dietary requirements, considering factors including age, sex, pregnancy and lactation and activity levels</li> <li>physiology of food allergies and intolerances including how allergy and intolerance differ and their respective symptoms and cause and management</li> <li>microorganisms that cause food poisoning, their effects and preventative practices for a safe food supply</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain appetite, satiety and the sensory appreciation of food</li> <li>explain physiology of eating and digesting, absorption of macronutrients</li> <li>apply principles of Australian Dietary Guidelines and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating to planning food intake</li> <li>evaluate nutritional quality of foods and meals</li> <li>explain and justify the substitution of ingredients in the management of food allergies and intolerances</li> <li>justify and apply principles of safe and hygienic food handling practices in the prevention of food poisoning</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food demonstration (video format) on how to prepare a recipe that addresses a food allergy or a food intolerance</li> </ol>   |

# Developing your own assessment tasks

## 3. Planning for high performance

In what can then be interpreted as a backwards design, the characteristics in a student response are then determined for each assessment task. This clarifies exactly what it is students should be able to do to allow them to perform at the highest level. In Units 3 and 4, advice is provided for teachers by the VCAA regarding performance descriptors. However, in Units 1 and 2 these are to be developed by the teacher. Sharing the performance descriptors or criteria for assessment with students allows them to determine exactly what it is they are expected to do and what a high-level response looks like.

If we look at the oral presentation task from Figure 1, the following assessment criteria might be developed: comprehensive description of the process of digesting and absorbing food; very detailed explanation of the relationship between appetite, satiety and the sensory appreciation of food; very thorough analysis of the differences in the causes of symptoms of food allergies, food intolerances and justification of the substitution of ingredients in their management; comprehensive description of the causes and effects of food contamination and very thorough identification and justification of preventable practices for a safe food supply and a very clear understanding of the principles of the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, with appropriate and very effective application to meal planning and evaluation.

## 4. Teaching knowledge and skills through assessment

In a teaching program, learning activities developed by the teacher allow students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills so that they can carry out the assessment. In following the example of the oral presentation above, learning activities might include:

- researching the differences between food allergies and food intolerances and representing the findings in a Double Bubble thinking routine
- modifying a recipe to meet the needs of an individual with a food allergy or a food intolerance
- evaluating the nutritional quality of a daily diet, comparing the requirements with food intake and making recommendations for improvement
- researching the microorganisms that are pathogenic, documenting the type of microorganism against the sources, symptoms and incubation period
- making a list of preventative practices for the school canteen to reduce the risk of food poisoning
- undertaking a sensory analysis of a new product and explaining the potential forces that manipulate the way we think and feel about new foods
- writing a creative story from the point of view of the rice (carbohydrate) in a nori roll as it travels through the digestive system.

## 5. Diversifying tasks and opportunities

When designing the assessment task, it is preferable for a range of task types to be used across a given unit to give students a range of different opportunities to demonstrate their understanding. Clear instructions about the task are communicated with students, and in terms of equity, the scope and demands of the task need to be comparable for all students within the one class and for students in different classes of the same subject. Stimulus material can be used to develop the task, providing a source for developing questions that are related to the key skills.

In selecting a recipe to be used as part of the food demonstration example, students would need to consider whether ingredients can be modified to address a food allergy as well as an intolerance. For example, if Ricotta pancakes with caramelised banana was the recipe in focus, then an egg allergy and a lactose intolerance would allow the student to analyse similarities and differences in causes and symptoms. The original recipe could be redesigned and recipe modifications justified in accordance with allergy/intolerance and the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the placement of the meal in a healthy diet. The student could identify preventative food hygiene and safety practices and describe these in relation to the causes and effects of food contamination at key points during the demonstration. A description of the process of digestion for the main macronutrients could be discussed in the recipe, along with an explanation of the sensory properties with clear links to appetite and satiety. This would cover the key skills that have been attributed to this assessment task during the initial stages of planning.



## 6. Authentication

During the implementation of the assessment, every effort should be made by the teacher to reduce any authentication risks to ensure that the work is the student's own. In the case of the food demonstration, all students should be given the same amount of class time to plan and demonstrate their performance. As mentioned above, students are given the performance descriptors at the outset of the task. Students should keep a record of their notes during the planning and research stages with the teacher monitoring the task during allocated class time. Acknowledging relevant sources of data minimises any breach of copyright. A video of the food demonstration could be recorded during class time – students might work in pairs to record each other's food demonstration in a practical kitchen as an efficient way of completing the assessment. A student's performance would then be assessed against the performance descriptor, with a raw score allocated. Students should be made aware that their score may alter according to statistical moderation after the end-of-year examination. Feedback is then provided to the student by the teacher and can be used for both summative and formative purposes.

## Preparing for an end-of-year examination

Students will acquire key skills by completing School-assessed coursework tasks throughout the duration of Units 3 and 4 in order to demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of a set of outcomes. Students are also expected to apply these skills in an externally set end-of-year examination. It is important to note that the skills can be applied in different assessment tasks and not just in tests. Instead, test conditions might

be applied to the assessment tasks to reduce the risk of authentication issues arising. For example, test conditions might be applied when students complete a short written report. Also, learning tasks that allow students to transfer their knowledge and skills in a way similar to how they would respond to examination questions could be embedded into the teaching program. Responding to examination-style questions provides students with an opportunity to develop skills such as reading and accurately interpreting questions, writing to a time constraint and responding in sufficient depth when considering the mark allocation and 'action word' that is used in the question (i.e. determining what the question is asking the student to do).

## Conclusion

In concluding, the end-of-year examination might be considered by some to be similar to running a marathon. However, to prepare for a marathon you don't necessarily run a marathon as part of the preparation. Instead, you carefully prepare for the event by using heart-rate data from training and races of shorter duration, undertaking extra strength training and developing mental toughness. In a similar way, the SAC tasks can prepare students by providing them with the information they need to refine their skills. The relationship between the student and the teacher is paramount in achieving success, as is the skill of the teacher in writing assessment that suits the program and lifts learning and performance. Developing a winning formula over time will be the key for teachers of the new study.

## References

- Education Services Australia, Curriculum Corporation, 'Formative use of summative assessment', retrieved from [www.assessmentforlearning.edu.au/professional\\_learning/formative\\_use\\_of\\_summative\\_assessment/formative\\_landing\\_page.html](http://www.assessmentforlearning.edu.au/professional_learning/formative_use_of_summative_assessment/formative_landing_page.html) accessed 3 July 2016
- Hattie, JA & Timperley, H 2007, 'The power of feedback', *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 77, no. 1, pp. 81–112.
- VCAA 2014, *VCE Food and Technology Assessment Handbook*, p. 4.
- VCAA 2016, *VCE Food Studies Study Design 2017–2021*, p. 18.
- Wiliam, D 2004, *Keeping learning on track: Integrating assessment with instruction*, retrieved from [www.dylanwiliam.org/Dylan\\_Wiliams\\_website/Papers\\_files/IAEA%2004%20paper.pdf](http://www.dylanwiliam.org/Dylan_Wiliams_website/Papers_files/IAEA%2004%20paper.pdf) accessed 3 July 2016.
- ### Author biography
- Christine Wintle is currently the State Reviewer for VCE Food and Technology, auditing School-based assessment on behalf of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. She is also on the Top Designs panel for VCE Food and Technology which involves selecting work for display at Melbourne Museum during the Season of Excellence. Christine currently teaches at Methodist Ladies' College where she holds the position of Head of Home Economics and Hospitality.

# Unit 1: Food origins (in other words, why do we eat what we eat?)

Jo Scanlan

## What's it all about? (Did someone mention sex?)

We all love food, right, and that is why we study, teach and work in this field. But we don't all love history, and nor do we necessarily feel confident that we know anything about it. So what is this new curriculum tangent that VCE Food Studies Unit 1 is taking us on?

The short answer is that interest in food history and culture is flourishing and growing throughout the world – including in universities – so shouldn't be ignored in a senior secondary food curriculum.

A better answer is: it's so great! Putting 'sex' in the subheading wasn't just a trick to get you to read on. After twenty-five years working in the field of food history, Ivan Day was asked (at the 2015 launch of the British Museum of Food) whether he had seen increasing awareness among curators and in the community that 'food can tell good social, political and historical stories'.

'Absolutely,' he said. 'At first there was a degree of resistance, just as there has been in universities and history departments. But now suddenly the history of food is the new sex' (BBC Radio 4, 2015).

So! The purpose of this article is to invite teachers to be excited by the possibilities presented by the Unit 1 curriculum. The focus here will be on the key knowledge and key skills of Area of Study 1 Food around the world. This article aims to unpack and simplify Unit 1 AoS 1 content, and to reassure teachers that this curriculum is all about finding and sharing interesting food stories, unfamiliar tastes and new skills.

The emphasis is not on teachers having to carry out research or acquire new expertise but on encouraging students to get out there (like hunter-gatherers) and use their food knowledge to

plant the seed (like agriculturalists) of adventurous eating and confident cooking.

## It's about finding stories through food

Take the humble broad bean. It is one of the oldest cultivated crops in the United Kingdom, where people have been eating it as far back as the Iron Age (Saltmarsh 2013); that is, way before the arrival of the Romans and Christianity.

But hang on a minute. According to Tim Lambert (2015) 'Broad beans are native to the Middle East and South Asia. They were known to the ancient Greeks and they have been eaten in Europe ever since'.

Not so humble, then? In fact, a treasured elder with a cosmopolitan and intriguing pedigree. Broad beans, also known as fava beans, sure have a story to tell.

And yet it is still true to say that as far as the broad bean's existence in the UK is concerned, this delicious and protein-packed pulse has indeed been humble. According to Nick Saltmarsh, who has spearheaded a push to revive the fortunes of the fava bean (see <https://hodmedods.co.uk> for a great case study in food marketing and entrepreneurship): 'It was a crucial part of the British diet for centuries, but in more recent times it became stigmatised as a food of the poor, and fell out of fashion' (2013).

Ah, food fads. They have never made a lot of sense. But if you're looking for 'factors' influencing what we eat, you can already see quite an array in just one thread of the epic global tale of food: agriculture, exploration, trade, geography, economics, social status.

British farmers kept growing broad beans, as they knew that (like all pulses) they had the priceless ability to draw in

nitrogen and enrich the soil. A natural, free, edible fertilizer! No wonder it was called 'the farmer's friend' (Saladino 2016). But once the Brits decided they didn't really want to eat broad beans, the harvested crop was sold as livestock feed (nowadays it is even sold to salmon farms) and exported to the Middle East (where they, thankfully, remained faithful to the fava bean and other pulses).

This lack of regard for what is right on our doorstep is a familiar tale for Australians. Sometimes we need a bit of help in appreciating what we have. However, this attitude has also fuelled human exploration and discovery throughout the ages, including into new frontiers of food.

It truly is a rich, fascinating and delicious journey to discover more about what people eat (and don't eat) and where foods (and the ideas around them) have come from. Looking at the past can help us to understand the present. Knowing that food has an evolving history – and that the fundamentals of enjoyment and nourishment don't really change – can help our food decisions today.

## Unpack the basics and then cut your students loose

There is so much rich material to be found around this area of study that it will be important for teachers to impose some boundaries, at least in the beginning. Try to unpack the key knowledge and provide students with an overview. Distil it and repackage it (or ask your students to try to do this).

One approach is to boil key knowledge down (pun intended) to several questions. Here's one example of what Unit 1 AoS 1 means:

- Why do we eat what we eat?

- How and why did we (generally) turn to agriculture, and what were the consequences?
- Take a look at all the choices at the supermarket and in restaurants today. Answer the question your ancestors might ask: what happened?

Alternatively, try to summarise the major focus and intent of the key knowledge. Unit 1 AoS 1 can be summarised as follows: how do we feed ourselves, and why has this differed across time and across the globe? I would argue that it's all about foodways. I don't introduce this term to cause confusion – it can be a handy descriptor. To quote Wikipedia, foodways are: 'cultural, social and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food'. This is a very familiar term to those who look at food through the social science lens (although it's not specifically used in the VCAA study design).

### The emergence of different foodways

The first question raised by the key knowledge is about 'factors influencing the emergence' of different foodways around the world. There need not be a deep dive into these factors here; an introductory brainstorm would uncover many that we can still see at work today. These historical considerations could include (but need not be limited to) factors that are:

- geographical (climate, water, soil, topography, latitude and isolation i.e. access to the rest of the world)
- biological (naturally occurring local species of plants and animals)
- economic (national wealth, levels of engagement in global travel and trade)
- political (role in world patterns of colonisation, warfare and immigration)
- religious (patterns of taboo and reverence relating to particular foods, food-related gods e.g. relating to

natural elements such as the sun, or to the harvest).

Various segues into other key knowledge points are already obvious from the above points, for example the rise of agriculture in places that had a natural bounty of plants and animals suitable for cultivation/domestication (and it follows that such places would also – in times of surplus and assuming transport/technology allowed it – be likely to engage in food trade).

### 'One selected region other than Australia'

To continue the discussion of content in a linear and sequential way (which is never, by the way, encouraged by the VCAA): the key knowledge then delves into the development of foodways in different 'regions'. There is no mandated interpretation of 'regions' here, and certainly when students are selecting a 'region' to focus on, they should be encouraged to follow their interests, and/or to be piqued by what is timely and topical (for example, the Olympic games in Brazil or Japan, both of which have fascinating, unique cuisines, richly influenced by their history).

'Region' need not be one of the early agricultural centres of the world. It could be a country, it could even be a city, as long as there are 'historical developments' to be examined and a 'distinctive cuisine' to be discovered. However, if this inquiry is to lead into agriculture – widely seen as the historical catalyst for many human endeavours including global exploration and trade (not to mention warfare and domination) – it may suit teachers to facilitate an overview of the early rise of agricultural food production and from there look at 'patterns in the global spread of food production and the growth in trade of food commodities'. The earliest agricultural food production regions could be described as:

- the 'Fertile Crescent' of southwestern Asia (which today includes parts of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Israel)
- the Far East – including the Yellow River and Yangtze River valleys in China
- Mesoamerica – which may essentially be considered to be Mexico
- Eastern North America (parts of Canada and the US)
- the South American highlands (the coast of Ecuador and the Peruvian mountains)
- the New Guinea highlands
- West Africa.

### Caution: Agriculture was not a panacea for humanity

Next in the key knowledge is an examination of how and why agricultural food systems arose and a comparison with hunter-gatherer approaches. A note of caution here: take care not to present a linear history of hunter-gathering inevitably followed by the 'progress' of agriculture. Students should be aware that these two systems often co-existed for many generations within a region, even for thousands of years, and the advancement of agriculture throughout the world was gradual. Both systems had benefits and problems for their communities. The giving up of hunter-gathering in the early agricultural regions exacted a high price for humanity – for example in susceptibility to bad seasons, overcrowded living conditions, the advent of animal-borne diseases and epidemics and the loss of diversity in the everyday foods that were eaten – a loss of diversity that continues today. The social costs were also high for groups that had previously enjoyed the autonomy and self-sufficiency of providing themselves with food, but then found themselves cast low in urban social hierarchy. Again, these social issues are with us still.

# Unit 1: Food origins (in other words, why do we eat what we eat?)

Lessons for today: being in control of your daily food supply can mean greater freedom and much better health. However, putting someone else in charge can mean more time for education and to explore the world (ask any farmer; and we could bring feminism into that equation too). On the fundamentals of the so-called Agricultural Revolution I highly recommend the Crash Course World History episode produced by PBS LearningMedia (available on YouTube: see reference section). It's lots of information in just 11 minutes and John and Hank Green may not be everybody's cup of tea. But they actually do a great job of summarising the prevailing research.

## Global food production and trade

In other words, the last two dot points. Seriously, let your students do all the work here. Perhaps provide a couple of choice vignettes such as Christopher Columbus setting out to find a quicker route to the Spice Islands (Indonesia) to help Spain in its quest for greater wealth – and accidentally finding America. Now that was a nice find (for some).

Or find a choice quote to set the scene, such as (this again refers to the discovery of America): 'Although initially overlooked by the Spanish, the greatest reward this New World had to offer was food, not precious metals. In their relentless quest for metals, these foreign conquerors discovered much about the agriculture of the areas they invaded, and began sending specimens back to Europe and to the countless other regions of the world where their trading ships docked' (*Edible* 2008, p. 31). For a while, chocolate was a top-secret status symbol in the royal courts of Spain. Once the commoners found out about it there was no turning back ... although at the time it was a quite bitter (but very novel) beverage, not the chocolate we know and love today.

There is a seemingly infinite number of great resources (books, blogs, podcasts, documentaries, everything!) to be found on the histories of the commodities mentioned in the study design: grains, tea, coffee, chocolate, salt, spices and sugar. Often these accounts intersect and overlap. For example, the rise in desire for sugar in Europe after the arrival of tea (China), coffee (Yemen or Ethiopia, depending where you look) and chocolate (Mexico) is said to have led to the establishment of the African slave trade (*Edible* 2008). Sugar cane had been sourced from the south Pacific, and was subsequently grown in the Caribbean by slavers. This sorry trade, of course, changed everything, perhaps most notably the course of US history.

Please note that the key knowledge point about food trade is a 'such as' scenario, meaning that these commodities are 'serving suggestions only' for research and inquiry. The world is your oyster, so to speak.

The rise of technology and its effects on food and eating is not a prescriptive list of items and events, and is therefore relatively straightforward to chart. For an Australian perspective (from 1788), I highly recommend the website Australian food history timeline (linked in the reference section), a spin-off from Jan O'Connell's food memoir *Me and my big mouth*: it's an interesting, fun and dynamic site. There are many other similar resources online. So many technological changes have occurred even within the lifetimes of students and their parents and grandparents: this might be a good opportunity for constructing a timeline as a class – thereby bringing in individual experiences and 'food voices' – and for reflecting on the subsequent changes in the way we prepare and share food.

## Some different approaches to inquiry

This is year 11. Please don't be daunted, and please have fun. Treat the key knowledge and skills as a nourishing meal, not as an obstacle course. As with food, half the fun of history is in discovering something new, so do encourage your students to fall down those rabbit holes of inquiry, and to bite off big chunks of the course at a time if they want to.

It's possible to explore this curriculum content through different lenses, for example through ingredients, or cooking techniques. If I chose to conduct a serious inquiry into the (not so humble) broad bean, for example, it could take me to many places – as shown at the beginning of this article. Once, in its original habitat, it was gathered as a wild plant (can you tell me about that?). Then it was cultivated (why, how, when?). Many people admired it and it was taken to a. b. and c. (who, where?). It fell out of favour in Britain because ... but is still loved in the Middle East because ... Now it's trendy in Britain again (thanks, Yotam Ottolenghi). This story of multicultural deliciousness easily transitions to the practical class, where different culinary discoveries and ideas can be trialled and shared. It also makes several leaps into other units: food industry trends, opportunities and marketing (Unit 2); how food values and information can be shaped by the world around us (Unit 3); it even incidentally gives us insight into sustainable crop rotation (Unit 4).

Similarly, I could trace the history of an age-old cooking or preservation technique such as fermentation. This one would probably take me on an even more rollicking journey than the broad bean. I would come across the serious contention (cited in Pollan 2013) that people first started to cultivate grain not to sustainably feed themselves but to ensure that they always had enough grain for brewing

grog. (As an Australian, I do believe this one. Didn't we once use rum as currency?) I'm not suggesting setting up a class brewery but the possibilities for incorporating fermentation into your program are endless: cheese, yoghurt, sourdough bread, not to mention kimchi, sauerkraut and kombucha.

If students are encouraged to pursue their own version of the food history narrative (including the food production planning), there will be such rich pickings for shared enjoyment. It creates a solid resource for you to build on as a teacher.

## Conclusion

Around the world and here in Australia, interest and research into food has extended beyond culinary, sensory and health dimensions and into questions about culture, connection and identity. In many ways, our progress as a species and our interactions with the land and with each other have always been about food. The human quest over many millennia to sustain life and health, to experience the new and the novel, to accumulate knowledge, status and wealth, and to live with pleasure and comfort: all of these aspects of human endeavour have epic food stories to tell.

Australian food historian Charmain O'Brien (2011) has said 'I know so much about the world because of food'. Here's the thing: this is an exciting and illuminating door that is open to all of us, even if we resist the idea of 'history' in the academic sense. Look at the word: over 70 per cent story! Just a small amount of research and inquiry uncovers much that is fascinating and surprising.

Keep the focus on the exploration, preparation and enjoyment of food. As your students discover different foods eaten by different people in different times and places, keep asking questions: about how they were produced, the best ways to prepare and eat them, and how the pleasures

of these foods came to be shared with the rest of the world. Do these foods still exist today? If they do, what are some of the typical dishes, recipes, and preparation techniques?

Being Unit 1, your assessment is internal, and you can take the key knowledge exactly the distance that you wish to. This is above all about food, and the journey it's been on to get to our Australian table today. Let the students do the legwork, and together you will assemble a body of knowledge (and deliciousness) that – no matter what – will be interesting, worthwhile and useful. The idea is to encounter new ingredients, experiment with them, and connect to the origins of our food through inquiry and imagination.

Above all, enjoy. Bon appetite!

## References

- The Agricultural Revolution – Crash Course World History #1* (11 mins), PBS LearningMedia [www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/crash-course](http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/crash-course) OR Crash Course YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yocja\\_N5s1I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yocja_N5s1I)
- Edible: The illustrated guide to the world's food plants* 2008, Global Book Publishing NSW (consultants Barbara Santich & Geoff Bryant; contributors Josephine Bacon, Claire Clifton & 11 others).
- Lambert, Tim 2015 (updated), *A brief history of vegetables*, retrieved from [www.localhistories.org/vegetables.html](http://www.localhistories.org/vegetables.html)
- O'Brien, Charmaine 2011, interview by Ian Kath, *Your Story* podcast Ep 65 [yourstorypodcast.com/2011/10/charmaine-food-history-writing-indian-food](http://yourstorypodcast.com/2011/10/charmaine-food-history-writing-indian-food)
- O'Connell, Jan, Australian food history timeline (and the book *Me and my big mouth*), [australianfoodtimeline.com.au](http://australianfoodtimeline.com.au)
- Pollan, Michael 2013, *Cooked: A natural history of transformation*, Penguin Group, New York.

Saltmarsh, Nick 2013, 'British fava beans are making a comeback' (interview by Bibi van der Zee), *The Guardian online*, retrieved from [www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/feb/02/fava-beans-nick-saltmarsh](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/feb/02/fava-beans-nick-saltmarsh)

Saladino, Dan & Dillon, Sheila 2016, 'Raising the pulse', BBC Food Programme podcast, 1 August, [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07m4glv](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07m4glv)

VCAA 2016, VCE Food Studies Study Design 2017–2021, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Melbourne.

VCAA 2016, VCE Food Studies Advice for Teachers (online ePub, in production)

## Author biography

Jo Scanlan is a writer, editor and former home economics teacher. She was the appointed writer for the recent VCAA VCE Food Studies review, working in collaboration with the expert panel and curriculum manager. Jo runs a small publishing business specialising in food and health education.

[scanlan\\_jo@hotmail.com](mailto:scanlan_jo@hotmail.com)

# Social struggle, tall tales and stereotypes: A closer look at food in colonial Australia

Charmain O'Brien

## Abstract

Writers of Australian history typically chose to present the same negative stereotypes of colonial eating habits with little attempt at holistically examining and explaining the context and circumstances informing food choices in the period. Nor has there been much challenge to these unsavoury representations. This article aims to show how challenging these stereotypes to gain a more complex understanding of our food history might have benefits for our food present and future.



*The feted colonial 'caterers' Spiers and Pond: hipster forefathers! (Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection)*

## Colonial celebrity chefs?

After working up an appetite promenading the thousands of exhibits of the 1867 Paris Exposition visitors could choose to satiate themselves with a diversity of international food and drink. There was the novelty – for the time – of tea served with lemon slices in it at the Russian concession and iced brandy cocktails at the American bar; the exotica of Iberian drinks or coffee in a ‘real Algerian café’; the native sophistication of French dishes as well as Swiss, Prussian, Viennese and Bavarian offerings (*Argus*, 16 July 1867, pp. 5–6). Yet it was the joints of roast beef served up by a ‘caterer from the wilds of Australia’ that ‘carried off the palm [took the prize] for gastronomic achievements in the presence of all the cooks of the capitals and courts of Europe’ and showed ‘Frenchmen what they ought to eat’ (*South Australian Advertiser*, 13 November 1868, p. 12; O’Brien 2014). The ‘caterer’ in question was actually a duo, Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond, and they had run the upmarket Café de Paris in the apparent ‘wilderness’ of booming gold rush Melbourne.



*The Café de Paris, which opened in Melbourne around 1859 (Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection)*

## Sticking to our stereotypes

Imagine the gush of praise the media would shower on an Australian cook today if they won such Gallic acclaim: a book and television show deal would surely be forthcoming. In 1868 the colonial press found the news of one of their own winning the ‘rapturous approval’ of the French for their cookery inexplicable: the *South Australian Advertiser* declared it ‘strange indeed’ that someone from the ‘land of mutton and damper’ had been able to gain the approbation of the very race that held ‘the international stereotype for ... culinary superiority’ (Bannerman 2001, p. 218; Mennell 1985). In my experience contemporary Australians raised on the prevailing historical precept that the colonial diet consisted of little more than gargantuan serves of badly cooked greasy meat (mutton), bread (damper), overly sweet stewed tea and stodgy puddings usually find it equally perplexing to believe that their Anglo forefathers might have been capable of cooking meals that they, and global others, found satisfying and enjoyable.



*Colonial mutton (Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection)*

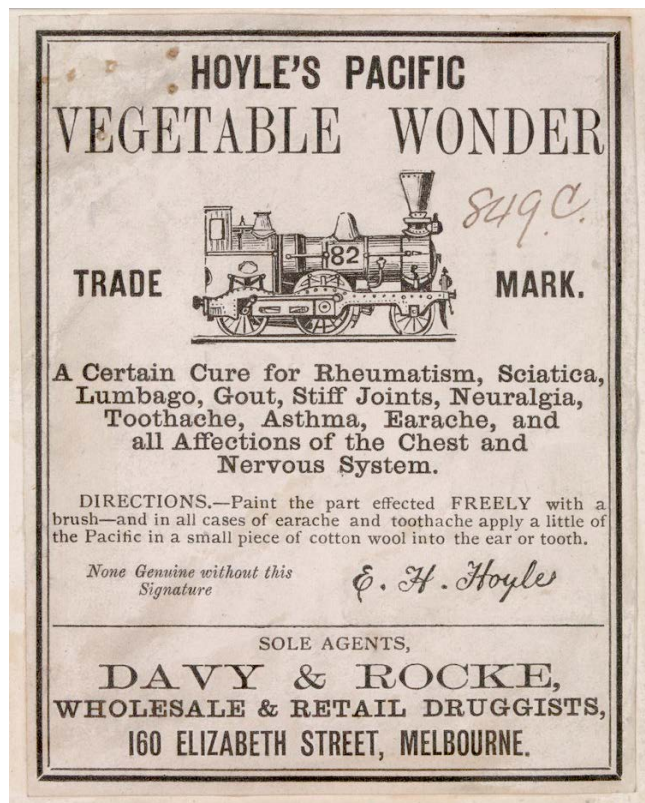
Admittedly the ‘elegant gastronomy’ (*South Australian Advertiser* 1868) of Spiers and Pond represents a singular example of historical culinary excellence; however, I often use it in my work to open the way to question if the food of colonial Australians was as universally abysmal as has been popularly accepted. My method in this is to use historical material, my lived experience of food and cookery and my imagination to go much further into the kitchens and dining rooms of early Australia than the accepted stereotypes take us – indeed these serve to halt us on the threshold. In deeply exploring people’s cookery pots you inevitably encounter their hearts and minds – and in this case we find a society as complex, as challenged by technological change, as diversified, and as interesting as we find ourselves today. My aim in doing this is to use food as a vehicle for pushing further

# Social struggle, tall tales and stereotypes: A closer look at food in colonial Australia

into Australian social and cultural history and opening up space for challenge and thereby expanding understanding.

## A consuming obsession

We are living in a time in which we have been encouraged – predominantly by the media and commercial entities – to be nothing short of obsessed by food and the consumption of it. The less useful consequences of this include significant imposts on individual, social and environmental health. Our world is saturated with visual, sensory and auditory cues inveigling us to eat and drink more than we need, often in subtle ways that we do not realise we are subject to and therefore cannot choose to exercise control over. More than half the Australian population is now overweight or obese and the often unconscious influences of this ‘obesogenic environment’ are considered to play a significant role in this critical health and social issue (Swinburn, Egger & Raza 1999, p. 570).



Colonial cure all (Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection)

Alongside this is a booming ‘lifestyle’ industry dominated by unqualified ‘experts’ who encourage people in practices such as over-consumption of so-called ‘super’ foods and

eating regimes that nonsensically reject and restrict certain food groups. At their most pernicious these dietary regimes can lead to nutritional deficiencies and facilitate the type of distorted thinking inherent in disordered eating. At the least they create confusion about what healthy eating is, and turn adherents into insufferable table companions. You usually don’t have to look very hard to discover a commercial product or service associated with this advice, and/or to see that the individual is propounding a personal philosophy with all the hallmarks of a religious fundamentalist. Yet we run after these people; we buy their books, products and dutifully consume the foods they recommend and when we don’t get a flat stomach and begin to ‘glow’ we turn to a new contemporary snake oil salesperson (last spotted peddling virgin paleo coconut fat). Nevertheless, because food so readily grabs people’s attention it can also be used to leverage more critical thinking about their immediate world.

The eminent art historian John Berger said that if we do not understand our past we are more easily ‘mystified’ and ‘less free to choose’ in our present. Exploring the history of what people have produced, cooked and eaten and the influences at play on these choices can be effective in growing understanding about the influences at work on our eating habits. We tend to be subject to the time we are living through; because we are emerged in it we often take on its thinking, fashions and mores unreflectively. Even when we ask probing questions of our contemporary experience we are still subject to deeply embedded frameworks of assumptions. The advantage of history is that we are not living in it – although its vestiges continue to animate our lives – and are able to potentially make it object; that is, to stand back, reflect on what has happened, make broader connections between things and see systemic patterns.

Reflecting on past occurrence can offer us lessons for the future and developing a more complex understanding of our food history can play an important role in elucidating factors that might contribute to, or hinder, individual, community and environmental wellbeing into the future. Developing a more considered and nuanced understanding of how food has worked historically can help us to better identify the complex social, cultural and political influences on eating habits, and therefore make us better able to identify and choose to resist those that are not in our best interest. To this end I am going to spend the rest of this article telling a few stories from Australia’s food past and carrying out a bit of culinary archaeology to expand understanding of the varied influences that have shaped our eating and cookery practices. In this I mount a challenge to dominant historical understanding and in doing so provide examples of how we might apply the same tool to the present.



## History lessons

### Socially inedible

It was standard practice to include a fish course at formal meals in nineteenth-century Australia. If you were invited to dinner in a genteel Sydney home in the 1840s you would have found yourself eating preserved or cured salmon or cod from England. Fresh native fish was 'never' served despite the immediate proximity of an expansive harbour teeming with piscatorial species. Local fish supply fluctuated seasonally but that was not a factor in this practice; the 'great cost' of the imported products certainly was (Meredith 1844). The hefty price made it a high-status food and providing it to guests was a social expression of ample means and refined taste as those who styled themselves as gentry considered colonial materials inferior. What was most salient though in the rejection of local fish by the elite, and those who aspired to such position, was that local produce was given to convicts as part of their rations and they steadfastly wanted to avoid resembling these felons in any way (Hughes 2003). Looked at from the present we might smirk and consider this ridiculous and take it as further confirmation that Australian colonists were hopeless cooks and uninspired eaters. If we chose instead to dig a bit deeper what we would discover is what was most at stake here was the free settlers' distinct fear of being seen to be 'uncivilised'.



*Australian cod: A 'socially inedible' species (Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection, artist Edward Wilson, c.1842)*

### Savage or civilised

At the time the Australian colonies were founded one of the most potent ideas of Western philosophy was that human society progressed through four stages from hunter-gatherer to pastoral, then agricultural to reach the 'pinnacle' of commerciality (McIntyre 2009). This model of progress was tied to production: in the first stage people existed by catching and collecting whatever Mother Nature cared to provide – they were deemed to be 'savage'. At the final

stage they produced, sold and consumed excess to their basic needs and in doing so they were 'civilised'. Each stage was considered a necessary advance on the previous one and that a society should become 'civilised' was considered the 'natural state of affairs'. The way the Australian settlers conceived their world was deeply entrenched in this idealised philosophy: it shaped the colony, including the prevailing attitudes to food and corresponding production and consumption practices.

### The land of depraved drunkards

Australia's foundation as a prison colony to which the 'scumme' of Britain were banished tainted it in the British imagination as an uncivilised place occupied by a 'rum-sodden, neglectful and immoral' population (Collins 1798, p. 100). While many of the independent colonists shared this view, the opportunity to gain significant monetary advantage from progressing this new country proved a powerful lure to emigrate. However, their intention was to make a pile, 'and then, hey, presto! for the old world again' (Richardson 1982, p. 13). They were well aware that in the 'mother country' they were held to be upstarts, morally suspect and culturally incompetent because of their colonial expatriation. They were genuinely concerned that they were under cultural 'surveillance' from London and that any slip in upholding civilised standards of moral and social behaviour would be noted and held against them (Young 2002). Eating the same food as degraded low-class convicts – when there were alternative choices available – would have been considered an uncivilised act, marking one as an inferior 'colonial' and marring any triumphant return to Britain no matter how flush one was with material success. The idea that you might not be accepted when you returned home to the place you understood yourself to belong to would have exercised a powerful influence over people's food choices.



*Colonial lawyers prepare for court (Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection)*

# Social struggle, tall tales and stereotypes: A closer look at food in colonial Australia

## The temptations of the wild

Inherited 'British culinary ineptitude' (Crew 2012, p. 13) is popularly posited as the reason colonial Australians failed to incorporate indigenous foods into their diets. According to this theory the colonists ignored the natural foods of the land they found themselves in in favour of cultivating imported species. There is no argument that they preferred their familiar foods and proceeded to grow these from the outset. However, they ate and experimented with more native foods than they have been given credit for. That they chose not to eventually incorporate these into their regular diet was determinedly influenced by the dominant ideas of progress. Domesticating native plants and animals – such that could be reliably grown, harvested and reproduced to be subsequently sold – would have been a lot of work when you already had a plethora of species immediately available to do that with, and there was no commercial market for indigenous Australian foods (Newling 2011; O'Brien 2016; Santich 2011; Singley 2012).

It barely requires a scratch of the surface to see that the natural consumable materials of the Antipodes was the food of Aborigines and because they were believed to exist solely by hunting and gathering they were understood by the settlers to be 'savages'. If eating in common with convicts was to bring your social standing into question, eating the food of Aborigines could lead to utter moral degradation: someone who willingly ate witchetty grubs for example would show they had a 'wild and uncivilised palate that could also succumb to cannibalism' (Mundy 1885, p. 340). The fact that Australia was the country of Aborigines heightened suspicion of those who lived there and gave rise to doubt that it could ever be a civilised place. From the comfort of historical distance we might find it amusing that our ancestors thought that ingesting particular foods would corrupt their morals – our tendency to categorise foods as 'good' or 'bad' indicates that we have not quite let go of that idea – and we condemn them for their attitude towards, and treatment of, Aboriginal peoples. Yet colonial Australians implicitly considered the European way of understanding the world, and the food system that stemmed from it, to be superior to any other: they believed they were 'right'.

Humans have a compelling need to understand their view of the world as the correct one: it is true of people who have lived before us, it is true of us now and it will likely remain thus into the future. History has certainly shown me this and the lesson I draw from it is to challenge where we hold ourselves to be 'right'. If you think that colonial Australians were inept in not incorporating native foods into their diet remember that they believed the food choices they made to be rational and best.

## Mutton gluttons?

The eminent English novelist Anthony Trollope travelled in Australia in the 1870s and was intrigued by the fact that meat

was so cheap that even a labouring man could afford to eat the best cuts on a daily basis (Trollope 1876). Over and over again in the records of colonial Australia commentary on people's dietary habits notes the inclusion of meat at every meal. Some commentators reported the quantities of animal flesh on colonial dining tables as excessive and undesirable: 'high and low, rich and poor, all eat meat to an incredible extent ... not in mere slices, but in good substantial hunks' (Twopenny 1976, p. 65). It is easy to see how the accepted 'truth' that the colonists lived predominantly on 'mutton', and ate it in great slabs, has come about. That we have held tightly to this idea and not questioned it is remiss of us.

It is inarguable that meat was an integral part of the colonial diet. Yet the average consumption of meat in the 1880s in Australia was a 'third of a kilo a day' (Blainey 2003). Across three meals that's 110 grams a time: two slices of bacon for breakfast, a couple of slices of meat at lunch, and two chops for dinner. It's not that much when you look at it spread out – and is only slightly more than current average consumption. The fact that people in the colonies could eat this much meat was repeatedly remarked upon because it was unusual for the time and more than that enjoyed in any other European country. Reporting it as 'more than twice the average consumption of England' is technically correct, but this is not as much as it might sound because the average citizen of the mother country ate less than a 100 grams a day of it. Meat was also purported to be deadly in the colonies: in 1863 a doctor claimed that the large number of cases of children with dysentery and typhoid in Melbourne was due to 'overstuffing with animal food' (Blainey 2003, p. 201). His assertion ignored the fact that this booming town had no sewage system and that these bacterial diseases less likely emanated from the type and quantity of foods people were eating than from the failure of people of his class to use their influence to push for fundamental civic infrastructure. However, this story fits nicely into the prevailing narrative of unappealing excessive meat-eating in the colonial era.

Back in Britain, Trollope's working-class man would have counted himself very lucky if he ate meat two or three times a week. It was an expensive commodity there and daily consumption of it out of reach for most. When the Australian colonists found themselves with easy opportunity to eat it thrice daily it was likely then to have been something that many of them relished: a possibility rarely put forward in learned renditions of our history. It is easy to justify the position of contemporaneous reports disparaging the meat-eating habits of colonial Australians, but if we choose not to accept these at face value and instead dig behind by asking standard historical questions such as 'who was the writer?' and 'what might their purpose have been?' we create the opportunity to build a more nuanced understanding of what was going on in the colonial kitchen.

The dominant cultural norms of Australian colonies faithfully replicated, as exactly as possible, those of England, including

its class system. Class was a particularly strident and affective construct in the colonies because social conditions were very fluid, to wit: money was easier to make in the colonies than in England and a colonist could buy social position and change his class rather than be stuck in the one he was born into. Meat had always been the most prestigious element of the diet in Britain and regular consumption the privilege of the upper classes. With meat readily affordable across all the classes in Australia it may be that the prestigious status of meat was most at issue. Many of the members of the colonial gentry were 'nouveau' occupants of this social position and they wanted to enjoy the privileges they believed were the rightful prerequisites of the class they had risen to. The easy access to meat by all classes of colonial Australians denied them the exclusive use of this important marker of their elevated position. When a social group – in this case the colonial upper class – experiences the loss of power of an exclusive symbol due to its adoption by an outsider group – the working classes – one of the ways of defending against this incursion is to negatively assert the other's use of the symbol (Zeuss 1985; Naccarto & Lebesco 2012). If we investigate who was writing the caricatures showing colonial meat-eating as in bad taste we would find that the authors were often of the upper class. We could consider then that their purpose might have been to punish people they believed to be socially inferior for transgressing class boundaries by making meat-eating seem undesirable, thus preventing them from acquiring any of the status this habit might have conferred.

### French fantasy

The influential gastrolebrity Maggie Beer believes that if the French had colonised Australia 'they would have been immediately into the wonderful things [native foods] available' (Crew 2012, p. 13), an assertion that I suggest is partly informed by the accepted notion of French culinary superiority. The idea that French cuisine was superior to any other national cookery had come to firm establishment in the nineteenth century (Mennell 1985) and it was common practice even then for commentators to hold up the ideal of Gallic cuisine against Australian cookery, most usually as a 'mode of rebuke to reinforce colonial culinary inferiority' (Bannerman 2001, p. 269).

It is unsurprising then that the reports of two nineteenth-century Frenchmen have been influential in shaping opinion of colonial eating. Edmond Marin La Meslee came to Australia in 1876 and resided in the colonies for more than twenty years. It is from his writings about antipodean life that the much repeated quote that Australian cuisine was 'abominable' (Ward 1973, p. 46) is drawn, although this statement it is more often not considered in its wider context. Reading through Meslee's work you cannot fail to detect his natural preference for French cultural practices and that he 'harboured the most vicious and anti-Semitic illusions ... [and] never mentions the Chinese without a sneer' (Ward 1973, p. xvii). That he

erroneously believes that Aborigines practised cannibalism suggests that his culinary judgement was shaped by strong prejudices and might have been entirely unreliable. Oscar Commettant visited Melbourne in 1888 to judge at the Centennial International Exhibition. His record of this visit contains considerable comment on his eating experiences from which is drawn the repeated comment on Australian food: 'With this cuisine the appetite dies quickly' (Commettant & Armstrong (trans) 1980, p. 65). He goes on to qualify this:

Here I am talking of restaurants in general ... In the big hotels the cuisine is of course better ... But, heavens above! What dreadful food you get in the cheap boarding-houses and temperance hotels and restaurants! How can one describe the fixed-price meals at sixpence or a shilling! Although it is true that in Paris, for the same price, you get literally poisonous food (p. 65).

His comment that the inexpensive eating places in Paris have even worse food than that found in Melbourne's cheap eateries is not usually mentioned, nor is his enthusiasm for colonial domestic cookery of which he says: 'It is hardly possible to eat better than one does in the private houses of [Melbourne and Sydney]' (Commettant & Armstrong (trans) 1980, p. 171). In comparing local produce to that available in France, he inevitably pronounces the offering of his native land superior; the only person he deems to have a 'superb' garden of fruit trees and vegetables is a Frenchman resident in Victoria. Meslee and Commettant were much more observant of colonial food practices than English visitors tended to be, possibly because the latter were 'inured to our essentially British home-like practices' (Ward 1973, p. xvii) and we can be grateful for the interesting record they have given us. Their observations are undoubtedly faithful to what they experienced, but it is worthwhile to examine these a little more fully before we use them to represent all of colonial cookery and eating.

### Close your mouth and engage your brain

There are so many more examples I could draw on but it's time to draw a close on this particular piece. I am currently researching and writing on the cook in colonial Australia because 'she' is often blamed for the allegedly poor state of Australian cuisine. Embedded in this accusation are issues of gender, class and emigration – it's a fascinating story. I think that a more comprehensive understanding of our food history provides us with examples to hold up against our current beliefs and attitudes and question our own sense of what we think is right and to use this to make better food choices now. It's an intellectual exercise but those who peddle their products and ideas to us would prefer that we respond from a less thoughtful place: to invert that, we need to do less eating and more thinking about what we are swallowing.

# Social struggle, tall tales and stereotypes: A closer look at food in colonial Australia

## References

- Bannerman, C 2001, 'Print media and the development of an Australian culture of food and eating c.1850 to c.1920', PhD thesis, University of Canberra.
- Berger, J 1973, *Ways of seeing*, Penguin Books, London.
- Blainey, G 2003, *Black kettle and full moon: Daily life in a vanished Australia*, Penguin, Camberwell, Victoria.
- Collins, D 1798, *An account of the English colony in New South Wales Volume 1 with remarks on the dispositions, customs, manners &c of the native inhabitants of that country. To which are added, some particulars of New Zealand: Compiled by permission, from the Mss of Lieutenant-Governor King*, University of Sydney Library, Sydney, retrieved from [purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/colacc1](http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/colacc1)
- Commettant, Oscar & Armstrong, J (trans) 1980, *In the land of kangaroos and goldmines*, Rigby, Sydney.
- Crew, C 2012, 'Gustatory redemption? Colonial appetites, historical tales and the contemporary consumption of Australian native foods', *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 13–24.
- Hughes, R 2003, *The fatal shore: A history of the transportation of convicts to Australia, 1787–1868*, Random House, Australia.
- McIntyre, J 2009, 'Not rich and not British: Phillip Schaeffer, "failed" colonial farmer', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, vol. 11.
- Mennell, S 1985, *All manners of food: Eating and taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the present*, Blackwell, United Kingdom.
- Meredith, LA 1844, *Notes and sketches of New South Wales during a residence in that colony from 1839 to 1844 by Mrs Charles Meredith*, John Murray, London.
- Mundy, G Charles 1885, *Our Antipodes, or, residence and rambles in the Australasian colonies: With a glimpse of the gold fields*, Richard Bentley, London.
- Naccarto, P & Lebesco, K 2012, *Culinary capital*, Berg, London.
- Newling, J 2011, 'Dining with strangeness: European foodways on the Eora frontier', *Journal of Australian Colonial History* vol. 3, p. 27.
- O'Brien, C 2014, 'The taste of class: Colonial Australian food writing, fact or fiction?' in *TEXT Special Issue 26, Taste in writing and publishing*, Donna Lee Brien and Adele Wessel (eds), retrieved from [www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue26/content.htm](http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue26/content.htm)
- O'Brien, C 2016, *The colonial kitchen: Australia 1788–1901*, Rowman & Littlefield, New York.
- Richardson, HH (1930) 1982, *The fortunes of Richard Mahoney*, Penguin, London.
- Santich, B 2011, 'Nineteenth-century experimentation and the role of indigenous foods in Australian food culture', *Australian Humanities Review*, vol. 51, p. 65.
- Singley, B 2012, 'Hardly anything fit for man to eat: Food and colonialism in Australia', *History Australia*, vol. 9, p. 27.
- Swinburn, B, Egger, G & Raza, F 1999, 'Dissecting obesogenic environments: The development and application of a framework for identifying and prioritising environmental interventions for obesity', *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 29, pp. 583–570.
- Twopenny, Richard 1976, *Town life in Australia*, Penguin Books, Ringwood.
- Trollope, A 1876, *Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 1, Chapman and Hall, London, retrieved from [www.archive.org/stream/australiaandnew03trolgoog#page/n10/mode/2up](http://www.archive.org/stream/australiaandnew03trolgoog#page/n10/mode/2up)
- Ward, R (trans) 1973, *The new Australia*, Heinemann, London.
- Young, L 2002, *Middle class culture in the nineteenth century*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Zeuss, R 1985, 'Consuming symbols: An anthropological analysis of Australian food in high culture, industry and popular culture' in the *Proceedings of the Second Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, Foodism – Philosophy or fad? Adelaide, September 21 – October 1*, Barbara Santich, Michael Symons and Colin Turner (eds).

## Author biography

Charmaine O'Brien thinks, writes, researches, educates and coaches about food. Her books include *The colonial kitchen: Australia 1788–1901* (2016), *The Penguin food guide to India* (2014), *Flavours of Delhi: A food lover's guide* (2003) and *Flavours of Melbourne: A culinary biography* (2008). She is internationally recognised for her knowledge on Indian food history, culture and cookery and her essay on 'plain food' in colonial Australia was commended in the 2014 Sophie Coe Prize for food history writing. She also has a master's degree in coaching psychology and is currently creating a work on how we can use history to change our thinking about food and our eating behaviour. Charmaine loves to inspire excitement about our food history through talks, interactive food activity and historical food walks around Melbourne's CBD.

[www.charmaineobrien.com](http://www.charmaineobrien.com)  
[charmaine@charmaineobrien.com](mailto:charmaine@charmaineobrien.com)

# Food, culture and community

Patrick Honan

For people who have left their home country, food is often an important link to their culture and a source of comfort in unfamiliar lands. As a nation built on immigration, Australia is a particularly interesting example of this. Perhaps there has been no better witness to this than Raffela Muscatello.

Raffela came to Australia from Italy in 1957, at the tender age of 24. Like so many others, she was seeking a better future, one far away from the ruin of post-war Europe. Once here, she married and settled in Melbourne's deeply working-class western suburbs. Her husband Guiseppi worked in a factory and she sewed piecework. They skipped a honeymoon to work and save.

With her husband she eventually opened a fruit and vegetable shop because, as she puts it, she 'likes work'. The painted sign above the threshold of the shop proudly proclaimed the family name to the neighbourhood, a name that was difficult to pronounce in a time when the national anthem was still 'God Save the Queen'. Raffela was now on the other side of the world, in a strange young country, as far away from where she grew up as you could possibly be. To add to her plate, there were children to clothe and feed, children with healthy appetites.

In a country where she didn't yet speak the language, Raffela set to selling fruits and vegetables. Serving customers day in day out, she soon learnt three important words in English: 'What you like?' Her vocabulary expanded with the names of different fruits and vegetables as she came to know them



*Raffela Muscatello in her backyard oasis in Melbourne's west*



in the foreign tongue, piece by piece. She learned that the largely Anglo-celtic population of Melbourne at that time had a strong preference for two things: potatoes and pumpkins. 'All the time, pumpkin and patate, pumpkini and patate,' she exclaims in a voice still heavy with old-world accent.

Raffela's personal tastes were broader, and as the cook for her growing family

she turned her suburban backyard into a production garden, growing things like chilies, eggplants and tomatoes. If there was a surplus of something, it was traded for something else to neighbours, or given away to relatives and friends. The tomatoes were bottled, so there were never too many of those.

Like many other new arrivals, part of the money Raffela earned was spent

# Food, culture and community



Raffela in her fruit and veg shop and (right) some of her garden bounty today

on bringing her relatives over to share in this new life. All over Melbourne (and indeed Australia) cousins, great aunts and brothers-in-law arrived on huge sagging boats to be greeted at the ports with tight hugs and tears. As they arrived, the ethnic make-up of the cities they settled in began to shift. Some of the new arrivals became farmers, and started growing the plants they were most familiar with.

Relatives returned from trips to their home countries with valuable seeds stashed in their pant cuffs, away from the eyes of customs officers. New varieties of fruit and vegetables literally started to pop up. Men in vans started roving suburbs that had high Mediterranean populations, plying goods like cured meats, cheeses, herbs and pasta.

Raffela took note of this and, being a shrewd business woman, recognised that she too could cater to this market. She told all the Italians she knew that her store was stocking more than just pumpkins, offering basil, zucchini, pomegranate, tomatoes and eggplant. Eventually olives, Italian cheeses and olive oil found their place on the shelves too. Until that time, if you wanted pasta

it meant a trip to Brunswick to perhaps the only store brave enough to stock this specialty product. Word spread among the growing community. During harder times, the cash register was stuffed with handwritten IOU notes. Credit was given out generously to members of the community.

These foods and plants are now unquestionably part of mainstream Australian food culture. But as immigration continues, so does this story. What foods do new arrivals to Australia grow because they can't find them in the shops? And what role does the cultivation of these plants play in their communities?

Sharelle Pollack is the Community Gardens Team Leader at Cultivating Community, the organisation responsible for managing community gardens within Melbourne public housing estates. Much of this housing is subsidised for new arrivals to Australia. The gardens were set up to 'allow people to come down out of the towers and have an experience with other people,' as Sharelle explains. With people from more than 30 language groups using the program, the gardens have become a way of growing plants

that are 'part of their culture and their innate experience'.

A visit to one of the gardens managed by Cultivating Community in Richmond is a humbling experience. In the shadow of brutalist pebble-mix concrete tower blocks, raspberry canes raise their berries in defiance. Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) lopes its long stems and barrels of kang kong (*Ipomoea aquatica*) threaten to spill over. Celtuce (*Lactuca sativa* var. *asparagina*) flaps lazily in the breeze while a woman steadily, rhythmically pulls amaranth (*Amaranthus cruentus*) seedlings out of the ground. 'Here they're given a garden and left to put in it what they want,' says Sharelle. 'It really does give them the capacity to say "this is what I want to grow because this means something to me" or "this is what I love eating".'



Everywhere the eye rests someone is growing some strange new plant. Here is multiculturalism manifest in its purest form, with people proudly displaying their culture and community via plant

choice. Every time Sharelle comes into the gardens she encounters something new. 'There's a lot of plants here that people would not be familiar with,' she comments. To her, this is what's special about working in this program: the diversity of plants is 'so different to what you would see in other community gardens, because it's reflecting the diversity of the people that are here ... Particularly for new arrivals, but for anyone really, food is something that's part of our everyday lives, but it's also something we can reflect memories with, and share with children and families what we know and love'.

With such a diverse community, language is often a barrier. Yet here a love of gardening crosses cultures. Sharelle suggests it's because plants are something you can see and experience together, meaning people can share 'regardless' of language or cultural issues. She's noticed that inevitably the many people using the gardens 'start sharing amongst each other and experiencing new food'.

The shifting sands of the link between food growing, culture, community and identity can seem a little abstract. Trying to imagine what will – and won't be – on the grocery shelves and our plates in the years to come can feel like trying to separate individual ingredients in an enormous soup. It helps to look



*Thriving raspberries in Cultivating Community's Richmond garden*

back to Raffella as a concrete example of where this change has already happened. She still lives in Melbourne's west, and her sprawling, ramshackle backyard is a perfect example of commitment to what you want to grow and eat.

In the shade of a monstrous fig tree, an immodest persimmon is shedding its leaves for autumn. She still makes her own cheese and preserved anchovies, and has a henhouse with a flock of at least thirty good layers. She sells the excess eggs for \$5.50 a dozen. Old customers who know her from those years ago at the shop make the pilgrimage to her house. They buy her extra eggs, and on occasion a

box of home-grown vegetables. Some things they take home are now familiar favourites, like eggplant and parsley. Others, like endive (*Cichorium intybus*) and verdura (*Cichorium endivia*) are still hard to find in the shops. The customer base is now a select few, but there is still variety. 'Greeks are very nice,' she assures. She doesn't need the money, but some instincts don't fade with age.

'My customers trust me,' she says firmly. 'We help each other, together'.

**Editor's note:** This article originally appeared in *The Planthunter*, an online magazine 'devoted to celebrating plants and the varied ways humans interact with them': [theplanthunter.com.au/culture/food-culture-community](http://theplanthunter.com.au/culture/food-culture-community). The online version of this article includes a video by Patrick Honan about Cultivating Community.

## Author biography

Patrick Honan is a graduate of Urban Horticulture at Melbourne University. He works at St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Coop and consults on ecology themes in the urban context. Patrick is also a maintenance gardener and content producer in the areas of sustainability and conservation. He has also worked with schools and community groups around sustainability and the world of plants.

[contact@patrickhonan.com.au](mailto:contact@patrickhonan.com.au)  
<http://patrickhonan.com.au>



*Raffella and some of her thirty chickens*

# Supporting the nutritional wellbeing of adolescents: Findings from the Youth2000 surveys

**Jennifer Utter**

Adolescent Health Research Group  
School of Population Health,  
University of Auckland

## Abstract

Poor nutrition is one of the most significant health issues facing adolescents in Australia, New Zealand, and globally. For the past fifteen years, the Adolescent Health Research Group has been collecting and analysing data from the Youth2000 surveys, with an aim to improve the health and wellbeing of all young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. The current paper is a brief summary of the findings about how we can promote and support the nutritional wellbeing of adolescents.

## About the Youth2000 surveys

The Youth2000 surveys are nationally representative surveys of the health and wellbeing of secondary school students in New Zealand. The first survey was conducted in 2001, with repeated surveys conducted in 2007 and 2012. Collectively, more than 28,000 students in New Zealand have been involved with the Youth2000 surveys to provide timely and accurate information about their health. The Youth2000 surveys include comprehensive questionnaires about multiple health indicators, as well as the environments that affect a young person's health (e.g. school, home and community). More detail about the surveys can be found at [www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/adolescent-health-research-group/youth2000-national-youth-health-survey-series.html](http://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/adolescent-health-research-group/youth2000-national-youth-health-survey-series.html)

## The nutritional indicators of young people are concerning

In 2012, more than 35 per cent of secondary school students in New Zealand were overweight or obese (Utter et al 2015) – during the 2007

and 2012 surveys, students were weighed and measured for height during the survey. Moreover, nearly 4 per cent of students met a definition of severe obesity. The prevalence of overweight and obesity did not improve between 2007 and 2012. And, in fact, the prevalence of severe obesity increased significantly for Pacific students. Concordant with high rates of overweight and obesity were indicators of poor eating behaviours (Clark et al 2012). For example, a little less than half of all students are regularly eating breakfast and only 60 per cent frequently share meals with their families. Fewer than one-third of students reported meeting the daily recommendations for fruits and vegetables, while nearly a quarter consume soft drinks frequently.

The social gradient of these poor nutritional indicators means that some young people are experiencing the greatest burden of poor nutrition and obesity. For example, the prevalence of overweight and obesity for adolescents living in the most economically deprived neighbourhoods is nearly 50 per cent, compared to 27 per cent for students living in the least deprived neighbourhoods (Utter et al 2015). In 2012 more than 10 per cent of young people reported that their parents

worried about not having enough money for food, often or all the time. Having concerns for household food security is a risk factor for poor nutrition for adolescents. Adolescents reporting concerns for household food security experience higher rates of obesity, less access to fruits and vegetables at home, and overall less healthy eating behaviours than adolescents who do not have these concerns (Utter, Denny, Robinson, Teevale et al 2012).

These nutritional indicators are concerning in their own right, but they also put students at risk for other poor health outcomes. For example, students with severe obesity are more likely to experience weight-based bullying and engage in unhealthy weight control behaviours (Farrant et al 2013). Engaging in unhealthy weight control behaviours (e.g. skipping meals, vomiting, smoking for weight loss) is associated with greater levels of depressive symptoms (Utter, Denny, Robinson, Ameratunga & Crengle 2012) and having concerns about body weight is associated with sexual risk-taking behaviours (Larson et al 2012). We have also explored the relationship between healthy eating and mental health and found that students who report greater levels of unhealthy eating (e.g. eating more junk food, irregular meal patterns)



also report poorer mental health – and vice versa (Puloka 2015).

## Families and schools can create healthy eating environments for adolescents

We have found that one of the most powerful things that families can do to promote the nutritional wellbeing of their young people is to eat meals together. In New Zealand, approximately 60 per cent of adolescents share a meal with their family five or more times a week (Clark et al 2012). Adolescents who frequently share meals with their families report better nutrition and overall health than those not having frequent family meals. Specifically, adolescents who share frequent family meals eat more fruits and vegetables, eat less junk food, and report healthier home food environments (Utter et al 2013a). Moreover, young people who share frequent meals with their families report stronger family connections, better emotional wellbeing, and fewer depressive symptoms (Utter et al 2013b; Utter, Denny, Peiris-John et al, under review). Interestingly, it appears that the impact of family meals on emotional wellbeing may be more important for girls than boys (Utter, Denny, Peiris-John et al, under review).

Families can also support the nutritional wellbeing of adolescents by making healthy foods available at home and encouraging their young people to eat healthily. Supportive families are particularly important for adolescents who are trying to lose weight (Utter, Denny, Dixon et al 2013). Approximately 50 per cent of adolescents have attempted weight loss in the past year, and among those, approximately 50 per cent achieved a sustained weight loss (of six months or longer). Students who have succeeded with a sustained weight loss were more likely to report that their parents encouraged them to eat healthily, that healthier foods were

available to eat at home, and they were less likely to be teased by their family about their weight.

Schools are obviously important environments for adolescents and can contribute to the nutritional wellbeing of students. Schools can influence the nutritional behaviours of students in multiple ways (e.g. policies, food availability, curricula), but measuring the impact of these environments can be difficult. In schools where high proportions of students rate the nutrition climate positively (where students felt the school encouraged them to eat healthily), students ate more fruit and vegetables (Cvjetan et al 2014). This study could not isolate the things each school did to promote a positive nutrition climate, but it was unique in asking the students (not the staff) to describe the nutrition climate.

School gardens are growing in popularity and the climate of New Zealand is conducive to fruit and vegetable gardening in schools. In New Zealand, approximately half (55 per cent) of secondary schools have a fruit or vegetable garden for students to participate in (Utter, Denny & Dyson 2016). How school gardens are implemented and integrated into curricula varies between schools and our surveys have not asked about this. However, simply having a garden at school is associated with a lower body mass index (BMI) of the student cohort. Moreover, for students living with household poverty, the effect of school gardens on student BMI appears to be even stronger.

## Opportunities to build food-related skills are important for adolescents

Developing food-related skills in adolescents is critical to ensure life-long nutritional wellbeing. There has been a shift in what skills are taught to adolescents to help them to

navigate the modern, commercial food environment. Many nutrition programs now focus on reading food labels and understanding food marketing, over more fundamental skills such as cooking and gardening. Yet, the more modern skills are not helpful or consistent in encouraging young people to be active participants in a local and sustainable food system.

While it is possible to live on convenience foods, cooking remains an essential life skill for healthy human development. Approximately 80 per cent of adolescents in New Zealand report that they could cook a meal from basic ingredients easily or fairly easily (Utter et al 2016). Students who report better cooking abilities and who report having the opportunity to cook also report better nutrition behaviours (eating more fruits and vegetables and less junk food) and better mental wellbeing.

Students report learning to cook from a variety of sources (Utter, Denny, Lucassen & Dyson, under review). Almost all students report learning to cook from someone in their family (mother, father, or other family member) and 60 per cent of students report learning to cook through media (cookbooks, TV, or the internet). Approximately half of all students reported learning to cook at school. More than one-third of students reported learning to cook from all three sources (family, media and school).

Like cooking, gardening also provides adolescents with opportunities to produce healthy and nutritious food while developing strong social relationships. In New Zealand, approximately two-thirds of adolescents have a fruit or vegetable garden at home and one-quarter of young people help out in the home garden (van Lier et al, under review). We found that adolescents who are engaged in home gardening report healthier eating behaviours and more physical activity. In addition, students who are involved

# Supporting the nutritional wellbeing of adolescents: Findings from the Youth2000 surveys

in home gardening also reported stronger connections to their families and neighbourhoods and better mental health than those not participating in gardening.

## Promoting nutritional wellbeing can contribute to a healthier generation of young people

For adolescents, food is an important vehicle for developing skills, engaging with families, building social skills and relationships, and creating a sense of self. Through our work with the Youth2000 surveys, we know that the nutritional wellbeing of young people is concerning, but that families and schools can create supportive and healthy food environments for young people. Allowing young people to develop and practise the food-related skills, such as cooking and gardening, can have a meaningful impact on not only how they eat, but also their emotional wellbeing. While governments, NGOs, and industry work to reduce the availability and marketing of unhealthy foods to children, schools and families can support young people with opportunities to engage meaningfully with a local, sustainable and ethical food system.

## References

- Clark T, Fleming T, Bullen P, Crengle S, Denny S, Dyson B, et al 2013, *Youth'12 prevalence tables: The health and wellbeing of New Zealand secondary school students in 2012*, The University of Auckland, Auckland.
- Cvijetan B, Utter J, Robinson E & Denny S 2014, 'The social environment of schools and adolescent nutrition: Associations between the school nutrition climate and adolescents' eating behaviours and body mass index', *Journal of School Health*, vol. 84, no. 10, pp. 677–682.
- Farrant B, Utter J, Ameratunga S, Clark T, Fleming T & Denny S 2013, 'Prevalence of severe obesity among New Zealand adolescents and associations with health risk behaviours and emotional wellbeing', *Journal of Pediatrics*, vo. 163, no. 1, pp. 143–149.
- Larson B, Clark T, Robinson E & Utter J 2012, 'Body satisfaction and sexual health behaviours among New Zealand secondary school students', *Sex Education*, vol.12, pp. 187–198.
- Puloka I 2015, *The association between diet quality and mental health among adolescents: Results from Youth'12, the national health and wellbeing survey of New Zealand secondary school students*, University of Auckland, Auckland.
- Utter J, Denny S, Robinson E, Ameratunga S & Crengle S 2012, 'Identifying the "red flags" for unhealthy weight control among adolescents: Findings from an item response theory analysis of a national survey', *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, vol. 9, pp. 99–107.
- Utter J, Denny S, Robinson E, Teevale T, Crengle S, Ameratunga S et al 2012, 'Food security concerns among young people: Impact on eating behaviours and weight status', *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, vol. 7, pp. 101–111.
- Utter J, Denny S, Dixon R, Ameratunga S & Teevale T 2013, 'Family support and weight-loss strategies among adolescents reporting sustained weight loss', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 499–504.
- Utter J, Denny S, Robinson E, Fleming T, Ameratunga S & Grant S 2013a, 'Family meals among New Zealand young people: Relationships with eating behaviours and body mass index', *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 3–11.
- Utter J, Denny S, Robinson E, Fleming T, Ameratunga S & Grant S 2013b, 'Family meals and the wellbeing of adolescents', *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, vol. 49, no. 11, pp. 906–911.
- Utter J, Denny S, Teevale T, Peiris-John R & Dyson B 2015, 'Prevalence and recent trends in overweight, obesity, and severe obesity among New Zealand adolescents', *Child Obesity*, vol. 11, no. 5, pp. 585–589.
- Utter J, Denny S & Dyson B 2016, 'School gardens and adolescent nutrition and BMI: Results from a national, multilevel study', *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 83, pp. 1–4.
- Utter J, Denny S, Lucassen M & Dyson B 2016, 'Adolescent cooking abilities and behaviours: Associations with nutrition and emotional wellbeing', *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 35–41.
- Utter J, Denny S, Lucassen M, & Dyson B (under review), 'Who's teaching the kids to cook? Results from a nationally representative survey of New Zealand secondary school students', *International Journal of Home Economics*.
- Utter J, Denny S, Peiris-John R, Moselen E, Dyson B & Clark T (under review), 'Family meals and adolescent emotional wellbeing: Findings from a national survey', *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.
- van Lier L, Utter J, Denny S, Lucassen M, Dyson B & Clark T (under review), 'Home gardening and the health and wellbeing of adolescents: Associations with nutrition, physical activity and emotional wellbeing', *Health Promotion Practice*.

## Author biography

Dr Jennifer Utter is a senior lecturer in public health nutrition at the University of Auckland's School of Population Health. Her main research interests are in adolescent eating behaviours, weight control, and obesity prevention.

[j.utter@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:j.utter@auckland.ac.nz)

Rebecca Lindberg  
Martin Caraher  
Kate Wingrove

# Implementing the right to food in Australia

## Abstract

The idea of universal human rights is a powerful one. It says that every person, wherever they are born and regardless of their background, income, race, gender or any other social status, is entitled to the enjoyment of certain inalienable and fundamental rights. In this paper we describe the international context that enshrines the human right to adequate food and then explore whether and how this is fulfilled in contemporary Australia, in light of ongoing food insecurity. A case study of an emerging non-government organisation called the Right to Food Coalition is provided to illustrate how members of civil society are attempting to use international law and human rights frameworks to improve accountability and action on food insecurity in Australia. We then discuss how teachers may wish to address some of the issues raised in this paper via the new Victorian Certificate of Education Food Studies curriculum.

## Introduction

Article 11 of the 1966 United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that every human on earth has the right to an '... adequate standard of living ... including adequate food, clothing and housing' (ICESCR 1966).

Human rights are more than a powerful concept; international declarations that delineate the substantive content of these rights have formed the basis of legislation, policy and practice across the globe since the 1970s. The formation of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 1945 allowed leaders from across the globe to meet and agree upon strategies to help establish the conditions for a stable global food supply by improving the economic and environmental sustainability of food systems and tackling hunger and inequality. However, only when the right to food for all is fulfilled in all its aspects can a population be considered food secure. The FAO (2009) states:

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Since 2002, the office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the

Right to Food has mapped out best practice for all countries on the legal and institutional steps to realise food security and fully implement the right to food (de Schutter 2010). Read together with the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines (2004) the key steps are as follows:

- incorporating the right to food in national constitutions
- passing enabling domestic legislation: a 'national Right to Food framework law'
- identifying and targeting the hungry and the poor
- conducting a thorough assessment of existing policies, institutions and laws through a human rights lens
- developing participatory 'national strategies based upon the right to food' such as national agriculture, food security and nutrition strategies
- designing and resourcing appropriate institutions and implementing actions of a participatory nature
- monitoring the implementation of the national strategies
- enforcing the right to food through judicial means where necessary.

As of 2011, twenty-three countries had explicitly incorporated the right to food in their constitutions and another thirty-three recognised the right to food implicitly as part of broader human rights guarantees (Knuth & Vidar 2011).

A further nineteen had adopted or were drafting a framework law to implement the constitutional right to food; several had adopted national food and nutrition strategies, and established institutions charged with their oversight (Knuth & Vidar 2011). In some countries the right to food has been legally enforced through the courts, providing citizens an opportunity to hold their governments to account. See the FAO website (2016) for a full list of relevant countries and their various levels of commitment.

## The right to food in Australia

According to the FAO (2016):

The constitution of Australia does not explicitly guarantee the right to adequate food. Australia has become a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1975 by way of ratification.

Australia, at the federal level, does not have a Bill of Rights or a Human Rights Act. Australian governments take the view that economic and social rights should be satisfied by individuals selling their labour in the marketplace, and buying access to food and housing. This is typical of a neoliberal model of rights and obligations, whereby basic life necessities are regarded as commodities, and access to them is

# Implementing the right to food in Australia

best achieved by participation in the economy.

In Australia, despite first-world status and the apparent abundance of food, the right to food has not been fulfilled, as evidenced by the more than 800,000 households who are estimated to be food insecure (ABS 2012). Food insecurity occurs when a person, household or whole community cannot consistently access sufficient quantities of affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food.

Food insecurity has negative outcomes for physical, social and mental health and wellbeing. For example, children in food insecure households are more likely to have behavioural and developmental problems (Ramsey et al 2011). Adults who are food insecure are at increased risk of developing diet-related chronic diseases, such as type two diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (Seligman, Laraia & Kushel 2010). Food affordability is a major determinant of household food security. For example, in Victoria the cost of a basket of healthy food that is consistent with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating is 40 per cent of the budget of a welfare-dependent household and 17 per cent of a middle-income household (Kettings & Sinclair 2009). The issues of food access and equity in Australia are complex and in the 'lucky country' a growing number are not so lucky (Pollard, Begley, & Landrigan 2016).

Fortunately, many civil society organisations are attempting to address food insecurity in Australia using a human rights approach. At the local government level, councils are taking the lead through the participatory development and implementation of holistic food system policies. Non-government organisations have persistently raised awareness about welfare, social and health injustices and brokered partnerships for improved

services for vulnerable Australians. Human rights principles, such as participation and non-discrimination, have influenced this work.

## The Right to Food Coalition

The Right to Food (RTF) Coalition seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians by working to ensure equitable access to nutritious food. It is a coalition of practitioners and researchers, united by a common vision: access to nutritious food for all, regardless of income, age, postcode or race. The evolution of the RTF Coalition is described below.

### A local collective

In late 2013, in response to reports of rising demand for emergency food relief and observation of increasing problems with food insecurity, a local collective of community, health and local government agencies working in south-western Sydney came together. The collective decided to hold a conference for practitioners, policy makers and communities to highlight the issue of food insecurity, discuss the underlying causes and to canvass solutions. In October 2014 the conference 'Putting Food on the Table' brought together over 200 delegates, many of whom travelled from interstate. The keynote speaker, Joel Berg from the New York Coalition against Hunger, also travelled to Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide and Perth to speak at a series of related events.

Many conference participants were keen to know if the RTF Coalition would continue. Participants were sent a post-conference survey seeking feedback about priority action areas, preferred structure of an ongoing coalition, and ideas for national and local organising. There was broad support for the

proposal to create a national RTF Coalition, with state and local chapters. Over 70 per cent of respondents were willing to meet with others at a state level to work on local priorities and 61 per cent were interested in advocacy.

### A national coalition

During 2015 a national RTF Coalition comprising representatives from a number of state RTF Coalition 'chapters' was established. The RTF Coalition has four key action areas:

1. Collaborate across Australia to support collective advocacy efforts to address the key determinants of nutritious food access
2. Promote collaboration across Australia's food security workforce to maximise collective impact
3. Identify areas for policy-relevant research to enable evidence-informed decision making and policy development; scrutinise public policy and identify areas for action
4. Equip partners to strengthen their advocacy in their own spheres.

The national Right to Food Coalition was officially launched in April 2016.

## The VCE Food Studies curriculum

In the discussion that follows, we include some suggestions as to how teachers can address the issues raised above via the VCE Food Studies curriculum (2016) and make some links to the study units. The issue of rights not only considers the rights of Australian citizens, it also concerns Australia as a global citizen in terms of its contribution to global food security.

As technology advances, the world we live in appears smaller and we are realising that the way we live and

behave has global consequences. Regarding food this requires us, as Australians from the rich 'global north', to behave as ethical and responsible global citizens with an awareness of how our behaviours impact on others, and to monitor how our governments and private companies conduct trade and diplomatic relations with the 'global south'. The Public Health Association of Australia's report 'A future for food' raised many of these issues and called for a 'national integrated food policy for Australia, which would involve all the food sectors including the food industry' (PHAA 2009). The report highlighted a number of dilemmas for Australia that included questions about:

- the appropriateness of setting limits and foods to avoid
- the balance between land to grow feed for animals and land to feed humans directly
- the role Australia should play in addressing concerns regarding world population growth and the impact on food security.

### Curriculum links

The issues of food security and the right to food in Australia and the role of Australia as a global citizen could be addressed in Unit 1: Food origins under the two sub-headings of Food around the world (Area of study 1) and Food in Australia (Area of study 2). There are specific points of key knowledge in both these areas of study which relate to food security and human rights. Similarly, in Unit 2: Food makers the role of agriculture and business could be used to explore these issues.

The Australian government and the Australian food industry are planning expansion into the growing South-East Asia food market. Australian

governments and the food industry positions the country as the 'food bowl' of South-East Asia in the Asian Century (Carey et al 2013), with the mining boom set to be replaced by the 'dining boom'. However, the vision is for the production of more meat, fat, salt and sugary products for export, thus exporting chronic diseases via dietary intake. Surely these are issues for Australia to consider as a global citizen.

### Curriculum links

The issues of globalisation and the right to adequate food could be addressed in all units, but Unit 4: Food issues, challenges and futures lends itself to a deeper exploration of the issues of who controls the food chain and who makes decisions about the food we eat. In Unit 4 under the two study areas of Environment and ethics and Navigating food information there are opportunities to explore the issues of corporate concentration and the associated control over key sectors of the global food system and the impact on the environment and health. Again, there are specific points of key knowledge in both these areas of study which relate to food security and human rights.

Globally, 795 million people will go to bed hungry tonight (FAO, IFAD & WFP 2015). In America 60 million people, mainly women, will go without a meal today; in the European Union this figure is 44 million with a further 80 million at severe risk. Food insecurity (often referred to as 'food poverty') in Europe is rising. In 2011, one quarter of Europeans (120 million) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion with 43 million in food poverty (Eurostat 2013 cited in IFRC 2013). The figures for Australia are less clear but all the indications are that food insecurity

is growing and not just among marginalised groups (Pollard, Begley & Landrigan 2016).

### Curriculum links

Food insecurity and inequality cuts across all the units of study but can be specifically applied in the following:

Unit 1: Food origins

Areas of study: Food around the world; Food in Australia

Unit 2: Food makers

Areas of study: Food industries; Food in the home

Unit 3: Food in daily life

Area of study: Food choice, health and wellbeing

Unit 4: Food issues, challenges and futures

Areas of study: Environment and ethics; Navigating food information

Our individual dietary choices are heavily influenced by external factors that affect the supply of food available to us. Dominant factors include trade, economic trade liberalisation and profit (Monteiro & Cannon 2012; Carolan 2013). As such, our current global food system is structured around a model of increasing food production for short-term profit, while sustainability, health and equity are relegated to lower-order priorities, if they appear at all (Caraher & Reynolds 2005).

# Implementing the right to food in Australia

## Curriculum links

The issues of food production, trade and economics could fit in nearly all areas of the study design. The table below shows some of these possible links and opportunities for teaching.

| Unit  | Area of study  | Key knowledge points that relate to food production, trade and economics*            |
|---|--|--|
| Unit 1: Food origins                        | Food around the world<br>Food in Australia               | 5 of the 6 key knowledge points<br>6 of the 7 key knowledge points                   |
| Unit 2: Food makers                         | Food industries<br>Food in the home                      | All 10 key knowledge points<br>At least 2 of the 6 key knowledge points              |
| Unit 3: Food in daily life                  | The science of food<br>Food choice, health and wellbeing | At least 2 of the 8 key knowledge points<br>At least 6 of the 7 key knowledge points |
| Unit 4: Food issues, challenges and futures | Environment and ethics<br>Navigating food information    | All 4 key knowledge points<br>All 6 key knowledge points                             |

\*For space and brevity, we focus on the key knowledge points, not the key skills

## Conclusion

Access to adequate food at all times is a basic human right. When consistent access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food is not supported, people's basic rights have been denied and their health and welfare will be compromised. Local governments and non-government organisations, including the Right to Food Coalition, are working to secure the full enjoyment of the right to adequate food in Australia for all people living in this country. A number of opportunities exist for teachers to discuss the issues of food security and the right to food with their students via the VCE Food Studies curriculum.

## Acknowledgments

This article was informed by previous publications relevant to the right to food in Australia, authored by the current authors and also Liza Barbour and Nick Rose. This article was written with

permission from all contributors and we would like to thank Liza and Nick for their review. We would also like to thank Liz Millen for her valuable feedback.

## Further details

If you are interested in joining or learning more about the Right to Food Coalition, please contact [righttofoodcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:righttofoodcoalition@gmail.com) or visit [www.righttofood.org.au](http://www.righttofood.org.au)

## References

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, File generated 11 July 2014 using Australian Health Survey, Nutrition and Physical Activity (2011–12) TableBuilder (findings based on use of ABS TableBuilder data), ABS, Canberra.

Caraher, M 2013, 'A global perspective: Towards a healthy, fair and sustainable food system', *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 9–12.

Caraher, M & Reynolds, J 2005, 'Lessons for home economics: Pedagogy and practice', *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 2–15.

Carey, R, Caraher, M, Lawrence, M & Friel, S 2015, 'Opportunities and challenges in developing a whole-of-government national food and nutrition policy: Lessons from Australia's National Food Plan', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 3–14.

Carolan, M 2013, *Reclaiming food security*, Earthscan from Routledge, London.

de Schutter, O 2010, *Countries tackling hunger with a right to food approach: Significant progress in implementing the right to food at national scale in Africa, Latin America and South Asia*, Briefing note 1, May, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva.

FAO 2004, *Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security*, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome.

FAO 2009, *Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security*, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome.

FAO 2016, 'The right to food around the globe', retrieved from [www.fao.org/right-to-food-around-the-globe/countries/en](http://www.fao.org/right-to-food-around-the-globe/countries/en) accessed 15 July 2016.

FAO, IFAD & WFP 2015, *The state of food insecurity in the world 2015. Meeting the 2015 international targets: taking stock of uneven progress*, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome.

ICESCR 1966, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, retrieved from [www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx), accessed 16 July 2016.

IFRC 2013, *Think differently: Humanitarian impacts of the economic crisis in Europe*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva.

Kettings, C, Sinclair, AJ & Voevodan, M 2009, 'A healthy diet consistent with Australian health recommendations is too expensive for welfare-dependent families', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* vol. 33, no. 6, pp. 566–72.

Knuth, L & Vidar, M 2011, *Constitutional and legal protection of the right to food around the world*, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome.

Monteiro, CA & Cannon, G 2012, 'The impact of transnational "Big food" companies on the south: A view from

Brazil', *PLOS Medicine*, vol. 9, no. 7, e1001252.

PHAA 2009, *A future for food: Addressing public health, sustainability and equity from paddock to plate*, Public Health Association of Australia, Canberra.

Pollard, C, Begley, A & Landrigan, T 2016, 'The rise of food inequality in Australia', in Caraher, M & Coveney, J 2016, *Food poverty and insecurity: International food inequalities*, Springer, Switzerland, pp. 89–104.

Ramsey, R, Giskes, K, Turrell, G & Gallegos, D 2011, 'Food insecurity among Australian children: Potential determinants, health and development consequences', *Journal of Child Health Care*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 401–406.

Seligman, H, Laraia, B & Kushel, M 2010, 'Food insecurity is associated with chronic diseases among low-income NHANES participants', *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 140, no. 2, pp. 304–10.

VCAA 2016, *Victorian Certificate of Education Food Studies Study Design*, Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority, Melbourne.

## Author biographies

**Dr Rebecca Lindberg PhD** is a mixed-methods public health researcher with both applied and academic research experience. Rebecca has expertise in not-for-profit food programs, social and health policy, nutrition inequities and chronic disease prevention. She is currently employed as the Chronic Disease Program Coordinator at the Australian Health Policy Collaboration. The Collaboration promotes and supports a national policy agenda for the prevention of chronic diseases that improves population health and wellbeing in Australia. Rebecca is Director of The Community Grocer and Co-Convener of the Right to Food

Coalition. She is also a member of the Public Health Association of Australia.

[rebecca.lindberg@vu.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.lindberg@vu.edu.au)

**Professor Martin Caraher** is professor of food and health policy at the Centre for Food Policy, City University London. His recent work has included research on the European Most Deprived Persons Programme, a review of food taxation schemes, the sugar tax, a critique of the English Responsibility Deal and a review of the Australian Food Plan. He has a long-standing interest in the area of home economics and has previously written for the *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia* and the *Victorian Journal of Home Economics*. His research interests include how the teaching of food skills can be used as a way of opening up issues around food security and globalisation of the food system. He has with colleagues at Deakin University written about the state of Australian food policy. He is a member of the International Federation for Home Economics.

[m.caraher@city.ac.uk](mailto:m.caraher@city.ac.uk)

**Kate Wingrove** is an Accredited Practising Dietitian with experience in public health nutrition research, teaching and advocacy. Kate currently works at Deakin University, where she provides research assistance and teaching support to colleagues within the School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences. She is particularly interested in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs that promote food and nutrition security using a food systems approach. Kate is a member of the Dietitians Association of Australia, the Public Health Association of Australia and the Right to Food Coalition.

[k.wingrove@deakin.edu.au](mailto:k.wingrove@deakin.edu.au)

# Food systems infographics

## Introduction

This section is inspired by Dr Nick Rose, who spoke so eloquently at the Home Economics Victoria Food Studies Conference on 27 July. This represents just a small part of his wide-ranging presentation on the topic of food systems in Australia and around the world. In the context of food systems, Nick pointed his audience towards four powerful infographics, which we reproduce here. Together, they present viewpoints relevant to the issues component of Unit 4, Area of Study 1, Environment and ethics. These infographics can be used to start discussions, to encourage further research or simply to illustrate the complexity of influences on the food we eat today.

The full set of slides from Nick's presentation can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/j9bddjn>

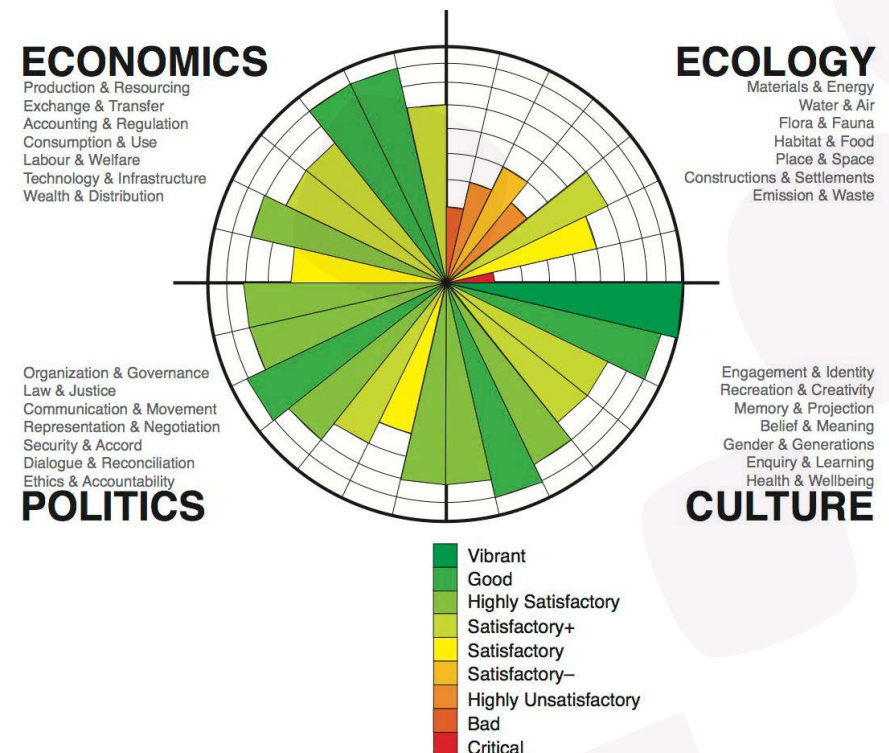
## Influences on global and national food systems

**Ecology:** soils, topography, water, climate, energy, animals, plants, ecosystems

**Culture:** identity, religion, beliefs, meaning, traditions, education

**Economics:** technology, infrastructure, equipment, capital, labour, consumption, wealth and distribution

**Politics:** legislation, regulation, policies, trade agreements, governance frameworks, ethics, security and dialogue



## CIRCLES OF SUSTAINABILITY

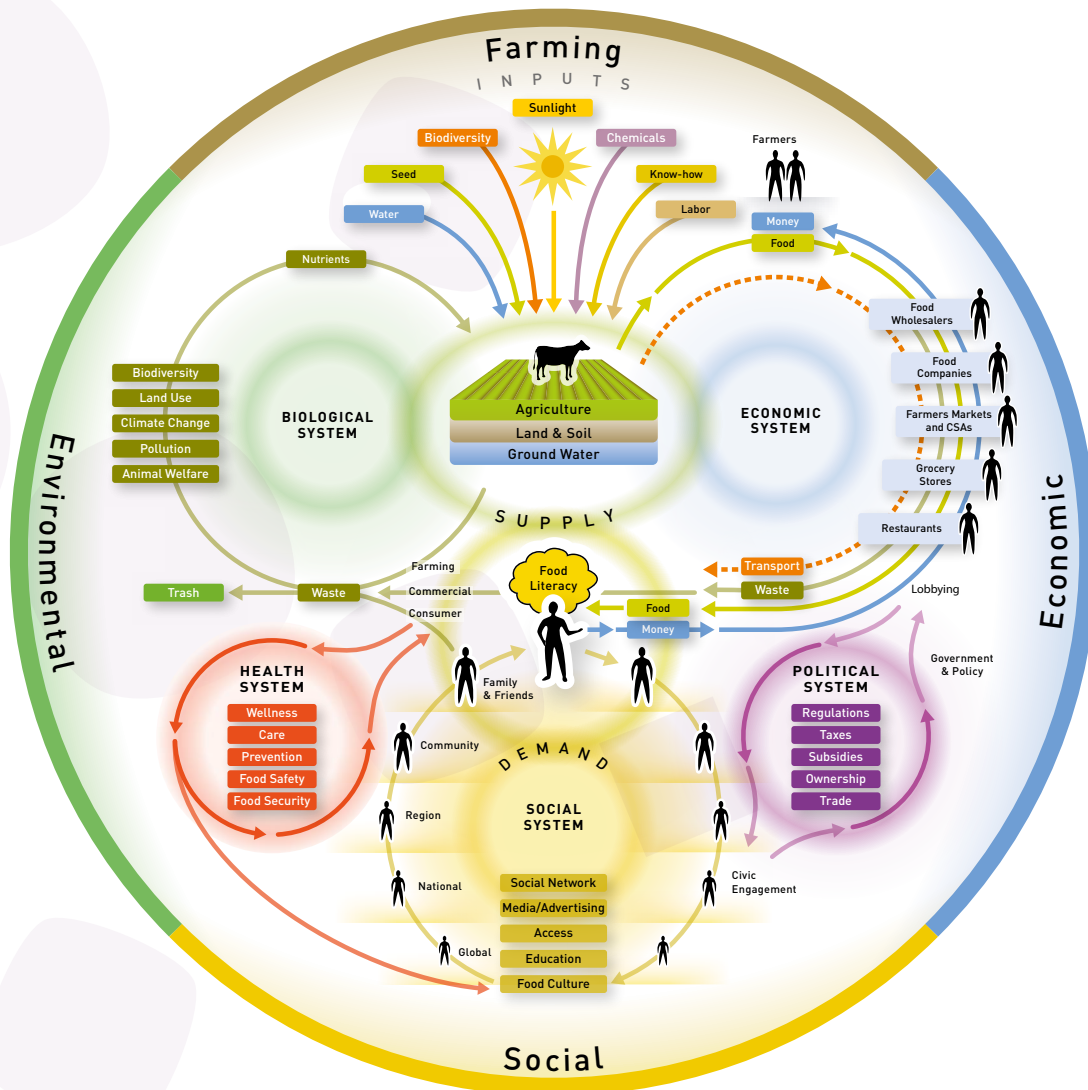
Figure 1: Food Systems Methodology, Circles of Sustainability, [www.circlesofsustainability.org](http://www.circlesofsustainability.org)



## Mapping food systems

# Nourish Food System Map

What's Your Relationship to Food? Look Closer.



[www.nourishlife.org](http://www.nourishlife.org)

copyright © 2014 WorldLink



Figure 2: Nourish Life Food System Map, [www.nourishlife.org/teach/food-system-tools](http://www.nourishlife.org/teach/food-system-tools)

# Ongoing challenges and questions: Agriculture and environment

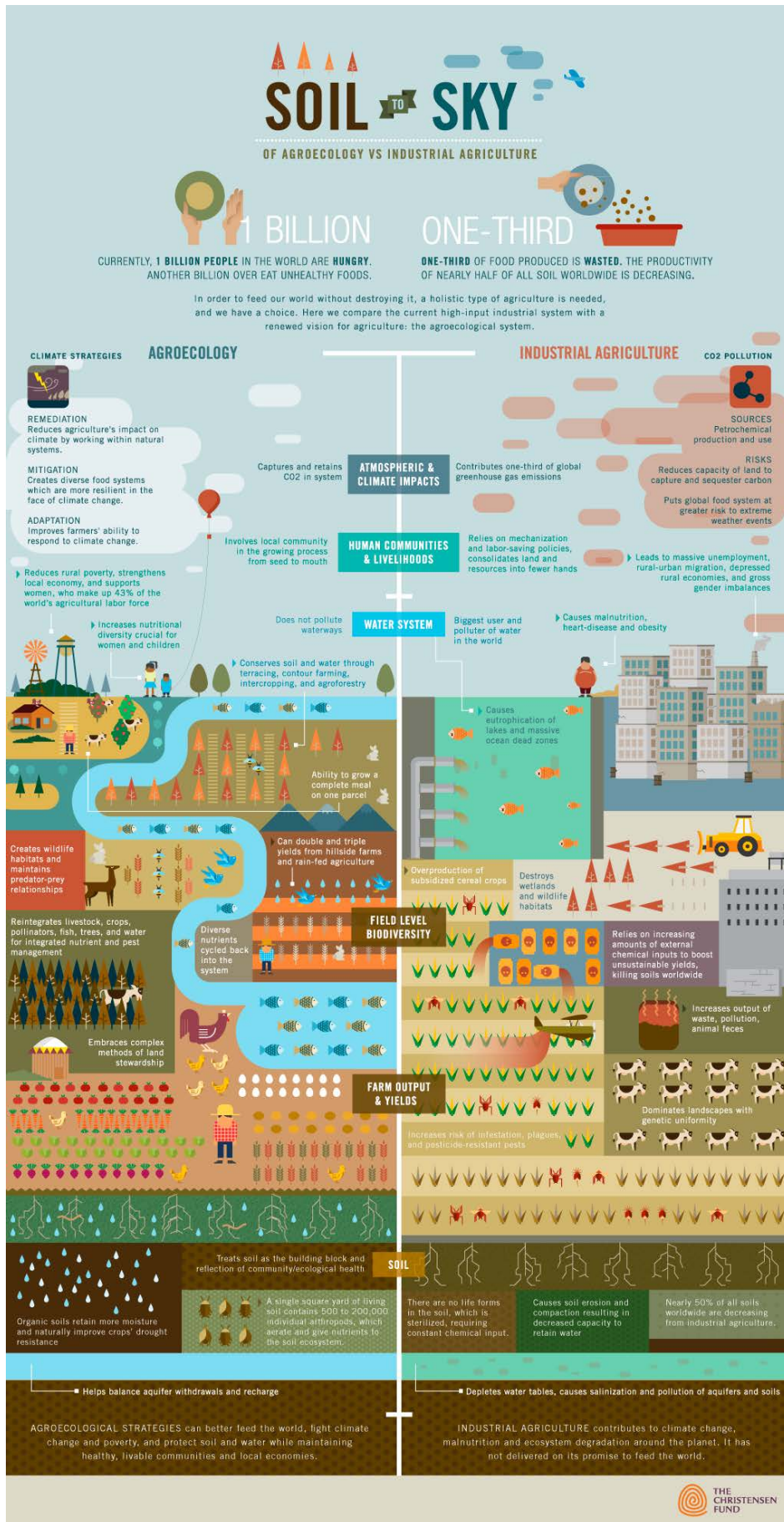


Figure 3: Nourishing the Planet, Soil to Sky of Agroecology vs Industrial Agriculture, [blogs.worldwatch.org/nourishingtheplanet/infographics](https://blogs.worldwatch.org/nourishingtheplanet/infographics)

# Connecting food production to everyday health



Figure 4: Soil, the foundation of nutrition: Healthy soils for a healthy life, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, [www.fao.org/3/a-bc275e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-bc275e.pdf)

## Acknowledgement

Dr Nick Rose is a lecturer at William Angliss Institute in the Bachelor of Food Studies course. He is a Master of Food Systems and Gastronomy and Executive Director of Sustain: The Australian Food Network

NicholasR@angliss.edu.au  
www.circlesoffood.org  
03 9606 2104



# Submission guidelines and contributor notes

## Description

The *Victorian Journal of Home Economics* publishes to an audience comprising the members of Home Economics Victoria. Published as *ECHO* since 1978, the *Victorian Journal of Home Economics* is established as one of the leading journals on the subject. Institutions and individuals in many countries subscribe, thus providing an international forum for academic research papers and curriculum-based practice or general interest articles. It aims to provide current and best practice information on the multi-faceted area that is Home Economics.

The scope of the Journal includes:

1. Topic areas: globalisation, food security, local food systems, sustainability, technology, ethical consumption, quality of life, food and nutrition, textiles and clothing, shelter, health and wellbeing for individuals, families and within communities.
2. Curriculum areas:
  - Health and Human Development
  - Product Design and Technology
  - Food Studies
  - Hospitality.

The Journal is published twice each year.

| Issue     | Deadline   |
|-----------|------------|
| April     | 8 February |
| September | 18 July    |

Authors may submit their manuscripts by email at any time prior to the deadline/s.

## Contributors

The *Victorian Journal of Home Economics* welcomes contributions from members and non-members, from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives.

## Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be sent electronically to Gail Boddy, Managing Editor at [business@hev.com.au](mailto:business@hev.com.au).

Manuscripts should be original work and, where appropriate, should acknowledge any significant contribution by others.

Before photographs can be published, authors must confirm that consent has been obtained from individuals whose images are portrayed in photographs.

## Language and formatting

Manuscripts should be in English. Please send files as a Microsoft Word document (doc, docx). Font should be Arial 11, left justified with single spacing between sentences and a single line return between paragraphs. Do not insert page breaks.

Use plain English, suitable for a broad audience. Avoid using jargon and clarify local terminology for an international audience. Use non-discriminatory language.

All pages must be numbered.

If an article is being submitted for peer-review, authors should create a Title Page file from the original manuscript and remove all identifying information from the text and document properties.

Material that requires substantial editing will be returned to the author.

## Author biography

In a separate document please provide a brief (less than 100 words) paragraph for each author, including:

- current role
- memberships
- an email address for correspondence
- a brief biography.

For example:

Dr Wendy Hunter PhD is currently self-employed. She has researched and written about the relationship between food, health and wellbeing across different age spans. Wendy has taught in nutrition, family and consumer studies, research methods, health promotion and public health at Deakin University in Melbourne. She has served as a director on the Board of Directors for Home Economics Victoria, a trustee on the King and Amy O'Malley Trust, and a national representative for the Victorian Division of the Home Economics Institute of Australia.

## Abstract

Academic articles should include an abstract of 150 to 200 words (100 words for a student paper) that includes up to five keywords. Abstracts for academic papers should include a brief introduction and aim, method, results and discussion/ conclusions.

Non-academic articles should include a brief (up to 50 words) summary.

## Length

Student papers – 1000 to 1500 words

Non-academic (practice or general interest) articles – 1500 to 2500 words

Academic articles – up to 6000 words

## Footnotes or endnotes

Footnotes or endnotes are not permitted, only reference lists. Please avoid using italics and bold. Spell check using UK English.

## Measurements

Measurements should be in metric units.

## Tables, figures and illustrations

Figures, diagrams and images must be cited in text and captions provided. Figures should be at a professional standard and supplied as separate electronic files (e.g. TIF, JPG, GIF). Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively. Include all tables, figures and illustrations in the correct location in the manuscript.

## Images

Images must be provided as jpeg or eps files.

## References

References should follow the Home Economics Victoria Style Guide as follows:

### Books

Author, initial/s year, Title, Publisher, City.

E.g.

Pendergast, D 2001, *Virginal mothers, groovy chicks and blokey blokes: Rethinking Home Economics (and) teaching bodies*, Australian Academic Press, Sydney.

### Journal articles

Author, initial/s year, 'Title', Journal, vol.#, no.#, page numbers.

E.g.

McGregor, SLT 2007a, 'Consumer scholarship and transdisciplinarity', *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, vol.31, no.5, pp. 487–495.

### Online journal articles

Author, B year, 'Title of article', *Title of Journal*, volume number, issue number, page numbers if given, date retrieved, name of database or <URL>.

E.g.

Newcomer, JW 2007, 'Metabolic syndrome and mental illness', *The American Journal of Managed Care*, vol.13, no.7, pp. 170–177, [www.ajmc.com/publications/supplement/2007/2007-11-vol13-n7Suppl/Nov07-2657pS170-S177](http://www.ajmc.com/publications/supplement/2007/2007-11-vol13-n7Suppl/Nov07-2657pS170-S177), retrieved 18 June 2015

# Submission guidelines and contributor notes

## Copyright

Manuscripts submitted for publication must not have been previously submitted or published. Accepted papers become the permanent property of *Victorian Journal of Home Economics* (VJHE). By submitting a manuscript, the author(s) agree that copyright for their articles is automatically transferred to the VJHE, if and when articles are accepted for publication. The copyright gives VJHE the exclusive rights to reproduce and distribute the article.

If you wish to reuse your own article (or an amended version of it) in a new publication of which you are the author, editor or co-editor, prior permission is not required (with the usual acknowledgements).

## Proofs

Where feasible, proofs will be sent electronically to the corresponding author for checking for accuracy. When this occurs, any corrections should be returned to the editor within 72 hours and, with the exception of printing errors, should be kept to a bare minimum.

## Photocopying

Teaching institutions with a current paid subscription to the Journal may make multiple copies for teaching purposes without charge, provided such copies are not resold or copied.

## Submission details

Please submit your article and supporting documents by email to the editor at [business@hev.com.au](mailto:business@hev.com.au). Please ensure that your contact details are up to date. The following should be attached in the required formatting and labelled as shown below:

|                           |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Biography                 | Word document             | bio_lastname_initial_date<br>(e.g. bio_hunter_w_24_06_2014)           |
| Abstract                  | Word document             | abstract_lastname_initial_date<br>(e.g. abstract_hunter_w_24_06_2014) |
| Article                   | Word document             | article_lastname_initial_date<br>(e.g. article_hunter_w_24_06_2014)   |
| Tables                    | Word document<br>EPS, PDF | TableNo_lastname_initial_date<br>(e.g. table1_hunter_w_24_06_2014)    |
| Figures/<br>illustrations | TIF, EPS, JPEG, PDF       | FigureNo_lastname_initial_date<br>(e.g. figure1_hunter_w_24_06_2014)  |
| Images                    | TIF, EPS, JPEG            | FigureNo_lastname_initial_date<br>(e.g. figure2_hunter_w_24_06_2014)  |

## Contact information for enquiries and submissions

Gail Boddy  
Home Economics Victoria  
605/198 Harbour Esplanade  
Docklands Victoria 3008 Australia  
Telephone +61 3 9642 1061  
Email [business@hev.com.au](mailto:business@hev.com.au)

## Contact information for advertising

Home Economics Victoria  
605/198 Harbour Esplanade  
Docklands Victoria 3008 Australia  
Telephone +61 3 9642 1061  
Email: [office@hev.com.au](mailto:office@hev.com.au)

## Presidents

|                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Jess Kerr</b>              | 1958–1959 |
| <b>Joy Kelley</b>             | 1959–1960 |
| <b>Dorothy Meurer</b>         | 1960–1965 |
| <b>Edna Usher</b>             | 1965–1970 |
| <b>Jean Thiemeyer</b>         | 1970–1973 |
| <b>Sylvia Grey</b>            | 1973–1974 |
| <b>Rosemary Hepburn</b>       | 1974–1976 |
| <b>Avril Yates</b>            | 1976–1978 |
| <b>June Reynolds</b>          | 1978–1982 |
| <b>Doris Embling</b>          | 1982–1983 |
| <b>Gwen Wilson</b>            | 1983–1985 |
| <b>Lorraine Scott</b>         | 1985–1988 |
| <b>Von Canty</b>              | 1988–1992 |
| <b>Glenis Heath</b>           | 1992–1994 |
| <b>Laurel Tully</b>           | 1994–2000 |
| <b>Heather McKenzie</b>       | 2000–2002 |
| <b>Sandra Fordyce-Voorham</b> | 2002–2004 |
| <b>Louise Gunther</b>         | 2004–2016 |
| <b>Alison Kuen</b>            | 2016–     |

## Life members

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>Claire Finniss</b>         |
| <b>Jean Pollock</b>           |
| <b>Isabel Horne</b>           |
| <b>Jess Kerr</b>              |
| <b>Dorothy Meurer</b>         |
| <b>June Reynolds</b>          |
| <b>Edna Usher</b>             |
| <b>Doris Embling</b>          |
| <b>Win Williams</b>           |
| <b>Shirley Cameron</b>        |
| <b>Suzanne Russell</b>        |
| <b>Coral Sundblom</b>         |
| <b>Von Canty</b>              |
| <b>Jenny McComb</b>           |
| <b>Glenis Heath</b>           |
| <b>Alison Kuen</b>            |
| <b>Gillian Smith</b>          |
| <b>Laurel Tully</b>           |
| <b>Pamela Williams</b>        |
| <b>Sandra Fordyce-Voorham</b> |

## Office staff

|   |
|---|
| <b>Carol Warren</b><br>Chief Executive Officer  |
| <b>Pam Pringle</b><br>Education Manager         |
| <b>Zita Priest</b><br>Accountant                |
| <b>Gail Boddy</b><br>Curriculum Project Officer |

## Home Economics Victoria board

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| <b>Daniel Baldwin</b>       |
| <b>Karma Blinco-Parr</b>    |
| <b>Sarah Cuthbert</b>       |
| <b>Rebecca Dyson</b>        |
| <b>Lisa Eltham</b>          |
| <b>Louise Gunther</b>       |
| <b>Alison Kuen</b>          |
| <b>Amanda Muxworthy</b>     |
| <b>Brooke Plymin</b>        |
| <b>Lezanne Webb-Johnson</b> |



## Mission statement

Our purpose is to promote skills for life to achieve optimal and sustainable wellbeing for individuals, families and communities. By promoting wellbeing, encompassing health, we aim to prevent and/or control disease such as obesity and type 2 diabetes by providing teachers, students, parents and wider school communities with education and information.

## Objectives

- Promote skills for life, including home economics, to achieve optimal and sustainable wellbeing for individuals, families and communities.
- Promote health and wellbeing, aimed at preventing diseases, specifically obesity and type 2 diabetes.
- Provide education and information about health and wellbeing through education programs, resources, publications, advocacy and consultancy.
- Support research into health and wellbeing including the provision of awards and scholarships.
- Work in partnership with relevant health and education bodies, government departments, organisations and industry.

## Office hours

The registered office of Home Economics Victoria is open from 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday during the school term except on public holidays or as a result of professional development activities and as advised from time to time in *Home Economics Victoria News*.

All communications and enquiries should be addressed to:

Home Economics Victoria  
605/198 Harbour Esplanade  
Docklands VIC 3008 Australia

Telephone +61 3 9642 1061  
Facsimile +61 3 9642 2418  
Email [office@hev.com.au](mailto:office@hev.com.au)

ACN 005 333 835  
ISSN 1836-7275

[www.homeeconomics.com.au](http://www.homeeconomics.com.au)