



The Community Grocer

Feasibility Tool

Introduction

The Community Grocer increases access for people living on a low-income to affordable fruit and vegetables. We do this by running weekly, local pop-up fresh food markets across Melbourne. We currently run two (core) markets in public housing estates in Carlton and Fitzroy, and two (franchise) markets in partnership with community organisations in Fawkner and Mernda.

The Community Grocer is regularly fielding enquiries about starting up new markets across Melbourne. To help us determine which opportunities are the most important, and most likely to succeed, we have developed this Feasibility Tool.

This tool has four main components:

1. A **grey literature review** to determine the current situation around food security and social cohesion in the geographical area of interest;
2. A **community consultation process** to discuss food security, shopping behaviours, desire for a market, and the time and location of a market;
3. A **mapping exercise** on the shortlist of identified locations to determine, according to the checklist, which location would be the most appropriate for a market;
4. A **price comparison** to determine the price variance between local food shopping options and The Community Grocer;
5. A **partnerships matrix** to identify and engage the key stakeholders to assist with the establishment and growth of the market.

The fundamental purpose of Feasibility Tool is:

1. To validate a **need** for The Community Grocer market;
2. To test if there is **demand** for The Community Grocer market;
3. To determine a **location** and a **time** for The Community Grocer market.

Following the implementation of this tool, The Community Grocer will be able to provide recommendations as to whether a market should be established, and what location and time

it should be run. Following this, a project plan will be developed that outlines the next key steps in implementing The Community Grocer market.

The Community Grocer Wyndham

Feasibility Study

Background

The Community Grocer submitted an Expression of Interest to set up a market in Wyndham to help address the food security issues in this rapidly growing area.

In partnership with Shoestring Gardening, Wyndham City Council, Open Food Network, Wyndham Community and Education Centre, The Smith Family, Werribee Baptist Church, the Youth Resource Centre and Wyndham Park Primary School, The Community Grocer has undertaken this feasibility study to determine the need, demand and logistics of setting up The Community Grocer Wyndham.

Most of this group of organisations makes up The Community Grocer Wyndham Working Group who currently meets fortnightly to progress the plans for the market.

Literature Review

Wyndham City is located on the Western Edge of Melbourne. In 2016, it was Victoria's fastest growing municipality, with the population increasing by 5.7%¹.

Despite this rapid population growth, the number of fresh food outlets have not kept up with the number of takeaway outlets. For every 1 fresh food outlet, there are 5.5 takeaway outlets². More than half the residents of Wyndham live more than 1km away from a fresh food outlet³. This makes access to healthy food options difficult, and contributes to food insecurity and poor health in Wyndham.

The Wyndham Household Survey found that 7.2% of residents had run out of food in the previous 12 months⁴, whilst only 3% of Wyndham residents consume the recommended 5 serves of vegetables each day. Up to 75% of residents eat take away meals once a week⁵.

Meanwhile, Wyndham City residents also experience high rates of obesity. Due to the complex and long term health consequences and costs associated with food insecurity and obesity, Wyndham City has identified this emerging issue as a priority.

The percentage of households in the City of Wyndham that are identified as low income range from 4.6% to 26.9% in Wyndham Vale North. Most households in Wyndham are two parent families with children, however about 10% of households are single parents and 15% single

¹ <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/about-council/wyndham-community/demographics-population-overview>

² Wyndham Food Hub Feasibility Draft 2017

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/news/improving-wyndhams-local-food-system>

⁵ Wyndham City Health and Wellbeing profile.

person households⁶. The proportion of people who speak another language at home is 30%, and the most commonly spoken languages other than English are Filipino or Tagalog, Italian, Mandarin, Hindi and Arabic⁷. Key cultural groups within the City of Wyndham include Indian, Filipino and Karen.

With the influx of new migrants and refugees in the City of Wyndham, ensuring a harmonious, inclusive and respectful multicultural community is a key priority for the Council. Recent research undertaken to inform the Multicultural Policy suggest that marginalised populations believe food is a wonderful means through which to share, connect and build a community that understands different cultures. Almost a quarter of adults in Wyndham have minimal or no social interactions in an average day⁸

Based on this key data around food security and community, it appears there is a need to establish a market in Wyndham that provides better access to affordable fruit and vegetables, some health literacy and education around healthy eating, and an opportunity for socially isolated individuals to engage with one another over one of the great shared common denominators – food.

Community Consultation

Having determined the need, it is also critical to determine the demand for a local, affordable fresh food market. The Community Grocer undertook a Community Consultation on Friday 24 March at the Wyndham Multicultural Fiesta from 10am - 2pm where we had a stall giving away free fruit and chatting to people about their shopping behaviours, experiences and needs. We asked the following questions:

- Where do you shop?
- How much do you spend?
- What is your experience?
- Where would a good place for a market be?
- When would be a good time for a market?

From approximately 12 interviews with members of the public and organisations we elicited the following key information:

- Potential locations including Kelly Park, the bus or train station and Tarneit Road. It was noted that people tended to select areas where there were already existing fruit and vegetable retailers. When alternative options including Wyndham Park Primary School and the Youth Resource Centre were presented, members of the public were supportive.
- The most common place where people shopped was the chain supermarkets (Woolworths and Coles), but also included Fresh to Chef in Hoppers Crossing which is cheap but not that accessible for people across Wyndham; The Harvest which is fresh

⁶ <http://forecast.id.com.au/wyndham/household-types>

⁷ <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2016-06/Multicultural%20Policy%20Final.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-04/Health%2C%20Wellbeing%20%26%20Safety%20Profiles%20-%20Mental%20Wellbeing%20%28A1602703%29.pdf>

but expensive, Aldi and the Werribee Fresh Food Market which were both cheap but poor quality and V-market which was cheap, centrally located but a positive shopping experience.

- Members of the public seemed very supportive of an additional fresh food market, particularly with culturally appropriate foods including bitter melon and snake beans, which people often need to travel further for.
- Members of the public suggested Saturday morning would not be a good time due to children's sporting commitments. It was suggested an afternoon after school would be good timing, especially before and after pick up times.
- At the Fiesta, we met a number of agencies and services who were very keen to support the growth of the market including Centrelink, AMES, the Werribee Football Club, IPC Health, Transition Wyndham, West Water and Wyndham Community Centre.

Mapping

Prior to the Community Consultation, the Working Group had shortlisted 4 sites for review. This sites were selected by people with local knowledge, and in consultation with the Food Hubs Feasibility Study. The shortlisted sites included:

- Hoppers Crossing Youth Resource Centre, 86 Derrimut Road Hoppers Crossing
- Wyndham Park Primary School, 77 Kookaburra Avenue Werribee
- Wyndham Parking Community Centres, 57 Kookaburra Avenue Werribee
- Penrose Community Centre, 83 Penrose Promenade, Tarneit

To determine which of the sites to use for The Community Grocer Wyndham, we assessed each site against a list of factors, ordered in importance.

1. Hoppers Crossing Youth Resource Centre, 86 Derrimut Road Hoppers Crossing

Factor	Poor – Good (0-5)	Details
Partnership with organisation	5	Very supportive
Visibility	5	Busy area, lots of people/cars, main road
Accessibility and placement in low income area	4	Easy to access, close to two estates – walking distance
Protection (undercover, electricity)	4	Indoor/outdoor setting
Storage	2	Poor storage – need to negotiate
Cost	5	No fee
Parking	5	Ample parking
Complementary activities in space	5	Lots of activities including cooking
In built on-sell options	5	Cooking on site
Potential growing space/partnership	5	Boxes out front of site
TOTAL	45	

2. Wyndham Park Primary School, 77 Kookaburra Avenue Werribee

Factor	Poor – Great (0-5)	Details
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Partnership with organisation	5	Principal very supportive, Smith Family co-located
Visibility	2	Behind fences and away from road – difficulty getting people into space
Accessibility and placement in low income area	3	In estate, but behind fences in school
Protection (undercover, electricity)	4	Undercover and protected from rain
Storage	4	Indicated storage was avl
Cost	5	No fee
Parking	2	Limited parking, hard to find
Complementary activities in space	5	Community Hub with activities
In built on-sell options	4	Canteen
Potential growing space/partnership	5	Existing community garden
TOTAL	39	

3. Wyndham Parking Community Centres, 57 Kookaburra Avenue Werribee

Factor	Poor – Good (0-5)	Details
Partnership with organisation	2	Never met management
Visibility	4	In residential estate but not well utilised
Accessibility and placement in low income area	5	In estate, co-located with other services
Protection (undercover, electricity)	3	Limited space out front
Storage	4	Looks like space available
Cost	5	No fee
Parking	5	Plenty of parking
Complementary activities in space	2	Not very busy
In built on-sell options	0	No options presented
Potential growing space/partnership	2	Growing space in Men's Shed across way
TOTAL	32	

4. Penrose Community Centre, 83 Penrose Promenade, Tarneit

Factor	Poor – Good (0-5)	Details
Partnership with organisation	3	Got tour but little interest from management
Visibility	4	Located in busy hub –supermarket nearby
Accessibility and placement in low income area	2	Tarneit not particularly low income
Protection (undercover, electricity)	4	In community room, inside
Storage	0	No storage
Cost	0	Expensive to hire

Parking	5	Good parking
Complementary activities in space	4	Co-located activities every day
In built on-sell options	0	None presented
Potential growing space/partnership	0	No growing space
TOTAL	22	

Whilst the Wyndham Park Primary School site had many significant positives, the traffic and co location of services at the Youth Resource Centre made this site more likely to succeed in our eyes in the short term. We would like to explore having a few additional markets at the Wyndham Park Primary School site across the 3-month pilot period to see if we can activate the area and drum up interest in the local community.

The market will therefore be held in the Activity Room at the Hoppers Crossing Youth Resource Centre every Thursday from 2-5pm starting on 1 June 2017.

Price Comparison

In early April, we undertook price comparison

Produce Lines	Woolworths	V-Market	TCG
Potatoes/kg	\$3.50	\$1.29	\$1.29
Spring Onions	\$2.00	\$1.99	\$1.49
Tomatoes/kg	\$7.90	\$2.99	\$2.99
Eggplant/kg	\$6.50	\$2.99	\$2.49
Coriander/bunch	\$3.00	\$0.99	\$1.29
Lettuce/bunch	\$3.90	\$2.99	\$2.49
Capsicums/kg	\$7.50	\$2.99	\$3.29
Avocado/each	\$3.00	\$2.49	\$2.49
Okra/kg	\$16.99	-	\$7.99
Grapes/kg	\$3.00	\$5.99	\$2.49
Bananas/kg	\$1.50	\$0.99	\$1.29
Strawberries/punnet	\$3.90	\$2.99	\$2.49
Watermelon/kg	\$1.50	\$1.29	\$1.29

In terms of pricing, The Community Grocer is up to 30% cheaper than chain supermarkets, and on par with the local budget greengrocers in Werribee Central, however the quality is much fresher having come from the wholesale markets that morning. We think The Community Grocer Wyndham will provide an additional affordable option for the Wyndham community, which is better quality and more locally available.

Partnerships

Through the establishment of a new market, The Community Grocer engages in two types of partnerships – key operational partners and peripheral partners to keep informed and utilise networks for promotions. Our initial scoping (outlined below) has identified a number of organisations we can work with to establish this market.

Organisation	Key/Periphery	Resources?	Are they engaged?
Open Food Network	K	Funding, networks	Y
Shoestring Gardening	K	Networks, collaboration	Y
WCEC	K	Sustainability (staff), networks	Y
The Smith Family	K	Networks	Y
WPPS	K	Networks	Y
HC Youth Resource Centre	K	Location, sustainability (on-sell), networks	Y
Wyndham City Council	K	Funding, networks, promotions	Y
Werribee Baptist Church	K	Networks	Y
Centrelink	P	Networks	Y
AMES	P	Networks	Y
Werribee Football Club	P	Networks	Y
IPC Health	K	Evaluation expertise, networks, sustainability (staff)	N
Waringa Special School	P	Networks	N
Heathdale Christian College	P	Networks	N
Werribee Interfaith Network	P	Networks	N
West Water	P	Networks	Y
Transition Wyndham	P	Networks	N
Karen Community	K	Networks	N
Saffron Kitchen	P	Networks, sustainability (on-sell)	N

The Working Group has been formulated with the following organisations: Shoestring Gardening, Wyndham City Council, Wyndham Community and Education Centre, The Smith Family, Werribee Baptist Church, the Youth Resource Centre and Wyndham Park Primary School.

We are endeavouring to engage a local community member to be involved in the Working Group as well.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threat Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interested partners with a range of resources including money, location, networks - The expertise of The Community Grocer which has now launched 4 markets, including one in a school and one after hours - The co-location of agricultural land in Wyndham to source locally - Our price point and high quality - Our community building efforts which make this market more than just a stop off for food 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No firm sustainability plan in place, and no assurance the market will be profitable within 3 months - No solid dedicated on sell option (however a few possibilities) - Limited knowledge within TCG about the Wyndham community
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<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linkages with local farmers to sell direct and cheap - Linkages with existing services and activities at the Youth Centre 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The weather – launching in Winter might not make for market weather - TCG staffing – long way to travel - Poor health literacy of local community means they don't engage with the market
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Recommendations

1. There is a need for The Community Grocer Wyndham, particularly to service low-income areas including Wyndham Vale North.
2. There is demand for the market, but a diverse set of behaviours around food shopping, and varying opinions on when and where the market should be located. As such, extensive promotions should be undertaken by the Working Group and partners to inform a breadth of the community about the launch of The Community Grocer Wyndham.
3. The best location for The Community Grocer Wyndham is the Hoppers Crossing Youth Resource Centre because of the physical location which is highly visible and co-located with two low SES estates (Mossville and Heathdale), already attracts a lot of people, has ample parking, and existing activities and food purchasing requirements to support The Community Grocer Wyndham.
4. The best time for The Community Grocer Wyndham is from 2pm until 5pm, to catch parents as they pick up and drop off children at the surrounding schools.
5. The market will therefore be held in the Activity Room at the Hoppers Crossing Youth Resource Centre every Thursday from 2-5pm starting on 1 June 2017.
6. There is a large and growing network of organisations that we can utilise to promote the market.
7. The key challenges the market will face include sustainability and longevity with funding for a 3-month trial only, and no solid partner committed to keeping the market.
8. A key opportunity is the local growing community in Werribee who could supply local and affordable produce.
9. A key threat is the weather – launching in winter!!!