

South East Food Hub

Research Report

Lyndal Collins, Tahlia Farragher, Alexandra Schepis and Raenie Zwierlein



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following report has been prepared for the South East Food Hub by Monash University Nutrition and Dietetics students. The authors would like to acknowledge the support of project supervisor Danielle Zamarchi, the guidance of Serenity Hill, and the Open Food Network for facilitating the development of this report. We would further like to acknowledge project partner, the South East Food Hub, and all research participants for their valuable contributions. We would also like to thank Claire Palermo (Monash University Unit Convenor) for her ongoing support and guidance.



Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 OBJECTIVES	2
2. METHODS	2
2.1A MAPPING	2
2.1B INSTITUTION INTERVIEWS	2
2.1C COMMUNITY CENTRE VISITS	3
2.2 BUYING GROUP MEMBER SURVEYS	3
2.3 PRICE COMPARISON	4
3. RESULTS	4
3.1A MAPPING	4
3.1B INSTITUTION INTERVIEWS	4
3.1C COMMUNITY CENTRE VISITS	5
3.2 CUSTOMER SURVEYS	6
3.3 PRICE COMPARISON	10
4. DISCUSSION	12
4.1A MAPPING	12
4.1B INSTITUTION INTERVIEWS	12
4.1C COMMUNITY CENTRE VISITS	12
4.2 CUSTOMER SURVEYS	12
4.3 PRICE COMPARISON	14
5. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	16
6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	16
7. REFERENCES	17
APPENDIX A	19
APPENDIX B	19
APPENDIX C	22
APPENDIX D	24

1. INTRODUCTION

The Open Food Network (OFN) promotes sustainable food systems by offering software to local food hubs thereby increasing their access to new markets and the viability of sustainable, transparent food systems.¹ The South East Food Hub (SEFH) is based in the South Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, selling local fresh produce online via the OFN.² This research was conducted in response to the food hub reporting difficulty in retaining current buying group customers, expanding their customer network into new settings and sectors, and responding to the competition presented by larger retailers. Evidence suggests that many Australian food hubs are experiencing similar challenges and thus struggling to prove their viability and achieve financial sustainability.³⁻⁵ This research therefore aims to support the development of practical recommendations for SEFH to address these barriers and to form the basis of future research in this area. The findings of this project will further enable the OFN to better support food hubs' information, technology and communication needs.

1.1 Objectives

1. To increase the awareness of the SEFH to institutions as potential buying group pickup points within their service area including; local community centres, private schools, private hospitals, residential nursing homes, child care and vocational education institutions.
2. To increase the awareness of the SEFH to the barriers and enablers of buying group members engaging with and purchasing food via the OFN.
3. To determine the cost of purchasing food from the SEFH via the OFN compared to nine conventional supermarkets located within the service area of the hub.

2. METHODS

2.1a Mapping

In April 2015, a Google Maps My Map™ was created to identify potential buying group pickup points for the SEFH and it included locations and contact details. Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia local government municipalities were selected based on the SEFH's location in Koo Wee Rup, Cardinia Shire, and their aim to make local produce available to local South Eastern suburb residents.

The institution types mapped were primary schools, higher education and vocational training facilities, private hospitals, community centres, child care centres and residential aged care centres. These institutions were mapped in response to evidence suggesting food hubs are more likely to build successful relationships with organisations that have a public obligation to promote health and support the local community.⁶

2.1b Institution interviews

From the institutions mapped, five primary schools, child care centres and aged care centres were randomly selected for telephone contact. These institutions were selected based on the interests of the SEFH in exploring barriers and enablers specific to institutions serving as pickup points for the food hub. The institutions were then contacted by telephone in April 2015, to request a semi-structured interview with a relevant staff member. The semi-structured interview (Appendix A) was restricted to ten questions to shorten interview time and increase chances of participation.

2.1c Community centre visits

Due to a lack of participation in semi-structured interviews (as discussed in results), the focus of institutional interviews turned to community centres. This was based on the success of some community centres working as pickup points for the SEFH and their social responsibility as a community organisation.⁶ One council area, the City of Greater Dandenong, was selected for on-site visits and informal interviews. A total of nine council recognised and affiliated community centres were visited on 27.04.15.

2.2 Buying group member surveys

When creating the SEFH survey a simple four-step tool was used, as outlined below (Appendix B).⁷

1. Determine the questions to be asked.

Senior representatives from the SEFH outlined their interest areas including what motivates their consumers, what level of time and interest their consumers invest and what challenges they experience.

2. Select the question type, format and specific wording.

Closed ended questions with ordered choices were chosen as the most appropriate form to allow for analysis using ordinal response scales in the form of 5-point Likert scales.^{7,8} Hybrid questions that allowed for a response of 'other' were also used to collect additional qualitative data where necessary. Only one open-ended question was used to ask for any additional comments or recommendations.

3. Design the question sequence and overall questionnaire layout.

Demographic questions were placed at the end of the questionnaire as the other questions were considered to be of greater importance to the SEFH. The survey was created for online use only.

4. Develop ancillary documents.

A short introduction was written to minimise survey length and an incentive for participation was offered by the SEFH, as incentives have been shown to improve survey response rate.⁹⁻¹²

The completed survey was distributed to five members of the public to assess comprehension and clarity.⁷ The survey was distributed online via the newsletter on the 28th of April and on the 5th of May, 3 buying group pickup points were attended at Cockatoo, Clyde and Pakenham, and links to the survey attached to each of the invoices.

All analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel

- Data was coded and entered into an excel spread sheet.
- Questions one, two, three and eight were analysed for frequency of response.
- Question four; frequency of responses to important and very important were added together for each of the buying factors.
- Question five; frequency of responses to agree and strongly agree were added together for each of the buying factors.
- Responses from questions four and five were compared to each other.
- Data from questions six and seven were compared to national data regarding fruit and vegetable consumption.

2.3 Price Comparison

In April 2015, a price comparison was conducted between SEFH and supermarket produce in the service area of the Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia shires. Supermarkets used for the comparison were those located in the large central suburbs of Dandenong, Pakenham and Narre Warren. In store supermarket prices and SEFH prices from the OFN were collected between 30.03.15 and 05.04.15.

Surveys of SEFH customers indicated the number of respondents with household incomes over \$1999/week was greater than the average for the area.¹³⁻¹⁴ An additional price comparison was conducted of supermarkets located in suburbs with SEIFA scores greater than the Local Government Area averages.¹³⁻¹⁵ From this criteria, the suburbs of Berwick and Beaconsfield were identified and visited during the week of 27.04.15 to 03.05.15.

Only conventional supermarket produce was used for the price comparisons, as the SEFH does not market the produce available as exclusively organic. Quantities most comparable to household quantities were used where possible to compare prices from the supermarkets and food hub.

3. RESULTS

3.1a Mapping

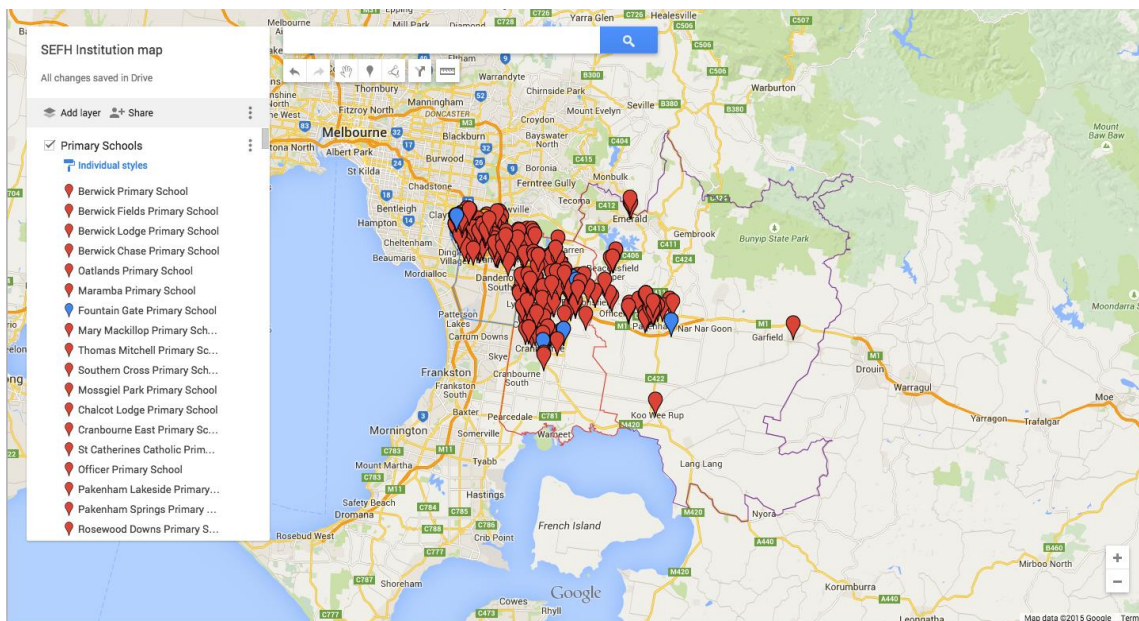


Figure 1. SEFH map of institutions identified in service area.

A total of 321 institutions were identified and mapped within the three local government areas; a screenshot of the completed map can be seen in Figure 1. For the mapping of individual institution types, see Appendix C.

3.1b Institution interviews

Of the 15 institutions contacted by telephone, 11 declined to be involved and four provided contact details for a relevant staff member within the institution, all of which were email addresses. Of the four people directly emailed, one replied and declined involvement, no other replies were received.

In declining to be interviewed, institutions cited lack of interest, no relevant staff member to talk with, lack of resources to facilitate a pickup point, and having tried something similar previously and failed.

3.1c Community centre visits

Table 1. Summary of Community Centre Visits in the City of Greater Dandenong

Community Centre	Contact results
Dandenong Neighbourhood House	Contact person unavailable. Email address provided to send our information to and organise a meeting. No response as of 25 May 2015.
Wellsprings for Women Inc.	Contact person said they did not have the resources to organise buying groups but that staff may be interested due to their interest in local food. Cited difficulties included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English being a second language for a large proportion of the community - Many community members required emergency food relief and charity - Price was a major concern, with most people buying reduced produce from the Dandenong market just before closing time.
Keysborough Learning Centre	Contact person unavailable. Email address provided to send our information to and organise a meeting. No response as of 25 May 2015.
Paddy O'Donoghue Centre	The receptionist explained that this is a business with rooms to rent for classes. They did not offer any information about the community food needs or possible SEFH involvement. Suggested contact with Jan Wilson Community Centre.
Jan Wilson Community Centre (Melbourne Ballet School)	The receptionist suggested a group of seniors who visit the centre might be interested. The organiser of the seniors group does not have an email address and is only contactable when at the Jan Wilson Community Centre. This group is Italian and would require multicultural options. Staff at the centre were uninterested, citing wanting to touch, feel, and see their food before purchasing.
Noble Park Community Centre	Staff member stated that the biggest factor for people in his community was price, with many people requiring the cheapest options possible and access to culturally appropriate food. It was suggested community members may be willing to compromise on the price if the quality and variety of the produce is of extremely high. It was stated that people generally like to touch and see foods they are buying.
Springvale Neighbourhood Literacy	The receptionist explained that they teach English at the centre and are not considered an official community centre.
Springvale Learning and Activities Centre	A pilot was conducted where parents bought in bulk from the Dandenong Market before dividing up produce. This did not involve online ordering. Issues with the pilot were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was not economically worthwhile due to no price difference. - People received produce they were unfamiliar with and they wanted to exchange these items. - The food items offered were limited, lacking variety and cultural diversity. - People were not concerned with sourcing local food. <p>After this pilot the community centre looked into a more permanent option, they felt that SEFH prices were too high.</p>
Springvale Neighbourhood House	Contact person unavailable mainly involved with emergency food relief. Email address provided to send our information to and organise a meeting. No response as of 25 May 2015.

The results of the nine community centre visits are recorded in Table 1. Four community centres provided information regarding the potential for a buying group to operate for either staff or the through the centre. Of the four centres that provided information, one cited a lack of resources to run a buying group, three cited price as an important deciding factor, three cited the need for a culturally appropriate variety of produce, two cited the desire to select produce themselves and one cited a lack of interest in local produce. Three of the remaining five centres visited did not have an appropriate staff member available at the time and provided contact details, with no response on follow-up. The remaining two said that despite their listing by the City of Greater of Dandenong as a community centre, they did not operate as one and would not be appropriate to discuss community food needs with.

3.2 Customer surveys

A total of 52 SEFH surveys were completed. Considering there were 103 customers who ordered from the food hub over 4 weeks during April and May 2015, the response rate was just over half (50.4%).

Table 2. The demographic characteristics of the study sample.

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	46	92%
Male	4	8%
Age		
Under 21 years old	0	0%
21-35 years old	19	39%
36-50 years old	21	43%
51-65 years old	8	16%
66 and over	1	2%
Number of adults living in your house		
1	2	4%
2	32	65%
3	9	18%
4 or more	6	12%
Number of children living in your house		
0	22	44%
1	8	16%
2	15	30%
3	4	8%
4 or more	1	2%
Annual household income		
Less than \$25000	2	4%
\$25000 - \$49999	6	12%
\$50000 - \$74999	5	10%
\$75000 - \$99999	12	24%
\$100000-\$199999	17	34%
\$200000 or higher	1	2%
Did not respond	7	14%

As shown in Table 2, the majority of participants were female (92%) and the most common age group was 36-50 years old (43%). The majority of respondents (52%) had one or more children under the age of 18 living in the household. Sixty two percent of respondents had two adults living in their household.

Over half (58%) of participants who gave a response regarding their annual household income earned over \$75 000; the Australian average household income is \$145 400.¹⁶



Figure 6. Percentage of people who rated buying factors Important and Very Important and if they are Satisfied and Very Satisfied by the food hub.

Figure 6 compares respondents' ratings for how important factors are to them and how well they believe the food hub satisfies them. The percentage of respondents who rated each of the factors as either important or very important was compared with the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the food hub was satisfying these factors.

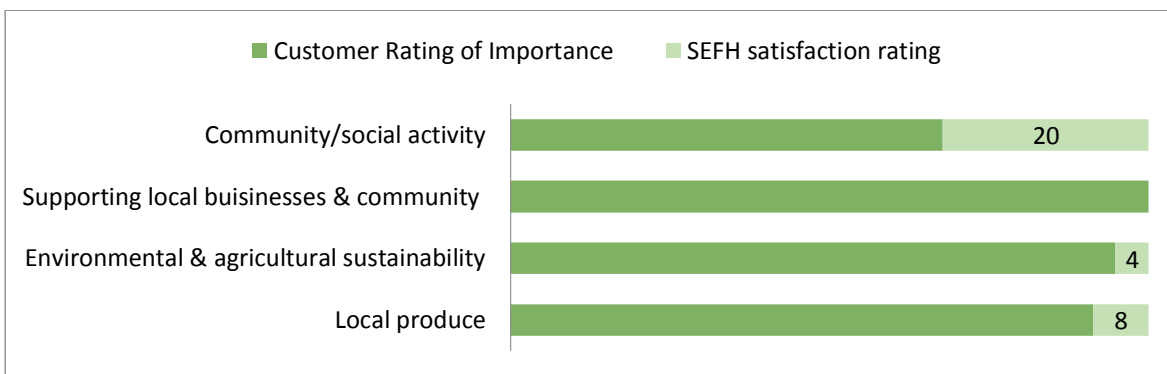


Figure 7. Percentage difference between SEFH satisfaction rating and Customer rating of importance.

Figure 7 demonstrates which factors the SEFH is either meeting or exceeding customers rating of importance. Supporting local businesses and community organisations were rated by customers' as equally important and as well addressed by SEFH. The SEFH's ability to satisfy customers' needs for 'local produce', to support 'environmental and agricultural sustainability' and encourage 'community and social activity' exceeded importance ratings.

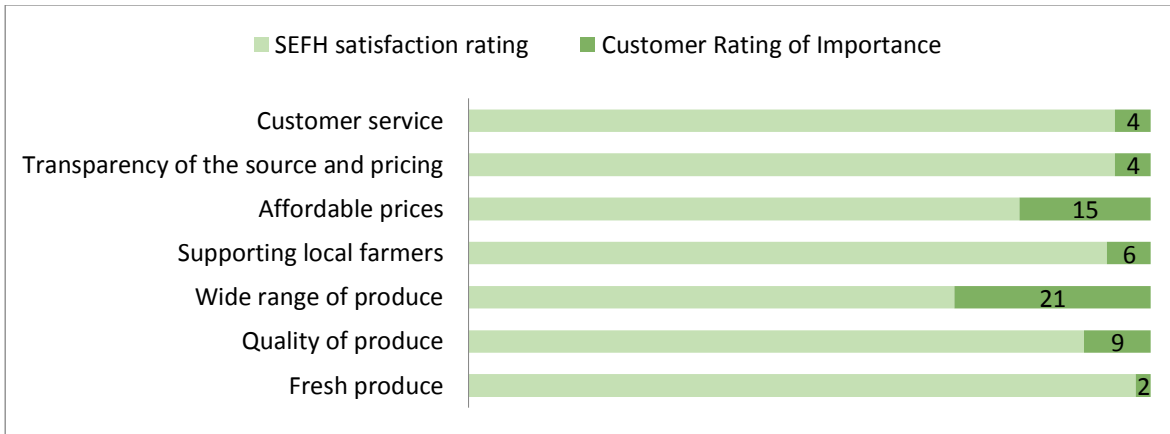


Figure 8. Percentage difference between customer rating of importance and SEFH satisfaction rating.

There were seven buying factors for which the SEFH did not meet customer rating of importance, the percentage difference in importance ratings is shown in Figure 8. 'Wide range of produce' and 'affordable prices' had the biggest discrepancies between ratings of importance and how well these factors were addressed by the SEFH, with a 21% and 15% difference respectively.

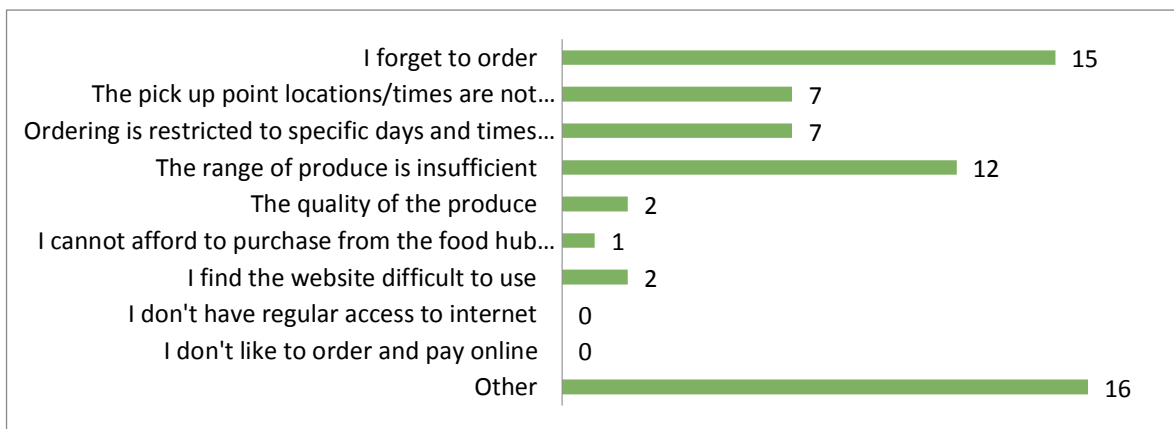


Figure 9. Frequency of responses to what prevents customers from ordering more frequently.

Customers who ordered from the hub less than every week were asked to select all options that apply to what prevents them from ordering more often. Figure 9 below shows that aside from the category of 'other', 'I forgot to order' was the most commonly selected answer, at 38.5% of respondents, followed by 'the range of produce is insufficient' at 30.8%.

Customers who chose 'other' were given the opportunity to comment on additional factors they considered important. A full list of these comments can be found in Appendix D. The most common response was 'organic' which occurred in 6 out of 22 comments, with the request for smaller quantities to be available the next most common with four responses. An example of this response was; "I am a personal shopper (not business), so I don't want to be buying 10Kg of a product when I only want 1 or 2 individual items. It's annoying when you don't get a choice". One customer commented on the positive level of customer care that they received, saying that "You did not supply a product in my order because you were not happy with the quality, I was impressed with that level of customer care".

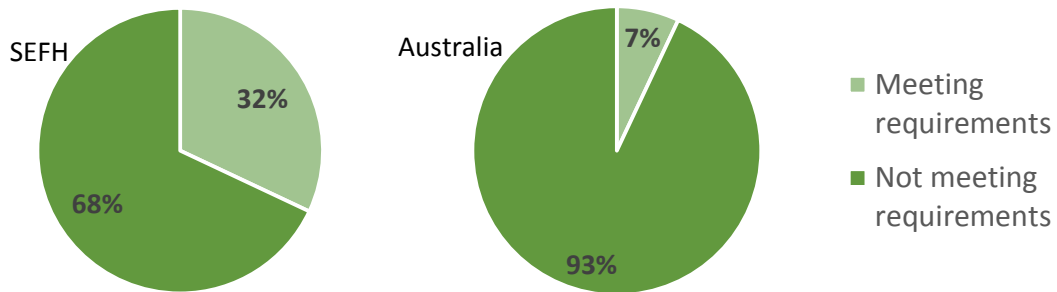


Figure 10. Percentage of SEFH customers meeting the requirement of 5 serves of vegetables per day compared to the Australian adult population.¹⁷

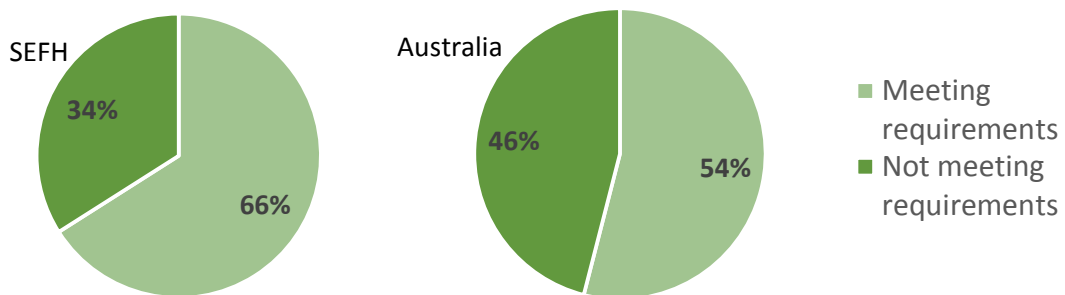


Figure 11. Percentage of SEFH customers meeting the requirement of 2 serves of fruit per day compared to the Australian adult population.¹⁷

Figure 10 and 11 show that a higher proportion of SEFH customers are meeting recommendations for serves of fruits and vegetables than the Australian adult population. Over four times more SEFH customers reported meeting the recommended serves of vegetables, and 12% more met recommended serves of fruit than the Australian population.

Customers were also given the opportunity to comment on any suggestions for how the food hub can improve or any additional things they would like to see. A full list of these comments can be seen in Appendix D. Additional items that customers requested included; a wider selection of fruit, more organic produce, meat, dairy, eggs, dry goods and pantry items. Another suggested area of improvement included the price of the produce, with people suggesting “Sale/ special items”, “Regular buyers discounts” and “Refer a friend program”. The option for payment after delivery was also suggested, as customers reported that they do not always receive complete orders. Product quantities were also commented on, with several people suggesting that products sold in large quantities were not user friendly for small households. Suggestions regarding the webpage and online ordering system were also made. For example, “Improved speed, general usability of website, especially for mobile ordering” and “Improve the website for Android phones and computers which have the older Internet Explorer and cannot upgrade. Please consider an Android phone Application”. A number of alternative pickup points were also suggested.

3.3 Price comparison

The results of the price comparison show that of the products offered by the SEFH, over half were cheaper than the equivalent at all nine supermarkets visited. Products were considered to be notably different if there was more than a 25% variation in price.

Table 3. Prices for produce items at the SEFH and six supermarkets in the service area

Produce item/unit	Price per item (\$)							Supermarket average
	SEFH	Narre Warren		Dandenong		Pakenham		
		Coles	Woolworths	Coles	Woolworths	Coles	Woolworths	
Beans/kg	9.24	4.98	4.98	4.98	4.98	5.98	4.98	5.15
Beetroot/kg	9.00	9.13	4.98	3.98	4.98	9.13	9.96	7.03
Broccoli/kg	5.06	5.98	2.98	3.00	2.98	5.98	2.98	3.98
Brown Onion/kg	2.16	2.98	2.98	2.98	1.48	2.98	2.98	2.73
Carrots/kg	1.44	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Cauliflower/unit	6.60	6.98	6.98	6.98	6.98	6.98	6.98	6.98
Cherry Tomatoes/kg	8.40	11.92	13.92	5.00	8.98	11.92	13.92	10.94
Eggplant/kg	5.76	6.98	6.95	6.98	1.88	6.98	6.98	6.13
Green Capsicum/kg	5.28	3.98	2.48	3.98	2.49	3.98	4.98	3.65
Green Chilli/unit	0.96	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80
Lettuce/unit	2.40	2.98	1.98	2.00	2.98	2.98	2.98	2.65
Kale/kg	2.64	5.96	7.96	5.96	7.96	7.96	7.96	7.29
Leek/unit	1.20	1.98	2.48	1.98	0.88	1.98	2.98	2.05
Limes/kg	6.00	6.66	6.98	6.66	6.98	6.98	6.66	6.82
Raspberries/pun net	9.60	9.80	9.80	9.80	13.96	13.96	13.96	11.88
Red Capsicum/kg	5.28	10.98	9.98	5.00	7.98	9.98	9.98	8.98
Red Onion/kg	3.96	3.98	3.48	3.98	3.98	3.98	3.98	3.90
Silverbeet/kg	3.25	4.97	4.97	4.97	3.72	4.97	4.97	4.76
Spring Onion/kg	7.20	3.33	6.60	3.33	5.00	3.33	6.60	4.70
Sweet Corn/unit	0.96	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.32	1.20	1.22
Truss Tomatoes/kg	4.80	8.98	8.98	11.92	11.92	8.98	8.98	9.96
Zucchini/kg	4.20	5.98	3.98	5.98	2.88	3.98	5.98	4.80

The prices collected from the SEFH and the six supermarkets in the central suburbs of Pakenham, Dandenong and Narre Warren are shown in Table 3. There was a large variation in prices between the food hub and the six supermarkets audited. The food hub offered certain items, such as spring onions, at over double the price of several supermarkets. The most notable difference was the price of eggplant, which was three times more expensive at the SEFH. Conversely, there were certain items such as leek and red capsicums that were cheaper at the SEFH compared to multiple supermarkets. Of the 132 prices compared, 54 supermarket prices were notably more expensive than the SEFH equivalent, whilst 32 supermarket prices were notably considerably cheaper. There was no notable difference between the SEFH and 46 product prices.

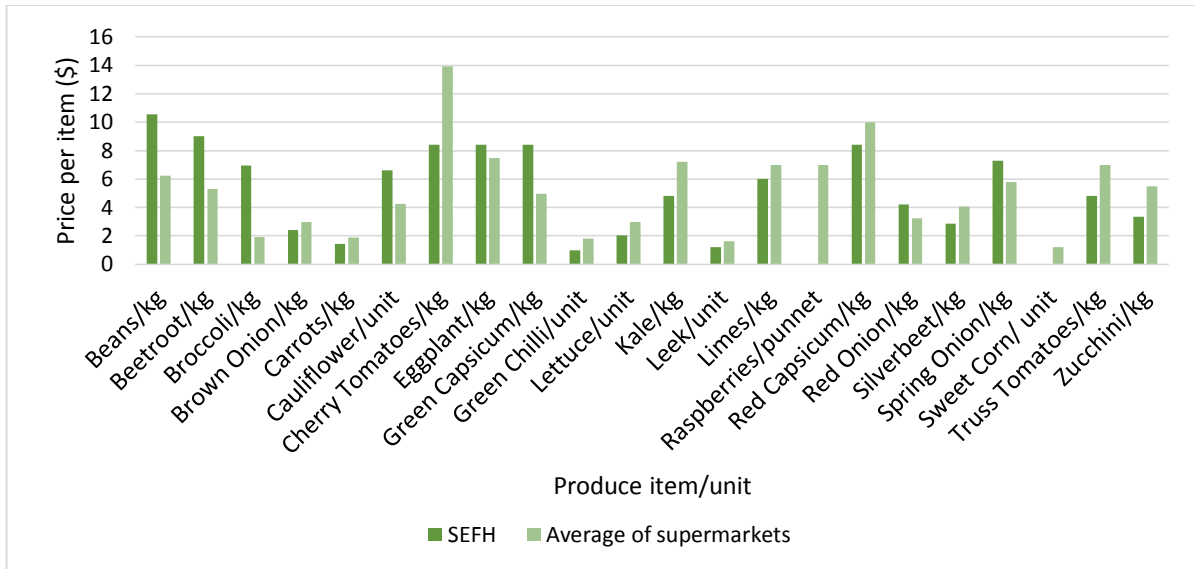


Figure 12. Price comparison of SEFH and Narre Warren, Pakenham and Dandenong supermarkets.

The average price of products from the six supermarkets are compared to SEFH prices in Figure 12. Of the 22 items audited, four items were notably cheaper at the supermarkets compared to the food hub, whilst eight items were notably more expensive at the supermarkets compared to the food hub.

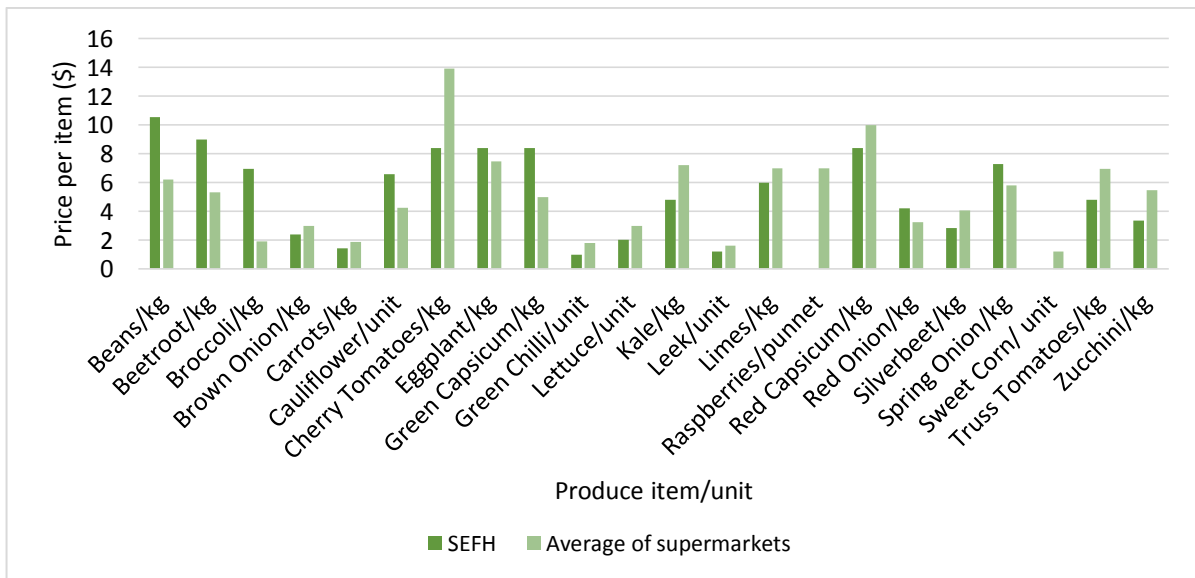


Figure 13. Price comparison of SEFH and the average of three supermarkets in high SEIFA suburbs.

For the higher SEIFA suburbs, five of the average supermarket prices were notably cheaper than food hub equivalents, and nine average supermarket prices were notably more expensive than the food hub (Figure 13). This data cannot be directly compared to the central suburb data, as prices were collected in different weeks. Whilst the same items list was used, it should be noted that raspberries and sweet corn were not available at the food hub at the time of the second data collection.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1a Mapping

The results of the mapping activities show an extensive and diverse range of institutions existing within a concentrated area of Melbourne (Figure 1). This suggests that there may be the potential to expand the SEFH customer base and buying group pickup points within the serviceable area. This map can act as a tool for staff to access online and assist in the identification of pickup point locations. It can also be used in the future, should the food hub develop marketing campaigns targeting buying group pickup points.

4.1b Institution interviews

Whilst 15 institutions were contacted by phone, no interviews were granted. As these institutions did not have pre-existing knowledge of, or interest in local food, making initial contact proved difficult. From these results, it would appear that simply contacting previously unengaged institutions is ineffective. Marketing and public education may be successful tools to increase interest and demand for local food, with the potential to not only target staff of institutions, but also create pressure from within, in a 'bottom-up' approach.^{4,18-23} Promoting the locality of SEFH farmers may also improve institution participation by instilling a sense of community among consumers.²⁴

4.1c Community centre visits

Valuable insight into challenges to operating a buying group through community centres were gained from the community centre visits (Table 1). The most commonly identified food priorities for the communities were lowest price and appropriate cultural varieties. Other factors were a lack of resources to run a buying group, the desire to select produce in person and sourcing local food not being a priority. It was found that many of the community centres had staff responsible for organising emergency relief programs and believed that community members were not in a position to use the food hub. If the SEFH were able to subsidise some produce for vulnerable groups and offer diverse produce the likelihood of successfully setting up and running future buying groups through community centres may increase.

Evidence from literature and case studies indicates that institutions with a pre-existing interest in local food and those that are publicly funded with social and ecological obligations are more successful partners of food hubs.^{4,14,15-18} While the community centres visited are publicly funded institutions they did not have a pre-existing interest in local food which was a major barrier to their involvement.

4.2 Customer surveys

In order to analyse the barriers and enablers of current customers, it was important to establish the demographics of those using the South East Food Hub. The persona of 'Felicity Food Hub' provides a snapshot of the typical SEFH customer. This persona outlines the most common age, gender and household demographics, as well as the typical goals and challenges of the customers surveyed (Table 2). Personas are commonly used in market research to characterise an ideal customer type, thus guide the development of products and services that are tailored to the customers' needs.²⁵ This persona can be used to target future social marketing and education campaigns.

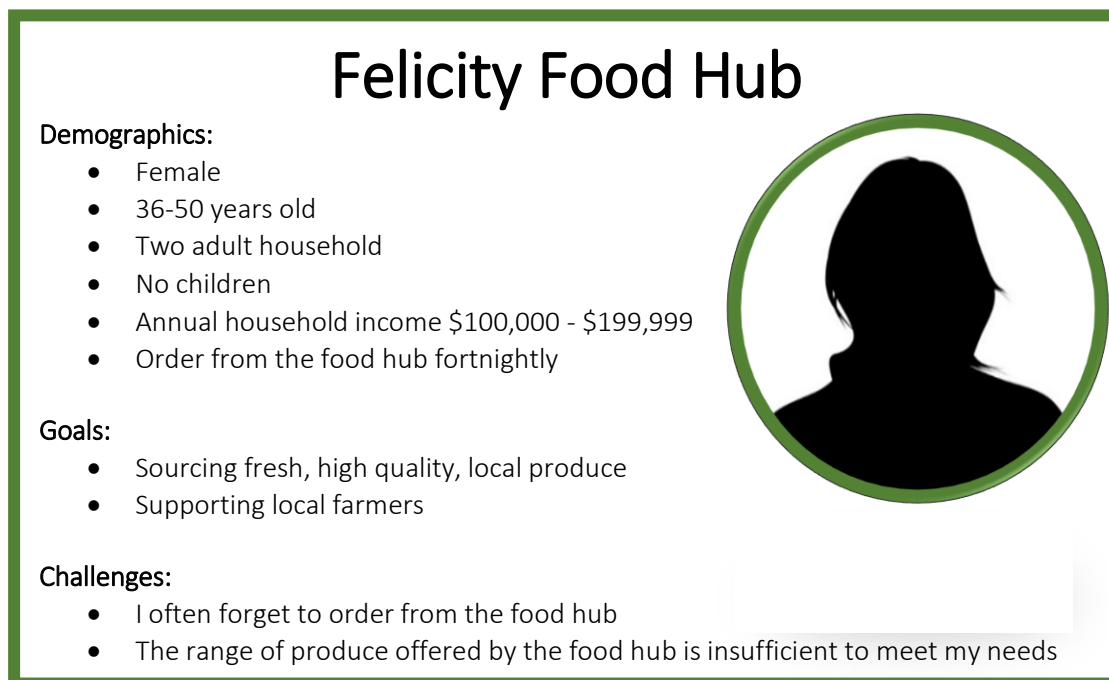


Figure 14. SEFH customer persona based on survey results.

Food procurement factors were rated according to how important customers felt they were and to what standard SEFH addressed them (Figure 6). Customers were satisfied with the food hub's management of four of the 12 factors important to them (Figure 7). This shows that SEFH is doing well to fulfil customers' needs in these areas. There were seven buying factors that customers believed the food hub was not yet satisfying, highlighting the areas of potential improvement for the food hub (Figure 8).

Considering that there was the largest discrepancy between customer ratings of importance and the SEFH rating for a 'wide range of produce', this could be one key area of improvement. Insufficient range of produce was also a common barrier to people ordering from the food hub more often. Several customers made suggestions of additional produce and these included; meat, dairy, poultry, eggs, dry goods and a wider variety of fruit (Appendix D). Given that the food hub focuses on seasonal produce, the inclusion of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables all year round would not be possible. Including other staple items such as flours and eggs could improve the range of year round produce. If a wider variety of food items is unable to be sourced, the food hub could consider educational material that explains to customers what is available and when these foods are in season. An example of how this could potentially look can be seen on the Seasonal Food Guide website.²⁶

Affordable prices had the second greatest difference between the satisfaction and importance ratings (Figure 8). Customers were not convinced prices were affordable and suggested including sale/specials on some items, regular buyers discounts and refer a friend promotions (Appendix D). Simply reducing the cost of produce is a rudimentary solution given that one of the main aims of the food hub is to support farmers and to offer them fair prices. Evidence suggests that repeat customer discounts, such as a '10% discount on every 5th order', have the potential to increase customer retention and ensure consistent buying.²⁷ Additionally, discounts offered to customers when ordering in larger amounts, for example \$100, has been shown to increase the amount spent per buy.²⁸ These marketing strategies have the potential to grow demand for local produce, thereby increasing profit for farmers rather than undercutting them.

If discounts are not a viable option for SEFH to consider, more information regarding how prices are calculated may help to satisfy customers. This could also potentially address the importance and satisfaction discrepancy for the buying factor 'transparency regarding the source of food and pricing' and 'supporting local farmers'. Information regarding the percentage of the product cost that goes directly to the farmer and how much is processing fees may aid customers in understanding why much support the food hub gives to farmers and why the prices cannot be reduced. As this information is currently available on the OFN website, providing additional insight about SEFH processing fees compared to conventional supermarkets may further aid in transparency.

Customers were explicitly asked what prevented them from ordering more frequently, independent of the factors rated on the Likert scale. 'I forget to order' was the most commonly selected response aside from 'other' (Figure 9). A text message reminder service is a modern tool used by many companies to engage with customers and ensures a personalised experience.²⁹ For those who do not want to disclose personal phone numbers there could be a smartphone application with generalised notifications to remind customers when ordering is open. Respondents to the survey expressed interest in being able to use mobile devices to place and track their orders (Appendix D).

The most common 'other' barriers to ordering more frequently were, lack of organic produce and unreasonable produce quantities (Appendix D). Consumer demand for organic food items has increased in response to the surge of social responsibility regarding sustainable food systems.³⁰ It would likely grow SEFH consumer base to promote and increase the volume of organic produce available.³⁰ To further appeal to buying group members, produce items should be offered in household quantities. If staple fruits and vegetables are available in per unit and per kilo amounts there may be an improvement in customer satisfaction.

The research found that a greater proportion of SEFH customers consumed the recommended daily servings of fruit and vegetables for good health than the Australian adult population (Figure 10 and 11). This finding could be used in the lobbying of local governments for funding to support the food hub. This research has not considered confounding factors that may account for the difference between SEFH and Australia wide consumption averages. Possible confounding factors include; that this customer base are likely to be more environmentally and health conscious than the rest of the population and were potentially already consuming larger amounts of fruits and vegetables. It is therefore not possible to state that there is a direct correlation between being a customer of the food hub and consuming more fruit and vegetables. Further investigation into this would be required to make evidence based conclusions.

4.3 Price comparison

The price comparisons illustrated a significant range between cost of produce at supermarkets and the food hub (Table 3). While a greater number of individual items were more expensive from supermarkets, this result in isolation is misleading in terms of the overall affordability of exclusively shopping at the SEFH. Many staple items from SEFH were more than twice as expensive as their supermarket counterparts. This was a barrier confirmed by the customer surveys (Appendix D).

Selling items in bulk quantities did not necessarily make the SEFH a cheaper option. Carrots were only available from SEFH in 20kg lots and were still almost 50% more expensive than the supermarket when comparing kilo to kilo (Figure 12). Items priced as much as 3.6 times more expensive at SEFH would be a barrier to purchasing for price sensitive customers (Figure 13).

5. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to track local institutions that may be potential buying group pickup points.
- Piloting a marketing or public education campaign to promote the food hub concept and increase demand for local food.
- Assessment of current produce range for cultural diversity and aim to engage with publicly funded institutions who also have a pre-existing interest in local food.
- Exploration of the potential of increasing product range to include seasonally stable items such as dry goods, eggs, meat etc.
- Creation of a resource for customers to increase awareness of seasonally available local produce and how this affects supply.
- Consider offering strategic discounts and incentives to increase customers order volumes and frequency.
- Consider improving customer awareness of administration costs added to retail items by food hubs compared to conventional supermarkets.
- Introducing a reminder text, email service, and/or mobile application to encourage customer engagement and promote frequency of purchases.
- Promoting and increasing the range of organic produce available.
- Auditing of current produce selection to identify produce only available in industrial quantities.
- Promotion of health benefits associated with recommended intakes of fruit and vegetables may encourage SEFH sales of fresh produce.
- Regular auditing of supermarkets in the South Eastern suburbs of Melbourne to ensure competitive prices.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The mapping of institutions, institution interviews and community centre visits shows the potential for South East Food Hub to diversify its customer base. A major finding of this was the difficulty associated with reaching out to institutions as buying group pickup points, and hence in developing business relationships. Future research may focus on identifying the best ways to approach and engage these institutions.

The survey results outline key areas in which the food hub can improve the experience of its customers. The greatest barriers to customers engaging with SEFH were lack of produce variety, including organic produce, affordability of prices, unreasonable quantities, and that they forget to order. Whilst this information is valuable to guide the development of the hub to better meet customer needs, a limitation of this research is that only current and not potential customers were surveyed. Consequently, there is a lack of information regarding the barriers and enablers of prospective customer to assist the food hub in diversifying their customer base. Future research should investigate the factors preventing potential customers from buying from the food hub, and the factors which would facilitate this.

The cost of produce from SEFH compared to local supermarkets was greatly varied. Bulk quantities did not necessarily make SEFH more affordable and particular items were significantly more expensive. Future research could involve regular audits of pricing across all seasons and communication of those results to their customer.

7. REFERENCES

1. Open Food Network [Internet]. c2014 [cited 2015 March 30]. Available from: <http://openfoodnetwork.org/>
2. South East Food Hub [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2015 May 12]. Available from: <http://www.southeastfoodhub.org/>
3. Matson J, Thayer J. The role of Food Hubs in food supply chains. *J Agric Food Syst Community Dev*. 2013 Jul;3(4):43-47.
4. Knezevic I, Landman, K, Blay-Palmer A, Nelson E (Eds.). *Models and best practices for building sustainable food systems in Ontario and beyond*. Guelph, Ontario: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; 2013.
5. Fischer M, Hamm M, Pirog M, Fisk J, Farbman J, Kiraly S. *Findings of the 2013 National Food Hub Survey*. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems & The Wallace Center at Winrock International; 2013.
6. Friedmann H. Scaling up: Bringing public institutions and food service corporations into the project for a local, sustainable food system in Ontario. *Agric Hum Values*. 2007;24(3):389-98.
7. Kasunic M. *Designing an effective survey* [Internet]. 2005 [cited 2015 May 12]. Available from: <http://www.sei.cmu.edu/reports/05hb004.pdf>
8. Likert R. A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*. 1932;140(7).
9. Dommeyer C. Does response to an offer of mail survey results interact with questionnaire interest? *Journal of Market Research*. 1985;27(1):27-38.
10. Brennan M. Techniques for improving mail survey response rates. *Marketing Bulletin*. 1992;3:24-37.
11. Nederhof A. The effects of material incentives in mail surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 1983;47(1):103-11.
12. Turley S. A case of response rate success. *Journal of the Market Research Society*. 1999;41(3):301-9.
13. Profile Id. *Community profile: City of Casey* [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2015 May 10]. Available from: <http://profile.id.com.au/casey>
14. Profile Id. *Community profile: City of Cardinia* [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2015 May 10]. Available from: <http://profile.id.com.au/cardinia>
15. City of Greater Dandenong. *Background paper 2012-2015: Ageing is about living –strategic directions to facilitate the health and wellbeing of older people in Greater Dandenong*. Dandenong: City of Greater Dandenong; 2012 Jun.
16. Business Insider Australia [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2015 May 12]. Available from: <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/chart-the-average-australian-households-income-is-145400-heres-what-they-spend-it-on-2014-9#state1>
17. Australia Bureau of Statistics [Internet]. Canberra: ABS; 2014. *Australian health survey nutrition first results -food and nutrients, 2011-12*. Cat. 4364.0.55.007 [updated 2014 Jul 2; cited 2015 Apr 29]. Available from: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/detailspage/4364.0.55.0072011--12>
18. Cambier P. *A feasibility report for a food hub: Serving a 14 county region of Northwest Michigan* [Internet]. 2013 Oct 30 [cited 2015 May 10]. Available from: http://foodsystems.msu.edu/uploads/files/Feasibility_Report_for_a_Food_Hub.pdf

19. Conner DS, Sevoian N, Heiss SN, Berlin L. The diverse values and motivations of Vermont farm to institution supply chain actors. *J Agric Environ Ethics*. 2014;27(5):695-713. doi:10.1007/s10806-013-9485-4.
20. National Good Food Network. Study hubs [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2015 May 10]. Available from: <http://www.ngfn.org/resources/food-hubs/study-hubs>
21. Eaterprises. Case studies: Food hubs [Internet]. 2011 [cited 2015 May 10]. Available from: <http://www.eaterprises.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Case-Studies-Food-Hub-Sept-2011.pdf>
22. Vogt RA, Kaiser LL. Still a time to act: A review of institutional marketing of regionally-grown food. *Agriculture and Human Values*. 2008;25(2):241-255. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10460-007-9106-9.
23. Harris D, Lott M, Lakins V, Bowden B, Kimmons J. Farm to Institution: Creating access to healthy local and regional foods. *Advances in Nutrition: An International Review Journal*. 2012;3(3):343-9.
24. Hingley M, Boone J, Haley S. Local food marketing as a development opportunity for small UK agri-food business. *International Journal of Food System Dynamics*. 2010;25(3):194-203. Available from: <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/97022/2/Hingley.pdf>
25. Mirman E. Everything marketers need to research & create detailed buyer personas [Internet]. HubSpot Blogs. 2012 Aug 23 [cited 2015 May 21]. Available from: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33491/Everything-Marketers-Need-to-Research-Create-Detailed-Buyer-Personas-Template.aspx>
26. Seasonal Food Guide Australia [Internet]. 2014 [cited 2015 May 20]. Available from: <http://seasonalfoodguide.com/melbourne-victoria-seasonal-fresh-produce-guide-fruits-vegetables-in-season-availability-australia.html>
27. Kopalle PK, Sun Y, Neslin SA, Sun B, Swaminathan V. The joint sales impact of frequency reward and customer tier components of loyalty programs. *Marketing Science*. 2012;31(2):216-35.
28. Lee L, Ariely D. Shopping goals, goal concreteness, and conditional promotions. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 2006;33(1):60-70.
29. Smutkupt P, Krairit D, Khang DB. Mobile marketing and consumer perceptions of brand equity. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*. 2012;24(4):539-560.
30. Matson J, Sullins M, Cook C. The role of food hubs in local food marketing. United States Department of Agri-culture; 2013 Jan.

APPENDIX A

1. After reading the flyer, what are your initial thoughts/impressions about working with the SEFH to make locally grown food available to your community?
2. Do you think your school/childcare centre/aged care centre would be interested in acting as a host site/drop off/pick up point for SEFH?
3. Do you think that the staff/parents/residents involved with your school/childcare centre/aged care centre would be interested in starting a food club/food co-op? Why or why not?
 - *If yes: Is there a specific time of year that is preferable for you to start?*
4. What challenges do you foresee if your school/childcare centre/aged care centre were to act as a host site for SEFH?
 - *Note: Food can currently only be delivered for pick up on a Tuesday afternoons- does this work for you?*
5. What challenges do you foresee if your school/childcare centre/aged care centre were to start a food club/food co-op?
 - *Note: Food can currently only be delivered for pick up on a Tuesday afternoons- does this work for you?*
6. What benefits do you think that acting as a host site and/or starting a food club/food co-op would have for your school/childcare centre/aged care centre and local community?
7. Do you consider your school/childcare centre/aged care centre to have a strong sense of community? e.g. does your school have an active parents association? Does your organisation regularly engage with the wider community e.g. school fetes, open days, host community events etc.
8. Would you consider health and nutrition to be a priority for your school/childcare centre/aged care centre? Why or why not?
9. Do you see this initiative as a good way to promote good health and healthy eating in your school/childcare centre/aged care centre and local community?
10. How do you think your school/childcare centre/aged care centre could help SEFH to spread the word in your community to get people involved in a food club/food co-op (i.e. your website or Facebook page, newsletter etc.)?



SEFH: Customer Survey

The SEFH has undergone a few changes recently, in order to get even better at bringing fresh food from your local farmers to you. In this quick survey we're asking for five-minutes of your time to get your feedback about your experience. This will help us to continue to improve your experience! All questions are optional.

How often do you currently order through SEFH?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every 2 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every 3 weeks | |

If you answered less than every week, what prevents you from ordering more frequently?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I forget to order | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordering is restricted to specific days and times that are not convenient for me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I find the website difficult to use | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I cannot afford to purchase from the food hub more often | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't like to order and pay online |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The quality of the produce | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have regular access to the internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The range of produce is insufficient | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

On average, how much would you typically spend on an individual order through the SEFH?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0 - \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$41 - \$60 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$81 - \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$21 - \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$61 - 80 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$100 |

Why do you come to the farmers market? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To buy fresh food | <input type="checkbox"/> To support environmentally sustainable agricultural practices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To buy local food directly from producers | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable prices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To buy organic food | <input type="checkbox"/> Community/social activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A large range of produce is offered | <input type="checkbox"/> To learn more about farming and food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To support animal welfare | |
-

There are a wide range of factors people consider when buying their food. Please rate each factor below based on how important it is to you.

	Strongly disagree (1)	2	3	4	Strongly agree (5)
Fresh produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wide range of produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental and agricultural sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting local farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting local businesses and community organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable prices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community/social activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transparency regarding the source of food and pricing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We would also like to know how well the South East Food Hub satisfies the factors that are important to you. Please indicate how well you think South East Food Hub addresses the following factors.

	Strongly disagree (1)	2	3	4	Strongly agree (5)
Provides fresh produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sources local produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides high quality produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides a sufficient range of produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supports environmental and agricultural sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supports local farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supports local businesses and community organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offers affordable prices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourages community/social activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transparency of food sources and pricing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Think about your usual eating pattern over the past month. On average, how many “servings*” of VEGETABLES you eat per day? *ONE “serving” is one whole vegetable (e.g. 1 carrot, 1 tomato etc.) OR 1 handful of vegetables (fresh, cooked, canned, frozen) OR 1 heaped handful of salad OR 1 glass of vegetable juice

- I don't eat vegetables 2 servings/day 5 or more servings/day
 Less than 1 serving/day 3 servings/day
 1 serving/day 4 servings/day

Think about your usual eating pattern over the past month. On average, how many “servings*” of FRUIT do you eat per day? *ONE “serving” is one whole piece of fruit (e.g. 1 apple, 1 banana etc.) OR 1 large handful of chopped/tinned fruit (e.g. fruit salad, frozen berries etc.) OR 1 small handful of dried fruit (sultanas, apricots etc.) OR ½ cup of fruit juice (125ml)

- I don't eat fruit 1 serving per day
 Less than 1 serving per day 2 or more servings per day

How did you hear about Melbourne Farmers Markets?

- From a friend/family member Melbourne Farmers Markets website
 Social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) Other _____

Where do you live?

Suburb: _____ Postcode: _____

Gender:

- Male Female Other

Age:

- Under 21 years old 51-65 years
 21-35 years 66 or older
 36-50 years

Number of adults living in your household:

- 1 2 3 4 or more

Number of children living in your household

- None 3
 1 4 or more
 2

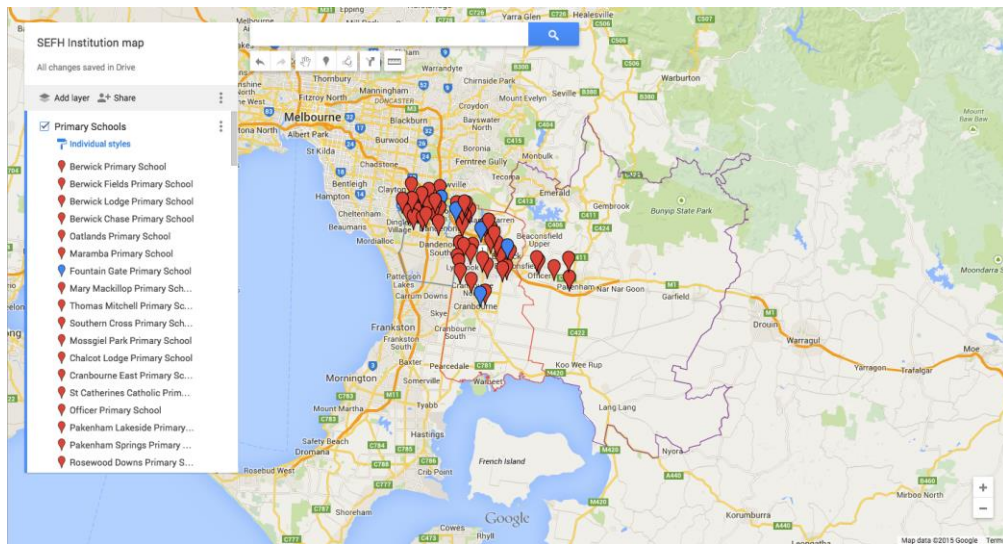
In what range does your annual household income fall?

- Less than \$25,000 \$75,000 - \$99,999
 \$25,000 - \$49,999 \$100,000 - \$199,999
 \$50,000 - \$74,999 \$200,000 or more

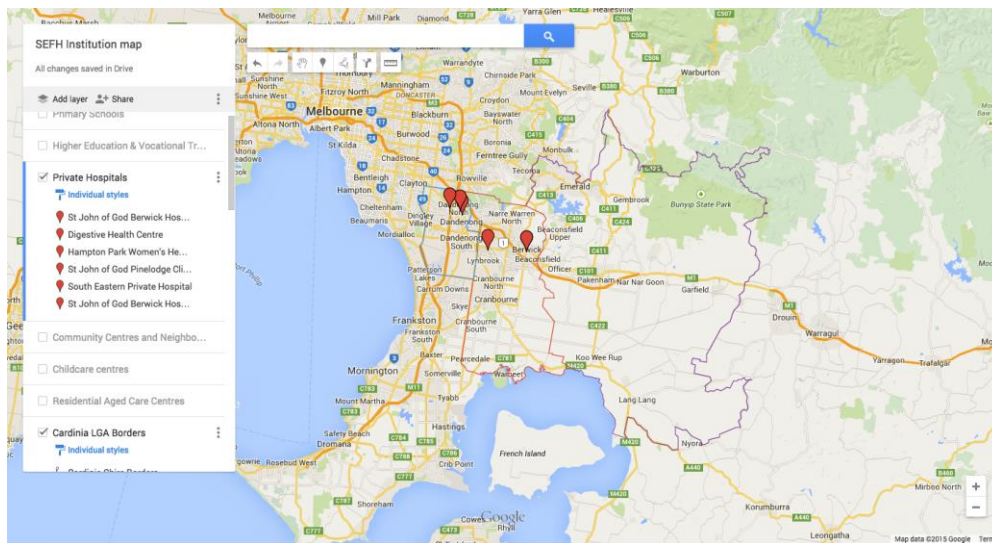
Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve the South East Food Hub's service/offering? Or is there anything missing from the South East Food Hub that you would like to see? (e.g. products, activities, sales/specials etc.)

APPENDIX C

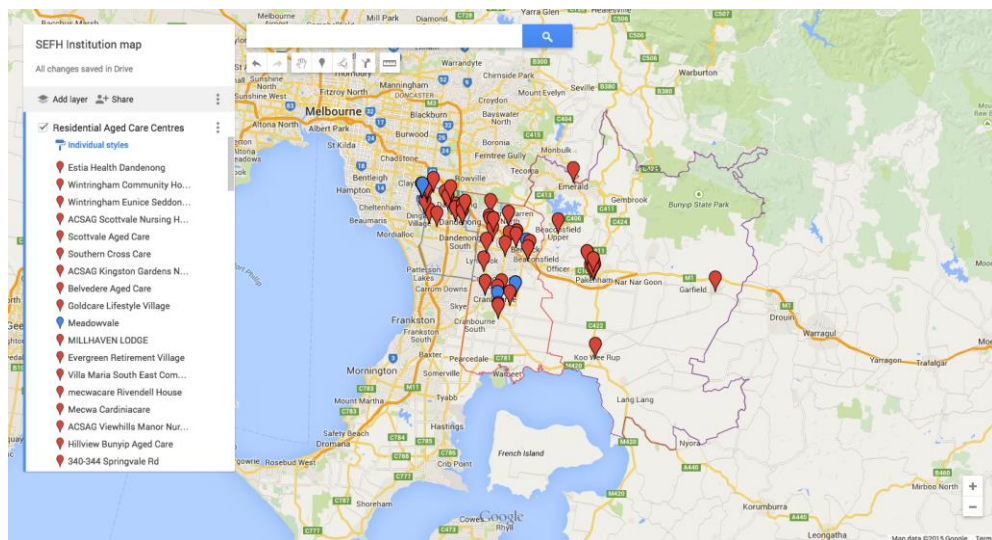
Blue points on the maps below indicate institutions who were randomly selected for contact.



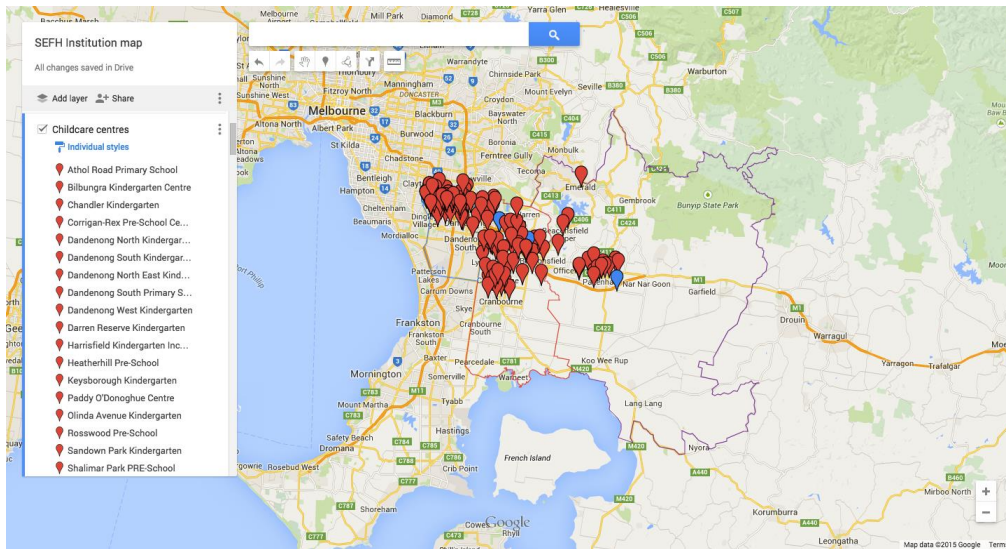
SEFH Institution Map: Primary Schools



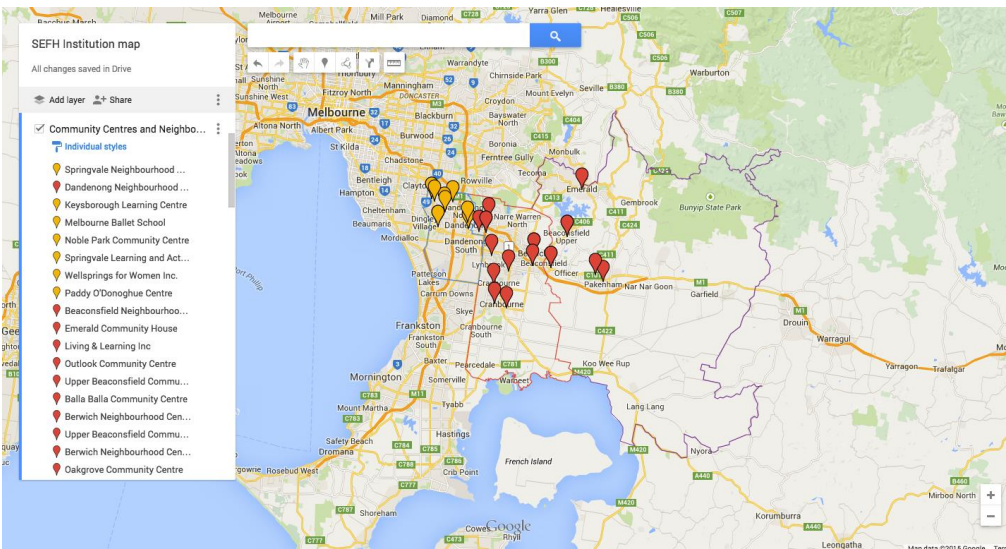
SEFH Institution Map: Private Hospitals



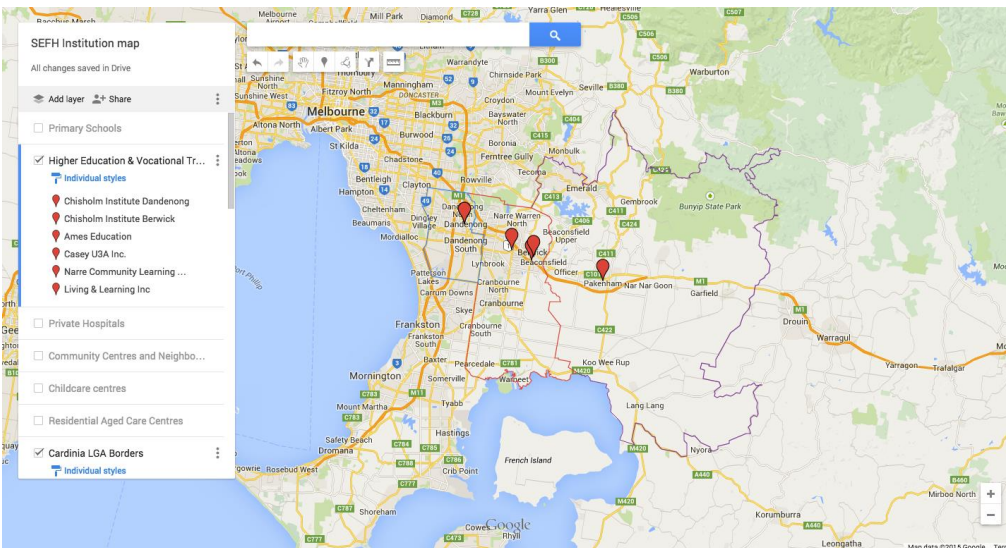
SEFH Institution Map: Residential Aged Care



SEFH Institution Map: Childcare Centres



SEFH Institution Map: Community Centres and Neighbourhood houses



SEFH Institution Map: Higher Education and Vocational Training.

APPENDIX D

Responses to 'other' from the question 'there are a wide range of factors people consider when buying food. Please rate each factor below based on how important it is to you.'

organic!

Im not at all interested in buying through the melbourne market as the source is less clear to me.

Have been disappointed with the goods in general

avoiding supermarket vegies!!

Fair prices for farmers

Organic produce (which is limited)

Small quantities being available as only two people in my household

Organic. I love to support local organic farmers and the food hub ensures that.

Organic produce in its natural state free from pesticides and preservatives

You cannot buy organic food in Cranbourne where I live, I had to drive to Mornington so this is a lot more economical for me

Responses to 'other' from the question 'we would like to know how well the SEFH satisfies the factors which are important to you. Please indicate how well you think the SEFH addresses the following factors.'

Organic

Have been disappointed with the goods in general

Fair prices for farmers

Small quantities being available

Organic options from local suppliers.

I am a personal shopper (not busines), so I don't want to be buying 10Kg of a product when I only want 1 or 2 individual items. It's annoying when you don't get a choice.

Interested in knowing if any overseas workers are used on Food Hub farms and working/pay conditions

non use of slave labour, exploitation of labour, non use of labour hire services

In my area there is no fruit, I realise that it is seasonal but there aren't even any apples you can buy, also I would like to buy some of the items but there is a kilo minimum and sometimes a kilo is too much

You did not supply a product in my order because you were not happy with the quality, I was impressed with that level of customer care

Responses to the question: 'Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve the SEFH's service/offering? Or is there anything missing from the SEFH that you would like to see? (e.g. products, activities, sales/specials etc.)'

I'd love to see some more variety, especially in terms of fruit. When "different" fruits have been available such as peaches and figs, there just hasn't been enough to meet demand! I'd also love to see some local farms from the Yarra Valley included, there are many fruit farms (Rayner's Orchard, Blue Hills etc) that would be good options to increase fruit offerings. Also, a delivery in the Lilydale area would be fabulous and save me a lot of miles in collecting my food :-)

It would be terrific to have more local fruits.

If you could add basic organic dry goods in bulk (bean, flour, coffee, rice, grains,...)

I like to pay by credit card, but you should process after delivery with adjustment (eg missing produce) if applicable.

Better prices is the most important factor at the moment for us. Unfortunately there are other fruit and veg shops around that have much better prices. We'd like to support and buy local but with a single wage and 2 young children it's not much of an option with the current prices.

Sale/ special items, eggs, branch into dry goods eg grains / flours etc

Would love a pickup location closer to home. Kilsyth, Lilydale etc

Would love a Yarra Valley pick up point

I feel that the food hub isn't overly user friendly for our cafe business as it's preferable for stock control to order fresh produce for next day delivery. Even if it were a 2 day wait that would be ok but it's not ideal to order on a Friday for delivery after the weekend. We would really like to use the food hub and will continue to take interest in the hub in the hope that it suits our needs in the future.

I thought it was great to have fresh organic produce, but get quite disappointed when I actually see what I have. Its ok, but I now don't buy as much as I would have liked. Things don't look overly fresh, theres not a lot of variety, and really isn't worth the hassle. I think the Neighbourhood House should also get some sort of donation for running the food co-op. At this point I dont know if I will continue with this service, although I think its a great idea. Generally I have just been disappointed.

There's pretty much always something missing from our box (not had a full order ever in fact). so not sure how credit card payment will work, every week I will be getting a refund? Also, the boxes are way overfilled and have now had to deal with fruit and veges twice on the street. Otherwise, we love the food, very happy with the quality!

You show categories that are never filled, such as meat, fish etc.

The ordering page is somewhat difficult to navigate-could be simplified, otherwise a great idea

Fruit, nuts, seeds :)

Automatic ordering that if you dont want it that week you cancel it.

A past suggestion was like the supermarket online ordering, it automatically populates what you ordered last time to make it easier.

More hubs! particularly somewhere in the middle of Albert park and Dandenong!

As I only buy organic I find the range very limited. I don't want to buy from the Melb. wholesale market either which is so far away. Would love to see potatoes when we can get them locally as well as any other organic fruit and veggies you can source. Well done on doing so well, it's a great venture!

I'm unsure how many people we need to set up a delivery site - some more information on this would be great. Thanks

More organic suppliers.

Payment via paypal

Pick up locations in bunyip

Refer a friend program

Links with farmers markets

Regular buyers discounts

Extra recipes

I would love to see suppliers that offer fruit. At the moment there is almost only vegetables available to buy. There are also no suppliers who sell potatoes or sweet potato. It would be helpful if items that are unavailable could be substituted by other suppliers rather than just left out as this can be annoying when you have to source that food from somewhere else.

I always forget to order until after the cut off time on a Friday (my fault I know....) Not sure what the answer is, apart from retraining me.

free range chicken , organic potatoes, local honey, olive oil

I would love to see suppliers that offer fruit. At the moment there is almost only vegetables available to buy. There are also no suppliers who sell potatoes or sweet potato. It would be helpful if items that are unavailable could be substituted by other suppliers rather than just left out as this can be annoying when you have to source that food from somewhere else.

It is annoying when a particular product that I want is only available in extreme bulk buy. Eg Carrots in a 10kg bag. As a household (not a business), we would never eat that much and it would go to waste, so we don't buy it. Multiple weights, or individual product options of each product would probably encourage more sales.

Sorry to miss the Farm gate tour as away, see previous comment re worker conditions/pay in light of Four Corners show this week.

Improve the website for Android phones and computers which have the older Internet Explorer and cannot upgrade. Please consider an Android phone Application.

If possible it would be great if the range of fruits could increase.

we would love to see oranges in the range and a larger variety of apples.

People do not mind paying by credit card, but only after receiving their products.

Would love access to more fruit and to organic milk, eggs & meat products. Also would be fantastic to have a drop off point in Berwick Village somewhere - Clyde North is far for me especially because pick up is during school pick up times and hence the traffic is busy....I have to set aside a one hour slot.

On occasion the veg is not as fresh as i would like or partly eaten by pests e.g the corn especially.....don't know who to speak to about that.

Also it is inconvenient when an order is not complete as i work out weekly menus as i am busyso incomplete orders mean sourcing veg again & that's a pain.....would be great if a different supplier could fill inmaybe

there could be an option for buyers to give permission for that?

The website is a little clunky (slow). Also perhaps consider offering an alternative drop off time.

Keep up this GREAT INITIATIVE!!

Organic fresh pre-washed produce ie potatoes, lettuce, kale etc.

A way to see if products are unavailable when you order them, rather than when you pick up your produce and see what is missing. Wider variety of products (fruits, pantry items, milks - dairy/non-dairy. Etc) Payment via paypal? Improved speed, general usability of website, especially for mobile ordering.

It is hard to know what new veges we will have available to buy in the future as we haven't experienced a full year. But at this stage, it would be good to have eating oranges, strawberries and mushrooms. I could say that it would be good to have bananas and avacados but I don't feel confident that our local farmers grow them!! I am so happy with the whole buying experience and if ever I have any queries they are always addressed promptly. Thank you so much SEFH!!

Just that I would like it if I could order less than a kilo from some places, and also if Selandra Rise could have some Fruit as there is only really vegetables on offer

Specials would be good but maybe suggestions for recipes would be great. E.g. So if there is some really good pumpkin at the moment then a easy healthy recipe using pumpkin could be featured. Also maybe to highlight a particular farming region/producer and provide a snapshot of their farming methods and pictures of them. I know they feature when you click of the (i) but to highlight one each week/fortnight/month may be good.

More organic produce,

The hub fee of \$4 on a \$12.5 box of vegies seems very high to me, is there a way to decrease this?

You used to have beef and lamb but I have not noticed it recently. Meat and Seafood.
