



Our Food Network's submission to Dunedin City Council's 9-year plan

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Dunedin City Council Nine Year Plan.

[Our Food Network's](#) (OFN) vision is for Ōtepoti to have a strong, well-connected local food system that nurtures the well-being and resilience of neighbourhoods and communities. OFN works with people and communities to support food growers to make it easier for everyone to access enough healthy, local food.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the council for supporting our mahi with a Dunedin City Services Grant in 2024.

Recommendations for Dunedin City Nine Year plan

- Resource 0.5 FTE to have a food focus in the Community Development Team, as access to enough healthy food is fundamental to community well-being.
- Resource Good Food Dunedin adequately to better support local small food businesses
- Dunedin City Council, in partnership with ORC, to develop an action plan for a resilient and thriving local food system.

Rationale

Food Focus in the Community Development Team

Local food resilience and security is not only central to social and community wellbeing: how we grow and distribute food is a key element in securing healthy and sustainable environments, and in mitigating and adapting to climate change. While a lot of food is grown in Ōtepoti, much of this is exported from the city, which means Ōtepoti is very reliant on food being transported in from other parts of the country and the globe. This leaves local communities extremely vulnerable during severe weather events and supply chain disruptions.

An element of vibrant and cohesive communities is ensuring everyone has access to healthy food through a well-connected local food system, which nurtures the well-being and resilience of neighbourhoods and communities. However, there is currently a marked increase in food insecurity and inequity in the community.

A robust and thriving local food system that includes home, community and school gardens, small scale market gardens and mixed farms, community food hubs, local procurement schemes, etc. increases surety of local supply, access to healthy food for everyone in the community, improves returns for local growers and creates more local jobs in food production.

Recommendation: Dunedin City Council resource 0.5 FTE in the Community Development team with a specific focus on increasing access to local healthy food for all.

Resourcing Good Food Dunedin

Good Food Dunedin, which was established in 2016, focuses on supporting local small businesses involved in growing or making food. This is an important part of the local food ecosystem and Good Food Dunedin would need to work closely with the proposed Community Development food focus team to develop strong connections between home gardens, community and school gardens and commercial operations, creating pathways for food production and employment.

Recommendation: Dunedin City Council to resource Good Food Dunedin adequately to increase the amount of food grown and sold locally.

DCC Food Action Plan

Food is referenced in various documents that make up the Strategic Framework for Dunedin. In the Economic Development strategy, food processing is highlighted for its potential as a high value, export facing contribution and the role food plays in the visitor experience in Ōtepoti. The Te Ao Tūroa strategy identifies that healthy food, water and air require a healthy environment, and the Social Wellbeing strategy only references food in relation to the Council's licencing responsibilities. Dunedin's Future Development Strategy 2024-2054 most clearly articulates the need for a thriving rural economy and local food production, along with the maintenance and restoration of Mahika kai sites. The reference to food in this document is, by its nature, very high level.

Recommendation: Dunedin City Council, in partnership with Otago Regional Council (ORC), develop an action plan for a resilient and thriving local food system.

Summary

OFN urges the Dunedin City Council to take bold, strategic action to support a resilient, sustainable local food system that meets the needs of all communities across Ōtepoti. Food is not only a necessity—it is a cornerstone of health, equity, environmental sustainability, and community resilience. Investing in local food systems is investing in the wellbeing of our people, the vitality of our economy, and the future of our city.

We call on the Council to demonstrate leadership by embedding food security and food system resilience in its planning and resourcing decisions—through dedicated staffing, targeted support for local food enterprises, and the development of a comprehensive Food Action Plan in partnership with ORC.