20 May 2009

SUBMISSION TO 'HOW THE BRISBANE CITY PLAN COULD CHANGE — A FORMAL STATEMENT OF PROPOSALS FOR THE BRISBANE CITY PLAN 2000 REVIEW' (MARCH 2009).

The Sydney Food Fairness Alliance makes the following submission based on its corporate experience and the research and work of its members in moving towards the development of a resilient food system for NSW, in particular the Greater Sydney region.

Agriculture on the urban fringe and within the suburbs of Australian cities is now accepted as a key component in making Australia's cities sustainable and in providing security of food supply to urban populations.

Assisting local authorities to adopt policies and practices that support these aims and sustaining and expanding agricultural enterprises is a key role of the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance.

The Alliance is presently involved with food interests, health and nutrition professionals, landuse interests, universities and community interests in organising a metropolitan Food Summit to develop a food policy for NSW.

COMMENT

We commend Council for including the following statement in its options document:

- **6.7** Council will consider how to facilitate the production of food in the city. Ways to promote urban rooftop farms, home based agricultural businesses and edible landscapes in medium- and high-density developments will also be investigated.

- **6.8** the review will investigate how to encourage innovative ways of greening Brisbane such as growing food in the city, plants on roofs and down the side of walls, supporting outdoor markets and increasing the number of street trees. This may require removing barriers presented by existing provisions.

SUBMISSION

Additional to the ideas expressed in the passages quoted above, we propose in this submission that Council include provision for the continued security and expansion of periurban and suburban food production, on the grounds that a viable, regional supply of fresh foods:

- increases urban resilience to fluctuations in global food and energy markets and the impact of fluctuations on city food prices and availability, as well as to potential epidemics and associated quarantines

- contributes to the viability of the regional economy and to the maintenance of livelihoods sustained by the regional food industry in agriculture, food processing and transportation, retail and associated sectors of the regional food supply chain

- provides fresher and therefore more nutritious perishable, fresh foods to the metropolitan market

- can contribute to the regional tourism economy through initiatives analogous to the Hawkesbury Food Trail in the Sydney region and through the availability and promotion of regional fresh food farmers' markets, the development and marketing of specialty food products and the development of a regional cuisine based on local food products.

A further proposal to Council is that it combine the proposed initiatives above in the development of a metropolitan food policy designed to sustain a secure, nutritious and affordable food supply to the city. Such a policy would be developed as a collaborative effort by Council, state government departments, health and nutrition professionals and interests, the periurban agricultural sector, universities, landuse interests, community development professionals and local representatives of the Australian City Farms & Community Gardens Network.

Opportunities for intervention

Opportunities for Council to intervene in support of a viable and secure regional food industry include:

- zoning periurban farmland so as to protect it from development, with development permitted on lands found to be of marginal agricultural value

- implementation of a land capability assessment to identify agricultural lands for farming use only, to facilitate the above point

- the amendment of city legislation and regulations, where necessary, to facilitate periurban agriculture and community-based food enterprise such as city farms and community gardening
   - this would facilitate section 6.8 of the document that is the focus of this submission, where it mentions the potential of " …removing barriers presented by existing provisions"

- the facilitation of farmers' markets in suburban locations

- development, through Council, community and industry cooperation, of a 'Brisbane Grown' label to identify regionally grown and processed foods for the benefit of buyers and the regional food industry

- reform of farmers' markets through Council regulation to identify, on site:
   - authentic farmers from the Greater Brisbane and adjacent regions
   - non-farmer operated stalls reselling produce obtained from the city's food wholesale market
      - this facilitates consumer choice, a de facto right in a market economy, and facilitates section 6.8 of the document commented upon in this submission that proposes "supporting outdoor markets"

- in collaboration with representatives of the local community gardens network, develop planning instruments to facilitate community food gardens and city farms within the Greater Brisbane region that provide multiple purpose landuse, education in sustainable living and access to fresh foods for citizens

- o this would supplement Council's *Living in Brisbane 2026* proposal for community gardens and city farms and the *Active, Healthy City* policy 'Food in the City' proposal for " …a network of community gardens and city farms in parks, schools and community facilities… "
- o it would also supply content for section 6.7 "Council will consider how to facilitate the production of food in the city"

Addressing trends identified in the Council document

We believe that the above proposals would assist in the addressing of the trends described in the *Introduction* to Council's document:

"Brisbane is facing unprecedented challenges, from an increasing population to an uncertain global environment. More industries, businesses and residents are realising the seriousness of climate change and diminishing resources and are taking sustainable living to heart".

In reference to the above quotation, an ecologically sustainable and socially beneficial, regional farming industry and food supply chain:

- is now recognised as a key component of sustainable urban living

- addresses climate change —

   - o by reducing the distance food is transported and the emission of greenhouse gases due to long distance transportation

   - o by sequestering carbon in agricultural soils

- through reduced transportation distances, a viable regional food industry would address diminishing resource availability, particularly the potential price rises and progressive energy shortfall that has been described in various scenarios developed around the anticipated peaking of global oil extraction ('peak oil'), such as described in the June 2008 CSIRO report *Fuel for Thought – the future of transport fuels: challenges and options*, which looked at the impact of peak oil in Australia, and the Queensland Government's *Towards Oil Resiliency Community Information Paper*

MAKING THE INNOVATIVE, LIVEABLE CITY A REALITY

In making this submission to Brisbane City Council, the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance acts on its belief that Brisbane could set a positive example to other metropolitan areas of Australia in taking initiatives in support of an affordable, nutritious and secure food supply for the city, based primarily on a viable regional farming and food industry supplemented by community-based food enterprises such as community gardens, city farms and educational gardens in schools.

We are aware that Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government position Brisbane as an innovative, modern and 'liveable' city. Policy initiatives by Council that act to sustain a viable, regional food and farming industry and that facilitate the easy development of community food initiatives can only assist the achievement of this 'liveable' and innovative city.

ALLIANCE READY TO ASSIST

The Sydney Food Fairness Alliance is prepared to assist and advise Council on any of the proposals in our submission.

Russ Grayson

VICE PRESIDENT

Sydney Food Fairness Alliance

SUMMARY of proposed actions

BCC adopts a metropolitan food policy in support of a regional, affordable, safe and secure food system

policy implementation

planning

Council urban food initiative action plan

land management

Implement a periurban land capability assessment

Develop planning instruments to validate, increase in number and geographically distribute community food gardens/city farms

policy

Zone periurban land to maintain viability of local agricultural industry and prevent loss of farmland to urban development

Facilitate urban retail/ distribution systems for affordable regional produce

Reform farmer's markets to clearly differentiate farmers and resellers

Provide support for community gardens/ city farms & community food initiatives

Amendment of Council policy and regulations to increase viability of regional agricultural industry

Provide council support for social enterprise business in regional food chain *

Develop links between regional food production, retail/ distribution and Council's tourism program

* Social enterprise consists of businesses with clearly stated social goals

An economically viable, affordable, safe and secure food system for Brisbane