



OUR ROLE

The role of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance is education for a better and a fair food future, and to advocate food sovereignty for Australians – the right to free choice about the food we eat, how it is grown and how it is distributed in ways that sustain the livelihood of farmers, Australia’s food processing industry and those who eat and use what our farmers produce.

We focus on advocacy to influence political policies because they have the potential to protect those food systems we value and to create opportunities for Australia’s businesses, farmers and citizens.

An unintentional organisation

IT WAS THE ANTHROPOLOGIST and author, Margaret Mead, who said that small groups can initiate big changes. The Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance might be an example of what she said, however it wasn’t what stimulated its launch. That was unintentional.

To locate the launch of the Alliance we need to look back to the latter months of 2010 when the then-federal agriculture minister announced his intention to create a national food plan for Australia. Some of us realised that the proposed food plan would likely be written to benefit mainly export farmers and would probably be a classic neoliberal document of greatest benefit to big corporate farmers and retailers.

With this in mind, we hatched the idea of writing to the minister and suggesting the inclusion of smaller farmers producing for Australia’s domestic market, Australian-owned food processors, smaller

food business and the community food movement then expanding in our towns and cities. This we did, expecting to gain a dozen or so co-signatories to the letter. We got that dozen, and we got the more than 100 unexpected others, and we sent the letter to the minister just before the 2010 federal election.

All of this was organised in a matter of a few weeks before the election. People had contacted us: “Where’s your website? I can’t find it”. That was because we didn’t have one, so over a weekend close to the election our website maven created an Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance website.

Letter sent. Job done. Now we could dissolve this unintentional organisation we had created, though we better ask those who signed out letter to the minister first, we thought. This we did. Their response: No, you can’t shut down just because you’ve done the job you set out to do – writing to the minister. You have to keep going.

Now we realised that there was quite a body of interest out there on the farms, in the towns and in the cities of Australia, a body of interest, we realised, that constituted a still-sleeping but incipient social movement around fair, local, Australian food and farming, a movement with potential to act in the national interest.

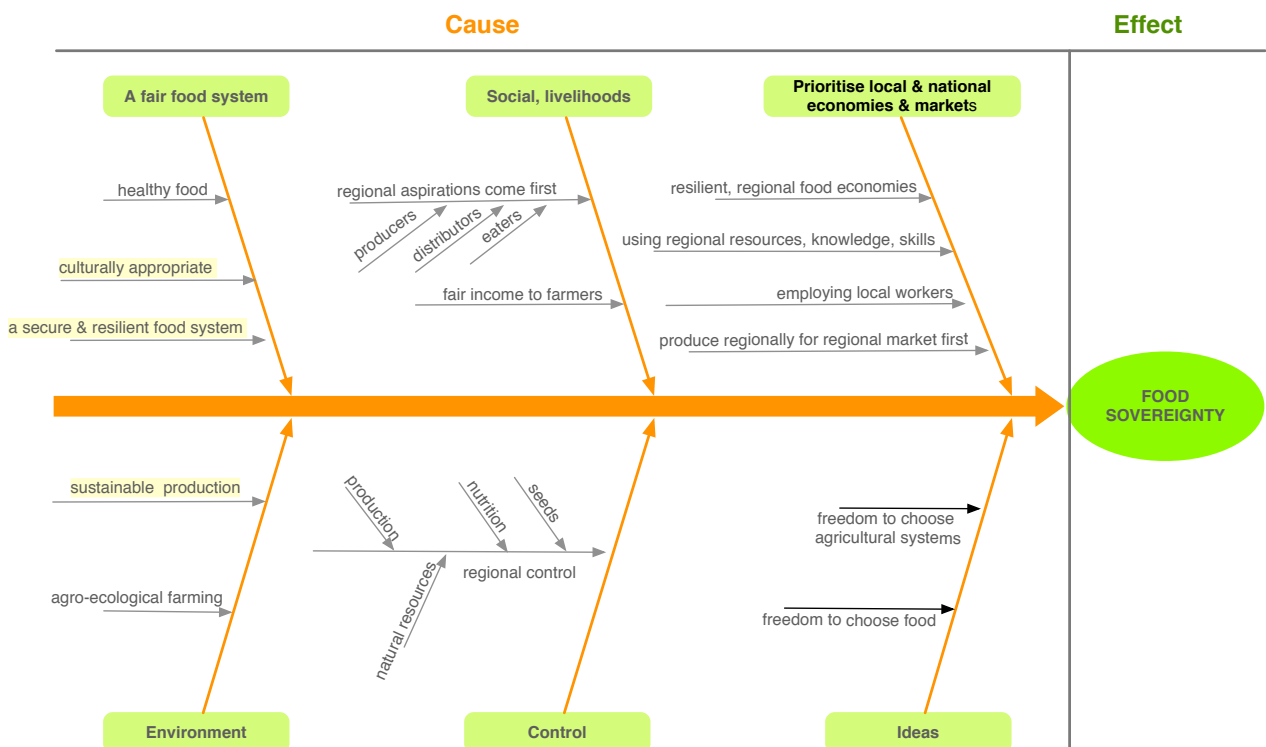
Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance sees its role as bringing together this diverse group of people who want a better food future and a better deal for Australia's farmers, food processors and for those who eat and otherwise use the products of our country's fields.

So it was that the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance came into being, an organisation born unintentionally to act on a rising social mood around what we eat and how we obtain it. The Alliance is made up of people – individuals, small food business, farmers, community associations, academics and others... people who want a better food system for our country, a better deal for farmers, a tastier and affordable deal for Australia's eaters, a secure food system for our country and the right of sovereign choice over what we choose to feed our families and where we get it from... a fair food future for all Australians.

The Alliance has set out to work together to create Australia's fair food movement, a fair and tasty food future. You and your organisation are welcome to join us.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH AUSTRALIA'S FOOD SYSTEM?

- market dominance by the supermarket duopoly and the way their buying practices affect Australian farmers and food processors and the food choices of those who buy what they offer, and their stifling of opportunity for smaller food businesses the risk of disproportionate competition to Australian farmers and food processing businesses from cheap and subsidised foreign agricultural products imported through international trade treaties sale of Australian agricultural land to foreign buyers
- an estimated more than a million food insecure Australians who cannot guarantee their families receive regular, wholesome meals
- the contribution of the fast food industry and foodlike products to Australia's obesity epidemic
- the loss of prime farmland on the urban fringe of our cities to urban sprawl the effects of coal seam gas mining on agricultural productivity, farmer livelihoods and natural resources.



November 2010: Letter to the agriculture minister

The idea that started the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance – asking the federal government to include the interests of farmers producing for the domestic market, Australian food processors, smaller food retailers and community food initiatives such as food co-operatives, community supported agriculture schemes, organic food buyers groups, community gardens and other community food enterprises in the proposed national food plan.

Submissions to government enquiries and proposals

Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance makes submissions to promote a fair food system in Australia and in the interest of small to medium scale food business, farmers and eaters.

Education

Through our website and social media, through participation in events and through hosting the annual, national Fair Food Week, the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance educates for a fair food system for Australian farmers, food business and food consumers.

The Peoples' Food Plan

The Plan is a manifesto produced when Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance members realised that the then-proposed National Food Plan would not adequately address the interests of non-corporate, community, small to medium scale farmers and the Australian food processing industry. Originally devised as an alternative plan for a better food future for Australians, the Peoples' Food Plan remains as a statement, with policy proposals, of the vision of

Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance members and supporters.

Fair Food Week

Launched in 2013 when it attracted an estimated 15,000 attendees to more than 110 self-organised fair food events around Australia, Fair Food Week is now an annual event. Organisations plan their own fair food-related events according to the theme of Fair Food Week, co-brand them with the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance and list the events on the Alliance's website and social media.

Local Food Act

In 2014, the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW stated to look at local food Acts of Parliament to create the legislative and policy basis that would create opportunities and improve livelihoods in Australian farming, for Australian food processors and those who eat what they produce. In taking this initiative, Alliance members were inspired by Canada's Ontario provincial government's Local Food Act and Local Food Fund.

Participation in international food organisations

Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance president, farmer, Michael Croft, serves as Australasian delegate to the Civil Society Mechanism of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's Committee on World Food Security, the most democratic and participatory of all UN mechanisms.

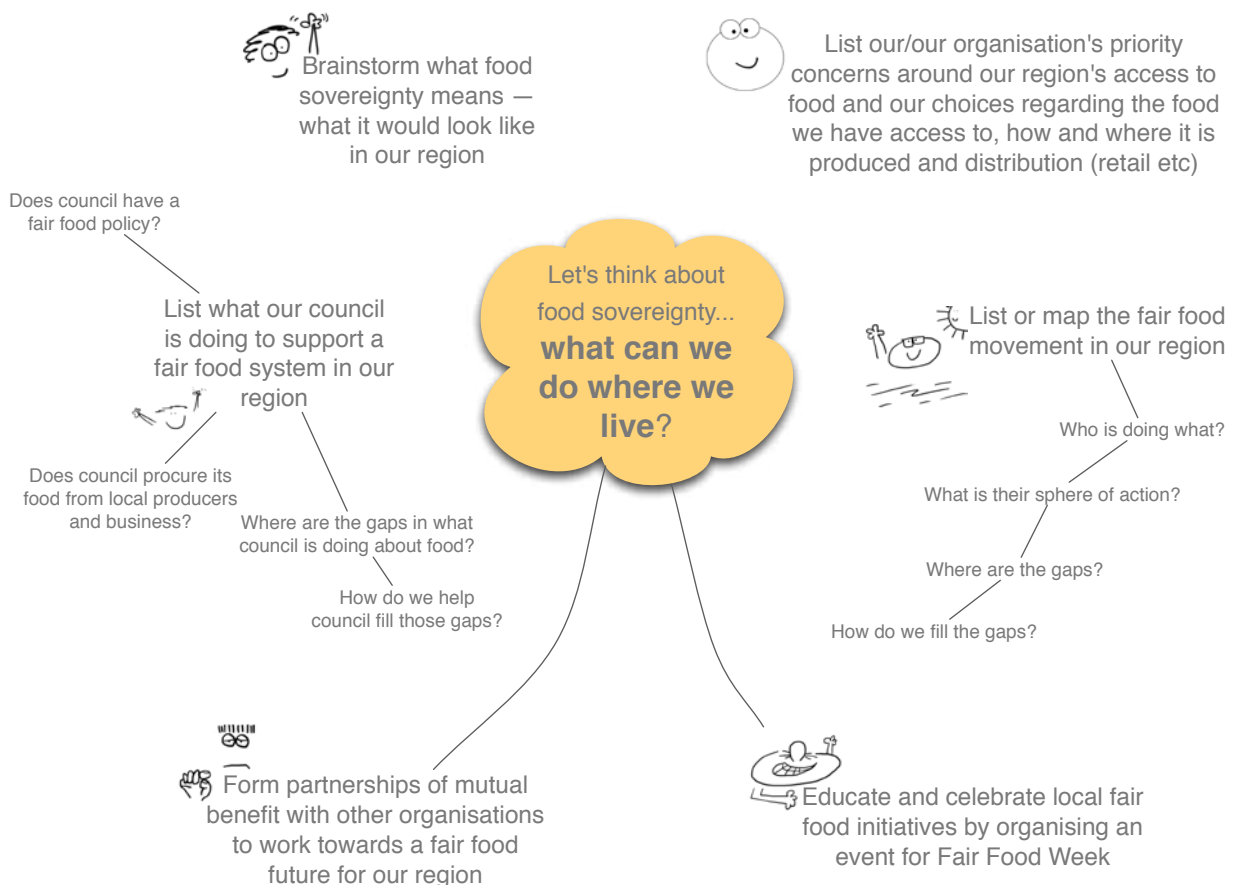
Michael is also Australian representative on the civil society International Planning Committee on Food Security, which includes representatives from 60 countries.

THE PEOPLES' FOOD PLAN

A common-sense approach to a fair, sustainable and resilient food system.

WHAT WE CAN DO

- brainstorm what food sovereignty means in your region organise an event for Fair Food Week
- list the priority concerns of yourself/your organisation around your region's access to food and your choices regarding the foods you have access to, how and where they are produced, their distribution (retail etc).
- list what your council is doing to support a fair food system in your local government area. Does council have a fair food policy, a food procurement policy that supports local producers and businesses, a community gardening policy? Where are the gaps in what council is doing? How can we help them fill those gaps?
- make a map or list of the fair food movement in your region and clarify the spheres of action of organisations involved as well as listing food retailers supporting regional farmers and food processors.
- form partnerships of mutual benefit with organisations to work towards a fair food future for your region.



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