



Transforming the Public Plate

A pathway forward for public food procurement that nourishes people, place and planet



Good Food
Purchasing
Australia

Public Food Purchasing is one of our most under-utilised levers for food system transformation

\$2.1 Billion

spent annually by Australian governments on food in our hospitals, residential aged care, long day care, prisons and other public settings.

\$6 Million

of tax payer money spent per day by governments on food for communities across generations and demographics.

Zero

national standards or criteria governing where that food comes from or how its produced.

Transforming the Public Plate is the first national assessment to understand how governments buy food in Australia. Due to lack of transparency, a thorough investigation was needed to be conducted by a national group of experts over a 6 month period.

Here are a snapshot of the findings, please read the full report at www.goodfoodpurchasingaustralia.com.au



Good Food
Purchasing
Australia

NATIONAL SPEND



Residential aged care

\$1,074,788,792



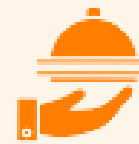
Long day care

\$331,820,152



Defence

\$ 77,842,758



Meals on Wheels

\$65,045,809



Residential care (mental health and homelessness services)

\$57,936,309



Antarctic bases (Managed by the Australian Antarctic Division)

\$3,493,498

STATE SPEND



Public Hospitals

\$331,820,152



Correctional facilities (prisons and youth detention)

\$157,608,112



TAFE

\$15,227,641



School meals

\$4,233,199



Venues/Events management (found in South Australia only)

\$4,400,000

ESTIMATED TOTAL SPEND

\$2,137,315,595

There's a gap between what we want for our food system and what our governments purchase

What we want

- Supply chains that can withstand disruption
- Visibility over where food comes from
- Food that supports health and recovery
- Farmers, small businesses and First Nations enterprises that can thrive
- Food production that protects our unique natural environment

What we found food procurement currently delivers

- Supply chains that are long, opaque and fragile
- No nutrition standards and ultra-processed food dominating institutional meals
- Contracts structured to exclude small producers, farmers and First Nations businesses
- A handful of multinationals dominating the supply
- Lack of criteria to reduce environmental impact or local sourcing of institutional food

Procurement is one of the most powerful levers we have and we're not using it.

Public food purchasing touches every hospital, long day care, aged care facility and prison in the country. Done differently, it could simultaneously advance goals that have otherwise proven difficult to achieve in isolation:

<p>01</p> <h3>Health and Nutrition</h3> <hr/> <p>More nourishing food across institutions, improving nutrition security for some of our most at-risk communities</p>	<p>02</p> <h3>Biodiversity and Resilience</h3> <hr/> <p>Creating stable demand for regeneratively grown food and shortening fragile supply chains</p>	<p>03</p> <h3>Local and Regional Economic Development</h3> <hr/> <p>Giving farmers, small and medium producers, producers and First Nations businesses a reliable market and a viable livelihood</p>
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For procurement to deliver on these goals, the values that shape it matter: equity and justice, First Nations food sovereignty, community agency, and action that is grounded in place and context.

The policy reform GFPA are seeking



Framework for mandating criteria and targets

Mandatory nutrition and local sourcing standards for all government-funded institutions and programs, with targets adapted to local context



Transparency and accountability

Public data on how and from whom government food is purchased, with critical gaps addressed, including visibility over procurement from First Nations businesses



Integration into government strategy

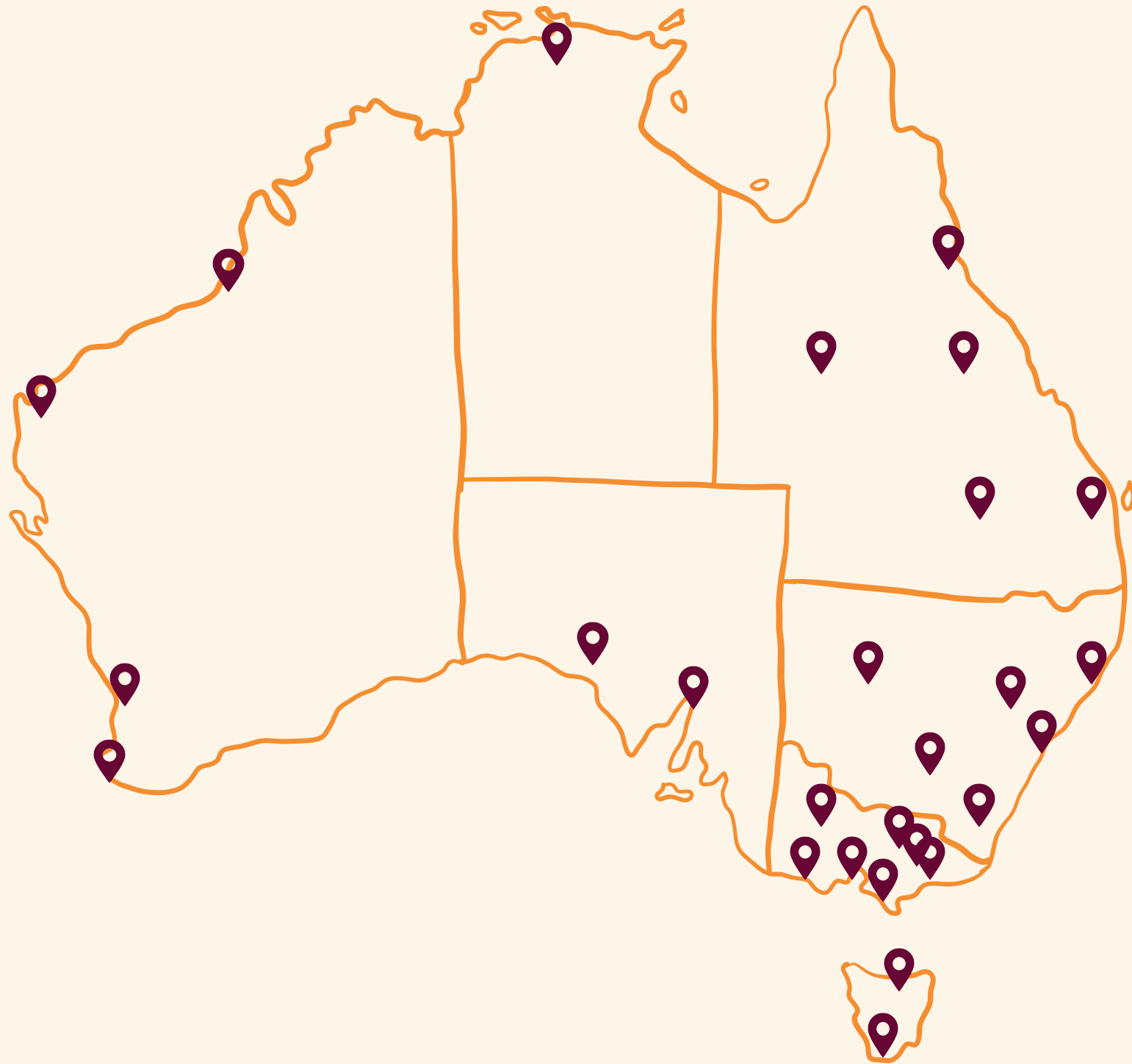
Public food procurement embedded into existing and future policy frameworks, including the national food security strategy currently in development at the federal level



Whole of Government Implementation

A coordinated approach across all departments that purchase food, including health, agriculture, finance and defence

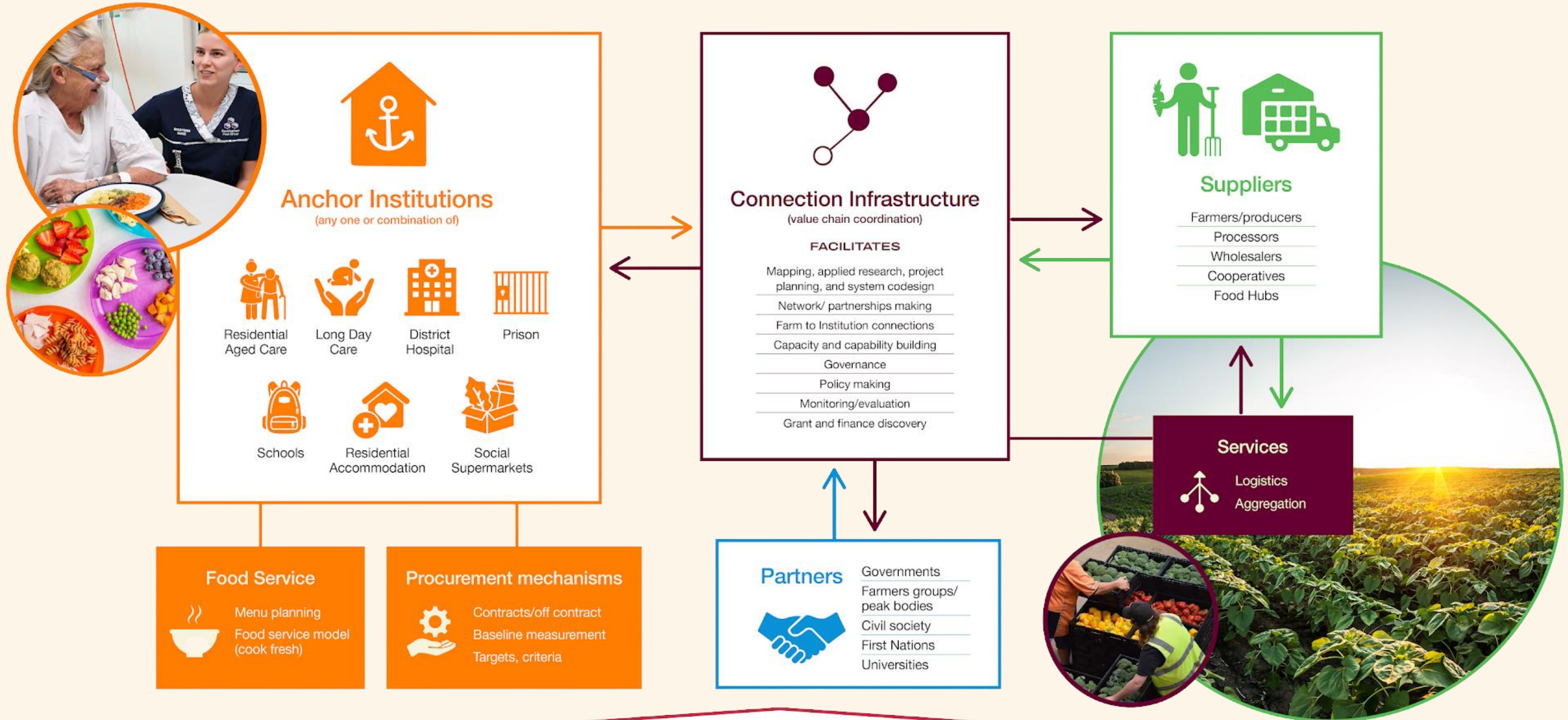
Policy change will enable transformation at scale — but institutions and communities aren't waiting.



Across the country, there are regions at varying levels of readiness to deliver place-based demonstration of good food purchasing. Through conversations and building strong local relationships, GFPA has identified 27 regions that it is ready to work with.

GFPA will work directly with regions to assess current procurement practice and build the knowledge and skills needed to procure differently. It connects institutions and communities through shared platforms, draws on international practice and adapts it to the Australian context, and feeds local learnings back into policy and advocacy.

Visualising a regional demonstration model



ENABLERS

Leadership | Time (3-5 years for phase 1) | Investment | Policy | Strengthened food systems literacy | Dynamic procurement practices | Cross-sectoral governance

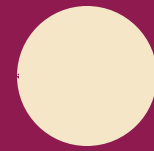
It's working elsewhere. The model is proven.



GEORGIA, UNITED STATES

Georgia ACRE Collective

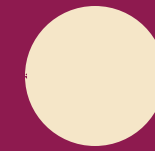
Created to address systemic inequities facing Black farmers and the decline in local food consumption, the ACRE Collective builds farmer capacity, acts as an intermediary aggregator, and connects institutions directly to local producers — including through forward agreements and pre-purchasing that give farmers reliable, stable income.



COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

City Food Strategy

Concerned about degraded waterways, Copenhagen committed to shifting its procurement toward organic and regenerative farming. By prioritising organic food across city institutions and adopting a plant-forward approach, the city has cut food-related emissions by 38%.



TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

School Meals Program

The Tasmanian Government now delivers school lunches across 60 schools, with a mandate that up to 75% of fresh ingredients must be sourced from within the state. The program has delivered strong satisfaction among students and demonstrated what locally grounded, nourishing food in institutions can look like in practice.

Why now?

1

Political momentum

Governments are actively looking for wins as they develop the national food security strategy. The response to Transforming the Public Plate has been striking with strong interest from bureaucrats, policymakers and politicians who recognise the opportunity this reform represents.

3

Public appetite for change

Australians aren't ambivalent about this. Independent polling shows 83% want food in public institutions to be healthy, 82% want governments to source from local farmers, and 71% want food chosen for its low environmental impact.

2

A supply chain wake-up call

Successive global disruptions and climate impacts have exposed just how fragile Australia's food system is. Farmers are losing livelihoods and food insecurity is rising. Public procurement is one of the most direct tools available to build resilience.

4

The foundation is already in place

Governments are spending this money regardless. The question is how. Australia also has the advantage of learning from proven models overseas — the work of building a better procurement system doesn't start from scratch, it builds on what already works.

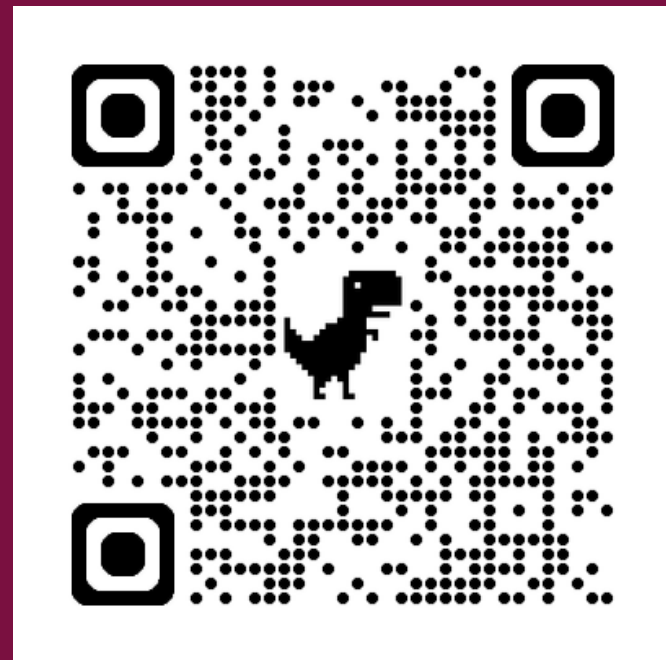
We are here to help!

Join our
Community of
Practice

Use our
toolkits and
resources

Get in touch to
partner on
demonstrations.

Let's advocate
together!



The evidence base now exists.
The case has been made.
What is needed is coordinated action.

\$2.1B

Annual government
food spend

0

National standards
currently in place

info@gfpa.au



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