Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Evaluation

Social Network Analysis

Final Report
June 2016
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EWTCoch</td>
<td>Eat Well Tasmania coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEPHI™</td>
<td>Open-source software for social network analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERF</td>
<td>Healthy Eating Resilience Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFAT</td>
<td>Healthy Food Access Tasmania Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFP</td>
<td>Local Food Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHT</td>
<td>Primary Health Tasmania</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNA</td>
<td>Social network analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAPPC</td>
<td>The Australian Preventative Partnership Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCanteens</td>
<td>Tasmanian School Canteens Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THERE</td>
<td>Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Evaluation project</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTas</td>
<td>University of Tasmania</td>
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DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGY

Community

A specific group of people, often, but not necessarily, living in a defined geographical area, who share common culture, values and norms. Communities exhibit some awareness of their identity as a group, and share common needs and a commitment to meeting them.

Community Capital

Community capital is often referred to as ‘social capital’ which is the networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Community capital is a public good that private markets alone cannot provide. It is made up of non-profit and voluntary associations where community capital is built. Community capital can be increased, reserves of it can be unlocked, and putting it to use can bring about great social, economic and personal benefits. All communities, social networks, and individuals have assets that can help to create community capital and generate social dividends.

Community Food Security

An extension of the food security concept, community food security exists when all citizens obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone.

Central Local Food Programs

Central local food programs (LFPs) are those programs considered to be most dominant within a network such as stated-wide programs. Central LFPs may have the benefit of being well connected but can also be large and cumbersome and not able to respond quickly to community needs.

GEPHI™ Open-Source Software

Gephi™ is an open-source free software package used to create a visual representation of social networks using graphs and maps.

Healthy Eating Resilience Framework

Researchers (Hume et al, n.d.) have established the Health Eating Resilience Framework which identifies factors impacting healthy eating resilience at the individual, social and environmental levels. These factors are thought to influence healthy eating at each of these three levels include:

1. **Individual level**: Capacity building in food knowledge and skills.
2. **Social level**: The culture of healthy eating and healthy eating resilience in communities. This contracts with the increasing need for emergency food relief.
3. **Environment level**: Food accessibility and availability through food supply models (such as enterprise models)
Healthy Food Access Tasmania

HFAT is a multi-dimensional food security initiative aimed at supporting projects that make healthy food choices easy choices through building local solutions which increase access to fruit and vegetables (preferably locally grown) within communities across Tasmania.

Local Food Programs

Local Food programs (LFPs) referred to in this study are community-based programs that are presently or have previously received a one time contribution of funding to become self-sustaining, to meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution or improve access to food as part of a more comprehensive service.

Local Food Programs (LFPs) can be described as any initiative, project or organisations in Tasmania that implements at least one determinant of healthy eating which could include:

1. **Building skills and knowledge** about food preparation, growing shopping and cooking
2. Establishing social or family norms that contribute towards a **culture** around healthy eating
3. Establishing reliable physical and affordable access to healthy food through **food supply** models such a social enterprise.

Regional Local Food Programs

Regional local food programs are those programs considered to be situated locally within a network. They may have the benefit of being very nimble, well connected to their own local community and responding quickly to community needs but may find themselves less connected from a state-wide perspective.

Social Network analysis

Social network analysis [SNA] is the mapping and measuring of relationships and flows between people, groups, organizations, computers, URLs, and other connected information/knowledge entities. The nodes in the network are the people and groups while the links show relationships or flows between the nodes.

**The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (TAPPC)**

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre is a national collaboration of researchers, policy makers and practitioners who are working together to identify new ways of understanding what works and what doesn’t to prevent lifestyle-related chronic health problems in Australia (Wilson et al, 2014)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tasmanian Health Eating Resilience Evaluation (THERE) was undertaken by the School of Health Science, University of Tasmania (UTas) from March 2016 to June 2016.

Funding for this project was gratefully received from Heart Foundation through a funding agreement with Primary Health Tasmania. UTas has been responsible for undertaking previous components of the delivery of the larger project “Health Food Access Tasmania” in collaboration with Heart Foundation (Tasmanian Division) as lead agency and Leah Galvin the Heart Foundation’s Project Manager for this project.

This evaluation complements a larger project evaluation being under-take by KPMG.

This project received ethics approval from the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Ref: H0015618) on the 17th March, 2016.

The authors of this report would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who generously gave their time to complete the online survey and share their thoughts about the relationships and networks they have established throughout the duration of the Health Food Access Tasmania (HFAT) Project. These individuals included representatives from local food programs from across Tasmania.

A special thankyou to the local advisory group including Alison Ward and Martina Wyss.

We acknowledge input from staff from the Prevention Tracker project, which is supported by The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre, which is funded by the NHMRC, the Australian Government Department of Health, NSW Ministry of Health, ACT Health and the HCF Research Foundation.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Evaluation (THERE) project has been an important step in the path towards building a picture of the social networks and relationships that have been established between Local Food Programs (LFPs) in Tasmania.

LFPs referred to in this study are community-based programs in Tasmania that are presently or have previously received a one time contribution of funding to become self-sustaining, to meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution or improved access to healthy food as part of a more comprehensive service. This evaluation is a collaboration between the University of Tasmania (UTas) and the Heart Foundation (Tasmanian Division).

The THERE project uses Social Network Analysis (SNA) to illustrate the benefits of a networked, collaborative approach to supporting new and existing LFPs that make-up the local food system across Tasmania. The use of network analysis is a relatively new approach to evaluating research projects within Public Health and specifically Community Food Security. Whilst network analysis can add value in understanding the benefits of relationships within a community-based program it can also have limitations. However, this project has found that SNA can add-value when combined with an in-depth knowledge of the communities and organizations involved.

The findings draw on interpretations based on network maps and a thematic analysis of open-ended responses which illustrate the benefits and limitation of a networked, collaborative approach to supporting new and existing LFPs in Tasmania. These findings include the following highlights.

Different motivations for connecting and interacting

- There was strong awareness among LFPs both regionally and state-wide of each other. This finding indicate that there is a solid platform for building and sustaining LFPs into the future.

- LFPs were motivated to connect and interact with other LFPs for different reasons. There is not a consistent pattern of connectedness across the different reasons to participate (the reasons to connect that were measured included: resource-sharing, advice, capacity building, funding).

- Resource-sharing was important for regional LFPs around activities relating to emergency food relief and establishing food supply models such as food social enterprises.

- An unexpected outcome was the strength of the advisory capacity that existed in a number of regional LFPs external to the traditional cluster of state-wide LFPs who provide advice such as Waterbridge.

- Regional LFPs can play an important role in supporting each other through capacity-building.
- It is evident that there is a **heavy reliance on traditional funding organisations** such as the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Healthy Food Access Tasmania (HFAT) project. Alternative funding from the philanthropic sector or crowd-sourced funding could be opportunities worth investigating in the future.

- **Heavy reliance on a single LFP for information-brokerage** and connecting other LFPs could leave the network vulnerable.

**Working together as a 'system' using the Healthy Eating Resilience Framework.**

Using the Healthy Eating Resilience Framework it is evident that at each level of healthy eating resilience there are clusters of LFPs which interact and work together as a system representing each of level of resilience.

1. **Individual-level**: capacity building in food knowledge and skills which is evident by the central role that the DHHS plays in supporting regional and state-wide LFPs.

2. **Social-level**: the culture of health eating within families and communities. This cluster illustrates that there continues to be an increasing need for emergency food relief which is indicated by the central role that emergency food relief (EFR) agencies such as Secondbite play in supporting regional LFPs. There continues to be a tension between building a culture of healthy eating within families and communities and ongoing reliance on EFR. Funding to neighbourhood houses has contributed towards shifting that dependence.

3. **Environment-level**: increasing food access through food supply models (such as enterprise models) which is evident by the central role that HFAT and Eat Well Tasmania (enterprise coach) play in supporting regional LFPs.

**The strength of the relationships within and between LFPs.**

This evaluation has identified that LFPs have ‘joined forces’ to achieve different outcomes. The strength of relationships varies depending upon the depth of the relationship from being simply aware of other LFPs through to in-depth collaboration between LFPs. Depending on the need of each LFP it may not be necessary or practical to forge in-depth collaborations and instead contact or coordination maybe all that is required. The findings suggest that the strength and the nature of the relationships were influenced by a range of factors including evidence of prior engagement, leadership capabilities, workplace culture, and accessibility factors.

Results suggest that whilst regional LFPs may be geographically isolated their connectivity and level of collaboration with other regional LFPs and state-wide LFPs is a strong indicator of a resilient decentralised network.

The report findings indicate that whilst there are a number of “pull” factors that draw the different LFPs to better engage with one another there are also a range of “push” factors or dis-incentives for deeper collaboration between the LFPs. Whilst commentary on these findings are beyond the scope of the evaluation it is worth noting that depending on the need of each LFP it may not be necessary or practical to forge in-depth collaborations and instead contact or coordination maybe all that is required.
The benefits and challenges of relationships and networking

A thematic analysis of the benefits and challenges of a networked, collaborative approach to supporting new and existing LFPs in Tasmania have been identified. These themes describe;

- the benefits that have been experienced from working in a collaborative way by LFPs both regionally and state-wide;
- an increased appreciation and understanding of the need to address food access challenges in communities and realising that LFPs are not isolated activities but rather part of a larger community with similar motivations;
- the value that trust and sharing provided to organisations through building community capitals including social, economic and human;
- an increased capacity to meet organisations goals through the process of building relationships and networking;
- working together with other LFPs was important for increasing the capacity of each LFP and keeping each ‘afloat’;
- motivation, inspiration and confidence is the key outcome of the networking process – i.e. LFPs motivate each other as they work collaboratively together and / or use each other for support;
- a reduction in a culture of competitiveness between LFPs and a greater appreciation of the value of sharing information;
- the need for a cultural and mind-set change within LFPs around how limited funding is used to ensure the longevity of LFPs.

Overall SNA has been a valuable tool for helping to understand the network structure within existing LFPs in Tasmania at this point in time. What network analysis cannot pre-determine is the resilience of LFPs and likelihood of them sustaining themselves through changes in funding. What is required is a cultural and mind-set change within LFPs around how limited funding is used to ensure the longevity of LFPs around how an environment in which funding is limited or time constrained can be used to generate creative approaches to sustain and build LFPs.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Funding

Funding for the Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Evaluation (THERE) project was provided by Heart Foundation through a funding agreement with Primary Health Tasmania (PHT). This work aims to value-add to the existing evaluation by KPMG undertaken for the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) and HFAT investments. The THERE project is a collaboration between the University of Tasmania and lead agency Heart Foundation Tasmania.

1.2 Healthy Food Access Tasmania (HFAT) Initiative

HFAT is a multi-dimensional food security initiative aimed at supporting projects that make healthy food choices easy choices through building local solutions within communities across Tasmania that increase access to fruit and vegetables (preferably locally grown). HFAT works within a collaborative framework and builds on the body of food security research, policy and practice undertaken in Tasmania over the past decade; in particular, the research by the Tasmanian Food Access Research Coalition (Le, et al, 2013) and the Food For All Tasmanians Food Security Strategy (TFSC, 2012).

The HFAT initiative is comprised of a number of sub-projects each with specific aims and objectives. A key point of reference for HFAT is to work within a Social Determinants of Health framework (Wilkinson & Marmot, 1998); this project seeks to address important health, economic, and social issues impacting on food security at a local level.

1.3 Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Evaluation

1.3.1 Rationale for undertaking this evaluation

Even for low income households, eating well is more achievable if we better understand the factors impacting vulnerable households. Researchers (Ball, et al, 2010; Ball et al, 2013; Hume et al, n.d.) have established a Health Eating Resilience Framework identifying factors impacting healthy eating resilience at the individual, social and environmental levels. The factors thought to influence healthy eating at each of these three levels include:

1. **Individual-level**: Capacity-building food skills and knowledge about food preparation, growing shopping and cooking
2. **Social-level**: Social and family influences that contribute towards a culture of healthy eating development of health eating resilience. This contrasts with the increasing need for emergency food relief in some regions.
3. **Environment-level**: increasing access and availability of healthy food through food supply models such as enterprise models.
Given that factors at each of these levels are needed to be favourably operating together to ensure healthy eating is achievable, the researchers believe there is merit in exploring the relationships between the providers of local food programs in Tasmania that contribute to ensuring these factors are delivered. The researchers believe that connections between these factors will contribute long term to ‘systems’ that support making healthy food choices easy choices even for Tasmanians on low incomes.

In the past 5-10 years there has been growing interest in the applicability of ‘systems thinking’ in public health (Carey et al, 2015). One of the intentions of this evaluation project is to use an approach that models ‘real systems’. For this reason, social-networks and relationship mapping will be used to determine how LFPs are interacting with each other to support and develop their own programs that address the barriers to healthy eating within their communities.

1.3.2 Purpose and scope for the evaluation

The THERE project is a complementary evaluation for the Healthy Food Access Tasmania (HFAT) project. During 2013-2016 there were a variety of HFAT Local Food Programs (LFPs) and initiatives being delivered concurrently across Tasmania that built on previous work undertaken to address community/household level food insecurity in Tasmania. These projects and initiatives had both formal and informal relationships. While the main projects were funded by PHT, others were funded by the State Government. The relationships between these projects and other initiatives have not been well documented in the past and have only been identified superficially through existing project evaluations.

It is estimated that there were between twenty-five to fifty funded (and previously funded) local food programs and initiatives in Tasmania that could provide a state-wide overview of the social networks and relationships between these projects. The local food project and initiatives by funding category are indicated in Table 1. For a full list that was included in this evaluation refer to Appendix 6.1.

Table 1 Local food programs identified by funding category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Category</th>
<th>Local food programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Food Access Tasmania</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Health Tasmania</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood House Tasmania</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not funded - (Not-for-profits)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Governments</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3.3 Governance

Working within a collaborative framework, the Heart Foundation engaged a research team from the School of Health Sciences at UTas to complete tasks associated with delivery of this evaluation.

Governance of this project was the primary responsibility of the Project Team which included Sandra Murray (UTas researcher), Stuart Auckland (UTas researcher) and Leah Galvin (Heart Foundation). A local advisory group was engaged to provide advice on the evaluation and identify Local Food Programs (LFP) to be included in the evaluation. The local advisory group members were also invited to pilot an online-survey prior to its dissemination.

As required the project team sub-contracted elements of the evaluation to a third party (Dr Don Thomson) to undertake specialist tasks such as the application of network analysis.

1.3.4 Key project stages

A detailed project plan was developed outlining timelines and milestones. The THERE project was planned, developed and implemented over a period of approximately 3 months from March 2016 through to the presentation of the final report in June 2016. Project commencement coincided with the completion of the final stage of the HFAT project. The THERE project involved three key phases which are summarised in Table 2. Monitoring of project progress included formal and informal reporting to the Heart Foundation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project stage</th>
<th>What was involved</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE 1 - Scoping</strong></td>
<td>• Seek approval to use The Australian Prevention Partnership Council (TAPPC) online-survey questionnaire and include in ethics application &lt;br&gt;• Complete low-risk ethics application and submit for approval. *If approval hasn’t been received from TAPPC by submission date for ethics application then a draft of likely question-set will be included. &lt;br&gt;• Develop detailed project plan and timeline &lt;br&gt;• Establish local advisory group to identify organisations for inclusion and questions for the survey &lt;br&gt;• Send doodle poll to local advisory group to confirm date for advisory group to meet and discuss survey &lt;br&gt;• Organise meeting for mid-Mar to review questions &lt;br&gt;• Develop draft Survey Tool (where possible questions from the APPC surveys will be repeated) &lt;br&gt;• Disseminate draft survey (TAPPC survey) to local advisory group prior to meeting &lt;br&gt;• Seek approval from UTAS IT to support process &lt;br&gt;• Develop survey tool using ‘Lime Survey’ technology which is very similar to Survey Monkey following feedback from local advisory group &lt;br&gt;• Pilot survey amongst local advisory group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE 2 – Implementation</strong></td>
<td>• Implement survey-dissemination strategy to key stakeholder organisations via email &lt;br&gt;  • Step 1 - Send initial promotional email to stakeholders informing of survey (bcc all stakeholders in 1 email) &lt;br&gt;  • Step 2 - Send personalised email to each stakeholder with link to survey and information sheet giving 10 days to complete &lt;br&gt;  • Send Follow up email to stakeholders to ensure maximum participation at end of first week of dissemination. With the aim of a 90% participation rate. &lt;br&gt;  • Send a final email the day before survey closes or personally telephone stakeholders if required. &lt;br&gt;  • Offer a lucky-draw incentive to maximise completion rate ($150 voucher X 3 from Harvey Norman) &lt;br&gt;• Organise GEPHi™ Network mapping training with local expert &lt;br&gt;• Collate survey results and enter data into network mapping program &lt;br&gt;• Interpretation of data and discussion of preliminary findings with HF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE 3 – Preparation of final report</strong></td>
<td>• Develop final report including recommendations &lt;br&gt;• Forward draft of final report to HF for internal review and editing. &lt;br&gt;• Amend final report following HF feedback and complete changes and forward back to HF &lt;br&gt;• Finalise summary of report to disseminate to key stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
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2. EVALUATION DESIGN

2.1 Aims and objectives

This project focused on the nature, structures and types of social-networks and relationships that have been established across a variety of LFPs that are being delivered concurrently across Tasmania. A majority of these LFPs have been funded by PHT whilst others have been funded by the Tasmanian State Government. Some of these programs have been built upon previous funding initiative such as Food for All Tasmanians (TFSC, 2012), which was undertaken to address community/household level food insecurity.

The relationships between these LFPs is not well documented and currently is only identified superficially through existing program evaluations. The findings from this evaluation could be used to inform future investment in LFPs by all levels of government including federal, state and local.

This project seeks to determine:

1. the types of networks and relationships that have resulted from the funding, and activity in the community, by determining which LFPs were the 'connectors' and which were the 'influencers';
2. the strength of the relationships between and within LFPs;
3. whether the LFPs were working together as a 'system' using the healthy eating resilience framework;
4. which LFPs have partnered or collaborated with each other;
5. which LFPs promote each other's objectives and programs.

2.2 Outcomes and outputs

The outcomes being sought for this evaluation includes:

1. Improved knowledge and understanding of the relationships between the providers of projects and programs that contribute to ensuring access to a healthy food supply.
2. Improved understanding of the connections that will contribute long term to ‘systems’ that support making healthy food choices easy choices for all Tasmanians.

The planned outputs for this evaluation includes:

1. A Project report containing key findings and recommendations from the evaluation.
2. Agreements between stakeholder organisations to support the evaluation process.
3. Evidence that will inform the development of future strategies to build the capacity of the workforce to address the social determinants of health.
4. Building capacity within our research team by trainer researchers in the application of this analysis process.
2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Using Social Network Analysis

The formation of cooperative partnerships or networks are considered important for addressing the broad needs of a community (Provan et al, 2005). Social relationships are considered to have a value and by working together community organisations can grow this value by drawing on the broad range of resources and expertise provided by other organisations in the network and as a result the health and wellbeing of community members will be improved (Parsfield et al, 2015; Provan & Brinton, 2001). Despite efforts to build community capacity through networks they are traditionally difficult to establish and even harder to sustain.

The methodology used in this evaluation is similar to that used by a recently completed social-network project carried out in Tasmania, the Glenorchy Prevention Tracker1 undertaken by the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (TAPPC). The TAPPC Glenorchy Prevention Tracker project evaluated the relationships between physical activity and healthy eating. The methodology used an online survey, as well as two workshops, that explored the connections between agencies operating in the Glenorchy City Council Area using social network analysis (SNA). The project was a collaboration between TAPPC, Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Glenorchy City Council.

The strength of using SNA (Otte, 2015) is that it allows exploration of social structures through the use of networks maps and graphs. It also explores whether relationships across LFPs are simply information sharing, partnerships or collaborations. In-turn this will allow a better understand of how they fit within the Healthy Eating Resilience framework. This will determine the extent to which relationships that were already in place support a ‘system’ of healthy eating. In addition, this will also help to determine whether the relationships need more direct support and the nature of support required. The practice of SNA for identifying existing ‘systems’ and networks within a community is now becoming more common-place in public health evaluation.

2.3.2 Selection of participants

All LFPs which met the evaluation criteria were invited to participate. This included LFPs which had been funded by HFAT, PHT as well as those currently and previously funded by the State Government (TFSC, 2012). The managers or project coordinators within each LFP were invited to complete an online-survey.

The reason for choosing these LFPs was so that the researchers could better understand the types of social networks and relationships that had resulted from the funding and activities in the community by determining which organisations were the ‘connectors and which were the ‘influencers’. It was estimated that there were between twenty-five to fifty LFPs that satisfied the inclusion criteria and would be invited to participate. This would give a state-wide overview which targeted LFPs presently or previously funded.

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2.3.3 Contacting participants

To strengthen the outcomes of the evaluation a completion rate of 90% was targeted. This completion-rate target was extremely important achieve to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the resulting network maps. The approach used to contact participants involved the five steps indicated in table 3.

Table 3 Approach used to contact participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>UTas and Heart Foundation in collaboration with the project’s Local Advisory Committee identified and sourced contact details for participating LFPs.</td>
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| 2     | To promote the THERE project an initial email invitation (appendix 6.4) was sent to potential participants informing them that they would be invited to complete an online-survey in a follow-up email. This email was blind copied and sent to all participant.  
  
  • Participants included managers and/or project coordinators who were involved with each of the LFPs.  
  
  • It was not a prerequisite that participants have any special characteristics (i.e. sex, age) however they must have been involved with a LFP within their organisation.  
  
  • A consent form was not provided as it was intended that completion and submission of the online-survey would assume informed consent by the participant. |
| 3     | The next day a follow-up personalised email was sent to each participant inviting them to complete the online-survey.  
  
  • A web-link to the survey tool and an information sheet (appendix 6.2) were included in the email.  
  
  • As an incentive to increase survey completions rates, all participants who completed a survey were entered into a lucky draw to win one of three vouchers to the value of $150 each. |
| 4     | A follow-up email was sent to each participant to ensure maximum participation mid-way through the survey period. With the aim of ensuring a 90% participation rate. This rate was important to achieve because network maps are sensitive to missing data. |
| 5     | A final email the day before the online-survey closed or in some instances a personal telephone was made to stakeholders to ensure maximum participation. |
2.3.4 Data collection via online survey tool

The online survey tool used for this evaluation was based on the TAPPC Network Survey Tool (Hawe, et al, 2004) which was used with the kind permission of TAPPC. The tool was deployed as an online-survey tool using online technology known as Lime Survey™ (similar to Survey Monkey). The question-set included a total of eight questions with six of the same questions used in the TAPPC tool and two of our own questions (refer to appendix 8.5). This method of collecting data was beneficial to the THERE as it provided a much faster way to collect data and also allowed for repetition and comparison with the previous work of TAPPC.

The online-survey gathered data through the use of open-ended and closed questions focusing on the social networks and relationships created during the project. The questions asked participants about their perceptions of their relationships and networks with other LFPS around Tasmania.

These questions included the following:

1. Please select all of the project, programs or organisations that you are aware of from the list below.
2. With which of the following projects, program or organisations do you have contact of any sought? This may be just to seek advice and information from them such as asking them to help you advertise something etc.
3. How often do you currently have contact with the following projects, programs or organisations?
4. How would you describe the nature and type of relationships you have with the following project, programs or organisations?
5. With which of the following projects, programs or organisations do you have a connection to coordinate activities?
6. With which of the following projects, programs or organisations do you have a more in-depth collaboration?
7. What effects/influences have your relationships, with other projects, programs or organisations, had on your way of working?
2.3.5 Data analysis and use of network mapping software

The online-survey was available for participants to complete over a three-week period and midway through this period a reminder email was sent to participants to maximise the number of online-survey completed. The survey data was then downloaded, ‘cleaned’ and manipulated for inclusion into network mapping software.

Advice from experts within TAPPC recommended that open-source software such as GEPHI™ (2016), be used to provide a visual representation of the social networks existing between the LFPs across Tasmania. This visual representation is important to enable an understanding of the network data and convey the result of the analysis.

Network analysis allows for the examination and comparison of relationships between two LFPs, among clusters of LFPs, and among all of the LFPs comprising the network. Because network analysis focuses on relationships across and between network members, the data collected are displayed and analysed using a map, which reflects each LFP’s relationship or links with every other LFP in the network (Provan, 2005).

Network analysis can be extremely helpful to communities that are trying to build capacity through growing their networks. However, it is not the total answer. Some qualitative understanding of the network is required to enable interpretation of the network map. Network analysis is useful for demonstrating the connections and relationships among community organisations, reflecting the structure of a network.

The benefit of network analysis for managers and project coordinators is that they can see where their community organization fits within the structure of the network, based not just on their own impressions and perspectives, but also on the experiences of the other network participants. Depending on the findings, managers and coordinators may choose to shift priorities and resources so that their organization becomes more (or less) involved in the network as a whole or with certain key organizations that may be critical to their own effectiveness (Provan, 2005).
3. FINDINGS

3.1 Survey completions

The survey completion rate for this evaluation was 85-90%. This very high response rate was anticipated given the high level of engagement with the participants invited to complete the online survey both prior to and during the survey period. The number of participants invited to complete the survey was thirty-eight with thirty-two completing the entire survey and one partially completing the survey (as indicated in Figure 1).

![Diagram showing the number of participants involved in the survey]

**Figure 1** Number of participants invited to complete survey and who completed survey
As indicated in figure 2, the LFP that completed the online-survey were representative of each geographical region of Tasmania based on population. The main funding organisations included HFAT, Primary Health Tasmania (PHT), Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania (NHT) and the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services.

Figure 2 Locality and reach of Local Food Programs
3.2 Network Maps

The following nine network maps have been created using GEPHI™ software. The network maps represent the nature and types of social-networks and relationships that have been established across thirty-two LFPs across Tasmania as a result of funding and other activities in the community.

The maps that have been created relate to the first seven of eight questions included in the online survey (appendix 8.5). The maps were designed to help determine:

1. The LFPs and organisations which were the ‘connectors’ and ‘influencers’.
2. The strength of the relationships between and within organisations.
3. Whether the programs and initiatives were working together as a 'system' using the resilience framework.
4. Which projects have partnered or collaborated with each other.
5. Which projects promote each other's objectives and programs.

3.2.1 Awareness of other LFPs

Survey question

The Social Network Map shown in Figure 3 provides an overview of the thirty-two LFPs that completed the survey and their awareness of each other. The question asked relates to question 2 of the online-survey indicated in the box below and appendix 8.5.

‘Please select all of the project, programs or organisations that you are aware of from the list below’

Findings

This map indicates that state-wide LFPs considered to be central to the network, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Eat Well Tasmania – enterprise coach (EWTCOach), HFAT and Secondbite were more recognised by regional LFPs.

These regional LFPs are showing as being more ‘peripheral’. The local, often regionally based LFPs are networked with others regional LFPs, meaning that geographic proximity is a factor, but not necessarily a driver of connectivity. Specifically, regional LFPs such as Geeveston, Deloraine, Huon, Maranoa and Dunalley were more recognised by other regional LFPs.

Implications

There is a strong awareness of LFPs both regionally and state-wide which has created a solid platform for building and sustaining LFPs into the future.
Figure 3 Map of all LFPs and their awareness of each other
(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)
3.2.2 LFPs that have contact with each other

Survey question

The map in figure 4 indicates the LFPs that have had contact with each other. The results discussed in this section relate to question 3 and 4 of the online-survey indicated in the box below and appendix 8.5.

‘With which of the following projects, program or organisations do you have contact of any sort? This may be just to seek advice and information from them such as asking them to help you advertise something etc.’

Findings

This map indicates the thirty-two LFPs that reported having direct contact with each other. It is apparent that DHHS, EWTCOach, Secondbite and HFAT were the four central LFPs that have most contact other LFPs, and do so on a more frequent basis.

DHHS and Secondbite have more frequent contact (indicated by the bright green line) than HFAT and EWTCOach. Whilst HFAT and EWTCOach have less frequent contact, should not be interpreted as reflecting the quality of the relationships and connections between these organisations.

In relation to the Healthy Eating Resilience Framework described earlier, there are three network clusters indicated in figure 3 working together as a system including:

1 Individual-level: capacity building in food knowledge and skills which is evident by the central role that DHHS played in supporting regional and state-wide LFPs.

2 Social-level: the culture of health eating within a families and communities. This cluster illustrates that there continues to be an increasing need for emergency food relief which is indicated by the central role that Secondbite play in supporting regional LFPs. Also it is evident that the role of Secondbite requires frequent face-to-face connect at least on a weekly basis as indicates by the bold green lines.

3 Environment-level: increasing food access through food supply models (such as enterprise models) which is evident by the central role that HFAT and EWTCOach plays in supporting regional LFPs.

Implications

There continues to be a tension between building a culture of healthy eating within families and communities and the increasing need for emergency food relief.
**Figure 4** Map of LFPs of which have contact with each other

*(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)*
3.2.3 Nature and types of relationships with other LFPs

Survey question

Figures five to nine document the nature of relationships with other LFPs. Data mapped is derived from question 5 of the online-survey, documented in the box below and appendix 8.5.

‘How would you describe the nature of relationships you have with the following Local Food Programs?’

- Resource Sharing
- Advisory Capacity
- Funding
- Capacity Building
- Other (information brokerage)

3.2.3.1 Resource-sharing relationship with LFPs

Findings

Figure 5 indicates the structure of the relationships based on ‘resource sharing’ that LFPs have with each other. This may refer to in-kind support including people resources, physical resources, knowledge and training.

As indicated in this map, HFAT, EWTCoach, and Secondbite were the three LFPs most relied upon for resource-sharing.

In relation to the Healthy Eating Resilience Framework there were two network clusters indicated in figure 5. At the social level, Secondbite supported emergency food relief resource-sharing activities and at the environment-level, HFAT and EWTCoach provided resources sharing opportunities relating to food supply and social enterprise models. At the individual-level the network cluster not evident was the sharing of resources for food skills and knowledge activities.

Implications

Resources sharing by these key LFPs is important for regional LFPs for activities relating to emergency food relief and establishing food supply models such as food social enterprises.

For activities relating to building food skills and knowledge within LFPs the need for resource sharing is less of a priority.
Figure 5 Map of the ‘resource-sharing’ relationships with each LFPs

(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)
3.2.3.2 Advisory capacity relationship with LFPs

Findings

Figure 6 illustrates the structure of the relationship based on ‘advisory capacity’ that LFPs have with each other. This may refer to advice, opinion or recommendation offered as a guide to LFPs by others.

The main LFPs relied upon for advice included HFAT, DHHS, and UTas who were considered experts in their field. What was unexpected was the capacity that existed outside of the traditional organisations which provided advice including community-based organisations such as Waterbridge, Maranoa (both Neighbourhood Houses) and Devonport and Kingborough (both local governments) which also appeared to be central LFPs with strong connections to other LFPs. Interestingly, none of these community based organisations had purposely set themselves up as advisory agencies, this role was recognised by other LFPs.

Implications

It’s evident that different LFPs were relied upon to provide advice which illustrates the strength of the connections.
3.2.3.3  Funding relationship with LFPs

**Findings**

Figure 7 illustrates the structure of the ‘funding’ relationships that LFPs have which each other. DHHS and HFAT were the two main LFPs responsible for providing funding. Note that data from NHT, for funding food cooperatives, and Primary Health Tasmania (PHT), for investing in food security project under the SDoH fund, was not available.

**Implications**

It is evident that there is a heavy reliance on traditional funders. Alternative funding from the philanthropic sector could be an opportunity worth investigating in the future.

![Figure 7 Map of the ‘funding’ relationships with each LFPs](image-url)

*(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)*
3.2.3.4 Capacity-building relationship with LFPs

Findings

Figure 8 shows the nature of the ‘capacity building’ relationships that LFPs have which each other. Capacity building refers to community development and it taps into existing abilities of individuals, communities, organisations or systems to increase involvement, decision-making and ownership of issues.

HFAT, Waterbridge and Tasmanian School Canteens Association (TCanteens) were the three LFPs most recognised for capacity-building. Note the important role that TCanteens plays in capacity-building, providing opportunities for building food skills and knowledge and influencing a cultural shift to healthy eating. It is also important to note the strong connections that Waterbridge, a regional LFP, has with other regional LFPs.

Implications

Regional LFPs can play an important role in supporting other regional LFPs through capacity building.

Figure 8 Map of the ‘capacity building’ relationships with each LFPs
(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)
3.2.3.5 ‘Other’ reasons for relationships with LFPs

**Findings**

Figure 9 illustrates the relationship LFPs have with each other for ‘other’ reasons. ‘Other reasons’ refers to information brokerage, building trust, and providing context.

HFAT and to a lesser extent Secondbite, EWTcoach were the three main LFPs most relied on for ‘other’ reasons. The last question of the Online Survey was an open-ended question which indicated the important role that HFAT played as an information broker, linkage agency or even a ‘dating service’.

**Implications**

A heavy reliance on one organisation, HFAT, for information-brokerage and connecting other LFPs leaves the network vulnerable.

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**Figure 9 Map of the ‘other reasons’ for relationships with LFP**

*(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)*
3.2.4 Connections to coordinated activities with LFPs

Survey questions

Figure 10 illustrates the connections of LFPs to coordinated activities with other LFPs. Coordination means sharing information and resources to achieve a common purpose. It means not creating something new. Examples include talking to each other about the scheduling of events, opening hours, gaps in service, sharing community resources like venues and community buses etc.’

Data used to compile this social network map is from question 6 of the online-survey (see box below and appendix 8.5).

‘With which of the following projects, programs or organisations do you have a connection to coordinate activities?

Findings

This map illustrates that HFAT, Secondbite, EWTCoach and DHHS were the four central LFPs that had more connections to coordinate activities.

Similar to Figure 3, in relation to the Healthy Eating Resilience Framework, there were three network clusters indicated in Figure 10 working together as a system including:

1 Individual-level: DHHS had a central role in coordinated activities relating to food knowledge and skills within regional and state-wide LFPs.

2 Social-level: Secondbite had a central role in coordinated activities relating to emergency food relief and supporting regional LFPs. Also it is evident that the role of Secondbite requires frequent face-to-face contact at least on a weekly basis as indicates by the bold green lines.

3 Environment-level: HFAT and EWTCoach had a central role in coordinated activities relating to increasing food access through food supply models (such as enterprise models).

Implications

There continues to be a tension between building a culture of healthy eating within families and communities and the increasing need for emergency food relief.
Figure 10 Map of LFPs where there is a connection to coordinate activities
(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)
3.2.5  In-depth collaboration with LFPs

Survey questions

Figure 11 shows the networks around in-depth collaboration between LFPs both regionally and state-wide. Collaboration means putting in time and resources to actively work together to create something new in support of a common purpose. For example, developing plans or projects, working together to jointly plan events, submitting joint funding applications together or running training and development activities.

The SNA map shown in Figure 11 is based on data collected through the online-survey question shown in the box below and appendix 8.5.

*With which of the following projects, programs or organisations do you have a more in-depth collaboration?*

Findings

Whilst HFAT and DHHS had in-depth collaborations with the majority of LFPs it is evident that both regional and the remaining state-wide LFPs also have in-depth collaborations with each other.

This illustrates a highly connected network with a high degree of collaboration.

Implications

There is clearly a strong connection between the state-wide LFPs and regional LFPs.

Whilst regional LFPs may have been more geographically isolated their connectivity and level of collaboration with other regional LFPs and state-wide LFPs was strong indicating a resilient decentralised network.
Figure 11 Map of LFPs where there is a more in-depth collaboration
(NB - refer to appendix 8.6 for LFP names and abbreviations)
3.3 Themes from open-ended question

A key part of creating an effective online-survey is in the appropriate use of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Of the eight questions included in the online-survey, seven questions were closed and the final question was open-ended. An open-ended question was included to provide critical comments from the participants to help interpret the closed questions and also shed light on the factors influencing connectivity and collaboration across the network.

The question asked is indicated in the box below and in appendix 8.5.

‘What effects/influences have your relationships, with other projects, programs or organisations, had on your way of working?’

Analysis of the responses to the open-ended question identified number of themes relating to the perceived benefits of working in a way that created relationships and networks and at the same time also identified some challenges.

3.3.1 The benefits of relationships and networking

A number of themes emerged which illustrate the benefits of a networked, collaborative approach to supporting new and existing LFPs in Tasmania.

A collaborative way of working

LFPs described the benefits they had experienced from working in a way that created strong relationships with other LFPs include both regional and state-wide.

‘….increases our opportunity to have a collaborative working style, finding common ground to improve advocacy and action in the area of food security leading to system change’. (State wide Org)

‘Through our extensive networks we have been able to collaborate with many organisations concerned with improved nutrition on many different levels…’ (State wide org)

‘The networks help to streamline and avoid pitfalls, although occasionally there can be a tendency to prevent innovation due to consensus requirements or high levels of risk aversion’. (State wide orgs)

‘The issue of duplication is less likely to happen’. (State Wide Org)
Mindset and Cultural shift
LFPs described an increased appreciation of and understanding for the need to address food access challenges in their communities as well as realising that they were not alone and part of a larger community with similar motivations.

Has provided an appreciation and understanding of some of the cultural and social challenges that need to be addressed in implementing local food initiatives in low socio economic communities. (Statewide Org)

I have realised that I am part of a big community of highly motivated people who want to see change at a community and system level. (Statewide org)

The value of trust and sharing
LFPs described the value that trust and sharing provided to their organisations by building community capital.

‘Though we haven’t really collaborated going to see Hilltop Fresh and Produce to the People was great. Seeing what is out there and what others are doing is motivating and inspiring, even if sometimes it’s on what not to do’. (Southern Region)

‘…..bounce ideas off each other, gain new ones, share resources, opportunities, commiserate on our losses, celebrate wins’. (Southern Region)

‘collaboration and information sharing is the best method of practice for stakeholders with similar goals and communities’. (Northern Region).

‘We base everything we do on trust relationships so this greatly influences who we work with’. (North West region)

‘The commonality of purpose of the various projects around the state have lent support and a knowledge and skills-sharing which has helped us enormously’. (Northern Region)
Increasing capacity

LFPs described an increased capacity to meet their goals through the process of building relationships and networking. Networking with similar LFPs provided opportunities for sharing resources and ultimate saving time.

Working together with other LFPs was considered important for increasing the capacity of each LFP and keeping each of the LFPs ‘afloat’, with time being the biggest hurdle to achieving this.

Motivation and the value of networking

Motivation was a key outcome of the networking process describe by some LFPs.

The resources, expertise and support provided by HFAT has informed all components of the project’. (North West Region)

‘Finding ways of sharing resources and creating actions to meet mutual goals provides us with an increased capacity to meet these goals. I feel this gives our Project an increased capacity to meet our goals while supporting other organisations to meet theirs’. (South Region)

‘I feel that networking much more effectively with all the community food projects would keep us all afloat, the biggest hurdle is TIME! All these projects need full-time staff - the nature of fresh food is that it is a perishable commodity and subsequently the operational side of sourcing, running the co-op effectively, reducing wastage, promoting awareness, facilitating events and education cannot be done on part-time hours, let alone the networking with similar projects spread over geographical distance. Setting them up without the correct amount of human resource and expertise, is like creating a 3-legged stool with only two legs’. (South Region).

‘It’s always motivating to collaborate with other organisations. Knowing we’re a part of a network of organisations trying to bring about change motivates me to keep going’. (South Region)
3.3.2 The Challenges of relationships and networking

A number of quotes illustrated that whilst relationships and networks provide many benefits to LFPs there were the additional challenges of changing culture and mind-set around how limited funding is used to ensure the longevity of LFPs.

“We have been doing what we do for some time now and do get frustrated by the number of new projects that get funded and then come to us for advice on how they should proceed. We suspect this has to do with the limited amount of funding around - the competition for funds and the funders wanting to see something new rather than see existing projects thrive. When we do work with another organisation we give it as close to 100% as we can in these competitive/hold your cards close to your chest times. We are here to assist the most vulnerable in the community and that is our priority’. (North West Region)

‘Although partnerships can create strength, they can sometimes create inefficiencies, extra work and barriers’. (Southern Region)

‘... A culture of immediate returns on investment exists in some communities re: funding. This mindset is not conducive to sustainable practices. It is likely that community food initiatives will remain fringe initiatives with localized impact rather than broader benefits. (Statewide Org)
4. DISCUSSION

The THERE project has been an important step in the path towards building a picture of the social networks and relationships that have been established between LFPs in Tasmania. This evaluation is a collaboration between the UTas and the Heart Foundation (Tasmanian Division). The study provides a picture of “what” is happening in a networking context and to some degree provides a sense of “why” the networking is occurring. However the study does not reveal “how” the networking is occurring other than to suggest that it occurs in a myriad of ways. Whilst the study revealed much about the relationships between the LFPs the context of the conversations within the relationships were beyond the scope of the study.

The formation of collaborative partnerships or networks are considered important for addressing the broad needs of a community (Provan et al, 2005). Social relationships are considered to have ‘value’ and by working together community organisations can grow this value by drawing upon the broad range of resources and expertise provided by other community initiatives in the network and as a result the health and wellbeing of community members will improve (Parsfield et al, 2015; Provan & Brinton, 2001). Despite efforts to build community capacity through networks they are traditionally difficult to establish and even harder to sustain.

The THERE project uses Social Network Analysis (SNA) to illustrate the benefits of a networked, collaborative approach to supporting new and existing LFPs that make-up the local food system across Tasmania. The use of SNA is a relatively new approach to evaluating research projects within public health and specifically community food security. Whilst network analysis can add value to our understanding of the benefits of relationships within a community-based program it can also have its limitations.

The authors believe the value of using SNA for this evaluation is demonstrated through;

- Improved knowledge and understanding of the relationships between the providers of LFPs that contribute to ensuring access to a healthy food supply;
- Better understanding of the connections that will contribute in the long term to ‘systems’ that support making healthy food choices easy choices even for Tasmanians on low incomes;
- Building the capacity of researchers in the application of this analysis process;
- Providing evidence that will inform the development of future community food security strategies;
- Identify new priority areas within food systems that could provide the basis for further research.

The findings draw on interpretations of nine network maps (section 3.2) and the thematic analysis of open-ended responses (section 3.3). Interpretations are based on the aims and objectives described in section 2.1 and highlight a number of emergent themes which illustrate the benefits of a networked, collaborative approach to supporting new and existing LFPs in Tasmania.
How aware were the LFPs of each other?

Results of the social network of data based on the LFPs awareness of each other (figure 3), indicates that state-wide LFPs are key to the network. These key or central LFPs include the DHHS, EWTCoach, HFAT and Secondbite.

The regional LFPs were geographically and functionally focussed on each other. Specifically, regional LFPs such as Geeveston, Deloraine, Huon, Maranoa and Dunalley were more recognised.

This indicates a strong awareness of LFPs both regionally and state-wide creating a solid platform for building and sustaining LFPs into the future.

Different motivations for connecting and interacting

Network analysis identified that LFPs describe their motivation to connect and interact with other LFPs differently. Their motivation will often depend on the purpose or reason for the interaction. These reasons are listed below:

1. **Resource sharing** (Figure 5) - where HFAT, EWTCoach, and Secondbite were the three LFPs most relied upon for resource-sharing. Resources sharing by these ‘central’ LFPs is important for regional LFPs for activities relating to emergency food relief and establishing food supply models such as food social enterprises.

2. **Advisory-capacity** (Figure 6) - where HFAT, DHHS, and UTas (who were considered experts in their field) were most relied upon for advice. What was unexpected was the capacity that existed outside of the traditional organisations and included Waterbridge, Maranoa, Devonport and Kingborough which also appeared to be central LFPs with strong connections to other LFPs. The implication of this finding suggests that regional LFPs can play an important role in supporting other regional LFPs through capacity building.

3. **Funding** (Figure 7) - where DHHS and HFAT were identified as the two most central LFPs responsible for providing funding. It is evident that there is a heavy reliance on traditional funders. Alternative funding from the philanthropic sector could be an opportunity worth investigating in the future. **NB-** NHT data which included funding to establishing food cooperatives in neighbourhood houses was not included.

4. **Capacity-building** (Figure 8) - where HFAT, Waterbridge and Tasmanian Canteens Association (TCanteens) were the three central LFPs most recognised for capacity-building. Of note is the important role that TCanteens plays in capacity-building, providing opportunities for building food skills and knowledge and influencing a cultural shift to healthy eating. Also important to note is the strong connections that Waterbridge, a regional LFPs, has with other regional LFPs. The implication of this finding is that regional LFPs can play an important role in supporting other regional LFPs through capacity building.

5. **Information brokerage** (Figure 9) - where HFAT, Secondbite and EWTCoach were the three most central LFPs relied on for ‘other’ reasons. The last question of the online-survey was an open-ended question which indicated the important role that HFAT played as an information broker, linkage agency and ‘dating service’. The implications
of this finding is that there is a heavy reliance on one organisation, HFAT, for information-brokerage which possibly leaving the network vulnerable.

**Working together as a 'system' using the Healthy Eating Resilience Framework.**

The Healthy Eating Resilience Framework identifies factors impacting healthy eating resilience at three levels (indicate below) including individual, social and environmental. The authors believe that connections between these factors will contribute long term to systems that support making healthy food choices easy choices.

1. **Individual-level**: capacity building in food knowledge and skills which is evident by the central role that DHHS played in supporting regional and state-wide LFPs.

2. **Social-level**: the culture of health eating within a families and communities. This cluster illustrates that there continues to be an increasing need for emergency food relief which is indicated by the central role that Secondbite play in supporting regional LFPs. Also it is evident that the role of Secondbite requires frequent face-to-face connect at least on a weekly basis as indicates by the bold green lines.

3. **Environment-level**: increasing food access through food supply models (such as enterprise models) which is evident by the central role that HFAT and EWTCooach plays in supporting regional LFPs.

These three levels of healthy eating resilience have been demonstrated clearly in figures 4 and 10. Figure 4 indicates that of the thirty-two LFPs which have contact with each other there are clearly three levels (or clusters) of LFPs interacting and working as a system, with DHHS, EWTCooach, Secondbite and HFAT being the most central LFPs and represent each level of healthy eating resilience.

In Figure 10, HFAT, Secondbite, EWTCooach and DHHS were the four key LFPs that had more connections to coordinate activities with other LFPs. There were again three levels of LFPs interacting as a system.

For both awareness and coordinated activities with other LFPs there continues to be a tension between building a culture of healthy eating within families and communities and reliance on emergency food relief.
The strength of the relationships within and between LFPs.

Community relationships can be described different depending on the needs of each community organisation. This evaluation has identified that LFPs have ‘joined forces’ to achieve different outcomes. The strength of relationships varies depending on the depth of the relationship from being simply aware of other LFPs through to in-depth collaboration as indicated in Figure 12. There were a number of “pull” and “push” factors that influenced both the breadth and depth of the relationships. Depending on the need of each LFP it may not be necessary or practical to forge in-depth collaborations and instead contact or coordination maybe all that is required.

![Figure 12 Relationship continuum](image)

Figure 11 indicates that there was clearly a strong connection between the more central state-wide LFPs and regional LFPs. It also suggests that whilst regional LFPs may have been more geographically isolated their connectivity and level of collaboration with other regional LFPs and state-wide LFPs was strong, indicating a resilient decentralised network.

The benefits and challenges of relationships and networking

A number of themes emerged from the open-ended question asked in the online-survey illustrate the benefits and challenges of a networked, collaborative approach to supporting new and existing LFPs in Tasmania.

- **A collaborative way of working** - LFPs described the benefits they had experienced from working in a way that created strong relationships with other LFPs include both regional and state-wide

- **Mindset and Cultural shift** - LFPs described an increased appreciation and understanding for the need to address food access challenges in their communities as well as realising that they were not alone and part of a larger community with similar motivations.

- **The value of trust and sharing** - LFPs described the value that trust and sharing provided to their organisations by building community capital.

- **Increasing capacity** - LFPs described an increased capacity to meet their goals through the process of building relationships and networking. Networking with similar LFPs provided opportunities for sharing resources and ultimate saving time. Working together with other LFPs was considered important for increasing the capacity of each LFP and keeping each of the LFPs ‘afloat’, with time being the biggest hurdle to achieving this.
Motivation and the value of networking – Motivation, inspiration and confidence were key outcomes of the networking process describe by some LFPs.

Challenges of changing culture and mind-set around funding - Whilst relationships and networks provide many benefits to LFPs there was need for a cultural and mind-set change within LFPs around how an environment in which funding is limited or time constrained can be used to develop creative approaches to help ensure the longevity of LFPs.
5. CONCLUSION

The aim of the THERE project was to attempt to explain the types of networks and relationships that have resulted from the funding of regional and state-wide LFPs in Tasmania. It has focussed on determining the strength of the relationships between and within LFPs, from awareness through to in-depth collaboration, and identifying whether LFPs work together as a 'system' using the Healthy Eating Resilience Framework.

The intention of the authors is that the knowledge acquired through the THERE project will be of benefit not only to understand how the thirty-two LFPs work together but will also benefit individual LFPs. The nine network maps will assist LFP managers and coordinators to see exactly where their organisation fits within the structure of the network, based not just on their own impressions but on the experiences of others in the network as a whole or with certain key organisations that may be critical to their own effectiveness.

The information created through the THERE project will only have practical value to LFPs if it can be effectively presented, discussed, accepted and acted on by LFP managers and coordinators. Findings from this report can help identify where an LFP is situated within the network and the extent of its current influence, but the value of enhancing that position may not be evident.

It is hoped that this will also help program managers to see how they can play a role in strengthening the resilience and sustainability of their programs and those of other LFPs – indeed the whole network – by being more proactive in their connectivity with each other.

It is important to consider that regional LFPs already have many partnerships or networks in place or are working to establish them through other programs. Their ability to dedicate time to further developing networks relevant to healthy eating resilience may be a challenge without additional funding to support such an activity. For example, network members in regional LFPs may believe they already know all of the players and what relationships they share. LFPs may feel there is little to be gained by systematic process of network-data gathering, analysis and interpretation. However, a clear recognition of confirmed and unconfirmed links or links to organizations outside the central network of participants is not information that is commonly known and is likely to generate discussion of network issues that would not have occurred otherwise.

More and stronger links may be beneficial, but only up to a point. The management and coordination of network activities becomes increasingly complex as the number of links increases. Maintaining many relationships may be time consuming and costly for individual network organizations. It might be that some organisations should remain peripheral as the services they provide is highly specialised. It is also worth noting that a networking role is often undertaken in an informal context and in many cases it is not a formal or official function as prescribed within the position duties of the LFP manager.
Overall, despite some shortcomings, SNA can be a valuable tool for helping LFPs to understand network structure and processes. Simply using network data to justify increased involvement among all network LFPs is not an effective strategy. Of greater value, in terms of achieving project sustainability is the nature and context of the conversations within those relationships.

Network analysis has highlighted that an LFP’s position within the network illustrates their role within the network as a provider of advice, funding, capacity building, sharing resources, collaborative support and/or information brokerage. There is clearly a strong connection between the more central state-wide LFPs and regional LFPs. It also suggests that whilst regional LFPs may have been more geographically isolated their connectivity and level of collaboration with other regional LFPs and state-wide LFPs is strong indicating a resilient decentralised network.

However, what can’t be determined is whether this position has pre-determined their resilience (or not) and their likelihood of sustaining themselves through changes in funding. What is required is the need for a cultural and mind-set change within LFPs around how limited funding is used to ensure the longevity of LFPs.
6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The use of network analysis is a relatively new approach to evaluating community projects within public health and specifically community food security. SNA has been used as a way of thinking about social systems that focus attention on the relationships that exist among LFPs making-up part of the food system in Tasmania.

Overall SNA has been a valuable tool for helping to understand network structure and processes among LFPs across Tasmania and a valuable analysis tool complementing more traditional qualitative evaluation methods. For the authors, network analysis is recognised as a valuable evaluation tool and with most evaluation has created more questions than answers and as a result the research team hope to be able to address some of these questions in the future.

Further directions include:

- **Support documentation for SNA** - Collection of additional data to further develop an understanding of the nature of networks which would help to expose other layers of interaction such as i) attendance lists for meetings and workshops; ii) Meeting minutes and iii) Email traffic.

- **Survey design** - Asking online-survey questions differently to further explore qualitative aspects of interactions and to collect data in a more usable format.

- **Time of the year the data was collected** may have influenced the strength of the networks. In this instance data was collected in April-May 2016 during school holidays.

- **Data should be collected at multiple points in time.** Although single-survey, cross-sectional data can be extremely useful for determining what the networks looks like at one point in time as was used in this evaluation, longitudinal data provides the opportunity to examine network evolution. Data collected every two years or earlier allows network participants to see whether and how relationships have changed, enabling them to track progress in building and sustaining the network.

- **Additional questions to explore in future research**
  - How are regional and state-wide LFPs are interrelated?
  - How important is the frequency of contact between LFPs?
  - When a network of LFPs is densely connected, does this place the network at a greater risk of failure or success?
  - How important were pre-existing relationships?
  - What will these networks look like in 2 years? It is assumed that the sustainability of networks will be dependants on what the networks look like in 2 years’ time.
  - Why do certain organisations appear to be more networked than others?
  - To what extent do regional LFPs rely on LFPs with stronger connections for their sustainability and in the absence of LFPs with stronger connections would we see the creation of more links between the less connected LFPs?
- How formal are the connections between LFPs? Are they more or less formal and what does that tell us?
- How do LFPs communicate (i.e. social media, face-to-face, phone) and what does this tells us about the relationships?
- To what extent were the connections between LFPs dependent on the personality characteristics of the volunteers and workers and were they organisational specific?
- To what extent was there evidence of a correlation between leadership and the number and frequency of connections?
- To what extent does the evidence tell us about the association between frequency of connections and quality of the interactions?

- Developing a process to guide communities in using the results of network analysis to build partnerships. Provan et al (2005) have developed a series of questions to guide this process. Table 5 provides a series of questions modified to be relevant to this research.

**Table 4 Questions to guide community based network analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Which LFPs are most central in the network, and are these LFPs essential for addressing the three levels of health eating resilience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Which central network members have links to important resources through their involvement with other organizations outside the network?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are critical network ties based solely on personal relationships, or have they become formalized so that they are sustainable over time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are some network relationships strong while others are weak? Should those relationships that are weak be maintained as is, or should they be strengthened?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Which subgroups of network organizations have strong working relationships? How can these groups be mobilized to meet the broader objectives of the network?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Based on comparative network data over time, has reasonable progress been made in building community capacity through developing stronger network ties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What is the level of trust among LFPs working together, and has it increased or decreased over time? If it has declined, how can it be strengthened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What have been the benefits and drawbacks of collaboration, have these changed over time, and how can benefits be enhanced and drawbacks minimized?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. REFERENCES


PARTNER. 2015. Program to analyse, record and track networks to enhance relationships http://partnertool.net/tools-and-training/partner-tool/


8. APPENDICES

8.1 Ethics Approval

This project received ethics email approval from the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Ref: H0015618) on the 17th March, 2016 and received the formal letter on 18th April 2016.

18 April 2016
Ms Sandra Murray
School of Health Sciences University of Tasmania

Dear Ms Murray

Re: MINIMAL RISK ETHICS APPLICATION APPROVAL

Ethics Ref: H0015618 - Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Evaluation Project

We are pleased to advise that acting on a mandate from the Tasmania Social Sciences HREC, the Chair of the committee considered and approved the above project on 17 March 2016.

This approval constitutes ethical clearance by the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. The decision and authority to commence the associated research may be dependent on factors beyond the remit of the ethics review process. For example, your research may need ethics clearance from other organisations or review by your research governance coordinator or Head of Department. It is your responsibility to find out if the approval of other bodies or authorities is required. It is recommended that the proposed research should not commence until you have satisfied these requirements.

Please note that this approval is for four years and is conditional upon receipt of an annual Progress Report. Ethics approval for this project will lapse if a Progress Report is not submitted.

The following conditions apply to this approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval.

1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval, to ensure the project is conducted as approved by the Ethics Committee, and to notify the Committee if any investigators are added to, or cease involvement with, the project.

2. Complaints: If any complaints are received or ethical issues arise during the course of the project, investigators should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 03 6226 7479 or human.ethics@utas.edu.au.
3. **Incidents or adverse effects**: Investigators should notify the Ethics Committee immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

4. **Amendments to Project**: Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval is obtained from the Ethics Committee. Please submit an Amendment Form (available on our website) to notify the Ethics Committee of the proposed modifications.

5. **Annual Report**: Continued approval for this project is dependent on the submission of a Progress Report by the anniversary date of your approval. You will be sent a courtesy reminder closer to this date. **Failure to submit a Progress Report will mean that ethics approval for this project will lapse.**

6. **Final Report**: A Final Report and a copy of any published material arising from the project, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of the project.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Shaw  
Executive Officer  
Tasmania Social Sciences HREC
8.2 Online survey - Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

STUDY TITLE: Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Mapping Project

Invitation
This study is being conducted by Ms Sandra Murray (School of Health Science, UTas), Ms Leah Galvin (Heart Foundation) and Mr Stuart Auckland (Centre of Rural Health).

1. What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this project is to map the nature and types of social-networks and relationships between community food projects that are being delivered across Tasmania at present.
We believe there is merit in exploring the relationships between the various program/projects. These relationships may lead to 'systems' that support making healthy food choices easy choices even for Tasmanians on low incomes. By taking part you will help us better understand the role of these relationships in community food security.

2. Why have I been invited to participate in this study?
You are invited to participate in this study because you have been identified as someone who is the project coordinator or manager who has initiated a community food program or project.

3. What do I need to do?
You are invited to complete an online survey which will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.
If you are unable or do not wish to complete the survey on-line, you may request a hard copy by contacting a member of the research team using the contact details contained in section 7 of this information sheet. A copy of the survey, consent form and replied paid envelope will be email or posted to you.

Anonymity and confidentiality: Participation in this study is voluntary and any data gathered during this evaluation will be kept confidential and no personal details will be identified in any stage of the survey.

4. How is my information kept?
The online survey will be managed by Lime Survey (similar to Survey Monkey) which is a web server-based software program. The data will be removed from Lime Survey at the completion of data collection period. Online data will be deleted from the secure servers of the School of Health Science after five years from submission.
Please note that the completion and submission of the survey indicates that you agree to take part in the study.

You will be asked to provide details down to the level of ‘program/organisation’ but will not be asked to provide personal details in the survey. Upon request information provided down to the level of ‘program/organisation’ will be withdrawn. All information will be kept confidential.

5. Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

The benefits of your participation in this survey may not be obvious. However, this evaluation will offer you the opportunity to provide feedback on the social-networks and relationships you have developed since your project/program started. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that strong social-networks and relationships will lead ‘systems’ that support making healthy food choices easy choices even for Tasmanians on low incomes. Your feedback will be valuable in developing a case for future funding on community food initiatives.

6. Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study.

7. Do I need to provide consent to allow my responses to be used in this survey?

Your completion and submission of the online survey will assume informed consent.

8. What if I have questions about this research?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study or wish to obtain a hard copy of the online survey please feel free to contact either Ms Sandra Murray (03) 6324 5493, Ms Leah Galvin (03) 6220 2210 and Stuart Auckland (03) 6324 4035. The research team members would be happy to discuss any aspects of the research with you.

A report containing outcomes and recommendations will be presented to the Heart Foundation, the funding organisation. This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote Ethics Ref Number H0015618.

Thank you for your time in reading this information sheet.

This information sheet is for you to keep.
8.3 Online Survey – Consent

Signed consent by participants was not required prior to completion of survey. Participants were informed within the survey preamble and within the information sheet that completion and submission of the survey indicated that each participant agreed to take part in the survey. Below is an extract from the content form.

4. How is my information kept?

Please note that the completion and submission of the survey indicates that you agree to take part in the study.

You will be asked to provide details down to the level of ‘program/organisation’ but will not be asked to provide personal details in the survey. Upon request information provided down to the level of ‘program/organisation’ will be withdrawn. All information will be kept confidential.

7. Do I need to provide consent to allow my responses to be used in this survey?

Your completion and submission of the online survey will assume informed consent.
8.4 Online Survey - Email invitation to participants

Email introduction to send to potential online survey participants

As someone who is involved in a state-wide or community food program/project you have been chosen to take part in this online survey.

This survey aims to map the nature and types of social-networks and relationships between community food projects that are being delivered across Tasmania at present.

We believe there is merit in exploring the relationships between the various programs/projects. These relationships may lead to ‘systems’ that support making healthy food choices easy choices even for Tasmanians on low incomes. By taking part you will help us better understand the role of these relationships in community food security.

The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. All responses are confidential and no personal details will be identified in any stage of the survey.

It would be appreciated if you could complete and submit the survey by Friday 20th April 2016.

To commence the survey please click on the following link https://surveys.utas.edu.au/index.php/446786?newtest=Y

Attached is an information sheet which contains more information about the survey and contact details of project team member should you have any difficulty in completing/ filling out the survey

Thanks,

The Tasmanian Healthy Eating Resilience Team
8.5 Online survey - tool

Tasmanian Healthy Eating Systems Resilience Evaluation Project

This survey aims to map the nature and types of social-networks and relationships between community food projects that are being delivered across Tasmania at present. We believe there is merit in exploring the relationships between the various programs/projects. These relationships may lead to ‘systems’ that support making healthy food choices easy choices even for Tasmanians on low incomes. By taking part you will help us better understand the nature of these relationships in community food security. Your participation will help to show that strong social-networks and relationships can drive change in communities.

1. What is the name of your project, program or organisation?

2. Please select all of the project, programs or organisations that you are aware of from the list below.

INSERT LIST OF ORGANISATIONS (tick box or drop-down box)
- A Peace of The Garden Vegetable Box Scheme (Northern Suburbs)
- Brighton Community Blitz
- Bucaan Community Centre (Chigwell) Food Coop
- Channel Living Social Enterprise
- Delicious Dorset Project
- Deloraine Neighbourhood House Local Food Taskforce
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Devonport Food Connect
- Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House Food Coop
- Eat Well Tasmania (Kids Coalition and/or Veg It Up)
- Eat Well Tasmania (Affordable Access, Enterprise Coaching Project)
- Eating with Friends
- Family Food Patch program
- Feeding the Future program
- Geeveston Community Centre Food Coop
- Goodwood Community Centre Food Coop
- Health Food Access Tasmania (HFAT) - Heart Foundation
- Hilltop Fresh Produce Project
- Hobart City Farm
- Huon Producers Network
- Kingborough Food Chain Project
- Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT)
- Maranoo Heights Community Centre (Kingston) Food Coop
- Mersey-Level Food Hub Project (Cradle Coast)
- MONA’s 24 Carrot Garden project (cluster 1)
- MONA’s 24 Carrot Garden project (cluster 2)
- Move Well Eat Well – Early years
- Move Well Eat Well – primary schools
3. With which of the following projects, program or organisations do you have contact of any sought? 
This may be just to seek advice and information from them such as asking them to help you advertise something etc. (survey will display organisations selected for Q2)

**INSERT LIST OF ORGANISATIONS**

☐ Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania Food Cooperatives
☐ Produce to the People Tasmania
☐ Ravenswood Growing Together
☐ SecondBite Tasmania
☐ Source Community Wholefoods Coop
☐ Sprout Tasmania e-market
☐ Tasmanian School Canteens Association
☐ Tassievore Eat Local Challenge
☐ University of Tasmania - School of Health Sciences or Centre of Rural Health
☐ Waterbridge Food Co-op
☐ West Moonah Neighbourhood House Food Coop

4. How often do you currently have contact with the following projects, programs or organisations? This contact could be emails, phone calls, meetings with staff etc. (survey will only display organisations selected for Q3)

**INSERT LIST OF ORGANISATIONS**

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<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
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5. How would you describe the nature and type of relationships you have with the following project, programs or organisations? (survey will only display organisations selected for Q3)

**INSERT LIST OF ORGANISATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory</th>
<th>Capacity Building</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Resource Sharing</th>
<th>Other</th>
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6. With which of the following projects, programs or organisations do you have a connection to coordinate activities? Coordination means sharing information and resources to achieve a common purpose. It means not creating something new. Examples include talking to each other about the scheduling of events, opening hours, gaps in service, sharing community resources like venues and community buses etc. (survey will only display organisations selected for Q3)

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etc for rest of organisations selected for Q3……

7. With which of the following projects, programs or organisations do you have a more in-depth collaboration? Collaboration means putting in time and resources to actively work together to create something new in support of a common purpose. For example developing plans or projects, working together to jointly plan events, submitting joint funding applications together or running training and development activities. (survey will only display organisations selected for Q3)

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<th>Weekly</th>
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etc for rest of organisations selected for Q3……

8. What effects/influences have your relationships, with other projects, programs or organisations, had on your way of working?

Thank you for completing this survey. Your time and contribution is greatly appreciated.
### 8.6 Local Food Project names and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Local food programs</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Peace of The Garden Vegetable Box Scheme (Northern Suburbs)</td>
<td>Apeace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brighton Community Blitz</td>
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<td>Deloraine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)</td>
<td>DHHS</td>
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<td>Devonport Food Connect</td>
<td>Devonport</td>
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<td>Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House Food Coop</td>
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<td>Eat Well Tasmania (Kids Coalition and/or Veg It Up)</td>
<td>EWTKids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eat Well Tasmania (Affordable Access, Enterprise Coaching Project)</td>
<td>EWTCoach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating with Friends</td>
<td>EWFriends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Food Patch program</td>
<td>FFPatch</td>
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<td>Feeding the Future program</td>
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<td>Geeveston Community Centre Food Coop</td>
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<td>Move Well Eat Well – Early years</td>
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