

Civil society advocacy towards sustainable food systems policy in Victoria

Jennifer Sheridan
Student 243004

Office for Environmental Programs
Faculty of Science

Supervised by Dr Rachel Carey
Food Policy Research Group
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences

Master of Environment
Environmental Research Project 50 points ENST70001

The University of Melbourne

December 2016

Table of Contents

List of tables	4
Glossary of acronyms	5
Abstract	6
Declaration	7
Acknowledgements	8
Introduction	9
1. Literature review	11
1.1 Sustainable food systems	11
1.1.1 The problems with our current food system	11
1.1.2 Shifting to a sustainable food system	14
1.2 Achieving sustainable food systems policy	16
1.2.1 The significance of the policy environment.....	17
1.2.2 The role of civil society in advocating for sustainable food systems	18
1.2.3 The role of alliance-building in advocacy.....	20
1.3 Sustainable food systems advocacy in Australia	23
1.4 Summary of literature review	26
2. Methodology	28
2.1 Research questions	28
2.2 Data collection	29
2.3 Theoretical approach	31
2.4 Data analysis	32
2.4.1 Analysis using the Roles in Transition framework	32
2.4.2 Analysis using the Advocacy Coalition Framework.....	34
3. Findings	37
3.1 Advocacy strategies being used	37
3.1.1 Grassroots innovation	38
3.1.2 Regime reform.....	39
3.1.3 Norm-challenging – aimed at citizens/consumers	40
3.1.4 Norm-challenging – aimed at policy-makers	42
3.2 Factors shaping choice of strategy	47
3.2.1 Policy context	47
3.2.2 Resource scarcity	49
3.3 Coalition-building	53
3.3.1 Presence of coalitions.....	53
3.3.2 Coalition stability	54
3.3.3 The lack of consensus amongst coalition members	55
3.3.4 Characterisation and purpose of coalitions.....	57
3.4 Characterising civil society advocacy towards sustainable food systems in Victoria 60	
4. Discussion	62
4.1 Factors limiting food policy advocacy	62
4.2 How a lack of resources shapes advocacy strategies	66
4.3 Coalition building is limited	67
4.4 Impact of advocacy strategies on progress towards sustainable food system policy 69	

4.5	Study limitations	70
5.	Conclusion	72
6.	References.....	74
7.	Appendices	89
	Appendix 1 - Letter of ethics approval	89
	Appendix 2 – Interview topic guide	90
	Appendix 3 – Ethics application form.....	93

List of tables

Table 1: Durrant's Roles in Transition Framework (2014a) p. 32

Table 2: Types of policy beliefs in the Advocacy Coalition Framework. p.35

Adapted from Sabatier's (1998) 'Table 3 - Revised structure of belief systems of policy elites'

Table 3: Summary version of Durrant's Roles in Transition Framework p. 37 (2014a)

Glossary of acronyms

ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
AFSA	Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPES-Food	International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
PMSEIC	Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council
RIT	Roles in Transition
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WFP	World Food Programme


Abstract

The current food system is widely regarded as unsustainable, in terms of its impact on the environment and population health, and in the inequality of current access to food. A policy shift is needed to drive a transformation towards sustainable food systems. Civil society groups are key actors in driving policy change, but little is known about the strategies that these groups are using in Australia to drive change. This research investigated how civil society stakeholders in Victoria advocate for sustainable food systems, including the role of alliances in their work and how the policy context shapes their work. The research used semi-structured interviews with civil society stakeholders, supplemented with documentary analysis, to explore the strategies used to advocate for sustainable food systems in Victoria. The research found that policy advocacy was not a current priority for many stakeholders, due to past disappointments with attempts to influence policy, and due to a lack of resources. Those stakeholders undertaking policy advocacy generally reacted to policy threats, rather than undertaking proactive and strategic policy actions. Many stakeholders focused on building an alternative food system rather than policy advocacy. The research concluded that while these actions contribute to a more sustainable food system, there is currently a lack of focus on proactive and strategic advocacy for policy change.

Declaration

The work in this project was undertaken in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Melbourne for the degree of Master of Environment.

The views expressed are those of the author and might not reflect the views of the University of Melbourne, Office for Environmental Programs.



Jennifer Bronwyn Sheridan
Student 243004

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Rachel Carey, not only for her guidance and encouragement during this research, which has been invaluable, but also for her mentorship and support of my development as a researcher over the last three years of working together.

I am incredibly grateful for the generous participation of those individuals interviewed for the project, without whom this research could not have happened.

I would like to thank my wonderful colleagues and friends for their support this year, and my partner Matt for his support, patience, and for making sure I spent time in wilderness to rejuvenate.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Liz and John, for their unwavering love, support, and belief in me, which shows in innumerable ways in my life. I would like to particularly thank my mother for providing much appreciated feedback and support during the writing process.

Introduction

There is increasing recognition that the world's food system is unsustainable in a number of ways, including its impact on the environment (Reisinger et al. 2014), on health (Lim et al. 2012), and the social inequity of access to food and of farmer livelihoods (De Schutter 2010). Modern industrialised agriculture, the commodification of food (Clapp 2016), and concentration in agricultural and food industry corporations (Nestle 2002) have all contributed to the system's unsustainability.

Government policy is needed to drive the shift towards more sustainable food systems (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009; Lang & Barling 2012). Food policy is developed through negotiation between business, government, and civil society; currently, government policies are heavily influenced by the interests of business, and are failing to lead to sustainable food systems (Lang & Heasman 2004). Civil society needs to play a stronger role in advocating for sustainable food systems policy (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009).

Civil society advocacy for sustainable food systems is a relatively new development, which is yet to make serious inroads in creating policy change (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009). In Australia, civil society was the key voice pushing for the inclusion of sustainability in the National Food Plan, although ultimately this was unsuccessful (Caraher et al. 2013). Civil society needs to play a more effective role in driving policy change for sustainable food systems. To inform this, there needs to be greater understanding of the types of advocacy that civil society groups undertake, and the factors that shape advocacy strategies for sustainable food systems in Victoria.

This research explores the question of how civil society stakeholders in Victoria advocate for sustainable food systems. It looks at what strategies they use, and the factors that shape those strategies. Three factors in particular are considered: the ways in which the policy environment shapes advocacy strategy, the impact of resource availability on strategy, and the role of alliances for strategic advocacy. It investigates the choices that civil society stakeholders make about advocacy, but

equally why they are making those choices, and what that means for advancement of sustainable food systems policy in Victoria. Little research has been carried out on this topic in Australia, so this project is an exploratory look at this advocacy sphere. More research in this vein has been carried out in the UK and North America (Durrant 2014a; Koç et al. 2008), and those international findings have shaped the investigation of this topic in Victoria, and enabled comparison with international experiences.

The first chapter reviews the relevant literature on sustainable food systems, the policy shift required to improve food system sustainability, and the place for civil society advocacy in driving that change. The second chapter details the research framework and methodology, and the third chapter presents the findings of this research. The fourth chapter is a discussion of those findings, particularly in relation to the potential role of civil society advocacy in driving sustainable food system policy, and the relatively narrow range of advocacy strategies used by Victorian civil society groups in comparison to similar groups internationally. Finally, the last chapter draws conclusions on the conditions that are required to create more effective civil society advocacy in Victoria to drive sustainable food systems policy change.

1. Literature review

This literature review first outlines the ways in which the current food system is unsustainable environmentally, socially and in terms of public health. It then looks at what is required to shift towards a more sustainable food system, and in particular the role of policy change in that shift. Following that, the barriers to those changes of policy, and the role of civil society in advocating for policy change are examined. Types of food system advocacy are discussed, and the barriers and enablers to effective civil society advocacy towards sustainable food systems are considered. Finally, civil society's actions to-date in advocating for sustainable food systems in Australia and Victoria are summarised.

1.1 Sustainable food systems

1.1.1 The problems with our current food system

“A food system gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes”

– FAO High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE 2014)

There is increasing recognition that the world's food system is unsustainable in a number of key ways: its impact on the environment (UNEP 2016; Reisinger et al. 2014), its effects on public health (Kivimäki, Vineis & Brunner 2015; Lim et al. 2012), its detrimental economic impact on many farmers (Richards et al. 2015), and the social inequity of access (FAO, IFAD & WFP 2015; De Schutter 2010). The modern era of industrialised, 'productionist' agriculture, which began following World War II, is held accountable for many of these impacts (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009).

Agriculture is a major contributor to climate change, and is responsible for generating one-fifth of the world's greenhouse gas emissions through land conversion to farmland and the production of crops and livestock (FAO 2016a). Climate change is likely to negatively impact agriculture through reducing yields, warming weather, increased CO₂ affecting crops and livestock, and extreme weather events (Porter et al.

2014; Garnaut 2011). Industrialisation of the food system has led to increasing homogenisation of food and crops, leading to agricultural monocultures, which negatively impact biodiversity (McIntyre 2014). The rise of monocultural farming has been linked to the increased use of herbicides, pesticides, and fossil fuel based fertilisers, all of which have facilitated the development of this farming style, but have also contributed to declining insect populations, damage to waterways, and numerous other poor environmental outcomes (McIntyre 2014).

Nutrition is now one of the greatest contributors to the global non-communicable disease burden (Kivimäki, Vineis & Brunner 2015; Lim et al. 2012). Around one billion people in the world are hungry, 2.5 billion are malnourished (De Schutter & Cordes 2011), and over 1.9 billion are overweight (World Health Organization 2016). Overweight and obesity now cause more deaths worldwide than malnutrition (World Health Organization 2009). This has been partially attributed to the role of multinational food corporations in creating a profit- rather than health-driven food system (Stuckler and Nestle 2012; Patel 2007). The impacts of poor nutrition are not distributed evenly across populations. Those experiencing food insecurity (limited or uncertain ability to buy nutritious, culturally appropriate food) are more likely to experience both nutritional deficiencies and obesity (Burns 2004). Access to food is inequitable and tackling this requires addressing underlying social determinants (structural causes) (Friel 2009; Swinburn, Egger & Raza 1999).

The agrifood sector has become increasingly concentrated (Clapp 2016); mergers and vertical integration of farming, agricultural supplies, and food companies have accelerated since the 1980s to reach the current state of oligopoly (Heffernan, Hendrickson & Gronski 1999). The lack of competition enables corporations to push prices and trading conditions onto farmers and allows for less autonomy in their decision-making (Heffernan, Hendrickson & Gronski 1999). Farmers are becoming price-takers rather than setters, which constrains their choices, including their ability to shift to more environmentally sustainable methods of production (Hendrickson & James 2005). Multinational ownership and concentration have contributed to food becoming financialised to the point of being thought of as a commodity, rather than a

source of sustenance (Clapp 2016). Multinational companies have also shaped a food system focused on 'cheap' food – a term that belies the externalised health and environmental costs, many of which are borne by nation states (Carolan 2011; Caraher & Coveney 2004).

Many of the issues undermining the sustainability of the global food system also affect Australia's food system. Climate change could reduce agricultural production (Reisinger et al. 2014), to the extent that Australia's future food security could be compromised (Lawrence, Richards & Lyons 2013), and food availability is likely to become more volatile due to fluctuating production and prices (Hughes & Steffen 2015). Agricultural practices are simultaneously negatively impacting ongoing land capability for farming (PMSEIC 2010), and degrading natural environments (Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability 2013). Australia has little arable land (World Bank 2013), relatively infertile soils (Campbell 2008), and is heavily reliant on at-risk agricultural imports, such as phosphorous (Cordell, Drangert & White 2009). Food production in Australia is likely to be increasingly affected by decreasing availability of arable land, fertilisers, and water (Hughes & Steffen 2015; Rochford 2013; McDonald 2013; Campbell 2008; Cordell, Drangert & White 2009). Australia is commonly perceived as food secure (PMSEIC 2010), in part due to its role as a major agricultural exporter (Ingram, Ericksen & Liverman 2010). However, its food security is undermined by the threat of climate change, social inequity in food access and the failure to plan for food both in terms of access and land for agriculture, and due to social inequity (Farmar-Bowers, Higgins & Millar 2013).

As is identified internationally, food security, food access and diet-related health burdens are issues raised in Australia. Many Australians are experiencing food insecurity (NHMRC 2011). While the national rate of food insecurity in Australia is relatively low compared to other countries – around 4% (ABS 2015) – this masks high rates of food insecurity in some sections of the population. Vulnerable population groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, people who are unemployed, and asylum seekers, all experience considerably higher rates of food insecurity (Lindberg et al. 2015). It is increasingly recognised that food insecurity is

related to low household income (Lindberg et al. 2015). Food security is not just dependent on sufficient food being available, and food insecurity in Australia often manifests as nutrition insecurity rather than a lack of sufficient food (Friel 2010). The FAO defines food security as being reliant on four pillars: availability, access, utilisation, and stability (FAO 2009). For example, City of Melbourne residents were more likely to experience food insecurity when they lived in areas without easy access to grocery stores, or if the food available was culturally unfamiliar to them (City of Melbourne 2011). In terms of health, around 60% of Australians are overweight or obese, and diet related disease is likely to become Australia's heaviest disease burden by 2023 (National Health and Medical Research Council 2013).

There are additional concerns in Australia about the supermarket duopoly's role in creating untenable conditions for farmers (Richards et al. 2015). Food security and food sovereignty are seen as two key concerns for Australia's food system in coming years (Farmar-Bowers, Higgins & Millar 2013). The concern for food security is whether all Australians will be able to afford a healthy diet, and for food sovereignty it is whether Australians will have control of the supply and production of their food in terms of the conditions under which it is produced, and how it impacts the environment (Farmar-Bowers, Higgins & Millar 2013).

1.1.2 Shifting to a sustainable food system

There is increasing consensus in the literature about the need for a fundamental shift to a more sustainable food system (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems 2015; Nellesmann et al. 2009; Marsden & Morley 2014; Blay-Palmer 2010). A sustainable food system is commonly described as one which is environmentally sustainable, healthy, and fair both in terms of equitable access to food and farmer livelihood (Lang & Heasman 2004; Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009; Durrant 2014a; Rose 2015). The FAO (2016b) defines a sustainable food system as "a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised".

Garnett (2014) identifies three dominant discourses on approaches to achieving a more sustainable food system: efficiency, demand restraint, and food system transformation. Efficiency stresses the benefits of new technologies (including gene technologies) and processes in food production and processing (Godfray et al. 2010), and it is the dominant paradigm used by government, farming bodies, and food processing and retail industry groups (Garnett 2014). It often champions sustainable intensification through technological advances (Foresight 2011). Locally, the Victorian Department of Agriculture's AgriBio research centre typifies this type of response, with a focus on genomic research, molecular diagnostics and breeding (AgriBio 2016). The demand restraint paradigm focuses on the role of consumers in reducing their consumption of certain products and lessening their wastage (Garnett 2014). Examples include campaigns to cut meat from the diet for one day a week to reduce carbon emissions (Meat Free Mondays 2016), or for reducing household food waste to lower environmental impacts (Love Food Hate Waste 2016). Finally, the transformation paradigm "considers both production and consumption in terms of the relationships among actors in the food system, interpreting the problem as one of inequality or imbalance" (Garnett 2014, p. 13), and proposes that a socio-economic paradigm shift is needed to create the necessary food system change.

The literature points to the need for government leadership and policy action in driving a shift to a more sustainable food system (Garnett et al. 2015; Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009; MacRae 2011; Mendes 2006). Lang, Barling and Caraher (2009) propose that the current unsustainable system is the result of allowing corporations to fill the void created by a lack of government policy, and emphasise the need for government policy to counter that. They also emphasise the need for integrated food policy that connects policy portfolios such as agriculture, health, environment, and other social policies (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009; Barling, Lang & Caraher 2002). Government policy holds many of the levers for food system change through its control of food and agriculture regulation, and through government departments of health, agriculture, and social welfare (Koç et al. 2008). Food policy which recognises the interconnectedness of these elements is the best way to minimise food's harmful

impacts, and to shift towards a food system which achieves positive outcomes (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009; Barling & Lang 2002).

Lang, Barling and Caraher (2009) also highlight that food policies are not made by governments alone. Food policies are created by “diverse actors and institutions, at local, national, regional and international levels”, including industry, civil society and consumers (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009, p. 24). Corporations play a significant role in food system governance, and generally try to maintain that role through voluntary regulations and corporate social responsibility measures (Devin & Richards 2016). However, these efforts are not necessarily effective at creating sustainable food systems, instead they tend towards maintenance of the status quo and brand perception management (Devin & Richards 2016).

Many governments have attempted to develop food policies, particularly following the International Conference on Nutrition in 1992 (FAO 1992). Rather than create policy, some governments responded by creating guidelines, which are less binding and put the onus on individual consumer choice (Alden 2012). There is increasing recognition that guidelines targeting a specific aspect of the food system – for example nutrition – may not be sufficient, and fail to account for systemic influences on health, such as global trade (Caraher & Coveney 2004). Food policy which instead addresses upstream determinants of food supply may be more successful (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems 2015; Caraher & Coveney 2004). Attempts to push for sustainable food system policy have at times been watered down by agrifood industry pressure (see Section 1.3). Such shifting is not uncommon and Lang, Barling and Caraher (2009, p. 24) propose that “the best way to understand food policy is as contested terrain, where actions and implications are tussled among interest groups and social forces from the state, supply chain and civil society”.

1.2 Achieving sustainable food systems policy

This section considers the factors which facilitate and hinder a shift to sustainable food systems policy, drawing on policy literature as well as food systems literature. It looks

at the influence of the policy environment, the role of civil society advocacy, the place of alliance-building, and the impact of insufficient resources.

1.2.1 The significance of the policy environment

The importance of policy systems, policy cycles, and policy windows in creating the conditions for food policy change is recognised in both international and local literature (Carey et al. 2016; Alden 2012). Policy creation responds to changing social contexts (Heywood & Lund-Adams 1991), is continually evolving, and is influenced by a broad range of actors (Considine 1994). Lang and Heasman (2004) propose that food policy-making is the outcome of negotiations between government, business, and civil society. Formation of public policy can be understood through 'policy cycles' (Lerner & Lasswell 1951) in which the need for policy becomes apparent (agenda-setting), policies are developed, implemented, evaluated, and then the cycle recommences. In a modern Australian context further steps include policy analysis and consultation (Althaus, Bridgman & Davis 2013). This cycle occurs for numerous policy solutions at any one time. Kingdon (1995) proposes that for a policy 'window' to open, policy 'streams' must align. This occurs when "a problem is recognized, a solution is developed and available in the policy community, a political change makes it the right time for policy change, and potential constraints are not severe" (Kingdon 1995, p.165). The short-term nature of those windows means that when they open the bulk of advocacy groundwork needs to have already been done; it is too late at that point to be introducing new policy into the policy system (Kingdon 1995).

Cairney (2016) cautions against a naïve belief that policy is informed by the best evidence, instead emphasising that policy-makers outsource the decision on what evidence to trust and use, not only to advisors, but also to groups (including civil society groups) that they trust. A study of food policy implementation in four local government areas in Australia found that the more successful examples were those in which health professionals had played a role in agenda setting and advising policy-makers (as opposed to those cases where policy was driven internally) (Yeatman 2003). Policy-makers' reliance on others to filter evidence for policies, the ongoing nature of policy formulation, and the brief policy windows that open up all point

towards a need for sustainable food systems to be consistently championed in the policy system if change is going to occur. It is this gap that civil society can step into, and which researchers argue they need to, as detailed in the next section.

1.2.2 The role of civil society in advocating for sustainable food systems

Following a period of dominance in food policy by business and government, civil society began to play a more important role in food policy advocacy and policy negotiations in the latter half of the twentieth century. Often these were interventions around a specific issue such as genetically modified food. As yet few overarching bodies have emerged in the way they have done for the environment movement more generally (Lang & Heasman 2004). Civil society's role in food policy-making includes holding governments accountable, acting as a voice for the people, and at times innovating and attempting new ways of doing something (Bereuter, Glickman & Reardon 2016). Civil society advocacy groups are those groups that "make public interest claims either promoting or resisting social change that, if implemented, would conflict with the social, cultural, political, or economic interests or values of other constituencies and groups" (Andrews & Edwards 2004, p.481). They sometimes combine social movement groups, not-for-profit organisations, and public interest groups (Greenspan 2014). Much of the existing literature on the role of civil society in food policy development focuses on the UK, and to a lesser extent the US (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009).

A census of over 300 civil society groups working on food issues in the UK (Food Ethics Council 2011) found that many groups spent a substantial amount of time on education and service provision, although far more staff time than volunteer labour was spent on these. By contrast, fewer organisations spent time on advocacy and lobbying, and those that did so relied on paid labour for those activities (Food Ethics Council 2011). This finding is confirmed by research into the increasing professionalisation of advocacy more broadly (Casey 2011).

Common strategies used by civil society groups in the UK and North America to advocate for food system change include re-framing of assumptions and language used to describe food systems, and provision of new information and research to counter claims from government and business (Brinsden & Lang 2015). Many civil society groups focus on research production and media relations as the core of their advocacy efforts (Casey 2011). They use evidence to influence policy through sharing expertise, experience and novel approaches to an issue, and by providing new research evidence to support decision-making (Pollard & Court 2005). This type of 'information campaigning' can encompass policy analysis and alternative policy development, briefings, and presentations (Gen & Wright 2013).

A number of studies highlight that media coverage is a key tool used by civil society groups to advocate for sustainable food systems (Bedore 2014; Jacobson 2007). It is seen as a way of re-framing the debate (Durrant 2014a; Brinsden & Lang 2015), increasing public awareness, educating the community, and documenting the efforts of advocates as a form of public record (Jacobson 2007). Events, for example local food dinners, have been used by some civil society groups as a form of advocacy and education (Jacobson 2007). Civil society groups also carry out community food assessments – which map local food systems and identify opportunities for change – as a way of educating the community and gathering local support (Pothukuchi et al. 2002).

UK civil society groups see the most useful forms of advocacy as grassroots action; education, training and behaviour change; political activism, campaigning and coalition-building; and bringing a number of these tactics together on multiple levels for greater impact (Durrant 2014a). Other common advocacy activities include engaging decision-makers, relationship-building with policy-makers, lobbying (Gen & Wright 2013), face-to-face meetings, and legal challenges (Casey 2011). Advocacy groups also engage in indirect activities such as education, creating awareness, modelling alternatives, and disseminating information (Casey 2011), community outreach, letter-writing, and rallies (Gen & Wright 2013).

Durrant's (2014a) Roles in Transition framework identifies four broad roles that UK civil society groups play in attempting to bring about change: grassroots innovation, niche development, norm-challenging, and regime reform. Although working in different ways, the groups were found to have broad agreement that the food system would be improved by increasing "diversity, social equity, environmental integrity and individual wellbeing within future food systems, which, they agree, should be more responsive to issues around seasonality and locality" (Durrant 2014b, p. 5) and that external shocks to the system and government intervention are the two levers most likely to effect change. This framework will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, and will be used to analyse the strategies used by Australian civil society stakeholders to advocate for sustainable food systems.

1.2.3 The role of alliance-building in advocacy

A key theme in the literature about policy formation and civil society advocacy is the presence of coalitions and alliances (Gen & Wright 2013; Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009). Alliances have been highlighted as playing an important role in bringing about sustainable food systems policy (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009). Alliances and networks have been important in the development of food policies across a number of cities (Bedore 2014; Cohen 2012). They have been used at a state level to engage industry, government and citizens in formulating and implementing a sustainable food system (Roots of Change 2016a). At a national level they have brought civil society stakeholders together to reach consensus around priorities for food systems action (Koç et al. 2008). They have also been used as a way of sharing information to strengthen work being done by alliance members, and developing best practice for sustainable food systems policy (Sustain 2016; Sustainable Food Cities Network 2016). Significant international coalitions to advance sustainable food systems have yet to emerge, although the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems is an interesting recent development.

Food policy councils are a form of alliance used to develop policy, particularly at a city, region, and state level (Mendes 2008; Derkzen & Morgan 2012). They are increasingly focusing on creating more sustainable food systems, particularly urban food systems

(Stierand 2012). Food policy councils typically include key stakeholders from across the food system and focus on the development of integrated food policy that addresses food system issues in a holistic way (Harper et al. 2009). Food policy councils may be hosted from within government (e.g. the Toronto Food Policy Council) or sit outside of government, but typically include representatives from government, business, civil society, and social service delivery (MacRae & Donahue 2013). In many cases food policy councils have been a bridge between government departments, and at times have acted as a testing ground for food policies later implemented at a national level (Harper et al. 2009). Introducing national food policy councils was a recommendation of the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition that few countries pursued (Lang et al. 2005; FAO 1992). Instead, food policy councils have for the most part been used at a sub-national level (Lang et al. 2005). There are now over 200 food policy councils in the United States of America (Roots of Change 2016b), and they have also been introduced (although to a lesser extent) in the UK (Bristol Food Policy Council 2016; Brighton & Hove Food Partnership).

There has been less use of food policy councils in an Australian context. However, local level networks that drew on the concept of food policy councils were developed as part of the Healthy Together Victoria program (Healthy Together Victoria 2014). The networks typically include stakeholders from across the food system, but differ from North American food policy councils in that they have a greater focus on food security and policy to support service delivery to alleviate food insecurity (Geelong G21 Food Security Network 2016; Albury Wodonga Regional Food Security Network 2016). To-date, they have had a relatively limited focus on broader advocacy for a sustainable, equitable and healthy food system.

Civil society groups in Australia responded to the National Food Plan policy process by forming alliances to try and achieve change; however, the food industry and major agricultural interests had already formed effective advocacy coalitions, which proved dominant (Carey et al. 2016). Civil society groups forming alliances to advocate for sustainable food systems in Australia have tended to coalesce around specific food system issues, such as food security or food sovereignty (Right to Food Coalition 2016;

Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance 2016a). Improving civil society coalitions has been suggested as an important step towards more sustainable food policy locally (Carey et al. 2016).

There are different types of civil society alliances; there are formal, staffed coalitions with each participating organisation contributing resources, and less structured coalitions involving cooperative lobbying and a common policy goal (Godwin, Ainsworth & Godwin 2013). There are also looser arrangements which are not typically classed as alliances (Godwin, Ainsworth & Godwin 2013). Within coalitions there are core groups with broad strategic aims, coalition players seeking targeted policy outcomes, and tag-along groups after information or side-benefits, but unwilling to expend energy on achieving policy change (Hula 1999). Policy beliefs are often the binding element in coalition relationships, and successful coalitions rely on groups being willing to make some compromises about their advocacy target in order to preserve the coalition relationship (Sabatier 1998). For groups to work together over a long period, benefits and costs need to be distributed fairly across a coalition, and there need to be ways to enforce standards of behaviour within a coalition (Ostrom 1990; Schlager 1995).

The number of policy interest groups has grown exponentially in recent decades (Hula 1999), and their proliferation means that each of them holds less sway over the policy process (Salisbury 1990), increasing the potential significance of coalition building. Coalition building has increased in the digital age because technology has allowed individual groups to push their own cause, which has led to a weakened unified voice and in turn a recognition by advocates that they need to form alliances in order to address those challenges (Casey 2011). In food systems, alliances have been proposed as a way to help groups agree on how to communicate about food systems issues to increase advocacy effectiveness (Aubrun, Brown, and Grady 2006a; Aubrun, Brown, and Grady 2006b). Alliances can play a key role 'pre-digesting' policy, in which members reach consensus on a policy option to put forward to decision-makers (Costain & Costain 1981). This strategy has been used by alliances in the US to secure

consideration of a smaller number of policy solutions, and for those solutions to be amenable to all alliance members (Costain & Costain 1981).

Some of the key reasons for stakeholders to join coalitions are: to achieve a specific policy goal; for access to timely information, or information that is resource-intensive to find out; or for symbolic reasons, particularly either as a way of showing support for others' issues, or as a way of demonstrating to their members that they are actively working on the issue (Hula 1999). Alliances are a way of gaining power by drawing in organisations and individuals to a group's cause, and using their networks and skills (Jacobson 2007). While it might seem intuitive for groups to come together and lobby around shared goals, the literature shows that this does not necessarily happen (Hula 1999).

There are barriers to effective alliance building. Alliance-forming and co-operation between groups is hampered by tight funding for advocacy, which pits many groups against each other for funding, and pushes groups to focus on stand-alone deliverables (Casey & Dalton 2006). In the community services sector, many groups have decreased their advocacy after becoming fully reliant on government funding for their role as service deliverers (Casey & Dalton 2006). In a study mapping the Victorian food system, McKenzie (2016) found that the short-term nature of funding, and lack of available funding for advocacy and capacity-building, were inhibiting progress in sustainable food system advocacy.

1.3 Sustainable food systems advocacy in Australia

There have been a number of attempts to develop integrated food policies at both national and state level in Australia, but in general Australia has tended towards soft interventions focusing on individual consumers' actions (Johnson 2015). The development of these integrated food policies have been galvanizing moments that motivated civil society groups to come together to form alliances and advocate for a focus on sustainable food systems (Carey et al. 2016).

Food industry and agriculture bodies have stymied attempts to develop more holistic food policies which focused on health, due to a perceived threat to economic prosperity (Caraher et al. 2013; Powles et al. 1992; Alden 2012). Over a two-and-a-half-year period from late 2010 onwards, the Australian Federal Government attempted to formulate a National Food Plan. There was a goal to incorporate sustainability, but the meaning of the term shifted during the consultation process, and became more focused on economic sustainability (Trevena, Kaldor & Downs 2015). Industry exerted significant influence on the policy process, and despite hundreds of submissions from the public through official submission channels, input from industry groups with close ties to government ended up being strongly represented in the final policy (Carey et al. 2016). The result was that despite support from many stakeholders for incorporating sustainability into the policy, “interests of a relatively small albeit powerful, number of stakeholders coincided with the dominant neoliberal ideology shaping the Australian public policy environment to critically influence the orientation and content of the final policy outcome” (Ridgway, Lawrence & Woods 2015, p. 12).

Alden’s (2012) study of the development of the 1992 Australian Food and Nutrition Policy found that although sustainability concerns were being voiced in the lead-up to that policy’s development, those voices were excluded from policy agenda setting as they were at odds with the dominant discourse emphasising markets and a neo-liberal paradigm. Powles et al. (1992) studied the inclusion of nutrition and public health initiatives in that policy and the 1987 Victorian Food and Nutrition Policy, and found that food producers’ reluctance to endorse food and nutrition initiatives stymied the inclusion of those initiatives in the policy. They suggested that:

“The entrenched political influence of such interests makes this a crucial determinant of progress towards nutrition goals in Australia. It also implies a reliance on influential political sponsors and committed lobbyists to maintain a place for nutrition on the political agenda. These ingredients are not always available” (Powles et al. 1992, p. 58).

Industry dominance in food policy formation in Australia points to an important role for civil society in advocacy towards sustainable food policy. Powles et al. (1992) argue that the successes of civil society advocacy around the 1992 policy development were reliant on personal interest from the Victorian Health Minister and personal relationships between academics and the Minister, highlighting the importance of civil society groundwork in achieving policy change. Caraher et al. (2013, p 83) found that:

“The major steps to integrating food policy in Australia have originated with civil society organizations, who have responded to concerns about the health, environmental and social impacts of Australia’s current food system with calls for whole of government food policy at both federal and state levels.”

Caraher et al. (2013) suggest that while civil society groups have achieved some policy successes in Australia, they tend to work in silos, and there is a need for cross-sector alliances to break down those silos in order to achieve greater policy traction. In their study of the Australian food policy-making process, Carey et al. (2016) suggest that civil society advocacy needs to engage with policy-making outside of formal submission channels, and similarly found that building cross-sectoral alliances between public health, social justice and environmental civil society groups would improve the leverage for alternative food system policy. Several alliances and coalitions have also emerged to advocate for sustainable food systems at local or regional level (e.g. Sydney Food Fairness Coalition) or to advocate on specific issues (e.g. Right to Food Coalition). To-date, these groups have focused particularly on issues of equitable food access.

An attempt to undertake this kind of policy advocacy occurred between 2010 and 2012, in response to the Government’s proposed National Food Plan. The Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance formed to create a ‘People’s Food Plan’, which drew together input from over 600 members of the public to suggest an alternative food policy to drive Australian food systems in a more sustainable direction (Parfitt et al. 2013). Some of the key proposals from *The people’s food plan* were around the adoption of more sustainable agriculture techniques; providing a greater proportion of

the population with access to healthy, fair food; developing a legislative framework for planning for food; reducing corporate control of the food system; and establishing food policy councils in each state (Parfitt et al. 2013).

A recent mapping exercise of the Victorian food system and the potential levers for change found that stakeholders in the food system saw the role of civil society locally as (McKenzie 2016):

- Providing broad education about the unsustainable impacts of the current food system, including educating government
- Advocating for greater food supply chain transparency
- Promoting consideration of the food system holistically
- Advocating for a greater priority to be placed on food's role as a source of sustenance, rather than a commodity
- Facilitating large-scale procurement contracts for sustainable food
- Facilitating direct selling methods between farmers and consumers

1.4 Summary of literature review

This literature review has shown that the current food system is unsustainable, and that policy change is critical in creating a more sustainable food system, in terms of environmental impact, farmer livelihood, health, and equitable access. Civil society can play an integral role in pushing for that change through a number of strategies, including awareness raising, building alternative systems, and advocacy aimed at policy-makers. Coalition-building is also an important element of strategic advocacy, and can assist civil society groups to take advantage of policy cycles and influence policy agendas. Less, however, is understood about how these elements contribute to strategies used in civil society advocacy for sustainable food systems in Australia.

This research will focus on the strategies used by civil society stakeholders in Victoria to advocate for sustainable food systems and supportive policy, particularly the place of alliance-building as a means of achieving advocacy goals. This research will also

investigate the ways in which the policy environment and the resources available to civil society groups have influenced choices about advocacy strategy.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research questions

This project is one of the first investigations of civil society advocacy towards sustainable food systems in Australia. It builds on international research about the role of civil society in driving policy shifts for more sustainable food systems, and contributes to the emerging body of Australian research into the policy formation process for sustainable food systems, and civil society's place in that process. This is a qualitative, exploratory research project. It is driven by the desire to 'seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 10).

The over-arching research question is:

What strategies do civil society stakeholders use in advocacy towards sustainable food systems in Victoria, and what shapes their strategies?

Sub-questions considered are:

- What is the role of alliance- or coalition-building in civil society advocacy to promote sustainable food systems in Victoria?
- How does the policy advocacy environment shape civil society stakeholders' choice of strategy in sustainable food systems advocacy?
- How does access to resources shape civil society stakeholders' advocacy towards sustainable food systems in Victoria?

The research focuses specifically on the role of civil society stakeholders in advocating for sustainable food systems in Victoria. Civil society stakeholders are the focus because these groups play a key role internationally in driving the shift to sustainable food systems in the absence of strong action from government or industry (Lang, Barling & Caraher 2009). Civil society stakeholders are defined as those groups which are neither business nor government, which often hold government accountable, act as a voice of the people, and innovate new ways of doing things (Bereuter, Glickman &

Reardon 2016). The research draws on Lang and Heasman's (2004) definition of food policy as an interaction between government, business, and civil society. This research focuses specifically on civil society advocacy in Victorian due to the more developed sustainable food systems advocacy space in this state, as evidenced by numerous initiatives (Food Alliance 2015; McKenzie 2016; VicHealth 2016).

2.2 Data collection

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews (Given 2016), which was supplemented by document analysis (Olsen 2011). Semi-structured interviews are frequently used as a means of gathering data about advocacy strategies (Durrant 2014a; Alden 2012; Yeatman 2008). An interview topic guide was developed prior to interviews with a number of open-ended overarching questions, and some further prompting questions to delve into respondents' initial answers (Olsen 2011; Given 2016). Semi-structured interviews allow for extended detailed responses which provides richer data for analysis (Ezzy 2001; Gilham 2000).

Purposive sampling was used, which involves seeking out participants with particular characteristics (Morse 2004). For this research, those characteristics were that participants were part of a civil society group that had undertaken advocacy towards sustainable food systems. Participants were identified through a desktop study of policy submissions, social media campaigns, and websites, and through networks and word-of-mouth. Snowball sampling, in which respondents were asked for recommendations of who else to speak to, was also used to try and cast the widest net possible for finding participants. This was also a way to find advocates who were working in less visible ways.

In all, 12 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with Victorian civil society stakeholders who have advocated for sustainable food systems. Individuals were identified through ties to their organisations, but many worked across more than one organisation involved in sustainable food systems advocacy. As a result, the lines between the actions of specific organisations were blurred and the lines between

personal activism and organisational advocacy were unclear, particularly because a number of organisations were entirely volunteer-driven. As a result, the findings cover the work of more than 12 organisations, and the work of some organisations was discussed by more than one respondent. No attempt has been made to separate individual from organisational advocacy, as participants themselves rarely made this distinction.

Interviews occurred between August and September 2016, and participants were interviewed for up to 45 minutes (usually between 30 and 45 minutes). All respondents gave informed consent to being interviewed, in line with the ethics process outlined in this project's human ethics approval from the University. Ethics approval was granted through the University of Melbourne Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences Human Ethics Advisory Group (Ethics ID 1646380 – see Appendix 1). Interviews were recorded with participants' consent, were transcribed, and then transcriptions were returned to respondents for review. The interview question guide is included in Appendix 2. All manner of identifying details have been removed from findings to ensure the confidentiality of participants (Richards & Morse 2007). In this research that included removing names of individuals, organisation, other stakeholders (e.g. ministers). The ethics application form (see Appendix 3) contains full details of procedures followed.

Secondary data sources included documents created by the respondent groups, particularly submissions to policy processes, documents used for advocacy such as reports, and accounts of the groups' advocacy efforts, such as website articles, social media posts, and book chapters. These documents were used as an initial research tool to guide development of the semi-structured interview questions for each individual. They provided background for questions about specific campaigns or advocacy strategies, and why those strategies had shifted over time. Furthermore, having multiple sources of both primary and secondary data created a triangulated pool of data for analysis, which ensures greater quality of research findings (Ezzy 2001; Flick 2002).

Thematic analysis of transcripts and documents was used to identify key themes in the strategies used by civil society stakeholders to advocate for sustainable food systems, the role of alliance-building in that process, and the influences shaping those choices. In thematic analysis the researcher codes paragraphs openly to determine emerging themes (Schwandt 2011).

2.3 Theoretical approach

The Roles in Transition (RIT) framework was used to identify and categorise the roles being played by civil society stakeholders in Victoria (Durrant 2014a). The Advocacy Coalition Framework was used to explore the way that civil society stakeholders formed and interacted with alliances, and to evaluate whether stakeholders interacted in ways that are recognised as facilitating long-term policy advocacy alliances.

The RIT framework was developed through the observation of civil society organisations advocating for sustainable food systems in the UK. It suggests four roles these organisations play in the process of transition towards a sustainable food system: grassroots innovation, niche development, norm-challenging, and regime reform (Durrant 2014a). Data gathered about advocacy strategies were analysed, and categorised, in terms of the RIT framework to identify the types of strategies used by Victorian stakeholders and to enable some comparison with the strategies used by UK stakeholders.

Durrant's framework is concerned broadly with roles played by civil society groups, but it says little about the role of coalition forming in civil society advocacy. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) (Sabatier 1998) was therefore used to consider the use of coalitions for advocacy by civil society stakeholders in Victoria. The ACF suggests ways in which coalitions form and make decisions, how coalitions remain active and allied, and what strategies they use to pull together and push for policy change. The ACF defines coalitions as "composed of actors from various governmental and private organizations who both (a) share a set of normative and causal beliefs and (b) engage in a non-trivial degree of co-ordinated

activity over time” (Sabatier 1998, p. 103). The distinction is made between ‘deep core beliefs’ which are the normative and ontological underpinning of the coalition’s belief system, and ‘policy core beliefs’ which represent “a coalition’s basic normative commitments and causal perceptions across an entire policy domain or subsystem” – the ACF views policy core beliefs as the binding element of coalition relationships (Sabatier 1998, p. 103). The ACF suggests that for coalitions to endure, members need to be willing to make compromises to preserve consensus in the coalition (Sabatier 1998).

2.4 Data analysis

2.4.1 Analysis using the Roles in Transition framework

In order to identify the roles being played by civil society stakeholders, Durrant’s Roles in Transition Framework was used (Durrant 2014a). The RIT framework suggests four main categories of civil society advocacy for sustainable food systems: grassroots innovation, niche development, norm-challenging, and regime reform (Durrant 2014a). More detail is provided in the table below:

Table 1: Durrant’s Roles in Transition Framework Role

Role	Definition	Examples
Grassroots innovation	Innovating to find new ways of growing, distributing, retailing and promoting food, in ways that respond to local situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic and regenerative agriculture • Urban agriculture, community gardening • Co-operative retail schemes • Direct retailing through farmgate shops, box schemes, farmers’ markets • Local diet challenges
Niche development	Facilitating education and capacity-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering agricultural training • Undertaking research and

	<p>drawing on grassroots innovations. Helping the alternative food system to scale up.</p>	<p>development for alternative agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing technical advice through resources, formal standards and guidelines • Developing online knowledge sharing platforms
<p>Norm-challenging</p>	<p>There are three targets for norm-challenging: the public, policy-makers, and food industry. In all cases, normative pressure is applied to try and shift preferences towards alternative systems, and in doing so undermine the current unsustainable system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging citizens and consumers through awareness-raising, e.g. stunts, celebrity patronage, petitions • Educating and re-skilling people • Promoting alternatives through advertisements, events and celebrations • Promoting 'good' businesses and practices, naming and shaming 'bad' businesses and practices, often using social media • Challenging policy-makers by hosting policy development platforms • Making submissions to government policy processes • Publishing reports and manifestos • Giving public talks and media interviews • Issuing press releases • Lobbying politicians
<p>Regime reform</p>	<p>Reforming the food industry by encouraging businesses and public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforming industry through alternative certification, labelling, and assurance schemes

	institutions to adopt more sustainable practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforming major public events and institutions, by negotiating for alternative procurement criteria
--	---	---

Source: Durrant (2014a, pp. 117-118, 302).

2.4.2 Analysis using the Advocacy Coalition Framework

The analysis drew on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to identify whether or not Victorian civil society stakeholders were interacting as policy coalitions in advocacy towards sustainable food systems.

According to this framework, key elements of advocacy coalitions are that they (Sabatier 1998):

- Are stable over periods of a decade or so
- Will show substantial consensus on policy core issues
- Will have less consensus on secondary aspects of policy
- Will give up secondary aspects of their belief system to preserve consensus around the policy core

The ACF makes the distinction between deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs, and secondary aspects. Deep core beliefs are fundamental beliefs, i.e. the relative priority of core values, or accepted criteria for fair outcomes (Sabatier 1998). Policy core beliefs are about strategies for achieving those core values through policy, e.g. choosing which problem should be addressed, identifying its cause, agreeing on the importance of various policy instruments for addressing the problem (Sabatier 1998). Secondary aspects relate to decisions around the detail of implementing a policy change, e.g. whether a particular place or group should be the focus of policy change, or what budget should be allocated (Sabatier 1998).

Table 2: Types of policy beliefs in the Advocacy Coalition Framework.

Category of policy belief	Examples of elements within each policy belief category
<p>Deep core</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of man, e.g. Part of nature v. dominion over nature. • Relative priority of various ultimate values, e.g. freedom, security, power, knowledge, health, love, beauty, etc. • Basic criteria of distributive justice: whose welfare counts? • Relative weights of self, primary groups, all people, future generations, non-human beings, etc
<p>Policy core</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation on basic value priorities. • Identification of groups or other entities whose welfare is of greatest concern. • Overall seriousness of the problem. • Basic causes of the problem. • Proper distribution of authority between government and market • Priority accorded various policy instruments (e.g. regulation, insurance, education, direct payments, tax credits). • Method of financing • Participation of public v. experts v. ejected officials.
<p>Secondary aspects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seriousness of specific aspects of the problem in specific locales. • Importance of various causal linkages in different locales and over time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most decisions concerning administrative rules, budgetary allocations, disposition of cases, statutory interpretation, and even statutory revision.• Information regarding performance of specific programs or institutions.
--	---

Source: Adapted from Sabatier's 'Table 3 - Revised structure of belief systems of policy elites' (Sabatier 1998, pp.112-113).

3. Findings

This section first looks at the strategies used by Victorian civil society stakeholders to advocate for sustainable food systems, and how these fit into Durrant's Roles in Transition framework. It then considers the role of alliances, drawing on three concepts in particular from the Advocacy Coalition Framework. These are that coalitions remain stable over long periods, that there is considerable consensus around the coalition's policy core, and that coalitions members are willing to sacrifice secondary policy aspects in order to maintain consensus around the policy core. Finally, it examines what has shaped decisions about advocacy strategy and alliance-forming, both in terms of resources and the policy environment.

3.1 Advocacy strategies being used

As outlined in the previous section, Durrant (2014a) identifies four roles being played by UK civil society stakeholders advocating for sustainable food systems. These are summarised in the table below:

Table 3: Summary version of Durrant's Roles in Transition Framework

Role in Transition	Role
Grassroots innovation	Developing alternative production and retailing solutions
Niche development	Training and certifying new farming solutions
Regime reform	Reforming industry through certification; Reforming procurement policies
Norm-challenging	Broad awareness-raising activities aimed at citizens/consumers; Policy development activities aimed at policy-makers

Source: Durrant (2014a).

This section highlights that Victorian stakeholders are undertaking many of the activities identified by Durrant, but not all. No stakeholders were undertaking niche development activities, and only a small number of regime reform activities were being carried out. A number of groups were undertaking forms of grassroots innovation, but the bulk of activities fell within Durrant's norm-challenging category. Of those activities, most were aimed at citizens/consumers rather than at policy-makers.

3.1.1 Grassroots innovation

Durrant (2014a) describes grassroots innovation as including alternative forms of marketing, distribution and retail. A number of the respondents saw alternative distribution that connected consumers and producers more directly as their main activity:

Our main role is to provide a platform for Victorian primary producers and makers of food who use local ingredients to sell direct to the public.

– Interview 11

We specifically established the farmers' market to support producers and to give the people of Melbourne access to food that had good provenance and sustainability and traceability.

– Interview 1

[We're] trying to get people to understand that there are producers in [our region] that are producing pretty much everything we need and why are we letting veggies and fruit come from such a vast distance when it doesn't really need to.

– Interview 8

For some respondents, the motivation for creating alternative distribution mechanisms came from being frustrated with a lack of progress in changing policy,

indicating that the slow pace of policy change has been a factor for some stakeholders' choice of advocacy strategy:

We want to get our hands dirty and do some stuff and work out the kind of business social enterprise side of things. In terms of that idea of advocacy, ... if we can get this working, you provide something that government can come around behind and support. We have no expectation that government will lead, but if you can point to enough positive things then eventually the policy context kind of potentially catches up to it.

– Interview 7

Some respondents felt that participating in creating alternative systems informed their advocacy, and gave it greater legitimacy:

We needed to know it from the inside ... to be able to advocate for reform.

– Interview 4

3.1.2 Regime reform

Durrant's (2014a) definition of regime reform includes reforming industries through certification and labelling, and reforming institutions through development of procurement policies. Participants did not describe any examples of using certification or direct labelling as an advocacy strategy. However, a small number of organisations were undertaking institution reform activities.

One group was engaging in reforming institutions through targeting procurement policies. Creating local government procurement policies that preference local, healthy, or sustainable food has been recognised as a method of supporting sustainable food systems (City of Melbourne 2012). Interestingly, the genesis of the reform activity described by the participant was an attempt to develop a sustainable

food business servicing a particular location, rather than a desire to advocate for a policy change:

It was a scoping and feasibility study for a small fruit business... I realised that what was missing wasn't so much that people could or couldn't buy vegetables, it was that they didn't know why to buy vegetables... [instead we] started doing some more research and realising that there was this policy gap ... so it basically was the response to an opportunity, it wasn't an intentional aiming at [procurement policy].

– Interview 9

The key strategy used in that case to push for regime reform was developing an alternative procurement policy. An important element of the group's advocacy was using stakeholder mapping to discover and then show how the policy could be implemented:

One of the biggest realisations that we've had, is that people can be very amenable to your ideas in theory, but the answer is, "It's not my job". And I think choosing the right language makes it a lot more tangible to people to say, "No, no this is actually part of your job."

– Interview 9

3.1.3 Norm-challenging – aimed at citizens/consumers

Most Victorian advocacy for sustainable food systems fits within Durrant's norm-challenging category. Durrant (2014a) makes the distinction between norm-challenging aimed at consumers/citizens, and aimed at policy-makers. Activities challenging consumers/citizens include raising awareness and championing alternatives through events, petitions, and education.

The bulk of norm-challenging described by respondents was aimed at challenging consumers/citizens. This included numerous events aiming to raise awareness broadly about sustainable food issues or about specific issues such as the challenges for small-

scale producers, the sustainability of a specific food type, the benefits of purchasing seasonal food, or of purchasing from non-supermarket distribution channels:

It seems like a great opportunity to be involved with things like Fair Food Week, and whether it's Fair Food Week or You Can't Buy What I Eat, you know, the edgier campaigns, or the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. We don't differentiate, in a way because it's the general public, ... so we'll be involved in anything if we possibly can.

– Interview 11

I've done a lot of event coordination where we talk about various issues in the food system ... a lot of the stuff I've done has been about trying to speak to somebody other than the converted.

– Interview 6

There's a point to writing certain policy submissions but ... you need to mobilise people in order for those policy submissions to really have anything, any political weight behind them. So events are a good way of mobilising people around particular issues and bringing attention to them so that politicians can also see that there's people who are interested and engaged.

– Interview 6

Many of the groups saw broad awareness-raising and education delivered via social media as a core part of their advocacy. They particularly favoured social media because of the direct line between the stakeholder group and the public, which they saw as uninterrupted by gatekeepers and therefore a conduit for their message to get through to the public in the way that they wanted it framed:

Social media has become absolutely huge, because I think it reflects who we are...

– Interview 11

We've actually been talking about needing to make more of our own videos and our own stories rather than bashing our head against a brick wall trying to use the mainstream media when it's becoming increasingly difficult to do it.

– Interview 2

There's the very easy [strategy] that any of us can do around social media and stuff. There's just that constant having a voice there that nobody else is the editor for...

– Interview 4

One organisation had also developed a mobile app to help customers find a particular type of sustainable food when shopping.

3.1.4 Norm-challenging – aimed at policy-makers

Far less norm-challenging activity was currently aimed at policy-makers, although several of the groups had undertaken policy-focused advocacy in the past. Durrant (2014a) suggests norm-challenging activities directed at policy-makers include submissions to government, advocating through media and report production, and lobbying politicians directly. Many of these activities were described by participants, but for most respondents they made up a much smaller part of the groups' work. Often they were a past strategy that the group no longer felt was worthwhile, or the activities were occurring infrequently, with long intervals between periods of engagement with policy-making. Not all groups were undertaking these types of activities (in comparison to broad awareness-raising, which all groups brought up as an important part of advocacy).

Only a few organisations were undertaking these activities as a core part of their work, and for the most part, advocacy aimed at policy-makers could be described as reactive. It was generally focused on changing regulations that formed barriers to more sustainable food systems. Very little of the activity aimed at policy-makers was

actually norm-challenging, in which groups tried to change policy-makers' understanding of an overarching issue. Respondents described trying to influence Federal Government during the development of the National Food Plan, but otherwise were mostly engaging with State Government, in particular the health and agriculture portfolios. Local Government was seen as more receptive to embracing sustainable food systems, and groups described being able to work *in partnership with* Local Government rather than advocating to them.

A number of groups had made direct contact with policy-makers to advocate for policy change, but many of them felt that this was a time-consuming activity that did not deliver great returns for their efforts due to a lack of receptivity from policy-makers:

With government departments we will put in submissions, we've met with [regulators]. It's like hitting your head against a brick wall. And politicians it is actually approaching them directly and speaking to their advisors ... if we know people and think it's worthwhile approaching them we will do that, and we will try and look at it strategically.

– Interview 10

The last few inquiries that have taken place we've put in submissions to... and we attended those public hearings and we've continued to follow up, we've had meetings with the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister for Planning, and the Shadow Minister for Agriculture in Victoria.

– Interview 4

Writing letters to all of the ministers attaching my reports on both the science and also on the review of the [consultancy] report [commissioned by the opposing peak body].

– Interview 3

One group took a different tack, and chose to hire a lobbyist to try and engage with policy-makers and stop a significant policy change from occurring:

[The campaign leader] employed a lobbyist who had those connections, ... and that's what we know we need to do in the future, and we need to start earlier.

– Interview 3

A number of groups used the strategy of creating research reports to try and sway policy-makers with evidence, although they were often unconvinced that this strategy was making headway with policy-makers:

I'm not sure it's necessarily the best tactic. I think we probably write too many reports... it's just kind of like water off a duck's back you know. We'll release a report or some damning media story and [the regulatory body] kind of counter statement and we really felt that we actually need to have a more systemic critique.

– Interview 2

My relationship to what could be achieved in academia [shifted] because an evidence base doesn't make any difference. No one is interested in an evidence base.

– Interview 7

Even when you produce a whole lot of evidence, if you're seen as an activist, it's automatically dismissed.

– Interview 10

In terms of more proactive, overarching policy advocacy, one group had developed a decision-making tool for policy-makers, which they published as a grey-literature report and toolkit. One other group was in the process of trying to build capacity within local government:

We're bringing experts into the council staff so that we can start kind of building their understanding of food system change and why it's important... I'm increasingly thinking that it's critical to work at least at the Local Government level and then just try to chip away upwards.

– Interview 6

A number of the organisations interviewed for this project were identified as being active advocates because they had made submissions to government policy consultations. However, they often did not mention these in interviews, and did not seem to see them as a core part of their advocacy activity. For example, in one case a group had made a submission to the Australian Food Plan consultation. One group member identified that submission as the work of another group member, but when the author of the submission was interviewed they recalled creating a submission that was hastily put together with colleagues, rather than the group:

I suppose I was responding as a citizen just through the submissions to Government. But there wasn't a campaign.

– Interview 6

Many of the groups had previously undertaken policy-focused advocacy, particularly at a national and state level, and then become disillusioned with the process and turned away. A number of the groups identified through desktop research and document analysis as advocating for policy change were no longer prioritising that strategy:

Initially we were entirely focused on politicians, and ... we did get a backbench revolt against [the policy change]. But then I realised, this is all about money and power, and even if your backbench revolts, it doesn't actually turn into a change of policy. ... we don't have the bandwidth to really engage exclusively with the whole of the policy-makers because in some ways it's just wasting our energy.

– Interview 10

It's really hard to engage State Government and Federal Government. Local Government is a lot easier to engage and ... the kinds of people that would come to the events that I was organising were often people like community health officers and people who were working at the ground level.

– Interview 6

I developed a pretty good sense of the intransigence of the State Government around these issues and trying to get them on the radar, trying to get food being considered within planning. In that period everyone just looked at you like you were just a lunatic for even thinking there was something called a food system and that it should be relevant.

– Interview 7

A small number of respondents identified ongoing, behind the scenes conversations as one of the forms of policy advocacy that they are willing to put effort into:

You have to be able to advocate a bit behind the scenes to get people to understand why that change is possible. ... I think it's working with people rather than being hard-nosed and advocating in a way that people find a threat, because it doesn't produce outcomes.

– Interview 5

While anonymous, semi-structured interviews were used to maximise the chance that this research process would facilitate open answers from respondents, there is also the possibility that more behind-the-scenes advocacy was taking place, but was considered too sensitive by some to discuss.

3.2 Factors shaping choice of strategy

3.2.1 Policy context

Many of the respondents were unmotivated to carry out advocacy aimed at policy-makers because they did not think it was worth doing. This was often due to past advocacy setbacks, or lack of policy progress when they had attempted policy-maker focused advocacy:

I've got quite disillusioned with working with policy, because if it is in this financialised, globalised, monopolised world where there is no accountability and transparency... [My effort] gets nowhere.

– Interview 10

[Our advocacy] was reactive in terms of following the government's agenda and responding to its issues paper and its round table consultations. Then there was the realisation in 2012 ... that that was from an advocacy perspective largely ineffective, because the government had known all along what its main policy priorities were going to be.

– Interview 12

A number of respondents felt like the dominant ideology in government made it almost impossible to change policy, or in some cases, difficult to advocate within the government framework:

We're working in a very neoliberal framework and in terms of politicians responding to arguments it really seems to be the market arguments that [are] ... the only thing that they listen to.

– Interview 2

I think our politicians at State and Federal level in Australia are very short-term, are very imbued within a neo-liberal paradigm.

– Interview 12

I wouldn't know who to advocate it to at a Federal level. I think the things I want are not accounted for in anyone's portfolios. I think maybe Local Government you can easily get some changes... State Government has some interesting pockets. Federal Government is a mystery to me, and a disappointing mystery at that.

– Interview 9

In some cases we have had quite a good hearing, and yet, because the dominant ideology is so undermined by this, it's very hard to see that we're getting anywhere.

– Interview 10

Respondents also identified the political influence of the agrifood sector as a barrier to achieving policy change for more sustainable food systems:

I think the political process in Australia at State and Federal level, to a large extent, has become very influenced by and corrupted by quite effective and sustained and powerful lobbying from corporate interests.

– Interview 12

Big business would actually have a very major input... Big Ag, I suppose you'd call it. You could see there was a lot of vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

– Interview 5

Big Ag and Big Food and Big Pharma, all of them are working very hard to protect their interests.

– Interview 4

One of the related barriers raised by a number of respondents was that because a shift to integrated food policy requires systems thinking and systemic change, the scale at which change is needed makes advocacy difficult:

I think that the barriers to changing things in policy, maybe it's something about systemic change and the fact that policy environments just can't deal with it, it's too big.

– Interview 7

They want a one liner, they want this really sexy clear thing that you want, and I'm like, "I would like lots of little things." That's doesn't go down well. But I think the inherent complexity of food systems is systems based, systems thinking... there's only grey area.

– Interview 9

3.2.2 Resource scarcity

In addition to the influence of the policy environment, a common answer for what shaped choice of advocacy strategy could be described as a lack of resources, be they money, time, or skills.

Many respondents identified reliance on volunteers being the biggest barrier to advocacy:

Time poverty is basically our biggest problem. I think that we probably could have got where we are much quicker, but we all just – this is no one's priority.

– Interview 9

The biggest lack of resources is people, because people are busy and people have lives and people study or work or have kids or whatever, so

manpower resources is very thin, and basically we're self-funded, so we do what we can afford.

– Interview 10

I don't know that we ever thought about [strategy]. I mean it probably what's simple and cost effective to be quite honest. Again it comes down to time.

– Interview 1

The funding that has been available has also shaped what advocacy some groups have then been able to undertake:

Doing events is a good way of doing advocacy that attracts funding but advocacy itself never gets funding. So I've ended up running a lot of events in my advocacy career.

– Interview 6

The impact of lack of time, or lack of paid time was identified by many respondents as undermining people's ability to sustain ongoing advocacy work that is effective:

Barriers include obviously funds and everyone scrabbling for the same bits of money and everyone being overworked and burnt out... You can do a lot more when you don't have to stress about how you're paying the rent, and burnt out people don't collaborate well or necessarily make all the best decisions.

– Interview 7

Volunteer burnout is a big one I think for anyone who's doing stuff in the food movement as so little of it is funded and a lot of money, a lot of time and energy can go into getting funding.

– Interview 6

[Undertaking more advocacy campaigns is] above and beyond our resources. They are volunteer time. Full stop. Every ounce of paid energy is in [our core business] ... everything that we do on top of that is the goodness of someone's heart.

– Interview 11

The reliance on volunteer time means that one of the biggest drivers of strategy is the particular passions and skills of volunteers:

[Our activities are] entirely shaped by people's resources and skills.

– Interview 10

People bring their own experience to something and that I think can tend to colour how groups evolve and what they are advocating for, because let's face it, the food system is huge.

– Interview 5

The reliance on volunteer time may influence the choice to focus on advocacy strategies other than policy change, as trying to change policy (particularly when unsuccessful) may not be as fulfilling as engaging in broader campaigns or as tangible as building an alternative system. Instead, respondents described weighing up the value of spending their time on policy advocacy, and instead choosing to work on building alternatives:

[I asked myself] do I spend all my energy trying to influence a policy, where I'm like a gnat on an ox, ... or do I then critique that and really try and work with the people who are actually doing good stuff and try to imagine something better.

– Interview 10

My belief in what was going to be effective ... was, "Let's stop talking to a brick wall and focus on what we can move to and what we can pull people

to and what we can rebuild”, and that to me is some of the power of food systems is because so much of it people can do just by doing it. It’s different from trying to redo an electricity distribution grid or something.

– Interview 7

Advocacy demands certain skills and knowledge, and some respondents felt that they did not have necessary skills, or only had skills or knowledge in one area, which stopped them from undertaking advocacy more broadly:

We don’t speak the language of policy and academia, we’re worker bees. So we do our stuff on the ground.

– Interview 11

I guess my biggest issues are time and just the general ability to gain some of these resources because I do live in a country town.

– Interview 8

We don't know [enough about social media], we’re like Jack of all trades, so it’s something we’ve really identified as being something we need to get better at. At the moment we’re preaching to our converted members, we’re not actually finding new people to convince and have a conversation with, and it’s sporadic and that’s a human resources problem.

– Interview 3

Overall, the lack of familiarity with advocacy for policy change, and the sense of powerlessness within the political system due to dominant ideologies were the main reasons why stakeholders instead turned their focus to norm-challenging aimed at the public. Targeting the public was seen as a way of addressing policy issues through the avenues available to groups:

We need political change for a number of the things we are trying to advocate for ... [but] we really don't have any political grunt in that sense except to try and influence other people who do have a political vote... So we don't advocate politically directly but I suppose we do indirectly through our supporters.

– Interview 1

3.3 Coalition-building

3.3.1 Presence of coalitions

Document analysis showed that coalitions were active in a number of common ways. Groups were cross-promoting each other's advocacy campaigns, co-authoring research aimed at policy-makers, and a number of the groups had been involved in producing the *People's Food Plan* an alternative policy to the National Food Plan, developed by academics and grassroots community groups (Parfitt et al. 2013).

However, data from interviews suggested that coalition activity was relatively limited. For example, groups sometimes lent their name to an action or campaign of another group, but did not actively participate in that action. Groups tended to have cross-promotional agreements based on personal relationships, rather than strategic alliances between groups.

It's often just personality based I suppose. People we know... it's reasonably organic.

– Interview 1

We talked about a Local Food Act for Victoria in 2014/15... A number of groups put their name to that.

– Interview 12

There was one exception to this. One group of civil society stakeholders was more focused on policy change and had formed an active coalition around a specific, shared policy goal:

We still continue to have a broad [formal issue-based] alliance and we continue to sort of meet regularly and work together on issues ... it's sort of sharing resources and also supporting each other and sometimes we put out joint media statements on issues... So we'll work together on submissions and support each other in our work.

– Interview 2

Well, we're part of the [formal issue-based] alliance, and really, that was to network all those groups together ... I think we've always done that because it is strength in numbers and it is important to share knowledge... So I suppose we have sort of loose networking rather than formal alliances, apart from the [formal issue-based] alliance.

– Interview 10

For ease of understanding, this formal alliance is referred to throughout as the 'Issue Alliance'.

3.3.2 Coalition stability

Sabatier (1998) describes policy coalitions as having a stable line-up of allies and opponents over long periods of time. Document analysis did not reveal long-term overarching alliances of multiple organisations working together for broad food policy change. Instead, most stakeholders described coming together at times of threat or opportunity for short-term coalitions.

It can depend on who's working in various things, for example, [Organisation A] at one point was very good, and [Organisation B] were very good on the ... issue, and now both of them have fallen by the

wayside on that. So often what you're dealing with is other groups' policy decision changes or personnel changes.

– Interview 10

We reached out to a number of different groups to see who was interested. It was broadly looking at what that kind of legislative initiative might achieve, and seeing who would have an interest in it. So that was an example I guess of a strategic alliance which had a particular policy objective.

– Interview 12

The exception was the Issue Alliance. Although this alliance was younger than 10 years old (suggested by the ACF as the minimum period of time for a stable alliance), documentary analysis revealed it was stable over a number of years.

3.3.3 The lack of consensus amongst coalition members

Sabatier (1998) suggests that coalitions show strong consensus on policy core issues, and less consensus on secondary aspects (i.e. how to implement a policy, for example through planning law, or land management incentive, etc.). In order to maintain consensus coalitions members will give up some of those secondary aspects to 'protect' the consensus around the policy core. This project found that sustainable food system advocates in Victoria did not tend to make this type of sacrifice for the common cause.

While the lack of policy-focused advocacy meant that many groups did not articulate a policy core, drawing on Sabatier's (1998) suggestions around consensus building in coalitions may still help explain why there is little formal alliance-building other than the Issue Alliance. Civil society stakeholders identified a variety of motivating factors for their advocacy work. To use quotes may reveal respondents' identities. Instead those motivating factors can be summarised as including concerns about:

- Climate change, with food systems as an entry point for talking about and tackling those issues
- Animal welfare
- Producer livelihood
- Ecological sustainability of one specific type of food
- The impact of capitalism on the food system globally
- Equitable access to healthy food for disadvantaged groups locally
- Loss of biodiversity due to agricultural practices
- Political economy of the food system

The relatively broad range of motivating concerns suggests that groups may not share a policy core partly because they do agree on what they value most – for example, if human and animal life are equal, or if sustainability and equity are equal. Different motivations may not hamper joint policy advocacy on an issue-by-issue basis, but may mean groups do not form long-term alliances (Sabatier 1998). Several respondents alluded to differences in values, or struggles to reach aligned values, as a barrier to forming alliances.

It's always about being strategic, right, and strategic both in who you want to support and who you want to support you. Not to say we wouldn't be loosely allied with any number of organisations and individuals. But formal alliances – we don't want them to be with people who are actually to any large extent not following the ethical practice that we're seeking.

– Interview 4

If you're forming alliances with other people, they obviously have a slightly different focus to you and so sometimes they either might not agree with your stance, or might not understand your stance.

– Interview 10

Some respondents also identified an unwillingness to compromise and work together on policy core issues as standing in the way of more effective policy change, and they drew comparisons with the effectiveness of alliance-building in other countries:

I think that there is a lot more interest from a number of groups in the UK to work together... Environmental organisations were always at loggerheads with industry, but they seem to have come around to if they want to actually positively change something then you have to work with the industry, and then they've started to find their common ground.

– Interview 3

I think one thing that to me is really missing in Australia is there's no national advocacy groups working on food and sustainable agriculture and I feel like that there's a real gap there...

– Interview 2

The Issue Alliance's success at maintaining a long-term coalition may draw on a shared policy core, and a shared perspective on how to implement that, including a willingness to compromise on secondary policy aspects.

3.3.4 Characterisation and purpose of coalitions

While alliances did not fit into the Advocacy Coalition Framework's definitions of long-term, strategy-oriented coalitions for policy change, and were generally looser or more temporary networks, many of the participants still saw value in the relationships between groups.

For some, this was because they saw them as a way to delegate tasks or to avoid duplicating efforts in the context of scarce resources:

I can't stand work being redone ... we kind of want to be more of a clearing house to say, "This ... group is doing this thing, and this ... group is

doing this thing,” and we’re going to like give them both resources and share their resources with each other.”

– Interview 9

We're a volunteer organisation so time is always an issue and yeah, just not enough people involved. So we try as much as possible to work with organisations that are already doing something and support them rather than set up our own campaigns, and just try and help where we can or with people who are already advocating.

– Interview 1

Resources are scarce, and I think that goes back to that point of alliance building is, you need to be smart about working out how you can share resources with people, whether it’s human capital or you know, just a knowledge of research.

– Interview 9

For many, alliances were also a network from which to learn new things or gain support:

We want to bring that alliance with [a more experienced local group] because they’re very active ... [and] seasoned in the advocacy, what they do and we’re so new it’s looking I guess at drawing out a bit of that knowledge to help grow...

– Interview 8

It's predominantly like a support network really and also just information sharing.

– Interview 3

Because many of the groups are volunteer-driven, a common way for alliances to form (and for projects to form) was in response to what was enjoyable to do, or people it was enjoyable to work with.

Partly it's who you come into contact with and who you can get on with, because of course the local food movement is full of internal politics and its own rifts. And ... because it's so volunteer driven you choose to work with those people that you enjoy working with.

– Interview 6

Really what we run on is the different people and their different skills and their different interests. Because it's volunteer, nobody's going to do something that they're not interested in, or they don't see any reason.

– Interview 10

A number of respondents spoke about using coalitions and alliances in their work, but at times were speaking more about something that would more accurately be described as a collaborative network, rather than a strategic coalition, i.e. it was a network for sharing information and resources and avoiding duplication of work, but not a way to jointly strategise and push together for a shared goal. That said, they identified how positive and useful these networks are as being a noteworthy feature of working in food systems advocacy.

One of the things I really like about the food space, and this goes at [an institutional] level, and a Victorian level, and national level, and an international level: "Hey I want to fix the food system." "Cool, let's talk." There is this incredible openness.

– Interview 9

I think that broadly speaking the food space is better at forming alliances than a lot of other sectors, and ... I think it's got something to do with the number of women working in the food sector as opposed to say in energy

and climate. My experience has been a more collaborative openness around work in food.

– Interview 7

There was recognition from a number of respondents that more could be achieved if there were more strategic alliances being formed, but also that because it is a maturing, relatively new area of advocacy some of that is yet to come:

It's around creating outcomes, like bringing people together rather than having individual groups with their own identities trying to forge the way through, whether it's a National City Farm and Community Gardening Network, a national permaculture network, a national Food Sovereignty Alliance, a Sustain: Australian Food Network, whatever it is where there's great work being done, multiple areas of overlap, but can you imagine what would happen if they were all one body? But that's an optimist's view.

– Interview 5

It'll keep moving but I think it's settling into place a little bit. Five years ago when there wasn't an AFSA or a Sustain or a Right to Food Coalition or whatever, there were a whole lot of people doing stuff, ... it was such a small thing, and then this connecting up and coalescing and people feeling like we're all part of a thing and academia, and all of this stuff has happened. Now it's got these semi-institutionalised AFSA, Sustain or whatever. So I think it's all going in the right direction.

– Interview 7

3.4 Characterising civil society advocacy towards sustainable food systems in Victoria

This research has found that little of the activity being undertaken by civil society stakeholders towards sustainable food systems is advocacy for policy change directed

at policy-makers. This is due to a belief that there was little value in this, due to the strong political influence of the agrifood sector and the dominant neoliberal ideology in policy-making. Most stakeholders cited a past experience of not getting through to policy-makers as being the reason to direct their efforts elsewhere. Resource scarcity, in terms of time and money, was a significant factor guiding efforts away from policy advocacy and into other activities which groups saw as more likely to yield results, such as building an alternative food system.

Civil society stakeholders working towards sustainable food systems in Victoria were for the most part not forming alliances in the way that they are recognised in the literature, i.e. formally, with a purpose, and to join together around a shared policy goal, for a long period of time. Groups were forming informal alliances around short-term policy campaigns, usually around what would be considered secondary aspects of policy, i.e. how a particular policy gets implemented to fix a problem, rather than an overarching policy core. Groups were more frequently forming loosely aligned networks for cross-promotion, knowledge sharing, and to avoid duplication.

The exceptions for both policy advocacy and alliance-building were usually in an area where building an alternative was not possible, and a policy shift was the only avenue for change. Where this was the case, groups did form alliances over long periods of time, and were aligned around a policy core.

4. Discussion

This section discusses some of the reasons for the limited civil society focus on proactive and strategic advocacy for policy change towards sustainable food systems in Victoria, and it considers some of the implications. It focuses particularly on the influence of a relatively unreceptive policy environment in Victoria and lack of resources.

Sustainable food systems advocacy is relatively recent internationally (Lang & Heasman 2004), but even more so in Australia. Major policy developments in 2007, 2012 and 2013 were consistently mentioned by research respondents as galvanising moments for Australian food systems advocacy, which points to the infancy of food systems advocacy in Australia. Almost all organisations interviewed were less than a decade old, and very few additional organisations were suggested for interview. Respondents commented consistently on the small size of the field. In contrast, the UK's food issues census (undertaken in 2011) identified over 300 organisations undertaking food systems advocacy, and estimated the food and farming civil society sector as having 25,000 (mostly small) organisations which are responsible for employing 20,000 full-time equivalent staff, and mobilising 80,000 full-time equivalent volunteers (Food Ethics Council 2011).

The small scale and relative immaturity of Victorian civil society advocacy may contribute to the limited emphasis on long-term strategy and to the lack of focus on alliance-building. As the sector is still small in Victoria, groups may differentiate themselves through their core beliefs. By contrast, in the UK the larger number of organisations in the sector means that there can be numerous groups that hold similar core beliefs but work on different issues within sustainable food system advocacy, and therefore may make more natural allies.

4.1 Factors limiting food policy advocacy

Advocacy covers a broad range of activities (Casey 2011; Gen & Wright 2013), many of which civil society groups in Victoria are undertaking to push for sustainable food

systems. However, much of the advocacy consists of broad public awareness raising as a way to drive change, rather than advocacy aimed directly at policy-makers. There appears to be less policy advocacy focused on policy change in Victoria than in the UK (Durrant 2014a) or Canada (Koç et al. 2008). Advocacy aimed at policy-makers appears to be used when policy change is the only lever available, i.e. when there is no option to just build a sustainable food system. Rather than maintaining advocacy efforts over a long period as ‘background advocacy’ on key issues, groups advocating for sustainable food systems in Victoria tend to react to policy opportunities, or – more often – policy threats.

Stakeholders’ decision to not focus on policy advocacy was partly tied to disappointment with previous policy advocacy not having as much impact as hoped, highlighting the influence of policy failures such as the development of the National Food Plan (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2013) on food systems advocacy in Victoria. Stakeholders were also frustrated with the slow pace of policy change, and the large gap between their vision of sustainable food systems and the dominance of export-oriented agricultural policy in Victoria (Fyfield & Ridley 2015). Many stakeholders felt that targeting policy-makers was getting them nowhere, and instead chose to focus on building an alternative system, or to work at local government level as this was seen as more rewarding and effective. This reflects a similar international trend to working on food policy at local and city level, in response to the difficulty of achieving effective policy change at national level (Sonnino 2016). Building an alternative food system outside of a policy context was, for some, also seen as a safer long-term solution. This was because they felt that policy could be more easily dismantled with changes in government, whereas a successful alternative system would not be as reliant on government and policy support.

Civil society groups most often described their advocacy efforts as broad awareness-raising aimed at the public, for the most part executed through events and social media. This was for a number of reasons (in addition to the motivations to not focus on policy identified above). The central mission of many of the civil society groups was to advocate for an alternative distribution system, such as farmers’ markets. They

were working to convince the public to adopt that system with the hope that behaviour change would either be enough on its own to create sustainable food systems, or that once people's behaviour had changed there would be a critical mass asking for policy change. Some felt that influencing the public was more achievable than influencing policy-makers. Lack of resources created a scenario in which there was little time to strategise. Respondents resorted to activities with which they were more familiar, such as awareness-raising, via low cost and accessible platforms, such as social media. The influence of lack of resources on advocacy activities generally (Casey & Dalton 2006), and sustainable food systems advocacy is also highlighted in the international literature (Koç et al. 2008; Food Ethics Council 2011), although it seems to be a particular issue in Victoria.

The other major focus for civil society groups was creating an alternative food system, through new ways of farming and through new distribution models connecting farmers and consumers more directly with shorter food supply chains. This was also identified as a key strand of civil society activity in the UK (Durrant 2014a; Food Ethics Council 2011). Some respondents saw this as a form of advocacy, whereas others saw it as a precursor to advocacy – that if an alternative were shown to be effective, it would be harder for government to ignore. This was also seen as a way of addressing the slow pace of policy change, as it could be tackled immediately without government policy support. The significant focus on applied research in food studies and food systems has been noted elsewhere (Koç et al. 2012). Where Victoria differs is in the limited focus on complementary proactive policy support. In the UK the greatest impact occurred when the strands of alternative system building, awareness-raising, and policy advocacy were used together, for “co-ordinated action on multiple levels with multiple tactics” (Durrant 2014a, p. 203).

Both of these strands of civil society work – broad awareness raising and building alternative systems – may have positive influences on consumers. However, it is unlikely in itself to bring about significant policy change. Public support for an idea, much like evidence or an example of a policy option, is only one part of policy formation (Althaus, Bridgman & Davis 2013). To cut through to policy-making,

attention also needs to be paid to the other stages of policy formation, and other influences on policy-making such as agenda-setting and the alignment of conditions needed for policy change to occur (Kingdon 1995).

The complexity of advocating for integrated *food* policy, as opposed to policy in an individual portfolio (such as agriculture or health) appears to be a barrier to civil society advocacy for sustainable food systems. Getting a food policy in place defies the departmental infrastructure of government, and is in itself a much-needed step towards sustainable food systems (MacRae 2011). Shifting to a sustainable food system requires transformational change (Garnett 2014), which is difficult to describe to policy-makers. Stakeholders in Victoria emphasised the difficulty of communicating complex food systems thinking. Under these circumstances, the inclination of civil society groups to react to policy threats, rather than to plan proactively, is understandable, but not necessarily effective. The complexity of food systems is one of the great challenges of advocacy for policy change. However, it is questionable whether the incremental strategies currently adopted by Victorian civil society groups will be sufficient to create the type of transformative food system change that is necessary (Garnett 2014).

In much of the current advocacy, the onus for change is pushed onto consumers. Victorian civil society organisations focus their efforts on awareness raising and developing alternative channels for consumers to purchase sustainable food, but there is limited focus on holding government accountable for food governance and policy. There is also an emphasis on individuals' role as consumers, and less recognition of their role as citizens (Renting, Schermer & Rossi 2012; Lang 2005). This maintains the status quo of government's existing approach to food policy, in which consumers are asked to drive food system change. For example, Australia's National Food Plan articulated a vision of, 'consumers defining Australia's food system' (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2013, p24). This focus on the role of consumers also ignores that the illusion of the power of consumer choice is constructed by the marketplace, and is used to justify using an alternative to the more binding regulations which might otherwise be imposed by government (Parker 2014; Parker & Scrinis

2014). It fits within a neoliberal conception of levers of change, and does not necessarily radically challenge the current food system paradigm of business dominating food governance (Garnett 2014; Lang & Heasman 2004). Again, it raises the issue of whether the paradigm shift that is proposed as necessary is able to be created through issue-by-issue changes, or if overarching policy change is needed to bring about systemic change.

4.2 How a lack of resources shapes advocacy strategies

The impact of resource scarcity was a recurring theme in interviews. The lack of paid time was identified as a direct contributing factor to how much advocacy stakeholders were able – or unable – to undertake. This appears to be having a significant impact on how much policy advocacy is occurring, over what timeframe that advocacy is sustained, and the strategies being used for advocacy. Advocacy is becoming increasingly professionalised (Casey 2011), and the bulk of civil society's sustainable food system advocacy in the UK is undertaken by paid workers (Food Ethics Council 2011). It is therefore unsurprising that if civil society groups are underfunded in Victoria, policy advocacy is the activity that is reduced.

Resource scarcity leaves groups reliant on volunteers, which may be contributing to lack of longevity in advocacy, as skills and knowledge are lost in volunteer turnover. Some stakeholders identified that they did not have the skills needed to effectively advocate to policy-makers. Lack of resources may also hinder how much time can be put into development of long-term relationships with policy-makers to put stakeholders in a trusted position to influence the policy development cycle (Cairney 2016). Long-term advocacy of the type needed to lay groundwork for policy change (Kingdon 1995), is less likely to be sustained when it is reliant on volunteers.

Many of the groups identified that the way in which funding is made available shaped their activities, for example funding was made available to run events but not to undertake advocacy. This type of piecemeal funding does not aid long-term strategic change. Philanthropy has played an important role in the UK's progression towards

stronger civil society advocacy (Food Ethics Council 2011), and many notable UK programs that contribute to overarching strategic work, such as the Food Research Collaboration Network, are funded by philanthropy (Food Research Collaboration Network 2016). The way in which that network is funded means that it does not have to generate funding through projects or membership fees, which has hampered similar initiatives locally (Caraher et al. 2013). Australian philanthropists are now beginning to recognise the potential of food systems as an area from which multiple environmental, health and social benefits can flow, and are now exploring how to fund projects in a more strategic way (Ripe for Change 2016).

4.3 Coalition building is limited

The main reason why civil society groups in Victoria formed coalitions was to address resource scarcity. This is in contrast to much of the international literature on the role of alliances in advocacy, which emphasises their role in achieving policy change by presenting a united front in order to amplify a message (Godwin, Ainsworth & Godwin 2013), and 'pre-digesting' policy for decision-makers by reaching consensus on a common set of policy solutions (Costain & Costain 1981). For Victorian groups, alliances were important for sharing information in a stretched sector about the issues arising, the work being done by other groups to tackle those issues, and the strategies that were working.

Victorian organisations behave in coalitions as 'tag-along' coalition members that are generally supportive of the coalition's objectives, but do not contribute significant resources to help achieve it (Hula 1999). In a context where more mature coalition-based advocacy occurs, coalition members may also function as 'core members' (Hula 1999), but few examples were described of these types of coalitions in Victoria.

The absence of a peak body for sustainable food systems advocacy may contribute to a lack of strategic alliance-based advocacy. On one of the major occasions when a number of groups came together for a policy purpose – the creation of the People's Food Plan – an alliance was formed that has become a separate organisation: the

Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (2016a). The group now has a membership base which includes a small number of advocacy groups and a larger number of food and farming businesses (Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance 2016b). Its advocacy reflects its membership base and its international ties to food sovereignty groups such as La Via Campesina, and it functions as a strategic advocacy group for small-scale producers, rather than continuing to work as an alliance incorporating multiple elements of sustainable food systems policy. Similarly, the Deakin University-based Food Alliance was intended to be a policy alliance (Caraher et al. 2013), but now exists as Sustain: the Australian Food Network, which has a focus on working with local government to develop food policies (Sustain, The Australia Food Network 2016). The lack of funding for advocacy may drive these types of decisions, as groups must instead ensure that they undertake projects that attract funding (McKenzie 2016). Lessons could be learned from the establishment of Canada's successful peak body, Food Secure Canada-Sécurité Alimentaire Canada, that has buy-in from a range of stakeholders thanks to its collaborative process and ongoing incorporation of stakeholder concerns, and has resulted in an enduring strategic advocacy alliance (Koç et al. 2008).

Many respondents highlighted the potential role that large environmental NGOs could play in sustainable food systems advocacy and as part of strategic alliances. Overarching multinational food systems advocacy organisations are yet to emerge in the way that they have for other environmental causes, e.g. Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund (Lang & Heasman 2004). Mainstream environmental groups have also yet to become involved to a significant extent in advocacy towards sustainable food systems, particularly in Australia. Another strategy identified as important for advocacy success is the tactic of forming alliances with groups that are only partially aligned with advocates' cause as a means of educating them and bringing those unaligned groups onside (Godwin, Ainsworth & Godwin 2013); participants emphasised that this strategy was little used in Victoria in comparison to international contexts.

Another difference between Victoria and more mature sustainable food systems advocacy in the UK and North America is the role being played by academic food *policy* groups, such as the Food Research Collaboration Network based in the UK, the Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food, and the University of London's Centre for Food Policy. These groups provide new evidence, which is used in policy-making, and facilitate strategic thinking and cross-pollination between academia, civil society, and government, mostly with a policy focus (Food Collaboration Research Network 2016). In the US, more research is also being done on how to frame food systems conversations in order to effect change (Aubrun, Brown & Grady 2006a; Aubrun, Brown & Grady 2006b). By comparison Australian universities are yet to take on this role as prominently, which may be contributing to the smaller amount of ongoing policy advocacy being undertaken.

4.4 Impact of advocacy strategies on progress towards sustainable food system policy

It is understandable that past experiences with advocating on unsuccessful policy change – such as the experiences described of disappointment with the Australian National Food Plan – have left advocates on sustainable food systems disillusioned or less willing to put effort into advocating directly to change policy. However, by neglecting this advocacy space – other than in moments of crisis or perceived opportunity – it is possible that civil society groups are setting themselves up for failure when policy windows do open. For a policy change to occur at the moment of opportunity presented by a policy window opening, the groundwork must have already been done (Kingdon 1995), in the form of re-framing (Aubrun, Brown & Grady 2006b), relationship building, and consensus-building around policy options to build a solution policy-makers can embrace as their own (Costain & Costain 1981). By not undertaking these activities in a consistent, strategic manner, civil society groups in this space have not built a foundation to underpin policy change when the window opens.

The result of this is that civil society groups are not managing to act as the check on government that they could be (Bereuter, Glickman & Reardon 2016). It is important that civil society operates effectively in this space, as while sustainability has not been incorporated into Australian food policy, civil society has been the main driver to-date of any push to do so (Caraher et al. 2013). If civil society steps away from policy advocacy it leaves a vacuum, and improving civil society advocacy could be the difference needed to achieve policy change. There is the question of ‘if not civil society, then who?’ In the case of sustainable food, it is difficult to imagine this role being played by business – which has successfully played an integral role in creating the current unsustainable system – or by government, which exists in silos uncondusive to food policy, and which has been guided by demands from business in previous policy formation (Carey et al. 2016).

4.5 Study limitations

There were some limitations to this study. While the research methods used were designed to facilitate open answers from respondents, it is possible that some types of policy advocacy may have been considered too sensitive to be discussed. The scope of this study was limited to Victoria, and to those stakeholders identified as policy advocates through desktop research. Given the range of activities undertaken by those interviewed, and the broader range of activities defined by frameworks used, a wider range of stakeholders could have been included under a different sampling method which may have yielded different results, e.g. stakeholders undertaking certification schemes. Including other civil society stakeholders who focus on one component of the food system, e.g. a particular farming practice, rather than food systems as a whole, may also have yielded different results. With more time, expanding the scope to a national study could prove fruitful, particularly given the level of government some advocacy targeted. Studying civil society and business stakeholder advocacy on food-related issues (including advocacy in opposition to sustainable food), or broader sustainability issues, could enable comparison with other stakeholders’ tactics and help to determine why advocacy for sustainable food systems is not achieving its policy goals. An ability to consider the role of other bodies such as think tanks or

advocacy-oriented academic groups within those other advocacy ecosystems may also add to the understanding of what is required to advance policy change.

5. Conclusion

It is widely recognised that the food system is fundamentally unsustainable, and that major transformation is required to achieve an environmentally sustainable, healthy and equitable food system. In the absence of strong government leadership, civil society stakeholders have an important role to play in advocating for the required policy change. However, this research has highlighted that civil society groups in Victoria currently undertake little proactive and strategic advocacy towards sustainable food systems.

Despite evidence of policy advocacy in the past, this research found that many of the groups advocating on sustainable food systems in Victoria were not currently prioritising policy advocacy. Instead they were mostly focused on broad awareness-raising and building alternative distribution systems. Policy advocacy was occurring only on topics for which policy change was the only option, i.e. no alternative system could be built; often these were regulatory issues. Advocacy was for the most part being undertaken reactively, as policy threats arose. The policy environment shaped advocacy through policy threats, and in the way that stakeholders chose not to focus on policy, because of past disappointments in policy failures, such as the National Food Plan. Many stakeholders felt the government had not been responsive to past advocacy efforts. The close ties between business and government created conditions in which there was a yawning ideological gap between the perspectives of government and groups engaged in sustainable food systems advocacy. Consequently, they had chosen not to focus on policy advocacy.

Lack of resources played an important role shaping civil society stakeholders' activities, in part due to reliance on volunteer time. Many groups focused on activities that were rewarding or tangible (when compared to long-term advocacy for significant policy change), or that offered income. Few groups were able to take time to develop an advocacy strategy or strategic alliances. Long-term, stable coalitions for the most part were not occurring, and coalition members were not generally willing to make strategic compromises to preserve the coalition and its core work. The exception to

this was in areas where only policy change could create a more sustainable outcome; for those particular advocacy targets, coalitions were being used more strategically and formally.

These findings suggest that the effectiveness of Victorian civil society policy advocacy could be improved through greater resources, if those were then used to develop more strategic, long-term policy advocacy. The relative infancy and small size of the sector appears to be playing a role in how stakeholders work together, and their willingness to create effective coalitions for policy advocacy, including whether they are willing to compromise in order to achieve policy change. This research echoes findings from Caraher et al. (2013) and Carey et al. (2016) that building cross-sectoral alliances with other food systems stakeholders and a broader range of allies would be a fruitful exercise for advocacy outcomes. International examples of success point to missing ingredients in Victorian civil society policy advocacy for sustainable food systems. More funding is required in Victoria to support similar activities locally.

In order for the policy change needed to create a more sustainable food system to occur, effective civil society policy advocacy is required. This needs to be proactive policy advocacy over a long period of time that lays the groundwork for the moment when a policy window opens. Strategic alliances, relationship-building, and re-framing of food systems issues are necessary to avoid repeating disappointments of the type that many civil society stakeholders identified as having previously experienced. For this type of advocacy to happen, it needs to be the focus for at least some civil society stakeholders. Developing a peak body which focuses specifically on maintaining a strong strategic alliance between stakeholders for the purpose of joint advocacy would help facilitate this, and funding of policy research and civil society stakeholder focused on policy advocacy would allow this to happen.

6. References

- ABS 2015, viewed 12 December 2016,
<www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4364.0.55.009?OpenDocument>
- Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance 2016a, viewed 8 December 2016,
<www.australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/about/history/>
- Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance 2016b, viewed 8 December 2016,
<www.australianfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/directory/>
- AgriBio 2016, viewed 6 December 2016, www.agribio.com.au/what-we-do
- Alden, JR 2012, *Development of the 1992 Australian Food and Nutrition Policy as a case study of policy process*, Flinders University, Adelaide.
- Albury Wodonga Regional Food Security Network 2016, viewed 11 December 2016,
<www.awcommunityguide.com.au/Directory/Details/tabid/67/view/640/organisation/Albury-Wodonga-Regional-Food-Security-Network/Default.aspx>
- Althaus, C, Bridgman, P & Davis, G 2013, *The Australian policy handbook*, 5th edn, Allen & Unwin, NSW.
- Andrews, KT & Edwards, B 2004, 'Advocacy organizations in the US political process', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 479-506.
- Aubrun, A, Brown, A & Grady, J 2006a, *All trees and no forest: how advocacy paradigms obscure public understanding of the food system*, Frameworks Institute, Washington, DC.
- Aubrun, A, Brown, A & Grady, J 2006b, *Conceptualizing US food systems with simplifying models findings from TalkBack testing*, Frameworks Institute, Washington, DC.

- Barling, D, Lang, T & Caraher, M 2002 'Joined-up food policy? The trials of governance, public policy and the food system', *Social Policy & Administration*, vol. 36, no. 6, pp. 556-574.
- Bedore, M 2014, 'The convening power of food as growth machine politics: a study of food policymaking and partnership formation in Baltimore', *Urban Studies*, vol. 51, no. 14, pp. 2979–2995.
- Bereuter, D, Glickman, D & Reardon, TA 2016, *Growing food for growing cities: transforming food systems in an urbanizing world*, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Chicago.
- Blay-Palmer, A (ed.) 2010, *Imagining sustainable food systems: theory and practice*, Ashgate, Burlington, Vermont.
- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, viewed 11 December 2016, <<http://bhfood.org.uk/policy-food-strategy>>
- Brinsden, H & Lang, T 2015, *An introduction to public health advocacy: reflections on theory and practice*, Food Research Collaboration Policy Brief, University of London, London.
- Bristol Food Policy Council 2016, viewed 11 December 2016, <<http://bristolfoodpolicycouncil.org/about/>>
- Burns, C 2004, *A review of the literature describing the link between poverty, food insecurity and obesity with specific reference to Australia*, VicHealth, Melbourne.
- Cairney, P 2016, *The politics of evidence-based policy making*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Campbell, A 2008, *Managing Australia's soils: a policy discussion paper*, National Committee on Soil and Terrain through the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, Canberra.
- Caraher, M, Carey, R, McConell, K & Lawrence, M 2013, 'Food policy development in

the Australian state of Victoria: a case study of the Food Alliance', *International Planning Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 78-95.

Caraher, M & Coveney, J, 2004, 'Public health nutrition and food policy', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 7, no. 5, pp. 591-598.

Carey, R, Caraher, M, Lawrence, M & Friel, S 2016, 'Opportunities and challenges in developing a whole-of-government national food and nutrition policy: lessons from Australia's National Food Plan', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 3–14.

Carolan, M 2011, *The real cost of cheap food*, Earthscan, Oxford.

Casey, J & Dalton, B 2006, 'The best of times, the worst of times: community sector advocacy in the age of "compacts"', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 23-38.

Casey, J 2011, *Understanding advocacy: a primer on the policy making role of nonprofit organizations*, City University of New York, New York.

City of Melbourne 2011, *Food policy discussion paper* viewed December 11 2016 <<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/food-policy-discussion-paper.pdf>>

City of Melbourne 2012, *Food City: City of Melbourne Food Policy*, City of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Clapp, J 2016, *Food*, 2nd edn, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Cohen, N 2012, 'Planning for urban agriculture: problem recognition, policy formation, and politics', in A Viljoen & JSC Wiskerke (eds), *Sustainable food planning: evolving theory and practice*, Wageningen Academic Publishers, Wageningen, pp. 103-114.

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability 2013, *Victoria state of the environment report 2013*, Victorian Government, Melbourne.

- Considine, M 1994, *Public policy: a critical approach*, Macmillan Education Australia, South Melbourne.
- Cordell, D, Drangert, J & White, S 2009, 'The story of phosphorous, global food security and food for thought', *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 292-305.
- Costain, WD & Costain, AN 1981, 'Interest groups as policy aggregators in the legislative process', *Polity*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 249-272.
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2013, *National food plan: our future food*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- De Schutter, O & Cordes, K (eds) 2011, *Accounting for hunger: the right to food in the era of globalisation*, Hart Publishing, Oxford.
- De Schutter, O 2010, *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter, to the United Nations Human Rights Council Sixteenth session, United Nations General Assembly, New York.*
- Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS 2005, *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd edn, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Derkzen, P & Morgan, K 2012, 'Food and the city: the challenge of urban food governance' in A Viljoen & JSC Wiskerke (eds), *Sustainable food planning: evolving theory and practice*, Wageningen Academic Publishers, Wageningen, pp. 61-66.
- Devin, B & Richards, C 2016, 'Food waste, power, and corporate social responsibility in the Australian food supply chain', *Journal of Business Ethics*, doi:10.1007/s10551-016-3181-z.
- Durrant, RA 2014a, 'Civil society roles in transition: towards sustainable food', Thesis (Ph.D.), University of Sussex, UK.
- Durrant, RA 2014b, *Civil society roles in transition: towards sustainable food?* Food Research Collaboration Policy Brief, University of London, London.

- Ezzy, D 2001, 'Are qualitative methods misunderstood?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 294-297.
- FAO 1992, viewed 12 December 2016, <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/v7700t/v7700t02.htm>>
- FAO 2009, viewed 11 December 2016, *World summit on food security*, <http://www.fao.org/wsfs/world-summit/en/?no_cache=1>
- FAO 2016a, *The state of food and agriculture 2016 (SOFA): climate change, agriculture and food security*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome.
- FAO 2016b, viewed 10 December 2016, <<http://www.fao.org/ag/ags/sustainable-food-consumption-and-production/en/>>
- FAO, IFAD & WFP 2015, *The state of food insecurity in the world 2015. Meeting the 2015 international hunger targets: taking stock of uneven progress*, FAO, Rome.
- Farmar-Bowers, Q, Higgins, V, & Millar, J (eds) 2013, *Food security in Australia: challenges and prospects for the future*, Springer, New York.
- Flick, U 2002, *An introduction to qualitative research*, 2nd edn, Sage Publications, London.
- Food Alliance 2015, viewed 1 December 2015 <www.foodalliance.org.au>
- Food Ethics Council 2011, *The food issues census: a survey of UK civil society*, Food Ethics Council, London.
- Food Research Collaboration Network 2016, viewed 8 December 2016, <<http://foodresearch.org.uk/what-we-do/>>
- Foresight 2011, *The future of food and farming: challenges and choices for global sustainability final report*, Government Office for Science, London.
- Friel, S 2009, *Health equity in Australia: a policy framework based on action on the social determinants of obesity, alcohol and tobacco*, The Australian National

Preventative Health Taskforce, Canberra.

Fyfield, A & Ridley, L 2015, *Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report 2014-15*, Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources, Victorian Government, Melbourne.

Garnaut, R 2011, *The Garnaut Review 2011: Australia in the global response to climate change*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Garnett, T 2014, 'Three perspectives on sustainable food security: efficiency, demand restraint, food system transformation. What role for life cycle assessment?', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 10–18.

Garnett, T, Mathewson, S, Angelides, P & Borthwick, F 2015, *Policies and actions to shift eating patterns: what works? A review of the evidence of the effectiveness of interventions aimed at shifting diets in more sustainable and healthy directions*, Food Climate Research Network, Oxford, and Chatham House, London.

Gen, S & Wright, AC 2013, 'Policy advocacy organizations: a framework linking theory and practice', *Journal of Policy Practice*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 163–193.

Gillham, B 2000, *Case study research methods [electronic resource]*, Continuum, London, New York.

Given, L 2016, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, California.

Geelong G21 Food Security Network 2016, viewed 11 December 2016, <<http://www.g21.com.au/g21-food-security-network>>

Godfray, HCJ, Beddington, JR, Crute, IR, Haddad, L, Lawrence, D, Muir, JF et al. 2010, 'Food security: the challenge of feeding 9 billion people', *Science*, vol. 327, no. 5967, pp. 812-818.

- Godwin, K, Ainsworth, SH, & Godwin, E 2013, *Lobbying and policymaking: the public pursuit of private interests*, CQ Press an Imprint of SAGE Publishing, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Greenspan, I 2014, 'How Can Bourdieu's theory of capital benefit the understanding of advocacy NGOs? Theoretical framework and empirical illustration', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 99–120.
- Harper, A, Shattuck, A, Holt-Giménez, E, Alkon, A & Lambrick, F 2009, *Food policy councils: lessons learned*, Food First, Institute for Food and Development Policy, Oakland, California.
- Healthy Together Victoria 2014 *Healthy Food Connect: A support resource* Victorian Department of Health, Melbourne.
- Heffernan, W, Hendrickson, MK & Gronski, R 1999, *Report to the National Farmers Union: consolidation in the food and agriculture system*, National Farmers Union, Missouri.
- Hendrickson, MK & James, HS 2005, 'The ethics of constrained choice: how the industrialization of agriculture impacts farming and farmer behavior', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 269–291.
- Heywood, P & Lund-Adams, M 1991, 'The Australian food and nutrition system: a basis for policy formulation and analysis', *Australian Journal of Public Health*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 258-270.
- HLPE 2014, *Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems*, Report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.
- Hughes, L & Steffen, W 2015, *Feeding a hungry nation: climate change, food and farming in Australia*, Climate Council of Australia, Sydney.

- Hula, KW 1999, *Lobbying together: interest group coalitions in legislative politics*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC.
- Ingram, J, Ericksen, P & Liverman, D (eds) 2010, *Food security and global environmental change*, Earthscan, UK.
- International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems 2015, *The new science of sustainable food systems: overcoming barriers to food systems reform*, viewed 6 December 2016, <http://www.ipes-food.org/images/Reports/IPES_report01_1505_web_br_pages.pdf>
- Jacobson, M 2007, 'Food matters', *Journal of Community Practice*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 37–55.
- Johnson, H 2015, 'Eating for health and the environment: Australian regulatory responses for dietary change', *QUT Law Review*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 122-139.
- Kingdon, JW 1995, *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*, Harper Collins College Publishers, New York.
- Kivimäki, M, Vineis, P & Brunner, EJ 2015, 'How can we reduce the global burden of disease?' *The Lancet*, vol. 386, no. 10010, pp. 2235-2237.
- Koç, M, MacRae, R, Desjardins, E & Roberts, W 2008, 'Getting civil about food: the interactions between civil society and the state to advance sustainable food systems in Canada', *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, vol. 3, no. 2-3, pp. 122-144.
- Koç, M, MacRae, R, Noack, A & Üstündağ, ÖG 2012, 'What is food studies? Characterizing an emerging academic field through the eyes of Canadian scholars', in M Koç, J Sumner & A Winson (eds), *Critical perspectives in food studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 4-16.
- Lang, T 2005, 'Food control or food democracy? Re-engaging nutrition with society and the environment', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 8, no. 6A, pp. 730–737.

- Lang T & Heasman, M 2004, *Food wars: the global battle for mouths, minds and markets*, Earthscan publications, London.
- Lang, T & Barling, B 2012, 'Food security and food sustainability: reformulating the debate', *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 178, no. 4, pp. 313–326.
- Lang, T, Barling, D & Caraher, M 2009, *Food policy: integrating health, environment and society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Lang, T, Rayner, G, Rayner, M, Barling, D & Millstone, E 2005, 'Policy councils on food, nutrition and physical activity: the UK as a case study', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 11-19.
- Lawrence, G, Richards, C & Lyons, K 2013, 'Food security in Australia in an era of neoliberalism, productivism and climate change', *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol. 29, pp. 30–39.
- Lerner, D & Lasswell, HD 1951, *The policy sciences: recent developments in scope and method*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Lim, SS, Vos, T, Flaxman, AD, Danaei, G, Shibuya, K, Adair-Rohani, H et al. 2012, 'A comparative risk assessment of burden of disease and injury attributable to 67 risk factors and risk factor clusters in 21 regions, 1990–2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010', *The Lancet*, vol. 380, no. 9859, pp. 2224–2260.
- Lindberg, R, Lawrence, M, Gold, L, Friel, S & Pegram, D 2015, 'Food insecurity in Australia: implications for general practitioners', *Australian Family Physician*, vol. 44, no. 11, pp. 859-862.
- Love food hate waste 2016, viewed 6 December 2016,
<<http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.vic.gov.au/>>
- MacRae, R & Donahue, K 2013, *Municipal food policy entrepreneurs: a preliminary analysis of how Canadian cities and regional districts are involved in food system change*, Toronto Food Policy Council, Toronto.

- MacRae, R 2011, 'A joined-up food policy for Canada', *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 424-457.
- Marsden, T & Morley, A (eds) 2014, *Sustainable food systems: building a new paradigm*, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon and New York.
- McDonald, D 2013, 'Food security and soil health', in Q Farmar-Bowers, V Higgins & J Millar (eds), *Food security in Australia: challenges and prospects for the future*, Springer, New York, pp. 247-258.
- McIntyre, S 2014, 'Farming, pastoralism and forestry' in Morton, S, Sheppard, A and Lonsdale, M, *Biodiversity*, CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood.
- McKenzie, F 2016, *Mapping Victoria's food system: outputs of the Ripe for Change Initiative*, Australian Futures Project, Melbourne.
- Meat free Mondays 2016, viewed 6 December 2016,
<<http://www.meatfreemondays.com/>>
- Mendes, W 2006 'Creating a "just and sustainable" food system in the City of Vancouver: the role of governance, partnerships and policy-making', Thesis (Ph.D.) Simon Fraser University, Canada.
- Mendes, W 2008, 'Implementing social and environmental policies in cities: the case of food policy in Vancouver, Canada', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 942-967.
- Morse, JM 2004, 'Purposive sampling', in M Lewis-Beck, A Bryman, & T Futing Liao (eds), *The SAGE encyclopedia of social science research methods*, SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, California, pp. 1-3.
- National Health and Medical Research Council 2013, *Australian dietary guidelines*, NH&MRC, Canberra.
- Nellemann, C, MacDevette, M, Manders, T, Eickhout, B, Svihus, B, Prins, AG & Kaltenborn, BP (eds) 2009, *The environmental food crisis – the environment's role*

in averting future food crises. A UNEP rapid response assessment, United Nations Environment Programme, GRID-Arendal, www.grida.no.

Nestle M 2002, *Food politics: how the food industry influences nutrition and health*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California.

NHMRC 2011, *NHMRC Annual Report 2010-2011*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Olsen, W 2011, *Data collection: key debates and methods in social research*, SAGE Publications, London.

Ostrom, E 1990, *Governing the commons: the evolution of institutions for collective actions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Parfitt, C, Rose, N, Green, C, Alden, J & Belby, A 2013, *The people's food plan*, Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance, Canberra.

Parker, C & Scrinis, G 2014, 'Out of the cage and into the barn: supermarket power food system governance and the regulation of free range eggs', *Griffith Law Review*, vol. 23, no. 22, pp. 318-347.

Parker, C 2014, 'The food label as governance space: free-range eggs and the fallacy of consumer choice', *Recht der Werkelijkheid*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 101-133.

Patel, R 2007, *Stuffed and starved: markets, power and the hidden battle for the world food system*, Black Inc., Melbourne.

PMSEIC 2010, *Australia and food security in a changing world*, The Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council, Canberra.

Pollard, A & Court, J 2005. *How civil society organisations use evidence to influence policy processes: a literature review*, Overseas Development Institute Working Paper 249, London.

Porter, JR, Xie, L, Challinor, AJ, Cochrane, K, Howden, SM, Iqbal, MM et al. 2014, 'Food security and food production systems', in CB Field, VR Barros, DJ Dokken, KJ Mach,

- MD Mastrandrea, TE Bilir et al. (eds), *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, pp. 485-533.
- Pothukuchi, K, Joseph, H, Burton, H & Fisher, A (authors) and Siedenburg, K & Pothukuchi, K (eds) 2002, *What's cooking in your food system? A guide to community food assessment*, Community Food Security Coalition, Venice, California.
- Powles, J, Wahlqvist, M, Robbins, J, King, C & Hicks, N 1992, 'The development of food and nutrition policy in Australia, with special attention to the State of Victoria', *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp.47–60.
- Reisinger et al. 2014 'Australasia' In Barros et al. (eds) *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part B: Regional Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Renting, H, Schermer, M & Rossi, A 2012, 'Building food democracy: exploring civic food networks and newly emerging forms of food citizenship', *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 289–307.
- Richards, L & Morse, JM 2007, *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*, 2nd edn, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Richards, Z, Thomas, SL, Randle, M & Pettigrew, S 2015, 'Corporate social responsibility programs of Big Food in Australia: a content analysis of industry documents', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 39, no. 6, pp. 550–556.
- Ridgway EM, Lawrence MA and Woods J 2015, 'Integrating environmental sustainability considerations into food and nutrition policies: insights from Australia's National Food Plan', *Frontiers in Nutrition*, vol. 2, article 29, doi: 10.3389/fnut.2015.00029.

- Right to Food Coalition 2016, viewed 11 December 2016,
<<https://righttofood.org.au/>>
- Ripe for Change 2016, viewed 8 December 2016,
<<https://aegn.org.au/grantmakers/sustainable-agriculture-and-food-systems/ripe-for-change/>>
- Roots of Change 2016a, viewed 11 December 2016,
<<http://www.rootsofchange.org/what-we-do/current-collaborative-projects/>>
- Roots of Change 2016b, viewed 11 December 2016,
<<http://www.rootsofchange.org/projects/engaging-food-policy-councils-across-land/>>
- Rose, N (ed.) 2015, *Fair food: stories from a movement changing the world*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane.
- Sabatier, PA 1998, 'The advocacy coalition framework: revisions and relevance for Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 98–130.
- Salisbury RH 1990, 'The paradox of interest groups in Washington: more interest groups less clout', in A King (ed.), *The New American Political System*, AEI Press, Washington, DC.
- Schlager, E 1995, 'Policy making and collective action: defining coalitions within the Advocacy Coalition Framework', *Policy Sciences*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 243–270.
- Schwandt, T 2011, 'Thematic analysis', in T Schwandt (ed.), *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry*, SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, California, pp. 1–2.
- Sonnino, R 2016, 'The new geography of food security: exploring the potential of urban food strategies', *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 182, no. 2, pp. 190–200.
- Stierand P 2012, 'Food policy councils: recovering the local level in food policy' in A Viljoen & JSC Wiskerke (eds), *Sustainable food planning: evolving theory and practice*, Wageningen Academic Publishers, Wageningen, pp. 67–77.

- Stuckler, D & Nestle, M 2012, 'Big food, food systems, and global health', *PLoS Medicine*, vol. 9, no. 6, pp. e1001242–5.
- Sustain 2016, viewed 11 December 2016, <<https://www.sustainweb.org/about/>>
- Sustain, The Australian Food Network 2016, viewed 8 December 2016, <<http://www.circlesoffood.org/about/history/>>
- Sustainable food cities network 2016, viewed 11 December 2016, <<http://sustainablefoodcities.org/about>>
- Swinburn, B, Egger, G & Raza, F 1999, 'Dissecting obesogenic environments: the development and application of a framework for identifying and prioritizing environmental interventions for obesity', *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 563–570.
- Trevena, H, Kaldor, JC & Downs, SM 2015, "'Sustainability does not quite get the attention it deserves": synergies and tensions in the sustainability frames of Australian food policy actors', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 18, no. 13, pp. 2323-2332.
- UNEP 2016, *Food systems and natural resources. A report of the Working Group on Food Systems of the International Resource Panel. Westhoek, H, Ingram J, Van Berkum, S, Özay, L, and Hajer M*, United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya.
- VicHealth 2016, viewed 30 November 2016 <<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search?category=Food%20systems>>
- World Bank 2013, viewed 12 December 2016, <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.ARBL.ZS>>
- World Health Organization 2009, *Global health risks: mortality and burden of disease attributable to selected major risks*, World Health Organization, Geneva.

World Health Organization 2016, viewed 12 December 2016,
<<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/>>

Yeatman, H 2008, 'Action or inaction? Food and nutrition in Australian local governments', *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 12, no. 9, pp. 1399-1407.

Yeatman, HR 2003, 'Food and nutrition policy at the local level: key factors that influence the policy development process', *Critical Public Health*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 125–138.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Letter of ethics approval

9 May 2016

Dr R.M Carey
Architecture, Building and Planning
The University of Melbourne



FACULTY OF
VETERINARY &
AGRICULTURAL
SCIENCES

Dear Dr Carey

I am pleased to advise that the Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences Human Ethics Advisory Group has approved the following Minimal Risk Project.

Project title: **Strategies used by civil society stakeholders in Victoria to advocate for sustainable food systems**
Researchers: **Dr R M Carey, J Sheridan**
Ethics ID: **1646380**

The Project has been approved for the period: **09-May-2016 to 31-Dec-2016.**

It is your responsibility to ensure that all people associated with the Project are made aware of what has actually been approved.

Research projects are normally approved to 31 December of the year of approval. Projects may be renewed yearly for up to a total of five years upon receipt of a satisfactory annual report. If a project is to continue beyond five years a new application will normally need to be submitted.

Please note that the following conditions apply to your approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval and/or disciplinary action.

- (a) **Limit of Approval:** Approval is limited strictly to the research as submitted in your Project application.
- (b) **Amendments to Project:** Any subsequent variations or modifications you might wish to make to the Project must be notified formally to the Human Ethics Advisory Group for further consideration and approval before the revised Project can commence. If the Human Ethics Advisory Group considers that the proposed amendments are significant, you may be required to submit a new application for approval of the revised Project.
- (c) **Incidents or adverse affects:** Researchers must report immediately to the Advisory Group and the relevant Sub-Committee anything which might affect the ethical acceptance of the protocol including adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the Project. Failure to do so may result in suspension or cancellation of approval.
- (d) **Monitoring:** All projects are subject to monitoring at any time by the Human Research Ethics Committee.
- (e) **Annual Report:** Please be aware that the Human Research Ethics Committee requires that researchers submit an annual report on each of their projects at the end of the year, or at the conclusion of a project if it continues for less than this time. Failure to submit an annual report will mean that ethics approval will lapse.
- (f) **Auditing:** All projects may be subject to audit by members of the Sub-Committee.

Please quote the ethics registration number and the name of the Project in any future correspondence. On behalf of the Ethics Committee I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'V. M. Bowles'.

A/Prof Vernon Bowles - Chair
Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences Human Ethics Advisory Group

Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences
The University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010 Australia
T: +61 3 8344 7357 F: +61 3 8344 7374

unimelb.edu.au

Appendix 2 – Interview topic guide

Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences



Interview topic guide

Project: Strategies used by civil society stakeholders in Australia to advocate for sustainable food systems

**** Ensure consent form is signed ****

*Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. The **interview will last around 45 minutes, and you can stop the interview at any time.***

This interview is for a research project I'm undertaking as a student of the University of Melbourne, towards a Master of Environment degree.

The purpose of the interview is to discuss your experience of advocating for sustainable food systems in Australia. I'm interested in:

- *The activities and strategies you have used to advocate for sustainable food systems, and how those were chosen*
- *What has shaped these activities and strategies*

There are no right or wrong answers. I am speaking to a range of stakeholders, and I'm interested in your personal opinion and perspective on this topic.

Introductory questions, covering the stakeholder's involvement in advocacy for sustainable food systems, and the interviewee's role.

1. What is your involvement in advocacy towards sustainable food systems?

Prompting questions to be used as needed

- 1.1 What specific issues does your advocacy focus on?
- 1.2 What are the goals of the advocacy?
- 1.3 Why were those goals chosen?
- 1.4 What activities or campaigns do you use to support your advocacy?
- 1.5 Who did you choose to aim your advocacy efforts at?
- 1.6 How was that target chosen?

Questions exploring external influences on the stakeholder's advocacy

2. Do you adjust your advocacy strategies to suit the political context and policy environment in Victoria and, if so, how?

Prompting questions to be used as needed

- 2.1 Does the Victorian policy environment influence the specific issues that you choose to focus on?
- 2.2 Does the Victorian policy environment influence your choice of messages? How?
- 2.3 What challenges do you face in advocating for policies to support sustainable food systems in Victoria?
- 2.4 How do you address those challenges?

When have you chosen to focus your advocacy on areas other than policy, and why?

Questions exploring the role of alliance- and coalition-building in sustainable food systems advocacy in Victoria

3. Do you ever form alliances with any other organisations or individuals to advocate for policies to support sustainable food systems in Australia?

Prompting questions to be used as needed

- 3.1 Why have you chosen to, or chosen not to, form alliances in your advocacy work?
- 3.2 What types of alliances do you form?
- 3.3 What is the aim of the alliances?
- 3.4 Are there particular benefits or challenges of forming alliances?

2

- 3.5 Have there been examples of recommendations from other alliance members shaping your individual advocacy strategy choices? Or where your advice of what works has shaped other alliance members' strategy choices?

Questions exploring the role of capital, skills, capacity and individuals' contributions?

Do the resources available to you shape your advocacy? And if so, how?

To what extent is your advocacy shaped by the skills, past experience, and capacity of particular individuals?

Were there particular relationships that helped guide your advocacy?

To what extent are your alliances shaped by individuals' relationships and networks in your group?

Were there specific relationships that were important in connecting you to policy-makers?

Questions exploring delivery and medium

4. What methods of communication do you use to advocate for sustainable food system?

Prompting questions to be used as needed

5. What are some different methods of communication you have used for advocacy?
- 5.1 What made you choose to use those methods?
- 5.2 Do your choices differ based on advocacy aims?
- 5.3 Do your choices differ based on the audience of the advocacy?
- 5.4 How do you choose the medium for delivery of your message?
- 5.5 Did you find that policy-makers responded better to different formats?

Open-ended wrap up

6. Is there anything else that you think is important to consider when discussing strategies used for advocacy towards sustainable food systems in Victoria, the policy environment influencing those activities, or the role of alliance-building in this area?
7. Is there anything else that you think we haven't covered that is relevant to your advocacy experience?

Thank you for your time today. Your contribution is a valuable part of this research. I will be sending you a transcript to approve.



How To Use This Form

- 1. Consider and refer to relevant guidelines and regulations.**
References to specific guidelines are provided, with hyperlinks, throughout this form. The primary guide for human research ethics in Australia is the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2007\) - Updated May 2015](#). Human research ethics applications at the University of Melbourne are reviewed and approved under the warrant of the *National Statement*. References to the *National Statement* are abbreviated (e.g. [NS §2.1](#).)
- 2. Use plain English.**
Use clear, non-technical language in your application. Be concise. Spell out the first instances of acronyms and abbreviations. Avoid jargon. Do not repeat information. Following these directions ensures effective review of your application. It will avoid unnecessary delays which result if applications are not clear and concise.
- 3. Consider ethical principles.**
Your application will be reviewed according to the principles of ethical research outlined in the *National Statement*, namely:

 - **Research Merit and Integrity** ([NS §1.1 - §1.3](#))
 - **Justice** ([NS §1.4 - §1.5](#))
 - **Beneficence** ([NS §1.6 - §1.9](#))
 - **Respect** ([NS §1.10 - §1.13](#))
- 4. Use the current version of the application form.**
Ensure that you are using the current version by downloading this form each time you prepare a new application.
- 5. Detailed instructions for specific questions are available online.**
If you are unsure about how best to answer a particular question, consult the Human Research Ethics [Guidance Document](#). That document provides detailed guidance on how to answer specific questions in this form.
- 6. Where possible, avoid printing this form.**
Consult your HEAG to find out if they still require hard copies of your application. If you must print this form, consider printing double-sided and in grayscale (black and white).
- 7. Save your completed application as a PDF and upload it to Themis.**
Refer to your local Human Ethics Advisory Group ([HEAG](#)) for detailed instructions on how and when to submit your application.

ANSWER ALL OF THE QUESTIONS IN THIS FORM

Ethics ID number: <i>(assigned by Themis)</i>	1646380.1		
Project Title: <i>(as recorded in Themis)</i>	Strategies used by civil society stakeholders in Victoria to advocate for sustainable food systems		
Responsible Researcher: <i>(as recorded in Themis)</i>	Dr Rachel Carey		
Application Type: <i>(mark with an "X")</i>	x	Minimal Risk	Standard Project

1. Project Details

1.1 Project Summary

Summarise your research project in plain language.
[Limit: 300 words]

Civil society stakeholders make an important contribution to advocating for sustainable food systems and policy that supports those systems in Australia, but there is little understanding of processes and strategies used by these groups, and what external influences shape advocacy efforts. There is a growing awareness in food system research that this is an area which should be more thoroughly researched and better understood. This project looks at the processes and strategies used by civil society stakeholders in Victoria to advocate for sustainable food systems and supportive policy, particularly the place of alliance-building, and the method of communication chosen by organisations to achieve their advocacy goals. The overarching research question is:

What strategies do civil society stakeholders use in advocacy towards sustainable food systems in Victoria?

Sub-topics will consider:

What is the role of alliance or coalition-building in civil society advocacy to promote sustainable food systems in Victoria?

How does the policy advocacy environment shape civil society stakeholders' choice of advocacy strategy?

How do civil society stakeholders choose communication method and medium for sustainable food systems advocacy?

The research uses a qualitative approach, based on 45-minute semi-structured interviews with 10-12 Victorian stakeholders who advocate for sustainable food systems. Interview participants will be drawn from desktop review, the researchers' involvement in this field, and through recommendations from participants. Participants will be interviewed for around 45 minutes, consent will be voluntary and participants are able to leave the study at any time. All data and analysis that arises from interviews will have identifying data removed, and outcomes of the project will keep the identity of participants anonymous.

Specific Guidelines Checklist

Type an "X" in the left-hand column beside all items that apply to your research project. Linked sections of the National Statement contain relevant guidelines and requirements that you need to address when completing your application.

	Children and/or young people (< 18 years old) will be recruited as participants.	→ Refer to NS §4.2 .
	People in dependent or unequal relationships will be recruited as participants. (There are pre-existing relationships between participants and researchers, or between participants and others involved in facilitating or implementing the research. E.g. student/teacher, patient/doctor, employee/employer.)	→ Refer to NS §4.3 .
	People in countries other than Australia will be recruited as participants.	→ Refer to NS §4.8 .
	One or more of the following describes the research project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it will be about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals or peoples, their health, or their culture(s), language(s) or histories; • it will be about the impact(s) or effect(s) of some phenomenon or phenomena on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals or peoples; • it will <i>specifically target</i> Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to be recruited as participants; • it will be conducted in a geographic location where a significant number of the population are likely to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. 	→ Refer to NS §4.7 . → Refer to Values and Ethics . → Refer to GERAIS . → This application is ineligible for minimal risk review.
	One or both of the following describes the research project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it will <i>specifically target</i> women who are pregnant to be recruited as participants; • it will be focused on women who are pregnant and/or the human foetus (including human foetal tissue or human embryos). 	→ Refer to NS §4.1 . → This application is ineligible for minimal risk review.
	People who may be involved in illegal activities will be recruited as participants, <i>and the research project could potentially expose such activities</i> .	→ Refer to NS §4.6 . → This application is <i>likely</i> ineligible for minimal risk review.
	People with cognitive impairment, intellectual disability, or mental illness will be recruited as participants.	→ Refer to NS §4.5 . → This application is ineligible for minimal risk review.
	People who are highly dependent on medical care will be recruited as participants.	→ Refer to NS §4.4 . → This application is ineligible for minimal risk review.
x	None of the above applies to this research project.	

Additional Modules Checklist	
<p>Type an "X" in the left-hand column beside all items that apply to your research project. This checklist will help you determine if you need to complete any other modules in addition to this application form. Linked sections of the <i>National Statement</i> contain relevant guidelines and requirements that you need to address when completing this form and any applicable additional modules.</p>	
	<p>This research project will involve the creation of a databank.</p>
	<p>→ Refer to NS §3.2. → Complete and attach the Privacy and Databanks Module.</p>
	<p>This research project will involve the collection of information for a databank.</p>
	<p>→ Refer to NS §3.2. → Complete and attach the Privacy and Databanks Module.</p>
	<p>This research project will involve accessing information from an existing databank.</p>
	<p>→ Refer to NS §3.2. → Complete and attach the Privacy and Databanks Module.</p>
	<p>This research project will involve obtaining identifiable (or potentially identifiable) personal information (including health information) about individuals without their consent.</p>
	<p>→ Complete and attach the Privacy and Databanks Module.</p>
	<p>This research project will involve the collection and/or use of human tissue/biological samples or materials (e.g. blood, saliva, cheek swabs, hair, human embryonic or foetal tissue).</p>
	<p>→ Refer to NS §3.4. → Complete and attach the Body Tissue and Genetic Research Module.</p>
	<p>This research project will involve human genetics.</p>
	<p>→ Refer to NS §3.5. → This application is ineligible for minimal risk review. → Complete and attach the Body Tissue and Genetic Research Module.</p>
	<p>This research project will involve medical interventions, therapies or trials.</p>
	<p>→ Refer to NS §3.3. → This application is ineligible for minimal risk review. → Complete and attach the Interventions, Therapies and Trials Module.</p>
	<p>This research project will involve administration of ionising radiation.</p>
	<p>→ Complete and attach the Ionising Radiation Module.</p>
x	<p>None of the above applies to this research project.</p>

2. Background and Method

2.1 Background and Significance	Provide a summary of background information. Explain the significance of the proposed research in the context of this background. Refer to NS §5.2.5. [Limit: 500 words]
<p>A) Background:</p> <p>Civil society stakeholders play an important role in advocating for sustainable food systems, and while there are theories around the roles groups can play in this type of space (Bracken, Oughton 2013) there is little understanding of the strategies used by civil society stakeholders to influence policy change towards more sustainable food systems, particularly in an Australian context.</p> <p>There is an emerging body of research internationally about the role of civil society stakeholders in bringing about sustainable food systems, but much of this is focused in the northern hemisphere and particularly in the UK, including a 2011 'census' of sustainable food systems civil society organisations in the UK which explored the roles and contributions made to the food system by those organisations (Food Ethics Council 2011). A recent UK study of civil society stakeholders advocating for sustainable food systems found that "little is known by academics, policy-makers and the public alike about how civil society stakeholders operate...it is high time that evidence of their strategies and contributions to</p>	

sustainability is made widely available" (Durrant 2014).

B) Significance of This Research:

This project attempts to contribute knowledge and evidence to this emerging field of research, and aims to contribute findings from within an Australian context to benefit the Australian research community and provide a point of comparison for international studies being undertaken.

An understanding of the strategies and processes being used in this space will also benefit the civil society stakeholder community attempting to undertake this type of advocacy work. Increased understanding of this topic has the potential to improve civil society stakeholders' advocacy practice in this field, which in turn could lead to improved research-to-policy translation or other improved efficiencies for stakeholders (many of which are publicly funded) in communicating their messages to policy-makers.

2.2 Research Design and Method

Provide details of your research design and your proposed method. Refer to [NS §5.2.5 - §5.2.6](#).

Attach a copy of any measures, scales, questionnaires, survey instruments (including online surveys), interview questions/themes, and/or focus group topics/questions to be used.

A) Participants (or Recruitment Targets, such as medical records):

Around 10-12 participants will be interviewed. They will all be over the age of 18 and working or volunteering in food system advocacy in Victoria. They will be recruited via desktop review, personal contacts of the researchers and the snowball approach, as described below.

As a qualitative study, the focus is on depth of understanding and the ability to provide thick description of the area being studied, rather than breadth of sample size. Food systems advocacy is a relatively small field in Australia, so 10-12 participants represents a good sample of the relevant field. The majority of Australian organisations and individuals advocating for sustainable food systems are based in Victoria (Victoria is the 'hub' of this activity in Australia), so Victorian-based interviews will capture a sound cross-section of interviewees.

B) Recruitment:

Participants will be identified through desktop research, and via the responsible researcher's and student researcher's networks in this field. Contact details for participants identified through desktop research will be obtained via the websites of their organisations or through other publicly available sources of information, such as submissions to policy consultations. Participants will also be asked for suggestions of other potential participants. Permission to contact subsequent participants will be sought from original participants, if the secondary participants contact details are not publically available

Participants will be contacted via email by the student researcher and will be forwarded the plain language statement and consent form. Participants will confirm their consent to participate by returning the consent form to the student researcher via email or by signing the consent form prior to the beginning of the interview. If interviews are conducted over the phone or via Skype, participants will be asked to scan the signed consent form and return it via email prior to the interview.

C) Participant Incentives:

N/A

D) Participant Task(s):

Participants will be asked to consent to be interviewed for around 45 minutes. Interviews will be

conducted at a time and place that is convenient for participants, typically the participant's workplace. The interview will be conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule, with a small number of open-ended questions and follow-up prompts that relate directly to the over-arching research questions (see the attached interview schedule).

E) Data/Material Collection Technique(s):

Interviews will be audio-recorded with participant consent using a handheld digital recorder, and written notes will also be taken during the interview. If participants do not consent to audio-recording of the interview then only written notes will be taken. Due to the time constraints of a student Masters dissertation, interviews will be partially transcribed, rather than fully transcribed. That is, significant parts of the interview will be transcribed by the student researcher, rather than transcribing the entire interview.

F) Data Analysis:

Data will be analysed using thematic analysis – key themes will be identified from the interview responses that relate to the over-arching research questions. Participant confidentiality will be protected in reporting of the data by referring only to the broad professional sector that participants belong to (e.g. environmental advocacy, local food advocacy).

3. Risks, Benefits and Monitoring

3.1 Potential Risks to Participants	<p>Does your research project pose any potential risks to participants? What are those risks? How will they be negated, minimised or managed? Refer to NS §2.1.</p> <p>Note that the risks you identify here should also be described in your Plain Language Statement (PLS). Attach a copy of any distress protocol or adverse event protocol (if applicable).</p>
<p>A) Potential Risks Due to the small number of people involved in advocacy for sustainable food systems, it is possible that some of the participants could be identified.</p> <p>B) Risk Management Strategy All possible steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality, including identifying interview participants by their professional sector only e.g. 'environmental advocacy' or 'local food advocacy.' Contextual details that could allow the participant to be identified will be removed. Interview data and transcripts will also be held on a password-protected computer at the University of Melbourne.</p>	

3.2 Potential Risks to Non-Participants	<p>Does your research project pose any potential risks to non-participants? (This could possibly include risks to researchers or independent contractors.) If so, how will these risks be minimised? Refer to NS §2.1.</p>
<p>Potential risks to non-participants are minimal. All interviews are being conducted in public or work places, and are not touching on high-risk topics.</p>	

3.3 Risks, Benefits and Justification	<p>In light of the risks and expected benefits of the research project, explain how the expected benefits of the research justify any risks it may pose. Refer to NS §1.6 - §1.7 and NS §2.1.</p>
<p>A) Expected Benefits</p>	

This project attempts to contribute knowledge and evidence to the emerging field of food system advocacy research, and aims to contribute findings from within an Australian context to benefit the Australian research community and provide a point of comparison for international studies being undertaken.

An understanding of the strategies and processes being used in this space will also benefit the civil society stakeholder community attempting to undertake this type of advocacy work. Increased understanding of this topic has the potential to improve civil society stakeholders' advocacy practice in this field, which in turn could lead to improved research-to-policy translation or other improved efficiencies for stakeholders (many of which are publicly funded) in communicating their messages to policy-makers.

B) Justification of Risks by Expected Benefits

There are no risks that are greater than inconvenience involved with this project. The slight risk that participants might be identified is mitigated by removing all identifying material and answers, and participants will have also given their consent to participate in interviews having been provided with all information about that potential risk. As identified in 3.3A, the research should also benefit the community from which participants are drawn, and will contribute new knowledge which participants may use to improve practice.

3.4 Management and Monitoring	How will researchers manage and monitor conduct of the research project? Refer to NS §5.5 .
<p>A) Management The student researcher will conduct and analyse all interviews and recruit all interviewees under the direct supervision of the responsible researcher. The student researcher will follow the protocol established for recruiting and interviewing participants, including providing plain language statements and consent forms when interviewees are first approached, secure storage of data and maintaining participant confidentiality. All interviews will be conducted in Victoria, where the responsible researcher is based, allowing for regular and close supervision.</p> <p>B) Monitoring The student will meet with the responsible researcher for regular supervision meetings and the responsible researcher will review lists of proposed interviewees, interview schedules and other materials before interviews take place. The responsible researcher will also review emerging findings and the reporting of results to ensure the established protocols are followed to protect confidentiality and the security of data.</p> <p>C) Independent Contractors N/A</p>	

4. Consent

4.1 Obtaining Informed Consent	Type an "X" in the left-hand column beside as many of the following options as apply to your research project. Use the space provided below to explain how you will obtain informed consent from participants. If you seek a waiver of consent, or the use of opt-out consent, use the space provided to justify your request. Refer to NS §2.2 , NS §2.3 .	
x	Written consent will be sought from (or on behalf of) participants.	<p>→ Refer to NS §2.2.6.</p> <p>→ Attach a copy of your consent form(s).</p>

	Verbal consent will be sought from (or on behalf of) participants.	<p>→ Refer to NS §2.2.5 - §2.2.6.</p> <p>→ Explain why you have chosen this form of consent, and how an individual's consent to participate will be recorded.</p> <p>→ Attach a copy of your consent script(s).</p>
	Consent will be implied, rather than explicitly obtained.	<p>→ Refer to NS §2.2.5 - §2.2.6.</p> <p>→ Explain why you have chosen this form of consent.</p>
	Third parties (e.g. parents/guardians of minors) will provide consent on behalf of participants.	<p>→ Refer to NS §2.2.12.</p> <p>→ Explain who will be providing consent on behalf of participants and why.</p>
	Third parties (e.g. community elders, school boards) will be involved in whole of community participation decisions.	<p>→ Refer to NS §2.2.13.</p> <p>→ Provide details of which third parties will be involved, why they will be involved, and how this will be accomplished.</p>
	This application seeks a waiver of consent.	→ Explain why you are seeking this option. Justify your request by referring to the conditions described in NS §2.3.10 - §2.3.11 .
	This application proposes to use opt-out consent.	→ Explain why you are seeking this option. Justify your request by referring to the conditions described in NS §2.3.6 .
<p>Participants will be contacted via email by the student researcher and will be forwarded the plain language statement and consent form. Participants will confirm their consent to participate by returning the consent form to the student researcher via email or by signing the consent form prior to the beginning of the interview. If interviews are conducted over the phone or via Skype, participants will be asked to scan the signed consent form and return it via email prior to the interview. All participants are active in professional or volunteer capacities which necessitate a level of cognitive and English language skills that equip them to comprehend the information about the project.</p>		

4.2 Limited Disclosure	Do you propose to use limited disclosure, concealment or deception for this research project? (Answer Yes or No. If Yes, use the space below to explain.) Refer to NS §2.3 .	
	YES or NO:	NO
<p>[If NO, you may leave this space blank. If YES, provide a justification for the limited disclosure, concealment or deception. Comment on the special considerations discussed in NS §2.3. Indicate whether you intend to debrief participants, and justify that position. If you are seeking a waiver of consent for all participants, select NO.]</p>		

4.3 Future Use of Data, Materials, or Tissues	Do you intend for the data and/or materials and/or tissues collected for this research project to be reused in future research? Type an "X" in the left-hand column beside as many of the following options as apply to your research. Use the space provided to specify which data/materials/tissues will be reused, if any. Refer to NS §2.2.14 .	
	x	Consent (or waiver of consent) will be specific .
		Consent (or waiver of consent) will be extended .
		Consent (or waiver of consent) will be unspecified .
		→ Data/materials/tissues will be used <i>only</i> for this research project (i.e. no future use).
		→ Data/materials/tissues used in this research project may also be used in future projects that are <i>closely related</i> to this project, <i>or in the same general area</i> of research as this project.
		→ Data/materials/tissues used in this project may also be used in <i>any</i> future research.

N/A

4.4 Conflict of Interest	Does your research present or involve any conflict of interest, whether potential, real, or perceived; or will the researcher(s) have dual roles in relation to the participants? (Answer Yes or No. If Yes, use the space below to explain.) Refer to NS §5.4 , University of Melbourne Code of Conduct for Research §2.5 , and Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research §7.2 .	
	YES or NO:	NO
[If YES, explain what the potential conflict of interest is and how it will be managed. If applicable, you may also need to include a comment on the Plain Language Statement and Consent form declaring that potential conflict of interest. If NO, you may leave this space blank.]		

4.5 Information for Participants	How will relevant information about the research project be provided to potential participants? Attach a copy of any advertisement (print or online), Plain Language Statement (PLS), consent form, letter, email, telephone script, and/or debriefing statement to be used. Refer to NS §5.2.23 .
Participants will be contacted via email by the student researcher and will be forwarded the plain language statement and consent form (attached).	

Plain Language Statement (PLS): Your PLS must satisfy the requirements set out in the *National Statement* ([NS §2.2.1 - §2.2.3](#), [§2.2.6](#)). The Office for Research Ethics and Integrity's website has [guidance on composing your plain language statement](#). A list of PLS requirements is also provided at the end of this form. **Ensure that your PLS is written in plain language. Ensure that the information contained in your PLS is consistent with the information in your application.**

Consent Form: Your consent form must satisfy the requirements set out in the *National Statement* ([NS §2.2](#)). The Office for Research Ethics and Integrity's website has [guidance on composing your consent form](#). A list of consent form requirements is also provided at the end of this form. **Ensure that your consent form is written in plain language. Ensure that the information contained in your consent form is consistent with the information in your application.**

5. Dissemination and Data Management

5.1 Providing Results to Participants	How will the results of the research project be provided to participants in an accessible format? Refer to NS §1.5 .
A brief (under 10 pages) report will be made available to participants via email.	

5.2 Reporting Project Outcomes	How will outcomes of the research project be made public? Refer to NS §1.3 .
The results will be published in a Masters final project thesis, and written up for publication in one or more journal articles. The results may also be presented at a conference.	

5.3 Data Management

How do you propose to manage the data collected in this research project? Specify what types of data will be collected, how they will be stored and in what format. How will access to the data be controlled and by whom? Discuss retention, security, and data sharing plans. What measures will be taken to protect participants' privacy, and their data?

Refer to [NS §1.11](#), the [Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research §2](#), and the [University of Melbourne Code of Conduct for Research §2.1](#).

A) Privacy and Confidentiality

Data will be stored as audio files, digital interview transcripts and digital interview notes, all of which will be password protected. Identifying material will be removed from transcripts and notes. It will be possible for the researchers involved in this project to match data to specific participants due to knowledge of who participated in interviews. Externally, all possible steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality, including identifying interview participants by their professional sector only e.g. 'environmental advocacy' or 'local food advocacy.' Contextual details that could allow the participant to be identified will be removed.

B) Security and Storage of Data

Audio files, interview transcripts and interview notes will be stored on a password-protected computer during fieldwork and data analysis. At the end of the research, data will be held securely for 5 years in locked facilities in FVAS; all data will be destroyed after 5 years.

C) Retention

In the event that the responsible researcher were to leave the university, responsibility for data storage would be transferred to the new responsible researcher on the research project and the same procedures for data storage would apply.

Data will be held securely for five years; all data will be destroyed after 5 years. Digital data will be held on a password protected computer

6. Other Issues

6.1 Other Ethical Issues

Are there any other issues, not addressed above or in additional modules, which are relevant to the ethical review of your research project? Refer to the relevant sections of the *National Statement* identified in the *Specific Guidelines Checklist*, if applicable.

N/A

Attachments Checklist

Review your answers above to determine which attachments (if any) are required for your application. **Type an “X” in the left-hand column beside all items that apply to your research project.** Attach a copy of the items you have selected.

X	Plain Language Statement (PLS) for Participants
X	Consent Form for Participants
	Additional PLS(s) (e.g. for parents, teachers, schools)
	Additional Consent Form(s) (e.g. for parents, teachers, schools; or assent forms for children)
	Recruitment Materials (e.g. advertisement(s), posters, letter(s) or email(s) of invitation)
	Questionnaire(s) and/or Survey Instrument(s)
	Measure(s) and/or Scale(s)
X	List of Interview Questions and/or Themes
	List of Focus Group Questions and/or Themes
	Participant Distress Protocol
	Adverse Event Protocol
	Debriefing Statement
	Approval(s) of research by an HREC external to the University of Melbourne
	Other External Approval(s) (e.g. schools, communities)
	Full Protocol (for Medical Research)
	Translations and/or Back-Translations (where languages other than English used)
	Privacy and Databanks Module
	Body Tissue and Genetic Research Module
	Ionising Radiation Module
	Interventions, Therapies and Trials Module
	Other Documents (e.g. contracts, agreements) – specify which:

Plain Language Statement (PLS) Requirements:

- Clearly identify the University of Melbourne (i.e. by prominent placement of the University's logo) and the department(s)/ school(s)/faculty(-ies) involved. If printed, the PLS should be on University of Melbourne letterhead.
- Clearly identify the title of the project, and the name(s) and contact details of the Principal Researcher and Other Researchers. For student projects, specify the student's level of study.
- Clearly explain the purpose of the research project.
- Clearly explain what participants will be asked to do, and provide an estimated time commitment.
- If participants will be photographed, audio- or video-recorded, clearly state as much.
- Clearly explain any risks arising from participation, as well as any procedures or measures in place to minimize such risks.
- Describe any expected benefits to the wider community. If applicable, also describe any expected benefits to participants.
- List any payments, incentives or reimbursements to be made to participants.
- State that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw from participation at any time. Explain any implications of withdrawal, including whether it will be possible for participants to withdraw any data already collected from or about them.
- Describe the likelihood and form of dissemination of the research results, including publication.
- Describe the arrangements in place to protect the confidentiality of participants' data, and advise participants of any legal limitations to such confidentiality. If the sample size for the project is small, advise participants that this may make them identifiable.
- The project HREC number (which is the ethics ID number assigned by Themis) and the date and version number of the PLS must appear on the PLS. If the PLS is printed, put this information in the footer.
- Explain what will happen to participants' data after the research project ends (i.e. how long it will be retained, whether it might be used again for future research and if so who would have access.)
- Include the following statement: "This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Fax: +61 3 9347 6739 or Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project."
- If the research is externally funded, state the amount(s) and source(s) of funding for the research.
- If the research is funded, the PLS must state the amounts and sources of funding for the research.
- If there are any potential conflicts of interests for any of the researchers, sponsors (if applicable) or institutions, disclose these potential conflicts of interest.
- If any participants will be in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers, state that decisions about participation will not affect the dependent relationship. (E.g. students' grades will not be affected if they decline to participate or withdraw from the project at any stage).

Consent Form Requirements:

- Clearly identify the University of Melbourne (i.e. by prominent placement of the University's logo) and the department(s)/ school(s)/faculty(-ies) involved. If printed, the consent form should be on University of Melbourne letterhead.
- Clearly identify the title of the project, the name(s) and contact details of the Principal Researcher and Other Researchers. For student projects, specify the student's level of study.
- If participants will be photographed, audio- or video-recorded, clearly state as much.
- State that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied. Also state that the purpose of the project is research.
- Describe the arrangements in place to protect the confidentiality of participants' data, and advise participants of any legal limitations to such confidentiality. If the sample size for the project is small, advise participants that this may make them identifiable.

Declaration by the Responsible Researcher

The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.

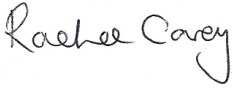

I have read the University's current human ethics guidelines. I accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with: those guidelines, with the [University's Code of Conduct for Research](#), and with any other condition laid down by the University of Melbourne's Central Human Research Ethics Committee (CHREC), its Human Ethics Sub-Committees (HESCs), or by the Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG) which will review this application. I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research. I acknowledge our obligations as researchers and the rights of the participants stipulated in the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2007\) - Updated May 2015](#). I certify that the research team has the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research described in the attached application, and to deal with any emergencies and contingencies related to research that may arise throughout the life of the project.

If approval is granted, the project will be undertaken in strict accordance with the approved protocol and relevant laws, regulations and guidelines.

I, the Responsible Researcher, agree to:

- start this research project only after obtaining final approval from the HESC (if this is a standard project), or the HEAG (if this is a minimal risk project);
- carry out this research only where adequate funding is available to enable the research to be carried out according to good research practice and in an ethical manner;
- provide additional information as requested by the CHREC, HESC, or HEAG;
- provide progress reports to the CHREC, HESC, or HEAG as requested, including annual and final reports;
- maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from, or about, research participants and maintain security procedures for the protection of their privacy;
- submit an amendment if any modification to the research design or protocol is proposed (including any change of researchers) and to proceed with the research only after the amendment has been approved by the HESC (if this is a standard project) or by the HEAG (if this is a minimal risk project);
- notify the HESC (if this is a standard project) or the HEAG (if this is a minimal risk project) in writing immediately if any adverse event occurs during the course of the research;
- notify the HESC (if this is a standard project) or the HEAG (if this is a minimal risk project) in writing immediately if any complaints are received about the research;
- comply with an audit of the research undertaken, if requested by the CHREC, HESC, or HEAG;
- use only the data/tissue samples collected for this research, and for which HESC/HEAG approval has been given.

I certify that all members of the research team have read this application and the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2007\) - Updated May 2015](#) and that they have agreed to comply with the provisions of the latter.

Responsible Researcher Name	Signature	Date
Dr Rachel Carey		29/2/16
Jennifer Sheridan		29/4/16