

## Request for Costing an Election Commitment

Name of proposal:	Local food production
Person requesting costing:	Shane Rattenbury MLA
Date of request:	10 October 2024
Summary of proposal:	<p>To increase local food production and protect agricultural land the ACT Greens will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish four Agricultural Extension Officers to support rural landholders to increase their sustainability and profitability.</li> <li>• Establish a Local Food Training Centre and Food Distribution Hub.</li> <li>• Rejuvenate heritage agricultural sites.</li> <li>• Provide interest free loans to empower local farmers.</li> <li>• Fund five full-time-equivalent primary school garden coordinators, to support school kitchen gardens</li> <li>• Create new large community gardens for the suburbs and support community organisations.</li> </ul>
Issue the proposal will address:	<p>Growing local food, rather than importing it from across the country, is good for farmers, good for the environment and gives local people more consumer choice.</p> <p>But at the moment, we have a food system that is vulnerable to climate change, unfair to farmers, and sells food to Canberrans at exorbitant prices, while big supermarkets rake in record profits.</p> <p>The system encourages huge amounts of food waste, in our homes, in the stores, and on farms, where crops are sometimes left to rot if they're not cosmetically perfect enough for the big supermarkets. Turning our food system around and increasing local production is one of the most powerful actions we can take to boost community health, protect against the climate crisis and bring greater transparency to our supermarket bills.</p> <p>This initiative will implement key elements of the Canberra Region Local Food Strategy.</p>
Proposal's public announcement details (media release or policy statement)	<a href="https://greens.org.au/act/policies/food">https://greens.org.au/act/policies/food</a>

published on a party website)<sup>1</sup>:

**What are the key assumptions that have been made in the proposal?**

**Note:** The costing will be developed on the basis of information and assumptions provided in the costing request. The professional judgment of the Under Treasurer will determine whether these assumptions are adopted in the costing of the proposal.

Establish Agricultural Extension Officers

\$2.19 million for four SOGC positions from July 2025 to June 2028. Other costs covered by existing resources.

Establish a Local Food Training Centre and Food Distribution Hub

\$3.5 million in capital costs to establish the training centre and food distribution hub, with a warehouse with office space a cool room and commercial kitchen. This cost estimate is based on food hubs built for similar scale use as Canberra. These are about 1500 – 2000 square metres and estimated cost to build is based on \$1500 per square metre.

Job training and apprenticeship places within the hub would be funded via federal skills grants and apprenticeships, and subsidised where appropriate by ACT justice reinvestment programs, so are not costed in this initiative.

Rejuvenate heritage agricultural sites

\$1.3 million including \$1 million capital upgrade costs in 2025/26 and 2026/27 and \$100,000 annually for site management from July 2025.

Provide interest free loans to empower local farmers

\$1 million to provide interest free loans for local farmers in 2026/27. These will be repaid over 10 years. Administration covered by existing resources.

Fund five full-time-equivalent primary school garden coordinators

\$1.83 million for five ASO3 level positions in the Education Directorate from July 2025 to June 2028.

Create new large community gardens for the suburbs

\$0.9 million including \$200,000 per year from July 2025 to establish community gardens and \$100,000 per year from July 2025 to provide foundational funding to support community organisations.

What are the estimated revenue and operating costs each year (if available) and what are the capital requirements for this proposal and estimated costs each year (if available)?

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Revenue<sup>(a)</sup></b>				100	100
<b>Expenses<sup>(a)</sup></b>		-1,603	-2,641	-1,677	-5,921
<b>Capital<sup>(a)</sup></b>		-1,000	-3,500		-4,500
<b>Depreciation<sup>(a)</sup></b>					

<sup>1</sup> As per Part 2, section 5 of the *Election Commitments Costing Act 2012*

<b>Offset - Expenses<sup>(a)</sup></b>					
<b>Offset - Capital<sup>(a)</sup></b>					
<b>Full-time equivalent employees</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	

(a) A negative number indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses, depreciation or capital outflows. A positive number indicates an increase in revenue or decrease in expenses, depreciation or capital inflows. The expenses row is not to include depreciation costs.

Has any specific information or data been utilised in generating the proposal? Please provide links or attach information/data sources referenced.

Canberra Region Local Food Strategy, [Fiona Buining's Churchill Fellowship report on urban farming](#), the work of [FoodConnect](#) in Brisbane

Where relevant, is funding for the proposal to be demand driven or a capped amount?

Capped except for loans, which are demand driven.

Will third parties, for instance the Commonwealth or other State/Territories, have a role in funding or delivering the proposal? Does the proposal provide additional funding to, or redirect, any existing Commonwealth/State or Territory funding arrangements?

The proposal is not reliant on external funding, however additional funding would be sought from the Commonwealth for some elements. The Food Hub could be eligible for the federal Regional Precincts and Partnerships funding.

Job training and apprenticeship places within the hub could be funded via federal skills grants and apprenticeships and elements of the Australian Government response to the National Agricultural Workforce Strategy.

Will funding/the cost require indexation?

No

Who will administer the proposal?

EPSDD and Education Directorate

How will the proposal be administered?

Some staffing included, other administration to be covered by existing resources.

Is the proposal part of a broader package? If so, please identify the other elements of the package.

Yes, other elements that will be delivered with existing resources are:

- Protect prime agricultural land so farmers have fair, long-term leases
- Revitalise the Canberra City Farm.

Has an allowance been made for expenses necessary to support the implementation of this proposal?

- If no, will the government agency be expected to absorb expenses associated with this proposal?
- If yes, please specify the key assumptions.

Yes, as above.

Will the proposal generate savings or offsets? If so, please quantify any savings or offsets.
No
Has the proposal been previously costed by an external (third) party? If so, will a copy of this material, including any assumptions, be made available to Treasury?
No
What are the community impacts associated with the proposal? Who and how many people will be affected?
Local farmers will benefit from increased support and funding opportunities; local retail food businesses including supermarkets, restaurants and cafes will be able to source locally grown food and differentiate from the big supermarkets and offer competitive pricing on local fresh produce. Canberrans will benefit from increased local food production, more community gardens and local employment.
Are there any transitional considerations associated with implementation of the proposal? If so, how will they be managed?
No
What is the intended implementation date of the proposal?
July 2025 to June 2028.
When is the proposal expected to be fully operational? Please provide details such as the start and end dates, the level of commitment during each period etc.
July 2025 to June 2028.
Will the proposal cease, and if so, when?
These elements will cease once complete: rejuvenate heritage sites, establish community gardens and zero interest loans. Other elements are intended to be ongoing.
Is there any additional information relevant to this proposal?
No